

IN the latter part of the year 1896 the famous discoveries of placer gold were made on the creeks in the basin of the Klondike river. These were followed in the years of 1897 and 1898 by the scarcely less famous placer gold discoveries in the basin of Indian river, and on the hills and benches adjoining all the creeks on which discoveries had previously been made. During the past two or three years rich placer ground has been found in the basin of the Stewart river, notably on Duncan, Clear, and Henderson creeks, also in the Fortymile district. The more famous creeks in the Klondike basin are Eldorado, Bonanza, Hunker, Last Chance and Bear, while in the Indian river basin, Dominion, Sulphur, Gold Run and Quartz are the most noted. Not only in the beds of the creeks in both Klondike and Indian river basins but also on the adjacent hills and benches the wealth of placer gold discovered has been enormous.

The proper protection and development of all these discoveries would have ensured to the Yukon territory a population of at least one hundred thousand souls. This population, being dependent almost wholly for food and supplies on the sources outside the Yukon territory, would have afforded a large and unexcelled market to the rest of Canada for farm products and manufactured goods. The possibilities of this market have, we believe, not yet been understood or appreciated by the government, the industries or trades of the rest of Canada.

In the whole of the Yukon territory, except around the town of Whitehorse, the prosperity of the whole population depends entirely upon the production of gold by the individual placer miner. A very large part of the people are engaged directly in this pursuit and the remainder are engaged in supplying the wants of those so employed. Anything which stimulates or retards this one industry equally stimulates or retards the prosperity of the whole community. The cessation of placer mining would result in the abandonment of the territory for the present by almost the entire population. Many of the rich early discovered claims have already by wasteful and rough methods been worked over, leaving a large part of the gold behind, and are now being re-worked by our present improved placer mining methods, which are obviously capable of immeasurably greater improvements, as the methods used by a few of our best operators show. But the greater part of the placer areas have to the present remained unworked, in some cases through lack of water, but generally because it requires a long time and much labor to prospect thoroughly so large a country, and because it was desirable in regard to low grade ground in the earlier years, to wait for, (a) the reduction of royalty, (b) the cheapening of labor, and (c) the introduction of improved machinery.