

# The Klondike Nugget

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On Tuesday and Saturday

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SATURDAY, JULY 16, 1898

## FAWCETT vs THE PEOPLE.

It is grounds for much rejoicing amongst the miners and prospectors that Mr. Thomas Fawcett, the gold commissioner of the Yukon district, is very shortly to be relieved of his position. In this topsy-turvy world of ours there have been many very ordinary men raised to positions of eminence by combinations of circumstances but we venture to assert that very seldom has so helplessly incapable a man as Mr. Fawcett been hoisted by events over which he had no control to a position of as much responsibility as the one held at this moment by that unfortunate and distinguished gentleman. And not very often is it given to mediocrity to become so famous in a night. Of all the copies of the KLONDIKE NUGGET printed last week containing Mr. Fawcett's latest administrative error, there are not probably over one hundred copies left in Dawson City today. The paper has been either sent out or carried out to every corner of the world. Every important paper in both Canada and the United States will in a very few days be in receipt of a copy of our paper. Many of them will reprint the story of the disgraceful doings at the gold commissioner's office.

The Seattle office of THE NUGGET will reprint the entire issue of Saturday last and they will be placed on sale at every news stand and on every railroad train in North America. Once again we reiterate that it is seldom given to such very ordinary men as the gold commissioner to become so famous—or notorious—in so short a time.

Without rendering himself liable to removal for malfeasance Mr. Fawcett has worked just about as much injury as one man can work in so short a time. From the time of his assuming control at this place to the present he has been issuing edicts and rulings of such peculiar and contradictory nature as to convince every man in the country from boundary to boundary that the wrong man was in charge here. Indeed the department was so singularly unfortunate as to get hold of a man who is probably the least capable of filling the position of any man in Dawson. Even the Siwash would at least be consistent. When before were such great powers as the gold commissioner's placed in the wavering hands of such a vacillating official?

Illustrating another trait of the recorder's character and the way in which it works to the injury of, not himself but the miners who are compelled to do business with him—we give a little occurrence of last winter. In a spirit of peevish economy which no government can endorse, the gold commissioner had trimmed down his office force in the early winter to a point where its inefficiency became actually wicked. Men desiring to record claims were forced to wait in line for days and days. No effort was made to shelter the men even though the thermometer ranged between twenty and forty-five degrees below zero all the time. Sometimes men laid on the snow at the door all night. When approached by charitable minded citizens on the subject, the gold commissioner would reply irritably: "I have no authority to go to the expense of putting up a shelter."

Many men were made very ill by the length of time they were forced to stand

still in a long line in such a winter climate, and many have never recovered their full health since; yet Mr. Fawcett persisted in a dilly-dallying method of his own which was positively criminal in its results to all. He had to weigh in his own gold from each applicant even though from lack of skill it consumed half the time taken up by each application. But the climax was reached when the recorder stopped the whole work to go out and chop a little wood for his stove. What can be thought of the niggardly policy of the man to pinch and save for a great government even though men were slowly freezing waiting his pleasure. Many of the men were simply waiting for information, which could have been given by a clerk at another window, through another door, just as well as by Mr. Fawcett himself. Yet no effort was made in this way to catch up with the mass of business and let the waiting crowd get away. The records were deliberately closed to the public and all information regarding untaken claims must come through the window—unless indeed a man would dig up \$15 and hire an attache of the office to furnish the information after hours. But why rehash the thousand and one grievances of the people? A successor to Mr. Fawcett cannot be appointed too quickly for the good of the camp.

## WE THANK YOU ALL.

It is not often that the efforts of a newspaper in behalf of the public's interests are so heartily and publicly appreciated as was done in the case of the testimonial given THE NUGGET at the mass meeting on Wednesday evening. There was a strong belief abroad that under the martial law in force here anything in the shape of criticism of officials would be suppressed by force and made a source of much annoyance to the critic. Friends of THE NUGGET freely advised us to this effect, yet we boldly came forward with a forcible condemnation of things as we find them, letting the blame fall wherever and on whomsoever it would. The public demonstration of approval given us so royally on Wednesday night without a single dissent, in a mixed audience of three thousand people, is very gratifying indeed to the management of THE NUGGET. It inspires our hearts, encourages our efforts and strengthens our hands as nothing else could have done. "Pro Bono Publico" shall ever be our motto, and unceasing shall be our efforts until the outrageous laws of the Klondike District have been replaced by just regulations, and shady officials have sneaked off to "fields afresh and pastures new." In certain quarters of the large cities where life and property were unsafe, the best way of effectually policing the district has been found to be simply to string a row of electric lights through that portion of the town. The criminal element would flee from the light like moles. Just so in other and larger matters. With a wide awake and vigilant local paper, armed with public approval, it is easy to guarantee that there will be no more "Dominion Creek muddles" in Dawson. There is still a lot of good work to be done just as soon as we get things in shape to turn on the electric light of publicity and to our many readers we would say that no considerations of personal profit or safety shall deter us from the course which has so undeniably met with your approval. We thank you, gentlemen, for your demonstration.

## COULDN'T RETURN THE MONEY.

The following little incident related by Mr. Chas. K. Zorn, who owns No. 3a below discovery on Sulphur, well illustrates some of the methods that have been in vogue at the gold commissioner's office during the past year. THE NUGGET has charged Mr. Fawcett with being incompetent to fill the position he now occupies. Mr. Fawcett emphatically denies the charge though, so far as THE NUGGET is informed, no one else in Dawson and vicinity takes the same view of the matter that the commissioner does.

Whether Mr. Zorn's story proves incompetence on the part of Mr. Fawcett or not, it makes interesting reading and

can be relied upon as an accurate statement of facts.

Mr. Zorn staked his claim No. 3 below discovery on Sulphur and came to Dawson to record in accordance with law. Through an error on the commissioner's part the records in the office showed Mr. Zorn as having title to No. 3 above instead of No. 3 below. Shortly afterward application was made by another party to record No. 3 below. The books in the office, of course, showed the claim not recorded and Mr. Fawcett allowed the man to record.

When Mr. Zorn learned of this action at the commissioner's office he hunted up the man who had made the second record and explained the circumstance to him. When the matter was understood the man agreed to withdraw all his claims to the property provided he could have his right in the district restored and his recording fee returned. Mr. Fawcett was apprised of this and agreed to restore the man's right but flatly refused to return the \$15 recording fee. Mr. Zorn protested very strongly against this action and reminded the commissioner that the affair had come about through his (the commissioner's) fault. He also pointed out how small a thing it was for the Canadian government to so treat a man who had been led into a mistake through a government official's error. But Mr. Fawcett remained obdurate and the upshot of the matter was that Mr. Zorn, himself, paid the man his \$15, taking care, however, to secure a receipt from Mr. Fawcett, which he still holds. A short time afterward the man died and was buried in the Dawson cemetery.

As a result of that little transaction Mr. Fawcett may have an extra \$15 to his credit on the books of the Canadian government. But THE NUGGET ventures the opinion that another set of books will be opened some day wherein that same transaction will show Mr. Fawcett's name charged with a very long black mark.

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