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CONTENTS

Klondike Days - A Heroic Epoch Recalled.....	1
NPD Running at Capacity.....	3
Jamaica-Canada Cadet Swap.....	3
Canadian Office in Brasilia.....	3
Two New Bridges.....	3
First Klondike Claim Marked.....	3
Visit of CIGS.....	4
New TCA Cheap Fares.....	4

Booklet on Chemical Imports.....	4
Stratford Orchestra Workshop.....	5
COTC Shows Record Revenues.....	5
Richelieu-Champlain Waterway.....	5
CUSO in Nigeria.....	5
Consumer Price Index.....	6
Arctic Supply Starts.....	6

KLONDIKE DAYS - A HEROIC EPOCH RECALLED

On July 1, the Palace Grand Theatre, one of the main relics of the Gold Rush days in Dawson City, Yukon, was re-opened to the public as a national historic site. The dedication address by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Mr. Walter Dinsdale, follows in part:

"...In the older days...Dominion Day celebrations began on July 1 and carried through to July 4. This is readily understood when we remember that, during the Gold Rush, Americans here outnumbered all other prospectors, Canadian, European or Asian, by something like 50 to one. There is every indication that the modern rush to the Yukon will again bring thousands of American visitors to Dawson.

"Canada has been called the 'true North, strong and free'. But we are mindful that we share the North American continent with a powerful, friendly, prosperous neighbour. We are especially mindful that we share the burden of defence of freedom along the northern frontier. The presence of so many from Alaska tonight reminds us that Canada and the United States are neighbours in the north as well as along the famous unguarded boundary to the south.

A ROMANTIC EPISODE

"Our purpose here this evening is to dedicate a monument to the past - to commemorate one of the great epics in Canadian history. I am sure that all the distinguished guests in this old auditorium share with me a secret and adolescent dream of the 'Trail of '98'. The Klondike Gold Rush has become one of the great romantic episodes of North American folklore. Older generations will recall with nostalgia Charlie Chaplin's filmed version, or the stories of

Jack London, or the poems of Robert Service. The impact has been renewed in more recent times by the writings of Pierre Berton, a son of Dawson City, and the excellent film presentations of the National Film Board.

"Happily, the romance with which we surround the days of the Gold Rush has been reinforced, rather than weakened, by recorded fact. While reading *Klondike*, the carefully documented and painstakingly researched book on the Gold Rush by Mr. Berton, I was continually confronted with the incredible. Logically this could not be true, that could never have happened. The Gold Rush defies logical analysis; under such conditions and in such a time it seems everything was possible.

"The Gold Rush was carried out by people, and people - particularly when they are stimulated by the promise of great material reward - do not necessarily act logically or rationally. For a relatively fleeting moment in man's history, men and women from all parts of the world, from every stratum of society, were thrust together in a common rush for gold. Selfishness and greed was the dominant motivation, but there was also exhibited great unselfishness and high nobility of character. In the rough social crucible of the Klondike, a microcosm of stirring, struggling humanity appeared for a brief period in history. In this, I am sure, lies the universal appeal of the story of the Trail of '98.

"Those who worked the gravel of the creeks packed heavy loads over the trails, wintered hard on beans and sourdough in a rough cabin, performed feats of heroic endurance and courage. They were driven by the mad desire to find gold, the panacea

(Continued on p. 6)

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