Atlin Suffers From Official Blundering.

Miners Wait in Idleness Consuming Precious Supplies While Recorder Refuses Permission to Work.

Jumpers Encouraged by Officials to File Claims to Ground Already Recorded--Abuse of Staking for Absentees.

Refusal of Hydraulic Leases Deprives Hundreds of Men of Work—General Exasperation at the Government's Ill-Advised Course.

Special Correspondence of the Colonist.

Atlin City, June 2.—In my letter of two weeks ago, which was sent out by private conveyance, there having been no outward mail now for three weeks, I endeavored to describe as accurately as possible some of the official difficulties which have arisen in this mining camp, and which over large areas on the gold-bearing creeks have brought about a condition of utter cessation of work. The lapse of time has served only to aggravate these conditions. Many hundreds of men are idling away their time, and have been for months, awaiting some official decision as to disputed claims. The entanglements as to claims are owing in the first place to the mix-up caused by the lack of method pursued by the mining recorder who was in office here last year; secondly by the introduction of the anti-alien law of last session, which raised a question as to the validity of hundreds of claims that had been staked by American prospectors; and thirdly by the indiscriminate jumping of claims which took place as a result of this uncertainty as to the title of original stakers.

All these circumstances were well known to the government at Victoria five months ago, as is shown by the provision made at the last session of the legislature for a judge of the Supreme court to proceed to Atlin to investigate the disputes as to claims and to quiet the titles thereto, but so far as known here, up to the present moment not the first step has been taken in the active work of the settlement of these disputes. The judge has not yet arrived, nor is there any certainty as to when he may be expected, though it is eagerly hoped that he will be here by the first boat, which may arrive from Bennett in a few days from now.

Meantime the miners, many hundreds of them, are idling away their time, consuming the supplies that it has cost them so dearly to bring in here, and which they were depending on to keep them going till such time as the returns from their claims should afford them means to purchase fresh supplies. Not only is this intolerable and outrageous delay on the part of the authorities causing a loss in the aggregate of thousands of dollars a day in "grub" alone, but it is wearing out the hearts of the miners themselves, who now see before them a prospect of the whole season slipping away with no opportunity of getting to work.

I have been over Pine creek several times and have witnessed much of the hardship occasioned by the delay of the authorities, which I have endeavored to describe. Not a few are already almost out of supplies, and will be compelled to make a shift for some time to avoid absolute destitution. The banks of the creek and the flats and benches adjoining, from Atlin lake to Surprise lake, present a veritable stockade of miners' stakes. The whole country bristles with them. Claims without number have been staked and re-staked by the jumpers, till the aggregation of stakes at the four corners of some of the claims would make up a very respectable quantity in the cubic measurement of a cord of four-foot stove-wood. Particularly does this seem to be the case where the nomenclature of the claim as fixed by the original staker indicates an American origin. For instance, I noticed one claim, the "Los Angeles," around which the jumpers seem to have clustered like flies around a tempting morsel. The stakes are clustered and tied together with ropes, wires and strings in the most amazing manner.

The claim-jumper—a creature who in all other mining camps in this province is looked upon as a person too mean and odious to associate with—is here regarded with no particular aversion. He stalks forth boldly in broad daylight, and makes no pretence of disguising the business he is about. Some of them put it this way: "Well, there was no one present on the claim; perhaps the original staker may have a right to the ground, and perhaps he hasn't. On the 1st of July I'll put in an appearance, and if there is no one there I'll claim the ground. If anyone turns up with a better claim he can have it." And so the thing goes on. The procedure followed in the recorder's office is to give a record whenever one is asked, without any questions whatever, save the now stereotyped one: "Are you a British subject?" The answer to this question is of course always in the affirmative, so the record is taken, the fee of $2.50 is paid and so another dispute is added to the long list that the judge will have to investigate if he ever arrives here.

Of course, occasionally the jumper meets a difficulty. The other day, for instance, a man came along to a claim on Willow creek and began planting his stakes on ground which had been already located. The original locator happened to be in the vicinity, and he asked the stranger what he was doing. "Staking this claim, of course," replied the jumper. "Well, before you do it you've got to lick me," said the owner, and as he was a big, husky fellow, the newcomer moved off, and the judge who is to come was saved the hearing of at least one case.

It seems to me utterly incomprehensible that the record office here will go on issuing record upon record for the same ground without the slightest effort to abate these outrages. It is simply a laying up of trouble against the future, and the officials know and acknowledge it. Yet the gold commisioner tells me that he is powerless to refuse records to jumpers, that he has no discretion in the matter whatever. This being the case, let me enquire what is the use of a gold commissioner at all, for surely it is the most important function that such an official should have to perform to see that miners are protected and established in their rights. There is no effort at this at all, and the office goes on day after day piling up troubles for itself at the charge of $2.50 apiece.

Some of the bolder spirits among those miners whose claims have been jumped have gone on with their work and a number have so far not been molested or interfered with by the other claimants. But these are the great minority. Frequently the gold commissioner is appealed to by rival claimants, and the result usually is that work is stopped and the claim "tied up" to await the advent of the judge! A few days ago a miner was arrested on the charge of stealing gold from a claim. He held the prior record, it appears, to the claim, and had done work to the extent of about $600 on the ground. The case came up before the gold commisioner here, but that official declined to go into the merits of the case, and the claim was consequently tied up, and the miner released on his own recognizances to appear before the next court of competent jurisdiction. Is it not pitiful?

Under these circumstances surely common sense would suggest that something more than the mere tender of a fee should be necessary before a new record is made of ground already recorded. Some declaration should be required, either that the ground has not been staked previously or that for some definite reason the original staking and recording is illegal. In the latter case the declaration should be followed, before the second record is made, by an inspection of the stakes, etc., by some officer appointed for the purpose, the expense attending such inspection being deposited in the recorder's office and forfeited if the declaration were found to be false. Common sense, I say, would suggest some such procedure as this, and if it be objected to on the score of expense to the government, the reply is that on the whole there would be a great saving to the community at large, and this practical paralysis of the mining industry be averted.

It is many years since there has been experienced in British Columbia a placer mining excitement equal to that of the Atlin country, and never one under conditions at all similar. Circumstances alter cases, and the procedure that applies in one case does not always apply in another. The authorities, at all events, have shown their total incapacity to deal with the situation as it is here, because matters could scarcely be in a worse condition.

HYDRAULIC LEASES REFUSED.

Since the discovery of placer gold in this district last year, there have been many applications for leases of ground to be worked by hydraulic process. But so far not one of these applications has been granted by the government, with the result that operations on those lines have been wholly prevented. There are considerable quantities of capital awaiting investment in these hydraulic enterprises, as soon as it can be shown that they would likely prove profitable. Men have been waiting here from month to month for the necessary leases, in readiness to begin the initiatory work of prospecting the ground. This work would give a summer's employment to probably some hundreds of men, but not a hand's turn has yet been done, because there is as yet no assurance that the leases that have been applied for will be granted. It would appear that the government is so fearful of allowing capital a chance for investment and workingmen a change for employment that they have determined to do nothing at all. But if they could hear the execrations that are passed upon their heads from the lonely tents of the working miners in this district, from the offices of investors and promoters in this town, from over the counters of dispirited and disgusted merchants and business men generally, and the denunciations even of the ministers of religion here, it seems to me that they would be startled into some semblance of rational action. That the ministry, individually and collectively, are densely ignorant of the conditions they have to deal with here is apparent, but there is the additional feature of stupid stubbornness and boorishness in their aspect to the people here which is often found as an accompaniment of ignorance in high official positions.

STAKING FOR ABSENTEES.

Before closing this letter I desire to refer to a couple of features in which the law respecting placer mines, at least in this district, requires amendment. One is the abuse of the privilege which the law permits free miners of staking an unlimited number of claims in one locality in the names of their friends or employers. It has become a regular business here on the part of some free miners, and is harmful in the extreme. I will give an example of how it is worked in this district. A miner discovers a new creek, and reports pay gold in it. He stakes the discovery claim for himself probably, and before making known the locality of the new ground goes about offering to stake claims for others at so much apiece. The price may be $10 or $50, or whatever amount may be obtained, and in this way a whole creek may be staked by one or two men before the public become acquainted with the locality at all. Claims may be staked in the names of people thousands of miles away and ignorant of what is going on, while free miners on the ground here have no opportunity of getting in on the creek. This is manifestly an improper proceeding, and that it is permitted suggests the advisability of adopting the Yukon plan of allowing claims to be staked only by the persons in whose names they are staked.

Of course a man who pays another one to stake a claim for him after the manned described above is doing something like buying a pig in a poke, and it is not to be wondered at that he sometimes finds himself sold. An instance recently occurred in this district where many innocents were gulled by the enterprising miner who did a thriving trade in locating on Simpson creek, where it has since been discovered there is not a trace of gold in the gravels. But the law needs amendment, not, it may be said, for the protection of the gulls, but in the interests of the bona fide free miner of every provincial camp.

CLAIMS TOO SMALL.

Another fault in the placer law is that the claims allowed are not large enough. As I showed in a previous letter the claims nearly everywhere in this district must be regarded as deep diggings, and that being the case, it is practically impossible to work a claim only 100x100 feet in area singly. These claims have to be worked in groups of two, three or more, and it is not always possible for adjoining claim owners to form partnerships and work on agreeable terms. The claims, in my opinion, and in the opinion of nearly every experienced miner whom I have talked to here, should be at least 250 feet. This would, in most cases, enable a man to work his claim independently of his neighbor, and besides that, in diggings of the average productiveness of the creeks of this district, claims of 100 feet are not a sufficient reward for the expense and toil that are necessary to get down to work on bedrock.

There has been a heavy wind blowing all day, and Atlin Lake is now clear of ice. The temperature gets down below freezing point every night, and the snow still hangs heavy and low down on the northern flanks of the mountains. The southern inclinations of hills up to two or three thousand feet are fairly clear, and the quartz prospector is busy.

ATLIN'S RICH CREEKS.

Litigation Prevents Miners From Proving Their Claims—Some Big Nuggets In Evidence.

In a letter to the Colonist Frank McQuillan, the well-known prospector, says: "Pine, Spruce and Boulder creeks are all right, so is Wright creek. Atlin will be better next year, as more than half the claims are tied up in law, and cannot be worked before next season. I found the old back channel of Pine creek and located ten claims in a group for Capt. Irving & Co. I will start work as soon as Capt. Irving arrives, and by the end of October the Irving group will give a fair account of itself. There are hundreds of men here looking for employment. The wages vary from $2.50 and board to $7 without board. Many old men are employed by the government merely for their board. Poor men are taxed 25 cents per cord for the wood they burn. The object of the government is to collect all the revenue possible, regardless of what misery may be caused. In years to come Pine creek may be worked by hydraulic mining, but will have to be worked by elevators, as there is no dump, and the pressure of water must come from Surprise lake, a distance of seven miles. The largest portion of Pine creek is yet unstaked, it being bench land. Last week a man named Campbell found a nugget on his claim on Pine creek weighing 13 ounces, 16 pennyweights, valued at $200. Atlin will be a splendid mining country in a few years, when everything gets straightened out and working in shipshape. It will never be any good as a farming country, as frost remains in the ground late in the summer. There is bunch grass in abundance. A milk ranch and brewery would do well here in summer time."

J. Russell came down from Boulder and says everything looks flattering. He said two chaps on 10 below were taking $100 a day and didn't seem to be working very hard either. Jim says that no estimate can be arrived at whereby it is possible to compute the output. Every man you meet is under the impression that if he discloses the amount of gold taken out he endangers his claim. Another creek that very little is being said about is Birch. Lots of work is being done on this creek, and for a distance of three miles one half of the creek is as dry as a thirsty traveller. "One thing," says Jim, "that should not be overlooked by miners and people of Atlin is the fact that perfect "harmony" should prevail and not think that every stranger is a usurper.

W. A. Patterson is another Boulder creek man with good news. "I wouldn't take $5,000 for one of my claims there," he said. "I own two and a fraction, but I'm only working one at present. This one is 8 below, and a three days' run with two men showed 17 ounces. Most of this was taken from bedrock, and the depth is about five feet. Of course, the ground was all stripped and cleared before-hand." He brought down an ounce nugget, and has it on exhibition in Dockrill's drug store, and it is a beauty.

THE SITUATION REVIEWED.

Whole Season Practically Lost Through Unaccountable Folly of the Government.

From the Atlin Claim, June 3.

It does not seem possible that the government of this province can understand or appreciate the situation at present existing in this district. Even the stupidest or most boorish government that ever was could not have it in its mind wilfully to allow conditions to exist from day to day, from week to week, and from month to month in Atlin district without doing the first thing to improve matters. The mining industry of the district is practically paralyzed because of the supeness of the authorities at Victoria and the delays of the law. It is safe to say that there are at this moment thousands of men lying in a state of enforced inactivity, at enormous expense of time and money to themselves, awaiting the decision of the authorities as to the ownership of mining claims on these creeks. Months ago, during the session of the legislature, provision was made for a judicial investigation and decision of disputes; still no functionary of the law has arrived for that purpose, and no information is vouchsafed as to when he will arrive. The delay is shameful—it is criminal. This delay is mulcting the people of the district thousands of dollars a day for the mere cost of living alone, to say nothing of the loss of time and other expenditures.

Yet meantime we see the officials of the government throughout the district displaying the marvellous—we might almost say mercless—activity in the collection of revenues. On this point the officials here have been instructed from Victoria in terms evidently that could not possibly be misunderstood. The pound of flesh is being exacted with a sanguinary ferocity that seems unappeasable. A poor devil of a prospector, with his claim out on the creek "tied up" by disputes for which the bungling of previous officials of this same government are responsible, having eaten himself out of grub during the long wait for the arrival of the judicial commissioner, goes out into the bush and cuts a cord of wood. He attempts to sell it in town that he may get money to buy food. Instantly he is set upon by the officials of the government to pay a logger's license of $10 or a stumpage on what he has cut. Having no money he is debarred of the opportunity of getting any. Unhappy man! He might better be an inhabitant of the debtors' ward in Fleet street prison, for there, at least, he would be assured of a covering for his head. Another unfortunate, having sold his tent to "raise the wind," sets himself to get out some spruce poles to put up a shack—the inevitable government official instantly appears on the scene, demanding the government royalty. You are lingering about the town waiting for the judge to turn up, and to satisfy the cravings of hunger you slip out in the morning and shoot a duck—heavy fines and probably imprisonment follows with a swiftness and certainty that is astounding.

All this sort of thing we regard as a species of petty oppression and extortion, wholly out of keeping with the spirit that should actuate the governing powers in a mining camp such as this is. The government seems to have the idea that its chief function is the collection of revenues. It is the motto of the government office here never to refuse money, and so any number of records will be cheerfully taken for the same piece of placer ground without any question at all as to whether it has been staked and recorded previously. Our gold commissioner regards it as his duty to do this, though he knows that it is only a further aggravation of the entanglements that already exist.

But it is not specially effective now to criticize the failures or deficiencies or worse of the past. It should be the effort to secure improved conditions for the future. It is to be surely presumed that some time a judicial officer will arrive here to settle the hundreds of disputes regarding claims. We fear it will be a tedious process, and the danger now is that in very many cases the whole season will be lost, with all the deplorable consequences that must ensue. The people here should bestir themselves to expediate the operations of the judge when he does arrive. He will necessarily be ignorant of the conditions as they exist. He will need the advice and counsel of the best informed and wisest of our citizens and with that object in view concerted action should be taken. We have this suggestion to make—that a public meeting should be called to discuss the situation generally, and after a free interchange of opinion has been held, a committee should be appointed to draw up in a formal manner a presentment to the judge on his arrival of the whole situation, together with such suggestions for the guidance and enlightenment of the judge as wisdom may suggest. The main object is to have the disputes settled as speedily as possible, so that the hundreds of men now idling away their time here may get to work. Only good can result from the most speedy action on these lines.

COLOR OF THE SUN.

It Is Blue, and Man When He Sees That Will Perish of Cold.

From the St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Prof. S. P. Langley, secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, is convinced that if we could rise above the earth's atmosphere to view it, the sun must have a decidedly bluish tint to the naked eye. The proper color of the sun is blue—not merely bluish, but positively and distinctly blue.

"There can be no doubt of the correctness of Prof. Langley's opinion that the sun is really blue, and not yellow as we see it, said Prof. T. J. J. See, of the Naval Observatory at Washington, who has made himself famous recently as the discoverer of "double stars" in numbers hitherto undreamed of. "You have only to imagine the atmospheric envelope of the earth, which hinders vision, removed, and the heavens are revealed to the eye in an altogether new and unfamiliar aspect. The sky, in broad daylight, is black, and the moon, in above the horizon, is no longer yellow, but a brilliant white. Though the blue sun shines above, the stars are much brighter and more distinctly seen than ever before on the clearest night. Furthermore, they differ very much in color, some of them being red, others blue, others rose-color, others red, others violet, and yet others green.

"A strange aspect of the universe this would seem to be; and yet such is its true appearance, whereas we are accustomed to behold it altered to the eye by the interference of the atmosphere. As is well known, the sky looks blue because of the breaking up of light by innumerable particles of dust and moisture afloat in the air. Take away this hindrance to vision, and no longer will diffusion of sunlight obscure the views of the stars, each of which will shine like a separate lamp in the blackness of space. The blue sun, under present circumstances, looks yellow because the blue light-rays, having very short wavelengths, do not easily penetrate the atmospheric coat of the earth. The yellow waves are much longer, and have a better chance to get through; hence the sun is yellow and sunlight is yellow.

"Now, as to the differing tints of the stars, we must understand that they vary in this respect with their age. To begin with, it is necessary to realize that, barring the moon and a few planets of our own system, visible because they are near, all of the celestial bodies one sees in the heavens at night are suns—many of them hundreds of times as big as our own sun. The so-called Milky Way is a congress of suns, in which our orb of day is a rather inferior luminary. On this point I shall have something more to say presently, but meanwhile it will suffice to remark that planets in general, being dark and extinguished bodies, could not possibly be visible by their own light, and so we must preceive that every star which twinkles in the vault above us at night is a sun. By the aid of a very powerful telescope, I have discovered about a dozen stars that are actually made visible by the reflected light of the suns about which they revolve; but they do not importantly concern the general proposition.

"The color of a star—otherwise to be termed a distant sun—varies according to its age. In its youth it is yellow; in its old age, blue. The tint is a matter of temperature; the hotter a star, the bluer it gets, because great heat means an activity that engenders blue light waves. Sirius is a very blue star, as seen through the telescope, simply because it is so hot. Probably, Sirius gives out 100 times as much light as our sun, though it is only three, or perhaps four, times as big. Viga, in the constellation Lyra, hundreds of times as big as our sun, is blue, and the inference is that the heat it emits is tremendous.

"I have been speaking of the appearance of these stars as viewed through the medium of our atmosphere. Their colors, in some cases, are so vivid as to exhibit marked differences; but, if the air-envelope of the earth were taken away, their varying tints would be much more noticeable. From what I have said, you will have understood that the suns of the universe go through progressive alterations of hue as they grow older. Our own sun is becoming steadily bluer, because it is growing hotter. Every star, or sun, grows hotter and hotter up to a certain point in its history and then cools. Our sun, through the contraction of its gaseous body, is still gaining temperature, while losing bulk at the rate of 10 inches in diameter per diem. It will be 10 inches less thick to-morrow than it is to-day.

"However, our sun has nearly reached the limit of its increase in temperature, and before long it will begin to cool off. My belief is that within 800,000 years the solar orb, while considerably smaller than now, will be so hot that it will look decidedly blue, even as seen through the earth's atmosphere. Thereafter it will show signs of running down quite rapidly, and a tendency will soon follow, on the part of the human population of the earth, to huddle toward the equator.

"So well as we are able to perceive, mankind must be destroyed eventually by the progress of cold, and, in my opinion, the sun will not shine for more than 4,000,000 years longer. Originally, of course, it was a nebula, composed of cold particles, chiefly stony and widely scattered. These particles, gathering together by mutual attraction, formed a body, in which heat was engendered by the falling together of the particles composing it. Since then the progressive shrinking—i.e., falling together—of the particles has resulted in the emission of heat. It is about 32,000,000 years since the sun began to shine, and we may reasonably expect that it will give warmth enough to sustain life on the earth for 1,000,000 years to come. I do not think we can count upon a more extended survival for the human race.

"Hitherto an absurdly mistaken notion seems to have been accepted regarding the make-up of the sun, which has been supposed to be a homogeneous body, equal in density throughout. As a matter of fact, while its material is lighter than our own atmosphere on its surface, the interior is very much denser than the heaviest known substances that go to compose the earth. In fact, the solar orb, near its centre, is about three times as dense as mercury. As for the future of the sun, we may suppose that for a while, after cooling, it will become habitable by living forms, animal and vegetable; but these are not likely to be developed highly or to endure for any length of time, inasmuch as the mighty globe will have no external source of heat to depend upon.

"Sirius, as I have said, is a blue star. Beta is the beak of the constellation of the Swan, is a double sun, one of its members being pale yellow and the other deep blue. The fiery-red sun of Scorpio is linked with another one that is small and green. These double stars are true cosmic twins, and occasionally triplets appear. Castor, in Germini, is a pair of suns, each of which is larger than our orb of day, and it is believed that the greater of the two revolves around a third gigantic and invisible body, the presence of which is suggested by the swaying movements of the mighty luminary in question. Algol, the so-called demon star, has such a body revolving around it, shutting off its light so as to make it glare and fade at alternate intervals. I myself, as I have already said, have discovered a dozen great stars that are almost black, shining merely by reflected light from neighboring suns. What worlds they must be, to be sure, and how strange the forms of life which may be imagined to inhabit them.

"Alcyone, 1000 times as big as our sun, is in the constellation of Lyra, toward which the whole of our own solar system is moving. It may even be conceived as possible that our sun eventually will become a satellite of Vega's. But Arcturus, the king of suns, gives 5,000 times as much light as our sun—a statement which becomes impressive when it is consudered that our solar orb would, "cut up" into 1,250,000 pieces, each one as large as the earth on which we live. If, by the way, the sun were a solid block of anthracite coal, ignited in pure oxygen, it would burn out in 1,760 years.

"The atmosphere of the sun is supposed to be 5,000 miles deep, being composed of various gases and vapors of metals. As observed through the telescope, its surface is covered with minute white forms, apparently floating in an ocean of grayish fluid. These are clouds, composed not of water, but chiefly of carbon. Just as the electrician uses carbon for producing the brightest of artificial lights, so the sun employs the same agent in the manufacture of its transcendent light and heat. The sun-clouds are made up of drops of liquid carbon, which have a radience vastly exceeding the glow of the filament in an electric lamp. "When," as a famous astronomer says, "we remember that the entire surface of the huge luminary is coated with these clouds, every particle of which is thus intensely luminous, we need no longer wonder at the dazzling brightness which, even across the awful gulf of 93,000,000 miles, produces for us the inooneceivable glory of daylight."

"The greatest and most important invenion to be made in the next century will be a machine for storing the heat of the sun and transforming it into electricity or some other form suitable for ready employment. This heat, which is now permitted to go to waste, will be applied to the running of mills, the warming of houses, and every other purpose for which energy is utilized. It is worth mentioning in this connection that every square yard of the sun's surface emits an amount of heat equal to that of a blast furnace consuming one ton of coal every ten minutes. The heat given out by the solar globe in one second would raise 195,000,000 cubic miles of ice-cold water to boiling point, and of this heat the earth receives only one-two-millionth part."

CONSUL-GENERAL MISSING.

Left Vancouver For New York and Cannot Be Located.

A search is being made for Herr Schmucker, German consul-general at Shanghai, who arrived from the Orient on the Empress of Japan nearly two weeks ago, on his way to Europe. He left Vancouver on June 7 for New York, but had not reached his destination yesterday. He was to have sailed from New York on the Teutonic a few days ago. His non-arrival has caused his friends considerable uneasiness, and at their request the British consul at New York telegraphed Premier Semlin, asking for information about the German diplomat, if any were available. The Premier communicated with the C. P. R. officials, and received the answer that Herr Schmucker had proceeded East on June 7.

The only likely theory is that the consul changed his plans and is stopping somewhere en route, but it seems hardly probable that he would do this without communicating with his friends in New York.

ELEVEN WORKMEN BURNED.

St. Petersburg, June 15.—Eleven workmen wee burned to death yesterday in a fire that destroyed a dwelling house near Rybensk in the government of Yaroslav, European Russia.

There are many forms of nervous debility in men that yield to the use of Carter's Iron Pills. Those who are troubled with nervous weakness, night sweats, etc., should try them.

First Dawson Arrival.

Harry Morton Returns From a Short Sojourn in the Klondike.

Water Very Low in the Yukon Rivers—Steamers on Bars.

Harry Morton of this city, the second man to come out from Dawson this season, reached home last evening by the way of Vancouver, having come south on the steamer Cutch. He left Dawson on May 31 on the Canadian Development Company's steamer Columbia, which, according to later arrivals is a wreck in White Horse rapids, and had a rather rough trip out. Having heard on his way up the river of Mrs. Morton's illness, he left the steamer at the head of Lake Lebarge, where she was waiting for higher water, and made his way out as best he could, walking the greater part of the distance in mud and slush.

The water in the river, Mr. Morton says, is lower than it has been for years and the prospects of its rising are not bright, there being little or no snow along the banks or in the hills. At White Horse rapids it was two feet lower than the lowest water of former years and at Cariboo Crossing it was very shallow, the steamers Gleaner and either the Ora or the Nora, he could not remember which, were stuck fast there. The Thirty Mile river was in very bad shape, the water being low and the channel circuitous and narrow. The Willie Irving which attempted to go down with a load of sheep had to land her cargo to get off one bar and shortly afterwards she was on another. It was only by the most careful navigating that the Columbia got up as far as she did. The steamers of the Canadian Development Company, Mr. Morton says, are well fitted for ascending the river and besides there is the very best accommodation for passengers.

The hundreds of loaded scows and boats which started down the river were stalled at the foot of Marsh lake, their way being blocked by an ice jam five miles long across the entrance to the Fifty Mile river. Occasionally the would shift, allowing a few boats to pass but it was dangerous to make the attempt. They would also have considerable difficulty in shooting White Horse rapids on account of the low state of the water. However, Norman Macaulay has extended his tramway and built good wharves at either end, enabling him to handle 110 tons in every twenty-four hours. No doubt many will chose this way of taking their freight down in preference to running the risk of losing it in the rapids.

The loss by the last big fire in Dawson, Mr. Morton says, reached $700,000 but it will not take long to rebuild the burned district, work having been commenced on the new buildings before the ashes were cool. There is plenty of lumber and the price was not raised one cent in consequence of the fire. Seven mills are at work cutting lumber and are capable of turning out 250,000 feet a day. The price was $150 a thousand for rough and $200 for dressed lumber, but there was prospect of a reduction. There is a scarcity, however, of window glass, sashes and doors and a cargo of horse feed would make the owner rich. As high as $500 a ton was paid for hay during the winter and $300 was paid far hay grown along the Yukon, which is not of much use as feed. Oats were also very high and many owners of horses killed them for dog meat in preference to feeding them during the winter.

The output of the Klondike, Mr. Morton says, will be between eighteen and twenty million dollars. Just before leaving he visited the various creeks and saw the start of the clean-up. It was very late this year, in some cases steam thawing machines having to be used on the dumps. Eldorado appears as rich as ever; the Bonanza hillsides are turning out well; Dominion between the two discoveries has proved to be very rich; Sulphur is looking good and the benches on the left limit of Hunker are rich. Gold Botton, Gold Run and Eureka are also good, there having been a stampede to the latter creek recently. A lot of summer work will be done on all creeks. Very little dust will be brought up by the individual miners this year, as the banks will now handle it on very small commission, making it cheaper to send it out through them.

Of the Victorians Jack Burgess and the former Truck and Dray Company's drivers have done well on a lay on Dominion; Pat Smith and M. Conlin have struck it rich on the same creek, Conlin besides having other interests in the country; Herbert Macaulay has a good claim on the Senator, a pup of the Eldorado; Tom Hinton is taking out a little fortune on Gold Hill and Frank Cryderman is still pegging away at his claim.

Quite a change has come over Dawson. A reform has been worked in the gold commissioner's office by Mr. Senkler and there as well as at the postoffice everybody is civilly treated and receive all the information the officials can give.

Asked as to the statement that a band of highwaymen had been organized to intercept miners coming out with dust, Mr. Morton smiled. "There are lots of tough characters there," he said, "but there is an object lesson to keep them under control. It is a never decreasing woodpile. The sentences imposed also act as a check, one man, Moss, a prizefighter, having been sentenced to fifteen years for robbing caches."

A miner on Dominion creek, whose name Mr. Morton could not remember, stated that he had been held up and relieved of $11,000.

THE ARION CLUB.

Third Concert of the Season Heard with Pleasure by Large Audience.

The third concert of the seventh season of the Arion Club was given last evening in the Institute hall to an audience which completely filled the large auditorium. This is the first appearance of this club under the exclusive direction of Mr. E. H. Russell, who has led its work since its talented director, Mr. William Greig, has been ill. Mr. Russell deserves very warm congratulations upon the masterly manner in which he fills the position. The club was assisted by Miss Powell, who gave the balcony scene from "Romeo and Juliet" in a very graceful and pleasing manner, but she has, unfortunately for those in the rear of the hall, not quite gauged the acoustic demands of the building and she was at times almost inaudible to many. Those who were better situated found her conception of the character and her rendition of the lines very satisfactory. Her voice is musical and her gestures easy and natural. Mr. Henry Strauss contributed two numbers in a manner that elicited very hearty applause and a deserved encore. Miss Corisande Powell, piano; Dr. Nash, violin; Mr. B. J. Bantly, violin; Mr. E. A. Powell, viola; Mr. A. Pafitt, violoncello and Mr. G. Pauline, organ, gave two numbers, of which the scherzo was much the best rendered, although not so pleasing a composition as the allegro. The club gave McFarren's "Windlass Song," Billeta's "Adieu," Foote's "Farewell of Hiawatha" with a baritone solo by Mr. H. Kent, Blumenthal's "What care I how fair she be," Buck's "In Memoriam," Catenhausen's "Old German Love Song," Neidlinger's "Hush," Sullivan's "Lost Chord," and the Pilgrims' Chorus from "Tannhauser." Of these the "Farewell" was perhaps the choice of the audience, although the last verse of the Pilgrims' Chorus has not been surpassed by any chorus singing in Victoria. The effect was greatly enhanced by the strong accompaniment. The soloists were Mr. A. T. Goward, who sang Beschnitt's "Serenade" and Mr. H. J. Cave, who gave Storch's "Love." Both were in good voice and sang in their usual good form, receiving hearty encores.

PHILHARMONIC CONCERT.

Musical Season to Be Closed on Thursday Evening Next.

On Thursday evening next the Philharmonic Society will close the musical season with an orchestral concert in the Institute hall, the third for the season. While few changes have been made in the composition of the orchestra since its last appearance in March, the introduction of an oboe among the wood-wind has been brought about, adding a much-needed and rarely heard instrument to the orchestral balance. Those who attended the recent performances of "Robin Hood" were united in according unlimited praise to the work accomplished by the Philharmonic orchestra, both in the performance of the overture and in the accompaniments generally. Steady progress has been the watchword of the Philharmonic Society since its organization last year, and it is expected that on the forthcoming occasion a still greater improvement will be noticeable.

Among the soloists may be mentioned Mrs. W. E. Green, the well-known soprano, who will sing Bohm's "Calm as the Night," and Cowen's "Swallows;" Mrs. Walsh-Windle, who will play Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto with the full orchestra; and Mr. James Pilling, the popular tenor, who will be heard in the dashing "Creole Love Song," by E. B. Smith.

The orchestra will be responsible for Mozart's Hochzeit overture, Massenet's Angelus and Air de Ballet, a grand selection from Rigoletto, and Kretschner's Coronation March from Folkhunger.

Associate members of the Philharmonic Society are requested to reserve their seats without fail on or before Tuesday next, after which date the box-plan will be offered the public. The final rehearsal will take place in the Institute hall to-morrow evening at 7:45 o'clock sharp.

Dyea Not Abandoned.—The local representatives of Messrs. Dodwell & Co., agents for the Chikoot Railway & Transport Co., yesterday received a despatch from the head office at Tacoma stating that the United States government had decided not to withdraw the collector of customs from the port of Dyea, as published. The C. R. & T. Co. are bonded carriers, and goods going over their tram can be bonded through from Victoria to Atlin and the Northwest Territories. The only change made is that the shipper must state before his shipment leaves here what route it is to take. A Canadian customs station will be maintained at Lake Linderman, as well as at Log Cabin.

William Munsie has left for Dawson. L. J. Boscowitz was a passenger from Vancouver last evening.

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