

PIONEERS OF THE UPPER YUKON.

One Transportation Company Which is a Success From the Start.

Handled the Bulk of the Up-River Traffic—Vast Improvements in Contemplation—Larger and More Powerful Boats to Be Built.

The B. L. & K. N. Company are just closing a season of enterprise and daring energy which has been crowned with success from the day the first of their three boats was launched in Lake Bennett. Last winter the North American continent was swamped with a multitude of transportation schemes. There were balloon schemes, steam ice sleds, reindeer transportation companies and steamboat lines by way of St. Michaels, till you couldn't rest. But in Victoria live people in possession of practical information of the upper Yukon and its lakes, so that while vast sums were being subscribed for railroads, all-Canadian routes, all-American routes, etc., Mr. F. M. Rattenbury quietly organized a company to operate on the upper river and contributed heavily himself.

All the transportation schemes hatched last winter none have proved the unqualified success of the B. L. & K. N. It was known that boats could not ascend the White Horse rapids, and again it was supposed to be impossible to take a steamer up Five Fingers, so the company adopted the plans of Mr. Rattenbury and decided upon building three boats with transfer of freight and passengers at the two points mentioned. The company obtained a timber grant at the mouth of the Wheaton river, 20 miles from Bennett and first put in a sawmill—the machinery for the mill and three steamers being hauled over the icy Skaguay trail.

The gallant little steamer Ora, under the able command of Captain Ritchie made the first successful trip from Bennett to Dawson and back to White Horse and then transferred to the Flora for Bennett, making the time of the first complete round trip, Bennett to Bennett, in less than nine days. The captain found that it was possible to climb the Five Fingers at any stage of the river by use of cables, and without any extraneous aid for the greater part of the summer. Thus it has happened that the Ora and Flora have completed the seventeenth trip from Dawson, connecting with the Nora at White Horse and taking out of the country some 1500 people and bringing in about 700. As for freight, the amount handled from the first trip to the last has been limited only by the capacity of the boats. The company is at present besieged with contracts for next season, both for passage and freight and right now could book all the company could handle for a number of the first trips of 1899.

It is seldom transportation companies have such a run of unparalleled good luck right from the inception. Not an accident of importance mar the season's success. One reason of it all is the disposition of the company to spare no expense in securing the wisest and best rated men to handle the boats. Captain Ritchie, master of navigation and captain of the Ora, is a phenomenal water man and has charted thirty-mile river after the fashion of a government chart, for use in the low water of next spring. Every rock, sand bar and hidden danger is correctly marked and it is the intention of this enterprising company to be navigating the river next year from the foot of LeBarge to Dawson long before the ice leaves the lakes.

Mr. H. Temple Fall, who has managed the Dawson end of the line for the past summer, has done much to popularize that line. Contracts made either in Victoria or Dawson have been carried out with such perfect good faith that the Bennett Lake & Klondike Navigation company is now regarded as standard and reliable as the C. P. R. or other great lines. Such public approval can only follow conscientious and able management.

The bringing of the Ora and Flora through Miles Canyon was a critical time for the company. Dixon, the famous police pilot, was secured and given carte blanche for what help he needed. Green logs were securely fastened along the guard rails and into the foaming chasm went the Ora. Should her nose strike in an angle of one wall the stern would swing and jamb against the other and in an instant the rushing torrent would tear her plank from plank. However, she went through like a charm, merely skinning the bark from the logs on one side. It was the occasion for much cheering and self-congratulation when the company found itself with one boat below the rapids. Then the Flora made the run, and with two boats below and one above, the company has been enabled to give uninterrupted service all summer.

Mr. F. M. Rattenbury, the head of the company, is a gentleman who came into prominence some time ago as the architect of the famous government buildings lately completed in Victoria. Another large stockholder is manager Gallotly, of the Victoria Bank of Montreal. The company has made the most distinctive success of any "cheecharko" company organized last winter, and intends to fully keep pace with the transpiring events. The plans for the coming summer of 1899 includes the building of two and probably three large steamers, which will be built with a special view to securing great power and speed. The two mile round trip from Dawson to White Horse and back will be made, if power can do it, every seven days, while the hundred-mile trip from the Canyon to Bennett will be made from ten to seven hours.

The company is now firmly established in the public mind as permanent and efficient,

and as the pioneers of upper river transportation are certainly deserving of every commendation for their enterprising and courageous opening of rapid transportation and transit over courses until this year deemed practically impassable to anything but canoes and small boats.

Much of the successful summer's work in the upper river is due to the great river skill and popularity of Captain Ritchie and Captain Martineau.

From the genial Captain Jack Rattenbury brother of President F. M. Rattenbury, we learn of the intended last trip of the Ora. She will once more make the ascent of the river unless prevented by a combination of the elements. Other boats have been laid up in winter quarters for a month, but "fortune favors the brave" and nature is kind enough to leave the river open and free for weeks beyond the time navigation usually becomes impossible.

THINGS THAT ARE A NEW FAKE

DOE BAY, Wash., Sept. 15.—James Kent, of this place, met with a peculiar form of confidence man while operating a pack train near Skaguay last spring. He had noticed a little sore on his hip for some time, but paid little attention to it until one day a man approached him and told him he had a cancer, sure, and that his friend had just recovered from having one removed by an eminent Cincinnati surgeon who was going in to start a hospital in Dawson. The next day the man returned and brought with him the doctor, who showed a card with "Professor of Official Surgery" in some college in Cincinnati printed on it. Mr. Kent was induced to have some medicine injected into his hip to cure the cancer, but was told that if the cancer had gone too far it would have to be cut out. They also left some of the same medicine to rub on the hip. In three days the hip was so sore and swollen that he started for the hospital in Skaguay, but meeting the doctor, he was told that he could not live if the "cancer" was not cut out immediately, which he had done. He was laid up for two weeks, during which time he was requested to pay a fee of \$1,000. He finally settled for \$300, and saw no more of the doctor.

AS SOON, however, as he could get around, he went down to Victoria, where he went to the hospital. He was assured that no cancer had existed, and having the bottle of medicine with him, it was tested and found to be the juice of leaves from an evergreen tree, used by quacks for causing a simple sore to look like a cancer, after which it can be cured for a big fee, "no cure, no pay." It was also tested on a dog from the pound, and caused what the doctor called "beautiful bogus cancers" after a few days, the dog dying in a week.

Mr. Kent is well, but very badly disgraced and out \$300, beside his time and the anxiety of a lingering death from cancer. He was told of two other men victimized in the same way, the steerer approaching the man first and the "doctor" later. In each case the medicine was injected first, and then the person becoming so much worse that he would pay all he could raise to get relief from what he supposed was a cancer. One man paid the full \$1,000.

As many persons have cracked tips in that country, this cancer fakir is, perhaps reaping a harvest in Dawson. Anyone going in should take warning.

Threats of What is to Come.

Hardly a day passes without a threat of fire in one or more of our defenseless buildings. Wednesday morning about 9:30 the roof of the Fairview hotel was discovered to be on fire and a crowd gathered to watch employees clambering over the roof and trying to stamp it out with their feet. Fortunately the fire did not secure such a hold but a few pails of water put it out. Dawson will just as surely be wiped out by fire unless something is done in the way of fire protection as that the river will freeze up this winter but for a miraculous intervention of providence. The fire was occasioned by sparks from a low smoke stack.

Tuesday morning George Ward, asleep in one of the rooms of the Northern, was awakened by the voices of persons inquiring from one another if they could not smell fire. At last he roused up sufficiently to see that it was the canvas lined ceiling of his own room which was on fire. Fortunately it had not secured much of a hold and was easily subdued without damage.

The "Housewarming."

Wednesday night was an "O be joyful" occasion at the housewarming of the Opera House, hotel given by Miss Helen Holden. Several hundreds of our citizens participated during the evening and "joy was unconfined." Dancing was indulged in with frequent pauses for refreshment, and interspersed with numerous songs from Jack Black, the king of male sopranos, Fred Breen in improvisations and original songs, and a graceful Mexican dancer by one of the ladies.

The reception and retiring rooms are handsomely furnished and finished with walls decorated by elegant paper hangings, set off by crystal mirrors and pretty pictures. The refreshments were served to all and were of dishes dear to the heart of the French, chef-salads of chicken and such things most savory to the Klondike palate and served on sparkling silver galore. The hostess was much in evidence and introductions were the order of the hour. It was an occasion long to be remembered by all and its popularity and success promises much for the future.

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WETHERLY NOT A CONCESSIONAIRE.

No Re-Lease of the Water Front Says Commissioner Ogilvie.

The Miners' Association and Mr. Ogilvie Compare Notes—Didn't Know Royalty Was Being Charged—Miners on Fire-Wood.

A most important session was that on Wednesday afternoon between the committee of the Miners' Association and the Hon. Wm. Ogilvie, Yukon Commissioner. The meeting was by appointment and no time at all was wasted in preliminaries. Mr. Ogilvie was apprised by the committee that they were directed by the Miners' Association to request of him, if possible, that the two vacancies in the Yukon Council be filled from the ranks of the Yukon miners and by elective choice of the people. Mr. Ogilvie replied that the law which authorized him to appoint men to fill the vacancies was an act of parliament and would not admit of the vacancies being filled by election. However he intended that representative men should shortly be appointed and to that end purposed consulting with the miners before making his choice.

The committee was assured by Mr. Ogilvie he had been altogether misquoted in regard to the water-front matter. The occupation of the water-front by store buildings he declared to be wrong on principle and opposed to the intention of the law reserving that strip from settlement. He positively would refuse to sanction a re-lease of any of the ground for any such purpose. Further, he would shortly issue a warning to all of the occupants of the strip that he would endanger their lives and property if they remained until the break-up, for he believed that it would make nearly a clean sweep of everything there. He would not, under any circumstances give his sanction to renewals. Knowing the river from years of residence along its shore he believed it his duty to warn the people on the strip that they might not only realize they were running chances on their own lives but also the lives of the people who should happen to be doing business with them at the time the buildings might collapse. The government will issue no written nor verbal permit for the occupation of the water-front by places of business.

Mr. Ogilvie was asked concerning the privileges given by Postmaster Harper to one Col. Wetherly, whereby the colonel was empowered to sort out of the government mail letters for his clients who were supposed to pay him upwards of \$5 per month for the service. Mr. Ogilvie assured the committee that he had righted this wrong soon after his arrival in Dawson by cancelling all agreements of that nature which had been entered into by Postmaster Harper prior to his arrival. The allowing of private access to the mails to any individuals whatever other than the regular employes was a wrong he could not allow. Col. Wetherly had no more rights at that postoffice than anyone else of the thousands of citizens of Dawson. If people were still continuing to pay Wetherly for services he could not perform they were fools and it was their own lookout. None but employes were allowed to handle the mail and no more privileges were given the colonel than any other citizen. If the colonel or anyone else presented properly signed orders on the mail clerks for the mail of people up the creek it would be given, but no quicker to one than to another—at least he didn't know of any favoritism and if such existed would like to be advised of it.

Mr. Ogilvie was then asked for the removal of Messrs. Fawcett, Bolton and Craig from the office of the gold commissioner. The inefficiency of Thomas Fawcett was dwelt upon at length and Messrs. Bolton and Craig were accused of working entirely in their own interests and contrary to the public good. The characters of the three men were overhauled somewhat severely and stories were told illustrative of the peculiar qualities of the gentlemen upon whom we are all so dependent for the services of the office they occupy. Mr. Ogilvie sprang the old chestnut about the known integrity of the gold commissioner and said that gentleman was not at all desirous of overstaying the two years for which he had been engaged; in fact that even now was perfectly willing to abdicate but for the various charges which were being made against him. Without an investigation, clearing them up one way or the other he did not care to quit. As for Bolton and Craig, if they were guilty of accepting money as stated, let affidavits be prepared to that effect and he (Mr. Ogilvie) would promptly take action. He did not see his way clear to act against the men without definite sworn statements to work upon. However, there are impending changes which he believed would be quite satisfactory to the miners of the Klondike.

The committee further called Mr. Ogilvie's attention to the matter of the wood monopoly and the collection of fees on every cord of wood used for fuel by the free miners of Dawson. Mr. Ogilvie expressed his surprise that royalty was being collected from men who held free miners' certificates and appeared to have been under the impression that royalty was only being paid on wood cut for sale.

The proposed mining exhibition of Yukon products at the Mine Exhibit in London next year was touched upon and Mr. Ogilvie expressed himself highly in favor of this section being represented there. He thought the government should take a hold of it and make a creditable display and should get every assistance possible from the miners.

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