

# The Klondike Nugget

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 1898

### THE KLONDIKE CITY AFFAIR

A number of the inhabitants of Klondike City have called at the Recorder office to recite their grievances anent the recent survey of the Klondike City flat, the prices asked the squatters for their own lots and the summary order that they could either pay up at once or get off the ground. The ground was surveyed Crown lands until a couple of weeks ago and the majority of the squatters had first sought the then two highest authorities at this place and had been advised to "go ahead and build if you want to; your squatter's rights will be respected and in time to come you will be assessed a merely nominal sum to defray the cost of the survey." The survey has now been made and the prices of occupied lots vary from \$100 to \$600. What is more, the discontented cabin dwellers are calmly informed that "they have no squatters' rights" as there is no such thing in the whole land.

The Nugget is in sympathy with its practically dispossessed subscribers of Klondike City and will endeavor to make their true standing plain. Legally there are no squatters' rights in any of the territories; that is to say there is no act of Parliament or constitutional provision which gives the squatter any claim on land which he may even have occupied and improved for a lifetime. Morally and by well established precedent the squatter has been decided to practically own the land he occupies. The history of the North West Territories has been a continual history of the attempted dispossession of squatters by understrappers of the government, the resistance (sometimes aroused) of the settlers, and their final recognition by the government. Not a settlement but has its own history on this matter, and every contest establishing a precedent for our Klondike City friends. What is more, the government has even recognized the purchaser of squatters' rights—that is to say individuals who were not squatters themselves but had bought out some one that was.

Here is the situation in a nutshell. Our squatters have well substantiated the fact that a hardship is being worked upon them. Many of them were on poor "lays" last winter and at the present time have barely enough dust in their possession to pay for the lot they occupy. If they pay for the lot they will not have a cent left to lay in their winter's supply. Some of the squatters are well able to pay the assessment but feel outraged that they are being compelled to buy what they already thought they possessed. The Nugget has been appealed to so often, for advice and encouragement, that it here outlines a course which will undoubtedly result in the end in the squatters getting their rights. Let them organize themselves at once and make an assessment of say \$15 apiece. Twenty men will thus raise \$300. This will secure the services of a good Canadian lawyer, (an American would do as well but he can't practice in Canadian courts) who will immediately stop anything like summary ejection. The case could then be properly presented at Ottawa with the undoubted result that the squatters would eventually be confirmed in their rights.

The armed resistance made by squatters in other territories we cannot for a

moment countenance in the Yukon district. All such talk must be dropped at once. The whole townsite in question is hardly worth the sacrifice of a single human life. Sixteen thousand dollars buys the whole seven blocks. But every man of British extraction knows that never yet was right so secure that resistance to wrong and oppression was not a crying and ever present need. An intolerance of imposition is an attribute of our race. We have become great because of our keen sense of right and intolerance of wrong. Whether it is a matter of a million-dollar townsite as at Edmonson or a handful of dispossessed miners at Klondike City, the principle involved is the same. The famous proverb might easily be transposed to read: "Eternal resistance to wrong is the price of liberty."

### THE FIRE SITUATION

The city of Dawson is growing faster probably than any city in the North West Territory ever grew. It must be admitted that the most of the buildings going up are of an exceedingly transitory character, being simply skeleton frames with canvas coverings; yet, nevertheless, with the erection of every one of the new buildings there is an ever increasing danger of disaster by fire. There is now an almost unbroken line of buildings on each side of Front street for half its length. That a third of the buildings are not destined to become permanent structures, but adds to the danger of the situation. For every tent or wooden building that goes up, there is a stove—or else there will be very shortly. Every stove has its stovepipe reaching above and through the roof. It is in these stovepipes that the chief danger to Dawson lays of disaster by fire. No bricks can be obtained for building necessary chimneys and the nearest line for cement is up the Stewart river. The weather is warm, yet the ordinary fires used in cooking have easily demonstrated the danger. Canvas roofs are to be found perforated in a thousand places from sparks. In dozens of cases the stovepipe is not surrounded even by the usual tin protections and the canvas lies snugly against the stovepipe. Nor is it alone in the canvas buildings that risk is incurred. In the more substantial structures the roofs are all moss-covered. The moss becomes dry as tinder and inflammable as punk. Sparks from above, or ignition from contact, have already been known to cause mysterious fires.

For a few months in the year we have an ample supply of water near at hand and hope soon to have an abundance of the usual appliances for handling it. For the balance of the year the use of water is forbidden by natural conditions which tie up the water in unavailable chunks, the only liquids being the whiskey, which would add but fuel to the flames, and what little water is kept immediately around the stoves. Still there is much that could be done to lessen the dangers of a clean sweep by fire. Under a municipal form of government there would have been already appointed a body of inspectors who would exercise a rigid censorship of all buildings and stoves. At every point where stovepipes pass near the building, suitable non-combustible material would have to be used, and many of those smoke conveyors which are now emitting a shower of glowing sparks would be muzzled by spark-arresters of wire-netting.

### THE HARDER TASK TO COME

The end of the Spanish-American war is already in sight. In fact there has been no doubt as to the final result at any time since the war began. Spanish poverty and sluggishness are no match for American wealth and energy and hence the issue of the war has been unquestioned almost from the beginning.

It will not be an exceedingly difficult task for America to defeat the Spaniards. Her hardest task will begin when the war is at an end. Whether a home government is organized for Cuba, or the island shall be actually annexed as one of the United States, the latter government will be held morally responsible by the civilized world for the preservation of law and order in Cuba. We do not

apprehend that any great effort will be made on the part of the United States to secure possession of the island, rich though she be. The war was entered upon in defence of the highest of ethical principles, and should it result in America taking possession of Cuba, the impression would go abroad that the war instead of being carried on for the sake of principle, had degenerated into a contest for the acquisition of territory. Hence it may be expected that in so far as Cuba is concerned the United States will interest itself only to the extent of establishing a strong and centralized government composed of the Cubans themselves.

But this task will prove an exceedingly onerous one. The population of Cuba is of such a mixed character and the interests of the inhabitants are so diversified that it will be a matter of the utmost difficulty to frame a constitution or code of laws satisfactory to a majority of the people. Again, though the Spanish army will be driven out, the Spanish influence, a growth of centuries, will still remain and it may well be supposed that whatever obstacles the Spaniards who elect to stay in Cuba can secretly throw in the pathway of the new government, will be freely and cheerfully thrown. Also, it remains yet to be determined just to what extent the Cubans will be capable of ruling themselves. If they prove no better than the average of the Central Americans it will scarcely be safe to entrust the reins of government entirely in their hands. Altogether, we are inclined to think as stated above that Uncle Sam will find his task only begun when the last Spanish ship has been sunk and the last Spanish battery silenced.

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DAWSON CITY, Mo.

The Monte Ca agreement of the Bill Gates; the to our outside There had been tween them, and name had been a arrangements ar place, which is r was doing a good

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A New T. W. Allenby is a new contrivan There have been the market for frozen grapes, b singularly unste tigated method in the shaft or fu had burned out a moving what Art has not been inq The time lost in a and the smoke to summer, in sup