

## MR. OGILVIE TO THE COUNCIL

What He Said in Reply to Mr. Dugas' Resolution.

Condensed Resume of Doings of the Council During His Administration—Difficulties Encountered.

In response to the testimonial tendered by all the members of the Yukon council to the retiring commissioner, Hon. William Ogilvie, at Thursday night's meeting of that body, which testimonial was published in the Daily Nugget of yesterday, Mr. Ogilvie said: "I had intended to make some extended remarks this evening. I feel somewhat affected by your kindly reference to myself, and I assure you I appreciate the resolutions which have passed, and the remarks which Mr. Justice Dugas has made. I want to say that I fully recognize your feelings in the matter and recognize that we can all sympathize with one another in what we all have been striving to do since coming to the territory. I will not make any reference to any outside act of any one. I will not make any reflection on anybody now that I am retiring, but I would like to make a few remarks to the members of the council, and say that I wish first of all to express my extreme appreciation of the efforts of the council as it was originally constituted in this territory, to better the conditions here. The first council was, as everyone knows, appointed by the government at Ottawa. When we arrived here in September, 1898, we found things, I may say—using the word in a qualified sense—in a most deplorable condition; the streets of Dawson were quagmires; there were no roads to the mines; the postoffice service, to put it mildly, was very inefficient; there was no public building; the two hospitals limited in capacity were overcrowded; the sick were lying in tents and cabins around Dawson, and some scenes in my office almost bring the tears to my eyes when I think of them; yet, men on their knees begging me for God's sake to do something for them. The Yukon council had no means, the only source of revenues were the fines; we could not touch a dollar of federal money; none of the money received from Dominion lands, timber and mines was ours. My predecessor could use that money; that right was taken away when I assumed office. The public here believed that I had the right to use this money, and because I did not I was criticised very often for not taking money belonging to the Dominion of Canada and appropriating it to local use. Ottawa was far away; the ministers were busy; I do not lay any charge at their door, for it was practically impossible to reach them. They were unaware of the conditions; they could not understand them; what we suffered they could not feel at all. We were able to extend but little relief to strained conditions, as we had only the money from fines and whisky permits, the latter of which I was fortunate enough to issue freely. Thus we were in a dilemma. We could not apply any of that money to benefit the public in any other way except to look after the sick. Roads were required, miners were praying for their construction; it took every dollar we could raise and we had not any other way to look for more to maintain the hospitals and care for the sick. I remember on one occasion we seriously thought of imposing a hospital tax, but our then acting legal adviser, Mr. Justice Dugas (Mr. Clement not having arrived) was firmly of the impression that under the Yukon territorial act we could not impose any tax whatever. The matter was discussed at great length as to whether we should raise a tax for the benefit of the hospitals and care of the sick, but it was felt that we could not legally do it. The public feeling was already expressed so much that it would have been impolitic to have done so. How we got through that winter I scarcely know; even now it seems to me like a nightmare when I think of it. The work of the council was reflected in the work of the commissioner especially on account of not more being done. The public had the feeling that the commissioner was a sort of automaton. If they had been in our place for six months I think they would have been a little more charitable, if not altogether silent in the matter. During the winter our means accumulated to a certain extent, and having made acceptance and representations to the Ottawa conditions of things here, I assumed the commissioner that we would be relieved from that quarter. I repeatedly

asked the minister of the interior for assistance, as under the Yukon act he alone was presumed to bear the responsibility of the administration of the affairs of this territory. The other ministers did not take this view; the result was that instead of one man being responsible, several men were responsible. I made requests for money to ameliorate conditions here, and the sum of \$175,000 was granted for the building of trails. This money was placed in the hands of a man entirely irresponsible to the local government. Unfortunately for this vicinity he did not take the view he should have taken, and spent the great bulk of that money in the south end of the territory. I am not reflecting on that act, but I think that this Klondike area should have been considered in the distribution of this money. It is this area that has made the Yukon territory world famous, and should have received some consideration. Be that as it may, the members of the council were utterly powerless in the matter. I, as commissioner was not notified that one dollar was voted for that purpose; was not notified that Mr. Charleson was coming in to expend that money and did not know what he was going to do until it was expended. Under these conditions I brought the matter to the attention of the local council at that time consisting only of Mr. Justice Dugas, Col. Steele and myself (Mr. Clement and Mr. Girouard being absent). I wish now to bear testimony heartily and emphatically to the hearty assistance of Mr. Justice Dugas in every project pertaining to the development or advancement of the country. I always found, when I proposed anything, he simply asked, 'Do you believe it will be for the public benefit?' and when I said yes he assented, and that was invariably Mr. Justice Dugas' course. In any thing that he originated we took the same course, because we had only one motive. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, outside this council chamber, we had only one motive and that was to benefit the territory. We tried our best to bring about better conditions. That we succeeded at last I think we can justly claim, notwithstanding anything that can be said to the contrary outside of the council chamber or any view held by the public. I think that the Yukon council can claim the lion's share of the credit for the better conditions which exist today. In saying this I believe I know what I am speaking of, and every member of the Yukon council knows that we have tried to bring about a better condition of affairs. Officially, June last we forwarded a memorandum to Ottawa, which I had the honor of framing, signed by all members of the council except one, and although he did not sign it for certain reasons which I need not mention, he stated that on his visit to Ottawa he would advocate the changes asked for. That memorandum contained the gist of what was put into a future memorandum prepared by a committee of the council after the two newly elected members had taken their seats. Two members of the council went out to Ottawa about that time and had the pleasure of discussing the memorandum with the minister of the interior and I believe received assurances from him that it would receive serious consideration.

"During the summer of 1899 two members of parliament came to this country. I discussed the condition of affairs at great length with them and pointed out to them the wants of this country, and we understood that they would use their utmost endeavor to bring about improvements. Our suggestions to them were not reduced to writing, and we are not in a position to say whether they failed or succeeded. They gave their opinions, I believe, to the minister in conferences with him, and I have no doubt but that their recommendations helped to bring about the results which have been attained.

"Late in the summer of 1899, as I before stated, when we gave up hope of federal aid in road building here the local council took action. The council at that time consisted of Justice Dugas, Col. Steele and myself, other members being absent. Justice Dugas proposed an ordinance authorizing the commissioner to borrow the sum of \$100,000 on the Yukon territorial responsibilities entirely, in the construction of roads. A great deal of discussion was given as to where these roads should be. Deputations from certain creeks wanted them in one place, deputations from other creeks wanted them in others. The \$100,000 would hardly begin to build the amount of roads considered necessary. The result was that we were driven to make a compromise and built the ridge road, tapping the creeks as far as possible, thus benefiting the greatest possible number with the means at hand, which

would not have been done if we had spent the money on one creek. That I am sorry to say met with some hostile criticism, but it was the only thing we could do.

"The question of the bridge across the Klondike was in the same predicament—was referred to the Yukon council with the result that the commissioner was authorized to proceed at once with the procuring of the material to make the bridge and the construction of a road to it. The selection of the site was left to the commissioner. This site was approved of by both the engineers of the department of public works and our resident engineer. A petition was presented against it and I am very sorry that my view of the public interest clashed with that of the petitioners. I regret that perhaps more than the petitioners. Yet I felt that I was in the position of a trustee of public money, and I felt that I would be unwarranted in spending \$75,000 more or less to benefit a very small community proportionately to Dawson. I think there is only 20 acres of ground in Klondike City, and what we wanted was a bridge from the mart to the mines—the shortest possible distance at the least possible expense to serve the greatest number of interests, and I think that these are all embraced in the present bridge, which has just been completed. I wish again to emphasize the remark I have made that the council always had only one object. They differed at times in their views; if they had not they would not have been human; but we wanted to get to the same point, and to a large extent we have succeeded.

"Mr. Ross, my successor, assumes office tomorrow. I feel that in him the territory has secured an experienced legislator, a man accustomed to new conditions in the Northwest territories, and will render to the council and territory invaluable service. More especially as he has to deal with improved conditions. He will reap to a certain extent—and I use the words respectfully—the benefit of what we have done. A great many things have been settled. Many difficulties have been met and disposed of. But there are others that will arise and I feel assured that in Mr. Ross you will find that experience, that judgment, that practical mindedness that will help materially to carry on the legislative work of this country, in a most effective and efficient manner.

"I wish to thank you very kindly for your remarks towards me, and assure you that I appreciate them as fully as a man can. In saying that, everybody knows what I mean, and I will appreciate them while I live.

"I have not considered what my future course will be. I have been made a most flattering offer by the minister of the interior—a very responsible position, and a position that will bring me before the people of this continent. I may accept it and I may not. I may return to the Yukon in a private capacity. But I must say this: No matter where I may be, no matter what my position may be, I will always take the most lively interest in this territory.

"My advent into this country was in 1885, to mark the boundary line. This brought me into some notoriety. My return in 1895 and my stay in 1896 and 1897, brought me more into notice in connection with the mines here. In my report in 1899 (and I do not wish to be egotistical) on my work in the territory, I find I expressed the opinion that where so much gold was so widely scattered, even in small quantities as it was then found, that there could not fail to be in one section, and maybe in several, such quantities of gold as to startle the world. My prediction has been verified in the discovery of the Klondike, and I believe that there will be others.

"Quartz has not been discovered in paying quantities, so far. We have found nothing yet which will warrant the assertion that any extensive quartz mining will be done in this territory. But I wish to point out that at Whitehorse there are extensive copper mines, and the same series of copper lodes run to the head of the Tanana, and I wish to call attention to the idea that in all probability we will find there other metaliferous lodes. Some of them likely gold, silver or other metals, and in that region I feel confident that we will find something that will insure the permanency of the Yukon region as a mining camp for generations, and I sincerely hope something will be seen in the vicinity of Dawson to assure us of the same future.

"The placer mining work now in view in Dawson and vicinity will last not less than 20 years. If we find gold bearing quartz of sufficient value (we have lots of low grade) Dawson is here for generations.

"Thanking you for your kindly expression of feeling towards me and your patience with my rambling remarks, and assuring you that whenever I am I will think of the members of the Yukon council with the greatest kindness and consideration, owing to the trials we had to bear and what we had to go through together.

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