

EVOLUTION OF RIVAL TOWNS

Weaker Absorbs Stronger Within a Period of Two Years.

At One Time Chilkoot Was the Only Feasible Route to the Interior—Dyea's Departed Glory.

[From Tuesday's Daily.] Probably the greatest business evolution ever witnessed in once rival towns has taken place in the history of Dyea and Skagway within the past two years. The rivalry between the points was principally as to the merits of their respective trails and passes to and over the summit; and it must be confessed that for a long time Dyea got the trade and Skagway the unenviable reputation of being the most pestilential as well as the "wickedest town on earth." The steamer on which the writer came to Alaska 25 months ago carried 76 passengers from the Sound and of that number the scribe and one other passenger stopped at Skagway, the other 74 going on to Dyea; and had the other two been intending to push on to the interior the human cargo of that steamer would have doubtless been unanimous for Dyea.

During all that summer and until the advent of the railroad to Skagway, the majority of the traffic from salt water to the interior was over the Chilkoot, on which many thousands of dollars had been expended in the erection of an aerial tramway system which was then considered sufficient to forever keep Dyea to the front and constitute her the one and only gateway to the interior. But to Skagway the railroad was as the star of Bethlehem. In a short time the entire business of Dyea was absorbed and she became as a deserted village of the plain; and her death knell was doubly sounded a few months ago when the railroad company purchased her only remaining hope, the tramway. A late Skagway paper says:

"All that remains of the once magnificent system of tramways over the Chilkoot pass now lies in a heap in a warehouse of the White Pass railroad in the north end of Skagway. The work of taking down the tramway was begun February 1st, and now there are no signs on the pass of the former transportation system but a few vacant buildings and the insignificant scars where the braces were bolted to the mountains. Included in the material that was a part of the tramway system are 45 miles of cable, three steam engines and one gasoline engine. There were three tramways in this system originally, one of them eight miles long, one a mile long and the third 3000 feet long. Two and sometimes more strands of cable were employed in each system, thus increasing the mileage of cable.

Gets What He Wants. "We get a good deal of business from wealthy natives of South and Central America," said a clerk in a large clothing and furniture store, "and there is one rather amusing feature in that class of trade. The average Latin American gentleman will never make a purchase until he is absolutely certain he is getting what he wants. There may be a moral certainty, but that isn't enough.

"A few days ago, to illustrate what I mean, a planter from San Juan, Costa Rica, came in and selected six dozen white linen shirts, a gross of collared and another gross of cuffs to match the outfit. The shirts were of a standard make and all of one pattern—as like as two peas—and the same was true of the collars and cuffs. When the planter finally made his selection, he told me in broken English that he was ready to try the things on, and, showing him into a private room, I sent him a shirt and set of collars and cuffs. Presently he stuck his head out of the door and said:

"These are all right. Please see me tomorrow." I told the porter to carry in the lot, and he proceeded to try on 72 shirts and 144 collars and cuffs. As you may well imagine, it took time, for he dressed himself fully when he put on each garment, to judge how it set with his clothes. He began at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and when we closed at 6 had worked his way through 14 shirts.

"Next day he began at 9 sharp, took an hour off for lunch and satisfied himself that he wasn't being bunked on 30 more. That left 28, which he finished off the following evening. With each shirt he tried on two collars and two pairs of cuffs. Of course he found all the different articles exact duplicates, just as I tried to explain to him in advance, but he wasn't taking any

chances and handed over the price with an easy mind.

"Nearly all our other customers from that part of the world do substantially the same thing. I once sold a Guatemala official a whole case of socks, and he insisted on trying one very pair and lacing up his shoes over them. It was a tedious operation and caused him to miss a ship, but he stuck to it to the bitter end. Queer people these Central Americans!"—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

GRAND FORKS ITEMS.

Claud Higgins and C. V. Morrison are performing manual labor on No. 20 Eldorado during the clean-up period.

James Nesbit, formerly of the Tacoma News, is making a tour of the creeks and incidentally taking a peep at the town after the shades of evening fall.

Frank Phisactor, owner of No. 2 Eldorado, which ground Steam Thawer Miller has been working under a lay the past season, is on the creek looking after the wash up.

Bert Shuler, one of the proprietors of the Gold Hill hotel an bar, a ioharic who has won many battles in conquest of love, is thinking of taking in the Nome country on the opening of navigation.

The new store building of the N. A. T. Co. is an imposing structure. The main building is two story, 30x50 feet, with an addition 20x30 feet, and is the best constructed building at the Forks. It is outside the fire belt and is connected with the more thickly populated portion by a newly constructed wagon bridge across Bonanz creek.

Homer Bean, the wide-awake and energetic representative of Orr & Tukey, formerly with Pickett & Devin, is one of the busiest men in town. He is thoroughly reliable, always courteous, and has the confidence and good will of all who know him.

Mrs. A. B. Ferguson, the telephone operator here, is fully occupied with the work of the office; a great volume of business going over the wire daily. It has proven a great benefit to mine owners and operators, and saved many long, hard walks over rough trails that would have otherwise been experienced.

Faulkner & Kronert's pumping plant is now in active operation and forces with ease a good sluice head of water to the highest dumps on Gold Hill. This will enable handling a good deal of dirt that under the more primitive methods was not profitable to work.

The restless spirit which has possessed laymen and mine-owners the past two weeks is rapidly fading away. The weather becomes warmer and the work of sluicing fairly begun. The coal nights have materially reduced the water supply and kept the dumps frozen and little sluicing has been done in consequence, though nearly all the miners are ready to commence this work, and are only awaiting the elements to favor them.

A good dentist would do a good business at the Forks during the next two months.

Riflemen's Range Marks.

The killing of Gen Lawton by the bullet of some unknown Filipino sharpshooter recalls an interesting little story which was told by one of the officers of the Tennesee regiment when it passed through the city recently on its way home from service in the far east.

"In the first advance which we made north of Manila," he said, "we discovered that the native sharpshooters were exceedingly fond of locating range marks on ground they thought would be apt to traverse. They would know the exact elevation necessary to drop a bullet at some bush, stump or pile of stones, and if a soldier approached the spot he was pretty certain to get it. Sometimes several men would be killed or wounded before the deadly indicator would be observed and when any sharpshooting was going on our boys learned eventually to avoid all conspicuous objects that looked as if they might have been selected as range marks. Otherwise the Filipinos are not remarkable as shots."

A very similar story was told by soldiers who participated in the fighting before Santiago. They say that almost every Spanish rifleman hidden away in a tree top had a scale of distances carefully noted by marks at various points, and some of these range finders acquired sinister fame. Some little distance from the first emergency hospital was the wreck of a heavy two wheeled native wagon, with a pole sticking straight up into the air. It was on the edge of a path to the nearest creek, which was frequently traversed, and three soldiers were shot near the heap of rubbish before it became evident that a hidden sharpshooter was using it to sight by. A couple of days later there was a systematic raid on the men in the tree tops, and most of them were swept out by the machine guns, but in the meanwhile the old wagon and other objects that appeared to have been located as distance marks were scrupulously shunned. It is very possible that the gallant Lawton chanced to get in line with some such indicator at the moment he received his death wound.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

THE QUEEN VS. CHAS. HILL

Is Now Being Heard in the District Court.

The Prisoner is Accused of Murdering His Partner, John Blair, on the Pelly River.

The trial of the criminal action of the Queen vs. Charles Hill was commenced in the territorial court this morning. The prisoner is accused of murdering his partner John Blair, early in February of this year, at a fish camp, which is situated on the Pelly river about 50 miles above the mouth of that tributary.

According to facts which have already been disclosed, it appears that the accused and the deceased had occupied the same cabin; that they quarreled respecting the ownership of a dog; that Blair possessed himself of a gun and threatened to kill the defendant, who attempted to avoid his antagonist by running behind a pair of bob sleds; that finally the prisoner, in order to defend his life, was obliged to shoot his partner, who soon died from the effects of the wound which was thus effected. An Indian woman was the sole witness to the tragedy. Immediately after the commission of the fatal deed, the perpetrator journeyed to Fort Selkirk and delivered himself into the custody of the N. W. M. P. Constable Tuttle was retained to visit the scene of the alleged crime for the purpose of recovering the body of the deceased; his efforts were unsuccessful, and the corpse is interred at Fort Selkirk.

The prisoner waived the privilege of defense at the preliminary examination, and was held to appear for trial in the territorial court. The accused was brought to Dawson several weeks ago, since which time he has been confined in the government barracks.

No difficulty was experienced this morning in selecting a jury; and the following gentlemen will determine the guilt or innocence of the accused: Messrs. Rich Guilds, Frank E. G. Berry, William J. Skynner, Charles S. Walker, Robert Mouchaff and Frank McQuillan. The crown is now engaged in submitting the testimony of the witnesses for the prosecution. Today Messrs. George Redlich, F. James, Arthur H. Hales and William H. Scarth were examined.

A .30-37 calibre Savage rifle, with which the crime is alleged to have been committed, was introduced as an exhibit, together with quite a quantity of papers, which were found upon the prisoner's person at the time when he surrendered himself. The action will not be concluded before tomorrow evening. Hon. F. C. Wade represents the crown; and Mr. McKay appears for the prisoner.

Justice Dugas returned a judgment of acquittal in the case of the Queen vs. Joseph W. Murphy, who was accused of barging Harvey Beckwith with an attempt to obtain money by false pretenses.

The defendant in the case of the Queen vs. Thomas Forrest was notified to appear in court on June 1st. The bonds of Robert Harold and George Morrison, accused of theft, were declared to be forfeited.

Remembered With Horror.

There are in Dawson a large number of persons who arrived here by one of three trails, namely: "Stickeen," "Edmonton" or "Ashcroft" and to them the very thought of what they passed through to reach the famed gold fields of the Klondike produces to this day a feeling of horror which causes the cold chills to creep over them. These people will readily appreciate the sentiment of the following from the Skagway News:

"In these days of steamboat and railroad travel to interior Alaska, the public has almost forgotten that less than three years ago many misguided people were striving to reach Dawson City by an overland route known to fame as the 'Edmonton trail.' The folly of those argonauts is again called to mind by the arrival in Wrangel last week of one of the last of the survivors of the overland gold-hunters. For over two years he had toiled and suffered and only reached civilization after his partner had been lost, he knew not where. The 'Stickeen,' 'Edmonton,' and 'Ashcroft' routes were at one time lively rivals of the 'Gateway' route, but have long since been forgotten, only to be remembered when some unfortunate survivor finds his way out of the wilderness."

Carbon paper for sale at the Nugget office.

The Klondike Nugget

(DAWSON'S PIONEER PAPER) ISSUED DAILY AND SEMI-WEEKLY.

A QUESTION FOR THE MASS MEETING.

As regards the theory that Dawson should be an incorporated town and governed by officers of its own choosing, we believe there is no considerable division of sentiment among our citizens. The present condition of affairs is almost without precedent. Dawson has been a town for a period of three years, and a good-sized town at that. The assessed valuation of property, when an assessment takes place, will run well into the millions. The population of the town is made up of men who are accustomed to self-government and the other usages which prevail in civilized communities. The question arises, why is Dawson not today an important municipality, controlling its own affairs, handling its own police and fire departments, and performing the other functions which ordinarily devolve upon a community such as we have here?

The answer to this query must be found in the vague and unsatisfactory manner in which the Yukon Council has communicated to the people the fact that they have a right to incorporate.

More than a year and a half has gone by since authority for the formation of a town government was given at Ottawa, but during this entire time no specific or authoritative statement has been issued as to the terms upon which such government would be granted. Instead of taking the initiative in the matter, as might naturally be expected, the commissioner and council have all along exhibited a disposition to discourage any movement looking toward incorporation.

This spirit of opposition, while it has been passive in nature, has been effective, nevertheless.

The people have been told that, in the event of incorporation, they would be entitled to expend but a portion of the municipal revenues, that they would not have control of the local police, and that heavy deficiencies would have to be met by a system of burdensome taxation.

By means of these general statements, and without specific information upon which to base an intelligent judgment, the matter of incorporation has been permitted thus far to go by default, as it were.

The Council, therefore, while we believe it to be directly and intentionally responsible for the fact that Dawson is still an unincorporated nonentity, is yet able to report to Ottawa that the people of Dawson are to blame for not having come forward en masse and clamored for something which has been purposely placed before them in its most unfavorable light.

Whether the town is incorporated or not, we are going to be taxed, unless the present plans of the Council fail to carry. The taxation ordinance is already an accomplished fact, and the lists are now in process of preparation.

This matter may, with propriety, be taken up by the mass meeting to be held on Saturday. The present citizens' committee, or some other equally good and representative committee, should be instructed to go fully into the question of incorporation and secure a complete definition of the powers and responsibilities which would appertain to a municipal government. This once done, a basis will be had upon

which the people can judge for themselves whether they desire incorporation.

If Dawson cannot properly and economically govern herself, the theory of representative government is entirely wrong. The question, if approached in an intelligent and businesslike manner, will, we believe, show that the town can be governed by its own representatives, with no heavier taxation than is now proposed by the Council. As long as we must face the taxation proposition, we should also insist upon a representative government.

Some definite action should be taken at Saturday night's meeting.

NO SURPRISE.

When it is considered that claim operators pay a royalty of 10 per cent on the wages of their men, on all the dead work they do, as well as the cost of transporting supplies and machinery to their claims, it is little wonder that they begin to believe they have a legitimate grievance against the government. Just how long the country will be able to withstand the bleeding process to which it has been subjected for the past two years, is a matter of extreme doubt. The territory is rich, but it has been compelled to submit to such treatment at the hands of the government that the wonder is that it has survived as long as it has. With the tremendous expenses involved in working ground in this country, it has been plainly demonstrated that in many cases, even where dirt of unusual richness has been discovered, the royalty represents the entire profit of the winter's work. When the enforcement of the royalty means a choice between perjury and bankruptcy, there is little room for surprise that many men will choose the former.

The mass meeting on Saturday night promises to be productive of interesting developments. The questions of incorporation, of local representation, the royalty and other live matters will be handled, and, apparently, will be handled without gloves. There is no escaping the fact that the Yukon Territory has waited long, anxiously and patiently for needed redress, which has never come. We are of the opinion that the coming meeting will furnish food for earnest reflection for the various representatives of the Dominion government now in Dawson. Ottawa must look to her local agents for advice upon matters affecting the Yukon policy, and if that advice were given in accordance with the light which the officials have, or should have, some changes for the better might be brought about.

There is just about time enough left to arrange a first-class celebration for the Queen's birthday. Since the publication of the article in yesterday's Nugget, interest has been already awakened, and the movement will soon take definite form. Everyone who can should attend the meeting on Thursday night, when the preliminary steps will be taken for making the necessary arrangements.

Roberts has the Boers in the Orange Free State caught in a trap, from which they will extricate themselves only with the utmost difficulty. As soon as the capture or destruction of the Boers who yet remain in the south is accomplished, nothing will remain to prevent a general advance in the direction of Pretoria.

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