

we understood that the people were going to spread over the district and very few were going to Dawson. Mark you, that was not a belief gathered from our imagination. It was gathered by talking with the men themselves. What happened? These men were camped in the passes, and were engaged putting up their shanties along the banks of the lakes and rivers, building their boats and getting ready to go down the stream. In the spring they launched their boats and started. In the meantime, all winter, men had been coming out telling them of the richness of the Dawson district and assuring them that the district was extensive and that there were good claims there to be had. Moreover, these men who were going in found that they could not go off and prospect in the interior of the country the travelling in which was dreadfully difficult, and that if they left the line of travel they would perish. And so they got in their boats, twenty-five or thirty thousand of them, and went down to Dawson City. There were men, practical miners—perhaps a thousand or two thousand of them—who went to different parts of the country and spread themselves over the country prospecting. But the great bulk of the people, certainly not less than thirty thousand, went down to Dawson City. Major Walsh got there on the 21st of May. Inside of three weeks after he got there, there were twenty-five or thirty thousand people in Dawson. I want this House, Mr. Speaker, to imagine that situation—something more than half the population of the city of Ottawa set down on a strip of ground, a mile and third long by a third of a mile wide, bounded on one side by the mountains, from which the melting snow trickled down and made a dreadful mud hole at the bottom, and on the other side, by the river. Imagine, half the population of Ottawa dumped in that mud hole within three weeks—no other word can be used that will express it, they were simply dumped there. There were not houses to give accommodation to more than one-tenth of them. There was no lumber to build houses with. The ground, after you went down eight or ten inches or a foot below the surface was frozen solid, and it was practically impossible to make any drains. These people were dumped on that little strip of territory under these conditions. Were they a class of people to be readily amenable to reason or likely to listen to advice? Were they a class of people who would do just what they were told to do? I have been told that no sanitary regulations were made. Sanitary regulations were made. Mr. Wade and the officers of the Mounted Police did make sanitary regulations. They did everything possible, everything that human beings could do under the circumstances to make the people obey those sanitary regulations. But imagine twenty-five or thirty thousand people dumped in a mud hole without any facility of taking care of them, and you will have

some idea of what our little handful of officers had to contend with. And this was a condition of affairs that no human being could possibly have foreseen, because these people had told me—scores of them—and had told Mr. Ogilvie also, that they were not going to Dawson at all. As proof of that, as proof that I am not giving you something that is a mere belief formed after the event, let me point out one thing. I came back to Ottawa and consulted with Mr. Ogilvie before he went to England. We concluded that the most important thing to do in connection with the mining regulations was to provide some means whereby miners who were scattered through the country at considerable distances could register their claims. I brought the matter before Council and devised the plan whereby these men could register their claims. It was like this:

In the event of the claim being more than 100 miles from the recorder's office, and situated where other claims are being located, the free miners, not less than five in number, are authorized to meet and appoint one of their number a "free miners' recorder," who shall act in that capacity until a mining recorder is appointed by the Gold Commissioner.

Then follow the provisions as to the matters of detail. This we did because we were convinced, as I have said, that the great bulk of these people were going to immense distances and would require some method of this kind in order to enable them to record their claims. The people, as I have said, were camped along the passes and the upper portion of the Yukon. These regulations were sent out to the police officers who were travelling along these passes, with instructions to communicate the information to the people, that they might be informed of it before they started prospecting.

Now, what was the next step? A great many stories have been told as to what was done next. Mr. Ogilvie and I had returned together as far as Vancouver, and he came on to Ottawa after I did. Before Mr. Ogilvie went to England I discussed the subject with him, and I informed him that I had it in view to recommend him as administrator of the territory, to take office when Major Walsh's term was up. Major Walsh went to the Yukon district under great pressure from myself, I believing that he was the best possible man for the position. He went very unwillingly and with the understanding that I should not ask him, under any circumstances, to stay longer than a year. Before he started down to Dawson City in the spring of 1897, he wrote back to me and said he did not wish to remain in Dawson City any longer than he could help, and that he would like his successor to be sent in as early as possible. Shortly after getting that, I cabled to Mr. Ogilvie asking him to return as soon as he could, and he did return as soon as his arrangements would permit him. When he got to Ottawa his health was not the best, and it was some days before he