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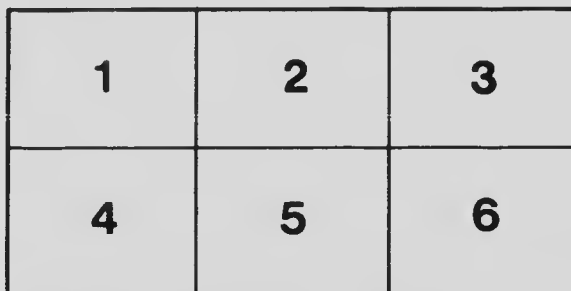
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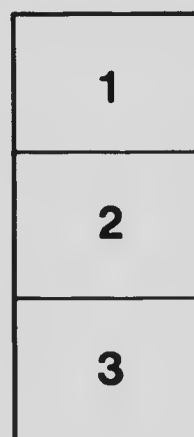
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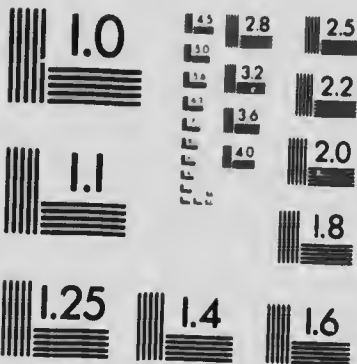
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# **The Yukon**

**A Business Talk**

**Delivered Before The Canadian Club  
Toronto**

**On Friday, March 21st, 1902**

**By**

**F. C. WADE, K.C.**

**Lately Crown Prosecutor, Yukon Territory**

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A BUSINESS TALK ON THE YUKON

## A BUSINESS TALK ON THE YUKON\*

*By F. C. Wade*

IT is rather presumptuous on my part to speak of a business talk, because I am not a business man. But in certain kinds of business he who runs may read, and so far as the Yukon is concerned a very primordial business germ is all that is necessary to realize that the Yukon business interests are not being attended to by the Canadian people as they should be.

I suppose you are all familiar with most of the facts with regard to the Yukon and its situation, because of the interest that was awakened in that far-off country in 1897 and 1898; but perhaps it would be well to point out one or two features with regard to its area and extent. To begin with, the Yukon is situated on our west coast, locking arms with Alaska—in fact, there is a little too much locking arms on the part of Alaska at the present time. That long arm that goes down on the western coast, seems to get longer all the time, so that it is difficult to tell which is our own country and which is the Alaskan arm with which we are encircled from time to time.

In the fact that Alaska at the north was purchased by the United States Government from the Russians, we have the first error or misfortune made with regard to the Yukon, and one of the most unfortunate things that ever occurred so far as the development of the north-western part of Canada is concerned. It was bad enough to have an immense hostile country below the 49th parallel, and all along our south. It was worse to allow that country to become possessed on the north of a large district which must ever remain hostile to us. We see the difficulties of it every day—customs difficulties, the trouble in delimiting our boundary, the tearing down of the British flag at Skagway, and other matters which might at any time lead to international complications.

The Klondyke, which is a portion of the Yukon, is situated in about sixty-four degrees north latitude; in fact, Circle City, a little below the Yukon, was so called because it was supposed to be within the Arctic Circle; it was afterwards found out not to be within the Arctic Circle, but it was sufficiently far north to justify the name. The Yukon country itself is 198,000 square miles in extent, which is considerably more than the area of Quebec, and very considerably more than the area of Ontario—twice the area of Ontario as it used to be given in the geographies.

The Klondyke mining camp, of the trade of which I have to speak, is a circumscribed area, bounded on the south by the Indian River, on the north by the Klondyke River, on the west by the Rocky Mountains, and on the east by the Yukon. It is some 800 square miles in extent.

The mileage of creeks actually operated in the Yukon does not go over fifty miles. Professor McConnell, Mr. Meyers, and others who have visited the country agree that there is no reason for imagining that the gold area will not extend to almost all the creeks in the Yukon, and when I tell you that only fifty miles have been worked, and that there are seven thousand miles of creeks in the Yukon, almost all of which are unprospected, you can have some idea of the future which lies before that country. (Hear, hear.) As to the little area of the Klondyke, with which we have to deal, I would like to make it clear to you that it has only been actively developed during the last four or five years.

The first stake was driven by George Cormack on Discovery Claim at Bonanza, on August 16th, 1896. The stampede into the country commenced in 1897, and continued in 1898. The first large gold production was made

\* An address delivered before the Canadian Club of Toronto.



in 1898, when \$10,000,000 were taken from the pay gravels of the country. That is according to the Governmental returns, but a government return is like an Income Tax return—I do not care what the Government is, or what the municipal body that is at the head of affairs, such a return must always be misleading. You remember that old story which is told in Fawcett's "Political Economy," about a street in London where the income tax was levied, and nobody on the street had an income at all, although it was one of the richest streets in London; but afterwards when the street was closed and every resident had to be paid damages according to his income, the amount swelled to tremendous proportions.

It must not be expected that a royalty official return will be any more accurate than an income tax return, especially when the miners are not the old miners of the old '49 days, the old miner or old prospector who spends all his life in the mountains, whether it be on the American or on the Canadian side, and whose single boast is his honour, and especially when they are dealing with a substance in which so much value is incorporated in so small a space or bulk as it is in the case of gold.

However, taking the returns as they are, ten millions of dollars were taken out of the soil in 1898, sixteen millions in 1899, twenty-two millions of dollars in 1900, and twenty-four millions in 1901. And yet people ask us every day on the street, in the face of these figures, if the gold production of the Klondyke is falling off. It has almost trebled in four years.

When we first arrived in the Yukon in 1897, and, travelling over the ice during that winter, came to Dawson, the sensation that I, in common with all others, no doubt experienced, was a very composite one. It did seem strange, after passing over hundreds or even thousands of miles of forest, stream and wilderness, to suddenly descend into a little basin formed by the junction of the Yukon and Klondyke Rivers in among the hills, under the

shadow of Moosemin Mountain, and find a little city all by itself, a sort of microcosm, a coming metropolis.

Even then, in the dead of winter, Dawson City was composed of tents and huts made up of rough frames covered with tanned paper, with some whipped lumber made in the locality, but largely made up of packing boxes, and anything else that could be obtained. Windows there were none. What might be called the windows of the cabins were made up largely, at the mines and in the city, of bottles set side by side. Strange to say—and this is a matter to be considered in connection with the referendum, no matter how remote the country, and no matter how impossible it is to get window glass, if you penetrate into the regions adjoining the North Pole, you find bottles, bottles, everywhere. There they were turned to a useful purpose, because they were set side by side, and chinked in with moss, and they made a very good window indeed.

However, such was Dawson in 1897-8, a collection of tents adjoining the old fishery hut of George Cormack, a collection of tar paper and canvas houses scattered around without any regard to sanitary arrangements, and with no street. Nothing better could have been expected.

We were in our infancy, and just then Miss Flora Shaw, of the *London Times*, descended upon the camp and found that we had not good roads, and that the billiard tables were not strictly up to date, and the *London Times* has been talking about it ever since.

However, the spirit of enterprise soon became very evident in the camp, with the result that after the lapse of four years we have to present to you the City of Dawson. In 1898 a cluster of huts, to-day a city with an assessment of \$12,000,000 real estate and personalty. (Applause.) In 1868 there was not a steamer on the Upper Yukon River; the first small steamer—a very small one indeed—arrived in June, 1898, and the succession of steamers arriving has been so tremen-

dous that now we can show you on the Upper Yukon a fleet of twenty-seven steamers valued at \$878,000, and just handed on the British market for nearly \$1,000,000.

On the Lower Yukon River were formerly the *Arctic* and the *Weir* and a few of the old tubs of the Alaska Commercial Company that were being operated. We now have two fleets. The fleet of the Northern Navigation Company, of twenty-eight steamers, valued to the assessor at \$1,125,000, and the fleet of the North America Transportation Company, of seven ships worth about half a million of dollars.

So that on the two ends of the river we have about two and a half million dollars' worth of steamers.

In the City of Dawson we have about \$12,000,000 worth of real estate and personalty. In the two years we have produced about \$46,000,000 of gold. In houses and land alone the assessment amounts to some \$5,000,000.

So that in four years that little country has piled up a total—I am not taking into account all the public buildings built by the Government, or the 218 miles of roads built by the Government with all these public improvements—of over \$100,000,000, and that not at some railroad centre in Eastern Canada, and not at some great lake terminus in the Province of Ontario, but at sixty-four and one-half degrees north latitude, under the very shadow of the North Pole.

It seems to me that is very excellent evidence of what enterprise in a country can accomplish.

The White Pass Railway was also built, and last year that White Pass Railway netted some one million and a quarter of dollars in profits, and paid a dividend of twenty-five per cent. to its shareholders.

On all sides, then, you have evidences of enterprise, trade and progress.

During last year there were carried into the country by the White Pass Railway and the steamers in connection with it, no less than 36,000 tons of freight, as against 32,000 tons in

the year previous. And last year there were taken in from Vancouver alone 9,000 cattle, horses and sheep, as against some 2,000 in the latter part of 1898. So much for our trade in the Yukon.

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But what can be said with regard to our trade interests in the Yukon? What trade interests have the Canadians as a people managed to secure in the Yukon, and to what extent have they shared in the marvellous prosperity of that camp?

It is indeed regrettable that a camp of such value, so far as gold mining is concerned, has to be opened up to the entire world. It does seem regrettable that foreigners and aliens from everywhere should be allowed to swoop down on that camp and without "by your leave" or "if you please," or without even an epithet to command your admiration and attention, simply take possession of our mines on Eldorado and Bonanza—an Eldorado, where the gold mines run \$2,000 to the lineal foot; on Bonanza, where they run \$1,000 to the lineal foot. It seems hard that these men should be able to take possession of the mines and to send and carry the gold away to Seattle and other places, and build public buildings in a magnanimous way in the different cities of the United States, build great stone blocks in Seattle, Portland and San Francisco, and that we in Canada should have nothing whatever left in return for all that is taken away. I say that it seems unfortunate that this should be so. It is difficult to distinguish between this state of things and simply allowing our friends on the other side of the line to enter the Treasury at Ottawa with wheelbarrows or whatever other utensils they may prefer, and to carry away the gold that belongs to the country.

However it cannot be helped. An alien law in a mining camp could never possibly succeed in Canada. The Canadian people, so far, have not developed as a mining people. The alien law was tried in Atlin, with the result that the

Atlin camp was killed the moment the law was passed; and if the alien law had been applied in the Yukon, the Yukon would have been strangled at its very birth.

The United States nation has, with its Swedes and Germans, hardy men of great industry, furnished the grandest class of miners that the world can produce. We have found them in the Yukon leading the way. In the early days of Cassiar it was impossible at times to get enough British subjects to fill a jury. In the Yukon, in my own department, I have had to use the same jurors over and over again, owing to the difficulty in getting sufficient British subjects. While the English and the Canadian show no aptitude for mining (whether it is abhorrence to working underground or not, I do not know), the French Canadian in the Yukon has shown himself an excellent miner, and to-day very closely contests the belt with the Swede, the Norwegian, the Scandinavian and the hardy Norseman that we have in that country.

The only excuse that can be given for allowing a country to be exploited in this way, allowing the gold to be dug from the bowels of the earth and carried off to a foreign country by foreigners, is that it develops Canadian trade, and that is the point upon which I wish to address the Canadian Club. Because persons interested in Canadian trade have not put forward sufficient energy to gain that trade in the Yukon, I am here to-day to say a few words.

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It is true that in the beginning of the country the Canadians had no share in the trade at all; but during the last few years their interest in the trade has very considerably increased. Vancouver has become a large shipping point. Victoria is shipping to some extent. The Northwest Territories are shipping to some extent, and you will often be told, and I have no doubt that you have been told, that the Canadian trade with the Yukon is so grown that to-day we

control sixty per cent. of the trade. That is true in a sense, but it is not true in the sense in which I desire to have the matter understood by my fellow-Canadian people.

It is true that the Canadian middleman is used much more than he was, and that the buyers in the Yukon to-day buy through middlemen, and in that way all these figures go to the Canadian trade. But the Canadian manufacturer is not by any means getting the trade of the country to the extent which those figures would seem to indicate.

To come down to details I might say that my object in discussing this point is simply to urge that one or two things should be done; that is, either that the Government should be prevailed upon to appoint somebody out of the trade, conversant with the manufacturing and with all the manufactured products of Canada, who will go to the Yukon and acquaint himself with the needs of the country, and then visit all the factories in Canada, and in that way help to increase the area and volume of Canadian trade with that country; or that the Manufacturers' Association, which I see is now devoting itself largely to education in the matter of manufacturing and trade, should take that matter up. Certainly the Government has had a great deal to do in connection with that country for several years past, and has carried on its shoulders much more than it should have attempted to carry.

With regard to the trade itself, I may say that it has been disappointing to us all up in that country from the very beginning, to notice the very slight interest which seems to have been taken by Canadians in the country. To begin in highest circles, let me tell you that but one Minister in the Government of Canada has ever visited that country as yet—the Minister of the Interior. I believe three members of Parliament, two from British Columbia and one from Nova Scotia, have visited the Yukon. Now, is it possible, gentlemen, that a new country can be successfully governed

without the members of the House of Commons and the members of the Cabinet visiting the country and acquainting themselves with its conditions and needs? If it were the same kind of country as Ontario or any of our Eastern Provinces, there would be nothing in my argument; but when it is a placer and quartz mining country, about which you can learn nothing in any other part of Canada, surely it is necessary to go to the mines and understand the needs of the country.

What I say is not for the purpose of attacking the Government, but I want to awaken all Canadian public men. Although the Opposition has choke-damped the Houses of Parliament at Ottawa for years with scandals in connection with the country, followed by Royal Commissions of Investigation, which always showed that there was nothing in the scandals, not one single member of the Opposition in the Parliament of Canada has up to date visited this Yukon country, a country larger than almost any other Province in Canada.

Now, with regard to the newspapers of Canada. I produce here one of the Dawson daily papers. We have three daily papers in Dawson, filled from edge to edge with all possible despatches concerning every item of news that occurs in Canada every day; and there is also a weekly paper, besides some small magazines and leaflets.

Although those papers, with the greatest enterprise and industry, are filled with news from all over Canada, there is not a paper in Canada to-day which contains any news from the Yukon. Seattle papers, as well as those of Tacoma and San Francisco are filled with news from the Yukon. It has been their specialty for years. But our Canadian papers contain nothing whatever with regard to that district.

Seattle newspapers and other American newspapers, especially of New York, are represented by scores of reporters and artists, and have been from 1897; while no Canadian newspaper has ever had a responsible correspondent or an

artist, or any one in the country to give them information with regard to that country.

I say our public men are at fault, and our newspapers are at fault. And again I want to say that the manufacturers, and those represented in the trade of the country, have been far more at fault than anybody else. What house of any consequence has sent agents to the Yukon to solicit trade or to seek to understand the trade question there? What house of any consequence in Canada can show an advertisement in the *Dawson Daily News*, or in any daily newspaper in the Klondyke? Those papers are full day after day with advertisements from Seattle and all the cities of the United States, and scarcely in any paper in Dawson, even to-day, after it has contributed so much to the welfare of Canada, and so much to the production of Canada at any rate, can such a thing as a Canadian advertisement be found in 1902?

The great business in the furnishing trade of the Yukon is, of course, the outfitting of the prospector. In the early days that was the greatest business. The prospectors who came to the country claimed that they could not be properly outfitted on the Canadian coast. The Canadians did not understand the needs of the prospector as the Americans did in those cities of the United States, where they had had much more experience in mining matters than had been gained in Canada.

To put it in a rather simple way, the prospector, you remember, goes far away from the centres of population, and travels one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles into the wilderness, and he must not only have the staples of existence, flour to make his flapjacks, the bacon that he requires from time to time, and the tea, but he must have his small and inexpensive luxuries. All the pleasures that enter into the hard existence in those remote points in the wilderness (if he has any pleasures) are very gross and material indeed, and are not to be mentioned in such a select assemblage; but if the miner does enjoy anything it is some luxury, some

little jelly or preserves put among his outfit. The outfitters of the American coast cities, with due regard to his tastes and pleasures, were able to make a more attractive outfit than were the outfitters of the cities on our side of the line.

There are a great many lines of goods which should be furnished to the Yukon trade. Why is it that we do not furnish butter to the Yukon trade? Surely our butter is better than any that could be furnished from any other part of the world. But our butter is packed in such tins, and in such a way, that the rust and air affect it. My experience is that Canadian butter cannot be bought, because it always spoils. That is the regular experience in camp. When we arrived at Skagway in 1897, four tons of Canadian butter had to be thrown over the edge of the dock into the Lynn Canal, which was certainly a fine advertisement at the outset for Canadian butter.

Then take Canadian bacon. Why do we not use Canadian bacon in the Yukon country? We want to use it. I say for the credit of the trading institutions up there, whether large or small, they feel that they are to make their money there, and they want to use all the Canadian staples they can; but they claim they cannot use Canadian bacon because it is not cured to last a sufficiently long time. Everything has to be carried in during the summer, to last not four or five months merely, but an entire season and half a season afterwards—a year or eighteen months. So much for our butter and bacon. These are technical matters in which I may be astray, but I tell you simply what all the business men in the country tell me.

Why do we not monopolize the Yukon market in canned goods? Our goods are better and sweeter, and there is probably more food in them than in similar goods from anywhere else. They object to the labels; they object to the tins as being too heavy.

Why do we not have our rubber goods in that country? For the simple reason that if we bought the Canadian

rubber miner's boots which are furnished at the Coast, it would take almost a team of horses to carry those boots up to the mine. The prospector or miner can go and get a pair of Gold Seal rubber boots from the other side of the line, which are light and easily worn.

Our shovels are too long in the handle; our picks are too heavy. Of the steel candlesticks to be driven into the frozen gravel we have not shipped any into the country.

Why does not Canadian cheese take possession of the market of the country, and Canadian condensed milk? In some cases it may be from lack in the supply of the articles themselves, and in other cases through fault in the method of packing and labelling, or in the tins or articles in which the goods are placed. But above and beyond all other reasons, because the manufacturers of our country have taken no interest in the country, and the newspapers have taken no interest in the country, and Parliament has taken little interest in the country beyond the debates which have taken place during the last few sessions.

It seemed to me it might be well to bring these matters before this Club, and it might be well worth while to point out, too, that there is no difficulty whatever in entering that country at the present time.

I am often asked—everybody who comes from that country is often asked—Isn't it very difficult to get into the country? Isn't it frightfully cold when you get there?

Here we object to our British friends always alluding to Canada as the Lady of the Snows; but every Canadian seems to hurl the same insult at our Yukon country. It is true we have cold there in the winter time; but you have it cold down here and in every part of Canada in the winter time. And surely every grown-up Canadian has stamina sufficient to know what a small argument that is.

We have the most beautiful summers it is possible to imagine; a more glorious summer climate could not well be

conceived. In the winter the cold is dry. We have, however, an open summer up to the end of September and well on into October; then by the middle of May the ice is gone out of the Yukon River, and from then on to the end of September or October we have as delightful a summer as you have. And we have what you have not in the summer. During the summer time we have daylight all night, which makes it possible to carry on all the works of the country at a double shift, and in that way to accomplish a great deal more than can be accomplished anywhere else.

We have the country, we have the climate, and we have the products.

As to the methods of getting into the country. It should be clearly understood that whereas in the old days you had to go by steamer to Skagway, and then scale the passes and endure a good deal of hardship, in the summer time in any case you had to scale the Chilcoot and White Passes and then come down the river in boats at a considerable expense. It is to-day no more difficult to go to the Yukon than it is to go on the steamer down to Quebec. It takes a little longer, perhaps.

From Victoria or Vancouver to Skagway you travel on an ocean steamer, well appointed in every way, as pleas-

antly as could be. At Skagway you take the White Pass Railway over the Pass. You have not to get out and clamber over the pass and carry anything, but you can ride in your slippers and lounging-jacket as well as you can anywhere else in the world; and when you reach Whitehorse all you have to do is to step on a palace steamer and in two days you are in Dawson.

Surely if all that has been accomplished in the short space of four years, and if we have to offer you a country which has produced in one-tenth of the time seven-eighths of the gold products of Canada, a country which last year imported thirty-six thousand tons of freight of all kinds for the consumption of the people of that country, and surely if you have the butter, cheese, canned goods, bacon and all the other staples which you hear about all the time, and if this is the growing time of Canada, and if the people of Toronto are as enterprising as they seem to be, and if we are in a period of growth and advancement, then when you and our public men spend so much time looking towards the development of trade with Australia and the Antipodes and all other parts of the world, you ought to be equal to reaching out and joining hands with the Yukon and getting close trade relations and securing the benefit of the Yukon trade.



