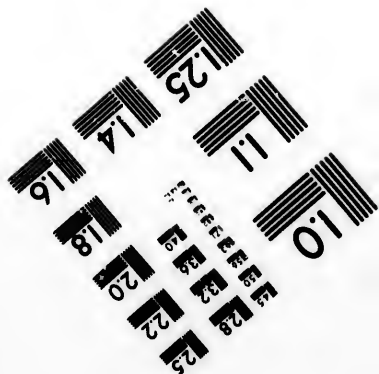
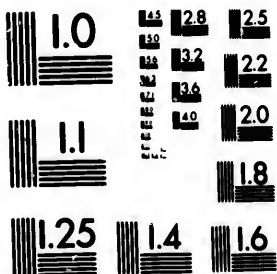


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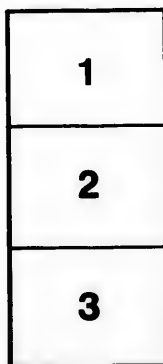
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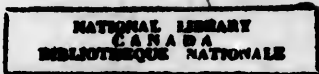
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HISTORICAL NOTES ON THE YUKON DIS-
TRICT by GEORGE M. DAWSON, C.M.G., LL.D., &c.
Director of the Geological Survey of Canada

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HISTORICAL NOTE ON EVENTS IN THE YUKON DISTRICT,
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES.

The history of the Yukon district of the north-west territory and that of the adjacent northern part of British Columbia, separated from it only by the 60th parallel of latitude, must be taken together. It begins with the explorations of the Hudson Bay Company, made in the interests of trade, for the old North-west company never extended its operations into any part of this region. Next comes the discovery of gold on the Stikine in 1861, and in the Cassiar country proper in 1872, and, at a long interval, about 1881, the initiation of mining on the upper tributaries of the Yukon and the subsequent events along that great river and its feeders. The history of Alaska proper, to the west of the 141st meridian, and that connected with the negotiations leading up to the convention of 1825 in regard to the boundary with Russian America, are not included in the present notes.

Probably in consequence of the negotiations with Russia about that time, in the course of which the Hudson Bay Company had been consulted by the British government (the existing interests in dispute being chiefly those of that company and the Russian American corporation) the attention of the company was directed to the vast inland region between the posts on the Mackenzie and the Russian outposts on the Pacific coast. Thus, in 1834, two expeditions were set on foot, one to occupy a post at the mouth of the Stikine, on the Pacific coast, the other to explore westward from Fort Halkett (lat. 59° 30', long. 126° 30'), then the farthest point occupied on the Liard or "west branch of the Mackenzie." The first, having been heard of by the Russian company, was frustrated by its prior occupation (under the name of Fort Dionysius) of the place now called Wrangell; the second constituted the commencement of that exploration of the interior of which it is proposed here to enumerate briefly the main events.

Chief trader J. McLeod led the expedition last referred to, and after surmounting the dangerous rapids of the Liard, ascended what is now known as the Dease river and named Dease Lake, at its head, after Peter Warren Dease, the Arctic explorer. From the lake he continued westward to the upper waters of the Stikine, finding there what he had been instructed to search for, a river running to the Pacific ocean, but without knowing under what name its waters reached the ocean. Two years later, McLeod's successor at Fort Halkett was sent to establish a post in the newly discovered region, but owing to a panic arising from the reported proximity of hostile natives this expedition entirely failed. In 1837, a far distant part of the Yukon district was touched by Messrs. Dease and Simpson, who examined the Arctic coast between the mouth of the Mackenzie and Point Barrow. In 1838, the attempt to establish posts to the westward by way of the Liard was renewed by the Hudson Bay Company. The enterprise was entrusted, on this occasion, to Robert Campbell, who thus began a series of remarkable explorations, the results of which, though scarcely appreciated at the time, even by the company for which he worked, can never be forgotten in the history of the far north-west. Campbell, accompanied only by a half-breed and two Indian lads, established an outpost on Dease Lake, and remained there during the winter of 1838-39, amid constant alarms from the "Russian" or coast Indians and with scarcely anything in the nature of supplies. In May, starvation forced him to abandon his post and return down the Liard.

Meanwhile, in 1837, a long lease of what is now the Alaskan "coast-strip" had been secured by the Hudson Bay Company on terms agreed upon with the Russian company, and the fur-trade being thus controlled on both sides by the first-named company, it became unnecessary to occupy Dease Lake. Campbell, no doubt, first heard of this arrangement on his return to the Mackenzie in 1839. The negotiations between representatives of the companies had been carried on in Hamburg, and with the slowness of communication at the time, the authorities in the Mackenzie district could not have been sooner made aware of them

or of their result. Thenceforward, and for many years, what afterwards became known as the Cassiar country, centring about Dease Lake, was practically forgotten, its furs finding their way to the coast or to the Mackenzie, probably in part by Fort Connelly, which had been established by Douglas in 1826 at Bear Lake at the head of the Skeena river.* In 1840, however, Campbell was commissioned by Sir George Simpson to explore the "North Branch" of the Liard (the Dease being the "South Branch") to its source, and to cross the height-of-land in search of waters flowing thence to the west or north, it being assumed that such streams would probably lead to the Colville, the mouth of which, on the Arctic ocean, had been discovered in 1837 by Dease and Simpson. It was this search that led to the discovery of the Yukon. Campbell had been preceded, it appears, in the direction indicated for a part of the way by McLeod, for though no detailed account of McLeod's journey has been found, it must have been due to his observations that the Liard as far as Simpson Lake was represented on Arrowsmith's map of 1850, previous to the communication of Campbell's results. Campbell left Fort Halkett in May, with a canoe and seven men, and made his way up the rapid stream to Frances Lake, so named after Lady Simpson. Here he left his canoe, and with three Indians and his interpreter, Hoole,† continued on foot for some fifty miles till he reached a large river which he named the Pelly, after one of the governors of the company. He made a raft and drifted for some miles down the river, before returning to Frances Lake, where, meanwhile, the other men of his party had built a house which was named "Glenlyon House," but afterwards became known as Fort Frances. Fortified by a "trading outfit," which had been sent after him from Fort Halkett, Campbell spent the winter of 1840-41 at Frances Lake.

The company being resolved to follow up Campbell's discoveries, we find him in 1842 establishing Fort Pelly Banks and

*John Finlay's exploration of 1824, up the Finlay branch of Peace River, of which a manuscript account exists, does not seem to have led to the opening of any trade route in that direction.

†Resident as an employee of the company at Fort Yukon in 1867, according to Whymper and Dall.

in June 1843 leaving that new post with a party of six men to explore the Pelly river. This he did for about 300 miles, or to the confluence of the large branch named by him the Lewes. Nothing further was done in this direction beyond Pelly Banks for some years, but meanwhile an opening was being made into the Yukon district in another direction, much further north.

In 1842, Mr. J. Bell, of the Hudson Bay Company, had crossed the mountains from the post situated on Peel River (Fort Macpherson) near the delta of the Mackenzie, and reached the Poreupine, and in 1846 he descended and explored that river to its confluence with the main stream, which the Indians told him was called the Yukon. In the following year, Fort Yukon was established by A. H. Murray, at the mouth of the Poreupine.

In the winter of 1847-48 boats were built at Pelly Banks, and in June, 1848, Campbell set out to establish a post at the confluence of the Lewes. This was named Fort Selkirk. In 1850 Campbell descended the river from Fort Selkirk to Fort Yukon, thus proving for the first time the connection of the Pelly river with the Yukon. From Fort Yukon he ascended the Poreupine, crossed the mountains and returned to headquarters at Fort Simpson *up* the Mackenzie, to the great surprise of the people there. One result of this journey was, however, to show that the route *via* the Poreupine was better than that by the Liard as a means of access for trade to the Yukon basin, and in consequence of this and of the great sacrifices which it had been necessary to make to keep up the posts on the latter route, these posts were abandoned, Pelly Banks in 1850 and Fort Frances in 1851.

In 1852 Fort Selkirk was pillaged by coast Indians, Chilkats or Chilkoots from the vicinity of Lynn Canal. No resistance was possible on the part of Campbell and his few men, but they were not personally molested. The hostility of these coast Indians resulted from the fact that the new post was interfering with a trade with the inland tribes which they had always regarded as specially their own. When the raiders had left and Campbell had made arrangements for the wintering of some of his people at Fort Yukon, he set out in a small canoe to report

the occurrences at head-quarters on the Mackenzie, reaching Fort Simpson by his old route just before the river closed, late in October. Wishing to appeal personally to Sir George Simpson for leave to re-establish his favourite post, he made a most remarkable journey during the winter, on snow-shoes, from Fort Simpson across the continent to Crow Wing in Minnesota, whence he reached London in about a month, but was unable to get the authorization he desired.

Lapierre House, on the eastern head-waters of the Porcupine was established about 1853 as an outpost of Fort Macpherson (or "Peel River post") and an intermediate station on the way to Fort Yukon, but no other establishments were maintained by the company in what is now known as the Yukon district for many years thereafter. It appears that in 1853 one of Campbell's hunters arrived from the Yukon by way of the Pelly and Frances, but subsequent to that date the old route is not known to have been again traversed until the date of our survey of 1887. In 1853, chief factor James Anderson states* that fourteen deaths of employees by drowning or from starvation had attended the attempt to establish and maintain this Liard River route to the Yukon.

The winter of 1860-61 was spent at Fort Yukon by Mr. R. Kennicott, the well-known collector and naturalist. He had reached this post from the Mackenzie district and returned the same way. Previous to 1853, the Hudson Bay men had met the Russian traders near the mouth of the Tanana, below Fort Yukon. In 1863, I. S. Lukeen, of the Russian company ascended to Fort Yukon, but none of the Russian traders appear to have entered at any time what is now the Yukon district.

The next event to be chronicled is the discovery of gold on the bars of the Stikine river in 1861 by two miners named Choquette ("Buck") and Carpenter. In the following spring several parties set out from Victoria for the river, and in 1863 the Russian authorities, having heard of it, sent a corvette to ascertain whether mining was being carried on in Russian territory. A boat-party ascended as far as the Little Cañon. A plan

* In a manuscript report.

of the lower river was printed by the Russian Hydrographical Department in 1867, and in the following year Mr. W. P. Blake, of San Francisco, who accompanied the expedition, published some account of it. Mining operations on a limited scale continued along the lower Stikine for a number of years, and in consequence of these a Hudson Bay post was established in 1862 or 1863 at a point about fifty miles up the river. This was maintained till 1874, when it was moved up to Glenora. In 1866, explorations under Major Pope, for a route for the Western Union or Collis' Telegraph, intended to connect Europe and North America by way of Asia, were extended to the Stikine basin. These explorations in the Stikine region were carried on during the following year by M. W. Byrnes, Vital Lafleur, W. McNeill and P. J. Leich. Rough sketches were made of most of the main tributaries of the Stikine, and extended, as it now proves, by Byrnes to the head of Teslin Lake. In 1867, Ketchum and Labarge pushed exploratory work up the Yukon as far as the site of Fort Selkirk, and Dall and Whympier reached Fort Yukon: but the whole of this work was abandoned in the same year on receipt of news of the successful laying of an Atlantic cable. In 1867 the Rev. J. McDonald was already stationed by the Church Missionary Society at Fort Yukon. It has not been ascertained whether missions were continuously maintained along the Yukon and Porcupine from this date, but it is probable that this was the case.

Russian America having passed by cession to the United States in 1867, in 1869 Captain C. W. Raymond was sent by the United States government, on the initiative of the Alaska Commercial Company, to determine the position of Fort Yukon. Having ascertained that it was to the west of the 141st meridian, there constituting the line of boundary, he promptly informed the representatives of the company of the fact, notified them that "the introduction of trading goods, or any trade with the natives is illegal and must cease," and took possession of the post. The company then erected a new post (Rampart House) nearly 100 miles up the Porcupine river. This was again moved in a few years to a point about twelve miles further up the river, where it remained till 1891.

The Convention of 1825, between Great Britain and Russia, (Art. VI) provided in perpetuity for the navigation by British subjects, "without any hindrance whatever," of all streams crossing the line of coast accorded to Russia. In 1871, the Treaty of Washington between Great Britain and the United States (Art. XXVI) reaffirmed the free navigation of the Stikine for purposes of commerce, and included the Yukon and Porcupine.

In 1871, Henry Thibert, a French-Canadian, and McCulloch, a Scotchman, who had found their way to the then abandoned site of Fort Halkett, on the Liard, on a hunting and prospecting expedition, passed the winter there, suffering great hardship from want of food, but finding gold in the river bars. When spring opened they continued westward to Dease Lake, which had not apparently been visited by any white man since its abandonment by Campbell in 1839. There they intended to lay in a stock of fish for the ensuing winter, but hearing from Indians of the proximity of the Stikine and the presence of miners on that river they went there. In 1873 they set out on their return to their discovery on the Liard, but found better paying ground on Thibert Creek, at the lower end of Dease Lake. There they were soon after joined by thirteen miners from the Stikine, and in the same summer Dease Creek was also discovered.

Cassiar at once became a mining district, but into the details of its history as such it is here impossible to enter. The population in 1874 was about 1,500, and the yield of gold is estimated at \$1,000,000. In 1875 the miners numbered 1,081, and the yield was valued at \$830,000. In 1876 the population at one time reached 2,000, but profitable work could not be found for so many, and the yield fell to \$499,830. Several steamers plied upon the Stikine to the head of navigation at Telegraph Creek or Glenora. A steamer was built upon Dease Lake. Laketon became a thriving centre, and several other mining camps were established. Since that time the product in gold has gradually diminished, but has never ceased. Mining remained confined to the placer deposits, no new rich creeks were discovered, and enterprise in the district became straggled by various causes into which it is not here necessary to enter. In 1876, some attention

was drawn to the Stikine in connection with questions arising out of the conveyance of a criminal, one Marten, across the coast-strip of Alaska. As a result a provisional boundary-line was agreed upon without prejudice. (Dominion of Canada, Sessional Papers, Vol. XI. No. 11, 1878.)

The Cassiar country proper, it will be remembered, drains into the Mackenzie by the Liard River, which cuts across the Rocky Mountains. We have now to trace the discovery of gold and the development of mining in the basin of the Yukon itself, which, although contiguous and occupying a similar position between the Rocky Mountains and the coast ranges, drains northward and then westward to Behring Sea. In 1872, Harper and McQuestion, who had been engaged with others in a hunting, prospecting and trading expedition on the Peace and Liard rivers and in the lower valley of the Mackenzie, crossed the mountains from Fort Macpherson and descended the Porcupine to the Yukon. Harper wintered on White River, McQuestion was obliged to go to the mouth of the Yukon for supplies, but returning next summer established the trading-post known as Fort Reliance. Here Harper joined McQuestion in 1873, and after that time they carried on trade with Indians at several places along the river, latterly in close connection with, or as agents of, the Alaska Commercial Company. When the miners entered the country from the south, they found these traders established on that part of the river below the site of old Fort Selkirk.

As long ago as 1869, Mr. F. Whympere published the fact that "minute specks" of gold were found along the Yukon by the Hudson Bay Company's employees, and in 1876 or 1877 it is reported that one Mike Powers, with seven or eight other prospectors, crossed from Taku Inlet to what is now known as Teslin Lake, returning by the same route and apparently without making any discovery of gold: but the prospecting of the Yukon country with a view to mining can scarcely be said to have begun till 1878. Inquiries show that it was in this year that one George Holt (killed by Indians at Cook's Inlet in 1885) followed the Indian route over the Chilkoot Pass from the coast, travelled by Lake Marsh to the Teslin, and returned reporting the discovery

of gold. Holt afterwards allowed himself to become the subject of various apocryphal stories which may be dismissed from consideration. In the same year the brothers Rath, of Victoria, and E. Bean, of San Francisco, attempted to cross the pass, but were prevented from doing so by the Indians. Fort Yukon, built by the Hudson Bay Company, had passed into the hands of the Alaska Commercial Company, but was in 1879 or 1880 (according to Schwatka) abandoned, and was subsequently allowed to go to ruin.

No important developments immediately followed Holt's journey, for it was not till 1880 that a strong prospecting party was organized at Sitka by Bean. The party had increased to twenty-five when what is now known as Lake Lindeman was reached, and at least two other miners followed at a later date. Gold was found on river bars, but not in what was considered as remunerative quantity. It was in the following year (1881) that what may be regarded as the first discovery of payable placer deposits occurred, by another party, travelling by the same route, but ascending afterwards the Big Salmon river for some distance. In 1882, more miners went in over the Chilkoot pass, and gold was discovered in this year or the next on the Stewart river by two brothers named Boswell. There were thirty or forty miners in all in the Yukon country that summer. In the same year Dr. A. Krause, on behalf of the Bremen Geographical Society, made an interesting exploration of the Chilkoot and Chilkat passes and the country in their vicinity, of which the results were published in Germany. Also in 1882 a mission station was established at Rampart House, on the Porcupine, by the Church Missionary Society. In 1883 and 1884, some mining was in progress on river bars, chiefly along the Lewes, and in the first-named year Lieut. Schwatka, U. S. Army, crossed the Chilkoot pass and descended by the Lewes and Yukon to the sea, making a fairly correct sketch of his route. The results of his journey appeared in an official report dated 1885, in a popular work entitled "Along Alaska's Great River" (1885), and in various magazine and press articles. He found both Fort Reliance and Belle Isle (a trading-post established by F. Mercier for the Alaska Com-

mercial Company just west of the 141st meridian) abandoned in 1883. In 1885 and 1886 most of the miners were engaged on the Stewart, and the bars of this river were pretty thoroughly worked over, with an aggregate yield in gold valued at about \$100,000. In 1886 Cassiar bar, so far the richest known on the Lewes river, was found and worked.

In consequence of the above discoveries and explorations some attention began to be directed to the valley of the Yukon, particularly in British Columbia, and the writer urged upon the late Hon. T. White, Minister of the Interior, the importance of gaining some accurate knowledge of it and its possibilities, in the interest of Canada. To Mr. White's approval and encouragement the despatch of the Yukon expedition of 1887-88 was directly due. All possible information was in the first place collected, largely by correspondence with Mr. R. Campbell, the original explorer of the Yukon, then still living as a resident of Manitoba, and early in the spring of 1887 the writer was despatched in charge of a geological and geographical reconnaissance of the territory. Mr. W. Ogilvie was a member of this expedition, being specially charged with the measurement of a line from the head of Lynn Canal, by the Lewes river and Yukon to the boundary at the 141st meridian, and Messrs. R. G. McConnell and J. McEvoy, of the Geological Survey, were attached as assistants to the expedition.

It is unnecessary to follow the work of the parties in detail, as this is given in several official reports published soon after by the Canadian government.* It may suffice to note that the writer, personally assisted by Mr. McEvoy, traversed and surveyed, in 1887, a route from Telegraph Creek by the Dease, Upper Liard and Frances to a point near the sources of the Tolly, down the latter river, up the Lewes and across the Chilkoot pass to the coast, making in all a distance of 1,322 miles. Mr. McConnell surveyed the Stikine below Telegraph Creek, and the

*See particularly Report on the Yukon District and adjacent northern portion of British Columbia, G. M. Dawson, and Report on Exploration in the Yukon and Mackenzie Basins, R. G. McConnell, both published by the Geological Survey; Exploratory Survey of parts of the Lewes, Tatonduc, Porcupine, Bell, Trout, Peel and Mackenzie Rivers, W. Ogilvie.

Lower Liard, in the same year, and after wintering at Fort Simpson on the Mackenzie and making thence some subsidiary trips during the winter of 1888, examined the Mackenzie to its delta, crossed the mountains, descended the Porcupine and ascended the Yukon and Lewes to the coast. Mr. Ogilvie, after completing an instrumentally measured line by the Lewes and Yukon to the vicinity of the 141st meridian, established winter quarters and an observatory there in the autumn.

Late in the autumn of 1886 "coarse" gold had been found on Forty-mile Creek, and nearly the whole mining population of the region, about 250 in all, was concentrated there. No authentic news of the discovery reached the coast before the early summer of 1887, but in the spring of that year Harper and McQuestion abandoned a post they had established at the mouth of the Stewart and moved to Forty-mile Creek. There about 300 men were at work in 1887, making during the season about \$112,500, much of which, however, came from tributaries of Forty-mile Creek within the Alaska boundary. Four small stern-wheel steamers were already on the river in 1887, and these had ascended as far as the Stewart river. Three of them belonged to the Alaska Commercial Company. T. Boswell and two other prospectors spent the summer on the Teslin or Hootalinqua river and its branches. About 100 miners remained in the country during the winter of 1887-88, and a station of the Church Missionary Society (Buxton) was established near Forty-mile Creek. The total value of gold produced in the district (excluding Alaska) may be roughly estimated at \$70,000.

In the early spring of 1888, Mr. W. Ogilvie, having completed his observations for the determination of the 141st meridian, left the Yukon by the valley of the Tatondue, crossed the watershed to the Porcupine (which was found to head near the sources of the first-named river), and travelled to Lapierre House, thus exploring a route through an entirely unknown territory. After crossing the mountains, he returned southward up the Mackenzie. A possible re-arrangement of the Canada-Alaska boundary was discussed in connection with the Fishery Conference in Washington, early in the year, but without result. (U. S. 50th Cong., 2nd

Sess., Senate Ex. Doc. 146.) The year 1888 was a very unfavourable one for mining, but the gold produced in the Yukon district (Canadian) was estimated at \$40,000.

In 1889, Messrs. J. H. Turner and J. E. McGrath, of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, were sent by their government to ascertain, respectively, the points at which the 141st meridian crosses the Porcupine and Yukon rivers. McGrath re-occupied Ogilvie's observation station. I. C. Russell of the U. S. Geological Survey accompanied the above-mentioned parties. He ascended the Yukon and Lewes rivers and crossed the Chilkoot pass to the coast, thus following (above the mouth of the Porcupine) the route previously examined, geologically, by the writer and Mr. McConnell. His notes on the surface geology of the region appear in Vol. I. Bull. Geol. Soc. Am. (1890). The gold produced during the year in the Yukon district was estimated at \$175,000.

In 1890, according to Hayes, a party of eight prospectors crossed from Taku Inlet to Teslin Lake. Some whaling vessels intended to winter this year at Herschel Island, and probably did so. The Anglican diocese of "Selkirk" (practically identical with the Yukon district) was established by the Provincial Synod, this diocese being separated from that of the Mackenzie River. The estimated value of gold produced in the Yukon district this year was \$175,000.

In 1891, gold was found at Birch Creek, Alaska, 200 miles below Forty-mile Creek, and many of the Forty-mile miners went there. Schwatka organized a second expedition in the interests of several newspapers, to which C. W. Hayes of the U. S. Geological Survey was attached. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what work the leader performed, but Mr. Hayes crossed from Taku Inlet to Teslin Lake, descended to Selkirk, crossed overland from Selkirk to the head of White River and travelled thence down Copper River to the coast. A report, with map, resulting from his journey appears in the National Geographical Magazine (Washington, 1892). In the same year, E. J. Glave was engaged in an exploration across the Chilkat Pass, of which imperfect accounts are given in Frank Leslie's Illustrated and in other periodicals. About 150 men were at work this season in the

Yukon district. W. C. Bompas was appointed bishop of the diocese of Selkirk. Rampart House was moved about twenty miles further up the Porcupine, it having been ascertained that the former site was still within the territory of Alaska. Harper had a trading-post at Selkirk in this year. About 140 miners were employed on Forty-mile Creek, and about ten on Lewes River. The estimated value of gold produced in the Yukon district in 1891 was \$40,000.

With the exception of the Porcupine river, the trade of which was controlled by the Hudson Bay Company, the Alaska Commercial Company held a practical monopoly of the Yukon valley trade until 1892. In this year, the North American Transportation and Trading Company was organized in Chicago, and Fort Cudahy was established as its head-quarters, a short distance below the mouth of Forty-mile Creek. Mining extended from the branches of Forty-mile Creek southward to the tributaries of Sixty-mile Creek, and Miller Creek was worked. About 200 miners wintered in the country. A station of the Church Missionary Society was established at Selkirk. The estimated value of gold produced in 1892 was \$87,500.

In 1893, parties were sent by the governments of Canada and the United States to survey the region of the Alaska "coast-strip" with a view to acquiring data for the determination of the line of boundary. About 260 miners remained in the interior during the winter of 1893-94. The estimated value of gold produced in 1893 was \$176,000.

In the spring of 1894, Inspector Constantine and Sergeant Brown, of the North-west mounted police, were sent in to the Yukon district to collect customs dues and preserve order. W. Ogilvie, in the winter, conducted an exploration up the Taku river, but did not reach Teslin Lake. About 500 miners wintered in the district. I. O. Stringer, of the Canadian Church Missionary Association was at Herschel Island this winter. The estimated value of gold produced in 1894 was \$125,000.

Early in the summer of 1895, it was estimated that not less than 1,000 men were at work in mining in the Yukon district, chiefly on Forty-mile and Sixty-mile Creeks, 350 being employed

on Miller and Glacier Creeks alone. A detachment of twenty mounted police was sent in by way of the mouth of the Yukon. W. Ogilvie accompanied this party. Fort Constantine was built at Cudahy as police head-quarters. Glacier Creek, a tributary of Sixty-mile Creek, was first worked this year. The 141st meridian was run southward across the head-waters of Forty-mile and Sixty-mile Creeks by Ogilvie. Twelve whaling vessels remained at Herschel Island in the winter of 1895-96, and C. E. Whittaker, of the Canadian Church Missionary Association, was stationed there. The gold produced in the Yukon district this year was valued at \$250,000.

In 1896, D. W. Davis was appointed collector of customs for the Yukon district. During the early summer most of the miners were employed on the branches of Forty-mile and Sixty-mile Creeks, but about 100 men were reported to be working along the Teslin or Hootalinqua. Late in August, "coarse" gold was discovered by G. W. Cornack in the Klondyke valley. The richness of the find became established before the end of the year, and a "rush" occurred. Forty-mile and Sixty-mile Creeks were nearly abandoned and the population of Circle City, Alaska, (more than 100 miles below the boundary) was reduced from about 1,000 to about 300. Dawson, or "Dawson City" was laid out by J. Ladue at the mouth of Klondyke Creek. Glacier and Miller Creeks had been, up to this time, the richest discovered. Early in the summer, Mr. J. E. Spurr of the U. S. Geological Survey, with two assistants, crossed by the Chilkoot pass and descended the river for the purpose of exploring that part of the gold-bearing region which extends into Alaska. Forty head of cattle were this summer driven in over the "Dalton trail" from Chilkat to Fort Selkirk. Dalton, by whose name the trail is known, had already crossed several times by this route, from 1894 or perhaps even earlier, but had not made it generally known. The arrival of deserters from the whaling vessels at Herschel Island overland *via* Rampart House on the Poreupine, is mentioned in the police report as having occurred annually for some years. The value of gold obtained in the Yukon district in 1896 is estimated at \$300,000.

In the spring of 1897, T. Fawcett was sent to the Yukon district as gold commissioner, with two assistant surveyors. Twenty-five police with an officer were also despatched *via* the Chilkoot pass to relieve those in the country who had engaged for two years only. J. A. McArthur and A. St Cyr were sent by the surveyor-general to examine the Chilkat pass and Dalton trail, and the country between the Stikine and Teslin Lake, respectively. The continued great influx of population led, later in the season, to the appointment, from August 15th, of Major J. M. Walsh as chief executive officer for the Yukon district. Judge McGuire of the Supreme Court of the North-west Territories was transferred to the Yukon and Mr. F. C. Wade was appointed registrar, crown prosecutor and clerk of court. Since September 1st, additional detachments of police, aggregating 100 men, have been despatched to the Yukon district. In August, Mr. T. W. Jenning, with assistants, was sent by the Canadian government to examine a route *via* the Stikine and overland from Telegraph Creek, the head of navigation on that river, to Teslin Lake, with a view to the construction of a railway. In October, the Hon. Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, crossed the Chilkoot pass to the lakes and returned to the coast by the White pass, in order to ascertain the precise conditions prevailing there. An unprecedented rush of miners and others set in during the summer to the Yukon district, the majority going by way of the Chilkoot and White passes, from the head of Lynn Canal, some ascending the Yukon from its mouth on Behring Sea, and others filtering in by various channels. The results of this movement of population, both in the district and elsewhere, are still engaging the attention of the public and the press.

The value of gold produced in 1897 is roughly estimated at \$2,500,000, an amount greater by half a million dollars than that obtained from the Cariboo district of British Columbia in 1861, the year of the discovery and first working of Williams and Lightning Creeks.

With regard to the above brief historical notes on the Yukon district, it may be explained that the data for the earlier years are for the most part derived from the report of the writer which

has already been referred to. Much attention was given at the time to the establishment of dates and events, by means of correspondence carried on with Mr. R. Campbell, and others connected with its early history. In the report referred to, additional particulars with the names of many subordinate actors may be found. It will be noted, however, that with the exception of a few collateral allusions, attention has been strictly confined to the Yukon district and adjacent northern part of British Columbia. The history of Alaska and that of the coast region are scarcely touched on. To have included these would have greatly lengthened these notes and would have involved the addition of much information already published elsewhere. It may also be observed, that the figures given for the value of the gold produced in the several years are merely rough approximations, intended to represent the gold obtained within the borders of the Yukon district of Canada. The uncertainty, up to 1896, of the position of several productive streams tributary to Forty-mile and Sixty-mile Creeks in relation to the boundary, with the constant intercommunication by miners from different parts of the region, have rendered it impossible to discriminate fully between the product from Alaska and that from the Yukon district, more especially as no authorized means have existed of endeavoring to ascertain the total output on the ground.

GEORGE M. DAWSON.

