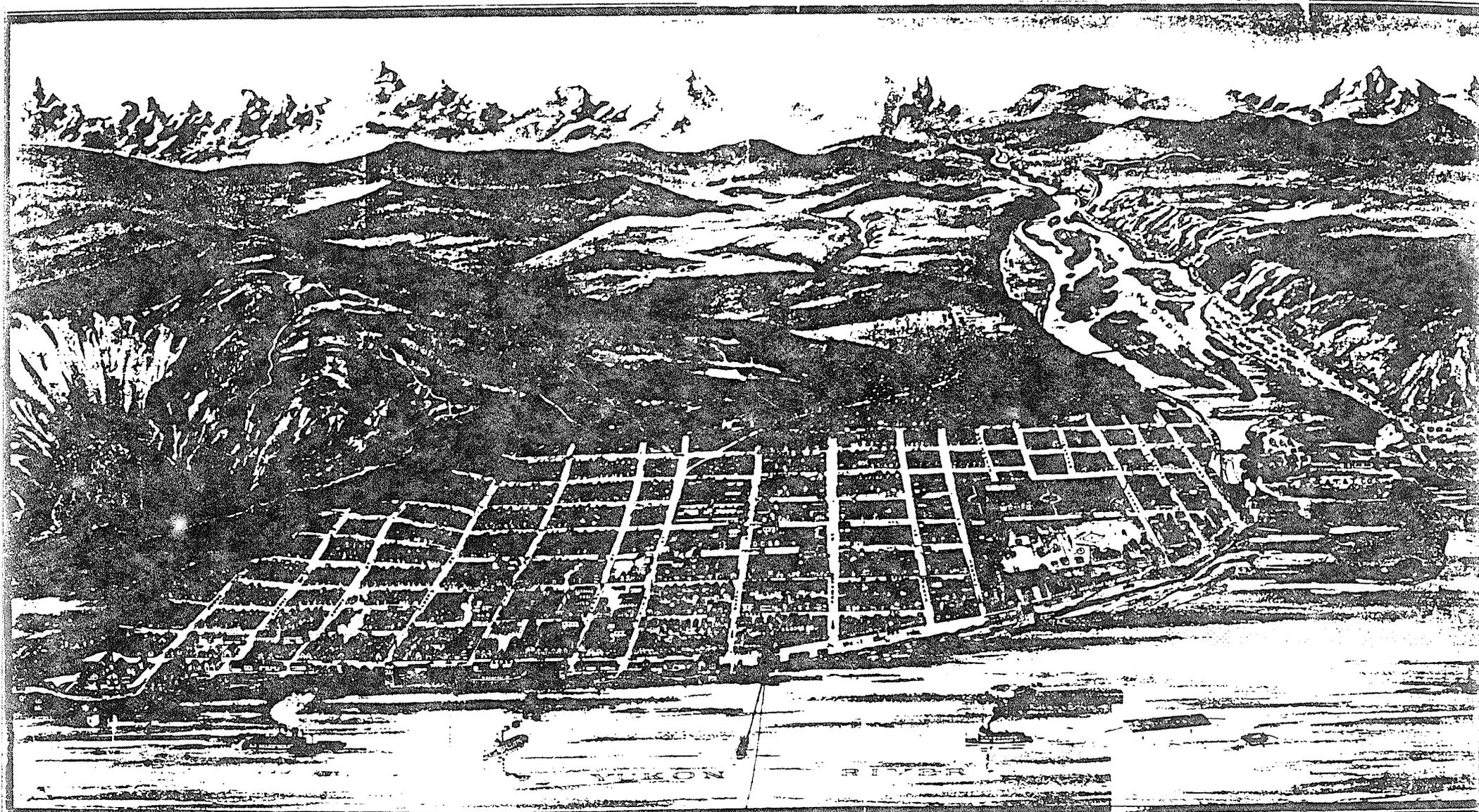


City of Gold:
Dawson, Yukon Territory, 1896-1918

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Henry James Guest
May 1982



Birdseye View of Dawson, Yukon Ter., 1903.

REPRODUCED BY THE DAWSON CITY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY 1977



1. Klondike Market Gardens.
2. Administration Building and Grounds, \$130,000.
3. Territorial Court Building, \$35,000.
4. N.W.M.P. Barracks and Grounds.
5. Government House, \$50,000.
6. Electric Light and Power Plant.
7. McDonald Iron Works.
8. Fire Dept. No. 1.
9. Yukon Sea.
10. St. Paul's Church.

11. Good Samaritan Hospital.
12. St. Andrew's Presb. Church and Parsonage.
13. Methodist Church and Parsonage.
14. Pacific Gold Storage Plant.
15. Public School and Grounds, \$50,000.
16. Amateur Athletic Club, \$30,000.
17. Arctic Brotherhood Hall, \$10,000.
18. Yukon Hardware Co., Capital \$125,000.
19. T. G. Wilson (Brick), \$75,000.
20. Macaulay Bros. Warehouse.

21. Canadian Bank of Commerce.
22. Bank of P. N. A.
23. Merchants Transportation Co. Dock.
24. White Pass and Yukon Docks.
25. Northern Commercial Co.'s Wharf.
26. Northern Commercial Co.'s Block.
27. N. A. T. & T. Co's Wharves.
28. N. A. T. & T. Co's Block.
29. Northern Commercial Co's Warehouse.

30. Post Office, Telegraph and Customs.
31. Auditorium Theatre.
32. Palmer Bros. Warehouse.
33. Asmus Mercantile Co.
34. The Ladies Co.
35. Lumber Mill District.
36. Ladies Quarts Mill.
37. H. A. T. & T. Coal Breakers.
38. Catholic Church, Hospital and School.

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CITY OF GOLD:
DAWSON, YUKON TERRITORY, 1896-1918

BY
HENRY JAMES GUEST

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

The popular image of Dawson is that it was a wide open frontier town whose streets were lined with saloons, dance halls and houses of ill repute. Although Dawson resembled such a town for only a few weeks, that impression was conveyed by the yellow press and perpetuated in penny fiction and motion pictures. By 1899, the community was less a frontier mining camp than a modern urban centre with the physical structures of a territorial capital. The town's location on a major transportation corridor and proximity to the gold bearing creeks assured its future as a distribution centre and the banks and corporations confirmed Dawson's mercantile function.

As the gold rush subsided, the community faced a variety of administrative and social problems. In 1902 Dawson was incorporated despite the opposition of its commercial interests but after three years the largest taxpayers persuaded the Yukon Commissioner to revoke the city's charter. The resulting confusion was never effectively resolved. The disorder, however, did not affect the enforcement of the law. There were NWMP constables in Dawson from the town's inception and their ruthless response to criminal activity prevented the anarchy which characterized mining camps in Alaska. While their interpretation of the law was sometimes harsh and heavy-handed, even their critics conceded that the circumstances required authoritarian rule. Fire protection was another matter of constant concern. The people of Dawson only paid for a professional fire department after a series of conflagrations almost destroyed the town. The fire department consumed much of the annual revenues and the costs of fire protection led to the downfall of the city council. The development of other amenities and utilities reflected the influence of an industrial region on its centre. The telephone system was built to meet the demand for communication

to the creeks and Dawson only had electricity because the mining companies sold the excess they generated.

The community also grappled with the social problems connected with the liquor traffic, prostitution and epidemics of disease. In the early years, the authorities recognized that saloons were legitimate social institutions which contributed large sums to the territorial treasury and thus they concentrated only on removing their attendant evils. Prostitution was a different issue but the officials responded in a similar fashion. The efforts to control the women passed through three distinct phases and by 1907 Dawson was no worse than any comparable town in southern Canada. While the community accepted some social evils, it was determined to prevent epidemics of disease. The typhoid outbreak of 1898 led the Yukon Council to make public health a priority and it passed sanitary regulations, appointed inspectors and subsidized the town's two hospitals.

In the two decades after 1898, Dawson slowly declined. A demographic study, however, suggests that the gold rush did not end abruptly but rather continued until 1910 and perhaps until 1914. In the years after 1903, the number of arrivals and departures was consistently high and the large proportion of transients in the population accounts for many of the social and economic problems which the city encountered. Although Dawson remained the metropolitan centre of the Yukon Territory, the transition from labour intensive to capital intensive mining eliminated the market in the hinterland and undermined the town's mercantile function. External events also affected the community. The outbreak of war in Europe curtailed industrial activity in the region and enlistments further reduced the population. Wartime inflation and economic recession also took their toll and by the end of 1918 Dawson was only a shadow of what it once had been.

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Preface

The history of Dawson is difficult to discuss chronologically, particularly because the two decades after 1898 cannot be divided into discernible periods. While it is easy to demonstrate when Dawson was founded and when it experienced a boom in population, the subsequent stages in its evolution are not as conspicuous. Paradoxically, the processes of consolidation and decline were coincident. The physical appurtenances of the city were built on a permanent foundation at the same time as the population steadily diminished. The community also had to grapple with a number of complex issues which arose as it matured. Reform movements, for example, periodically launched campaigns for prohibition and against gambling, dance halls and prostitution. Examination of these themes and topics is the clearest and most convenient means by which to investigate Dawson's chequered past. Thus, the organization is thematic rather than strictly chronological.

Dawson cannot be discussed within the frameworks ordinarily employed by urban historians. Many historians have examined cities and towns as examples of the process of urbanization. They have equated urbanization with population growth, industrial development, economic diversification, geographic expansion and social stratification.¹ Some urban historians have focused on city planning and city promotion while others have emphasized architectural and landscape design, housing, transportation and land use. In every case, they have been concerned with the growth of an urban environment. It is difficult to examine Dawson in that context for the simple reason that, after the early years, Dawson did not grow. The process of urbanization was compressed into a few weeks or months during the great gold rush of 1898. After the

rush had passed its crest, the town experienced no significant economic development or diversification and its social stratification is hard to identify beyond superficial occupational differences. There were, for example, no exclusive neighbourhoods. One indication of this fact is that Dawson had three judges and each lived in a different part of Dawson. Nor was there a labour movement of any size. For these reasons, the usual concepts of urbanization have little utility in a study of Dawson.

Other historians have regarded metropolitanism as the major element in the development of urban centres.² Metropolitanism involves a mixture of factors, including a centre's location, dynamic internal leadership, favourable external influences and a potentially rich hinterland. Metropolises generally develop into commercial centres which are able to control their surrounding regions. Most cities develop in stages from colonial entrepôts, to commercial towns, to commercial-manufacturing cities and finally to diversified metropolises. Dawson, however, was not a metropolis in the classic sense because it did not progress beyond the second stage. The reasons are discussed in chapter 2 and the conclusion.

A third school of urban historians has viewed the city as a physical entity. These people have discussed the process of city building by examining topics such as planning, spatial growth, architecture, housing, suburbanization and transportation technology.³ For the most part, those themes are irrelevant in Dawson. There was only the most primitive form of planning; William Ogilvie's original grid pattern was designed primarily to expedite the sale of land. After 1898, there was no spatial growth, little suburbanization and, apart from graded streets

and the Klondike Mines Railway, almost no improvement in transportation technology. Dawson's architecture was determined by the materials available and the skill of the builders. Although large scale business and financial interests harboured grand building schemes, the result was a mixture of many styles, mostly primitive and functional. There are, then, severe limitations to examining Dawson in this context.

Still other historians have analysed urban society. Using quantitative techniques, they have discerned demographic characteristics such as population growth and composition, turnover and persistence, class and mobility.⁴ These analyses have sometimes revealed tangible facts of ordinary city life and a similar approach might have cast different light on Dawson. Here the problem lay with the documents. There simply are too few reliable sources for a full scale demographic study. Municipal records, for the most part, do not exist. In 1979, the Yukon Archives contacted the acting Administrator for Dawson and a former city manager regarding microfilm reproductions of the tax rolls believed to be stored in the city office. The latter officer confirmed that "they were thrown out along with 'a lot of other City records' just before he arrived."⁵ The notes to chapter 4 cite those which have survived. Employment records are similarly unavailable. The Yukon Archives has an incomplete collection of the records of St. Mary's Hospital but they are classified as confidential and restricted and thus may not be cited. The birth, marriage and death records are inadequate for fruitful study because of large gaps in the collections. Census data also leave much to be desired. The manuscript census of 1901 is not yet available and the published volumes have only limited utility. The population statistics on Dawson, for example, do not include a table of distribution by sex. There is, moreover, a discrepancy of 100% in the size of Dawson's

population in the 1901 census and in Ferguson's Dawson City, Yukon Territory and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer for the same year and the census may be the suspect document. There are also problems with Polk's Directories since they do not list non-working women or children. Nonetheless, there are enough records for what is admittedly a very broad demographic analysis. The findings appear in chapter 3.

Dawson also cannot be discussed very well in the context of urban reform. Historians of urban reform in other places have concentrated on areas such as social welfare, the changing structure of municipal governments, the planning of the physical environment and on the question of public ownership or regulation of civic utilities.⁶ They have often found that there was a gap between reform ideology and practice and some have suggested that men of business used reform rhetoric in order to concentrate municipal power in their own hands. In Dawson, however, reform efforts were directed by persons outside the community and aimed at the government at Ottawa more than at the authorities on the scene. There was, then, a political dimension in Dawson which was not as apparent in other towns and cities. Chapter 4 discusses the structure of municipal government in Dawson and chapter 7 deals with the question of utilities.

The most promising framework might seem to be the resource towns model proposed by Gilbert Stelter and Alan Artibise.⁷ Stelter and Artibise suggested that a resource town acts as an agent for a metropolitan centre by collecting and shipping staples for processing in the metropolis and by distributing goods received from it. They outlined four basic characteristics of all resource towns. The principal one is the town's status as an "adjunct" of an industrial enterprise, such as

mining. A second feature is the town's inability to control its own development since its economic base is controlled by outsiders, often corporations or government, who determine the degree of prosperity and growth. External factors, fluctuations in international markets or political decisions, affect its economy more than local initiatives. A third characteristic of resource towns is their simplified occupational structure. The problems of isolation, high wages and expensive technology discourage the development of a diversified economy and the limited number of merchants and professionals contributes to the weakness of the town's middle class. The last common aspect of resource towns is their appearance. They are either ramshackle communities dominated by a mine or mill or planned sites filled with prefabricated structures. Finally, resource towns are either supply and service centres or company towns dominated by one industrial enterprise.

Stelter and Artibise asserted, with some justification, that Dawson was the prototype of the supply and service resource town, an instant town produced by "the sudden and intense nature of gold mining development."⁸ Apart from the four characteristics, however, this framework has little to offer, especially since the primary concern of Stelter and Artibise is with planning and government involvement at the design level of company towns. The existing literature on resource towns is not much help because it, too, is concentrated almost exclusively on company towns.⁹ Dawson was not a company town before 1920 and it does not conform to the models used in much of the literature.

Gilbert Stelter's work on the mining towns of northern Ontario is also concentrated on company towns.¹⁰ While the towns he described were physically isolated and built on

inhospitable terrain, they were all part of the Sudbury area community and Stelter conceded that they were very different from the boomtowns of the Klondike, Alaska or even the Ontario silver belt.¹¹ The best known centre in the Ontario silver belt was Cobalt. Cobalt developed in a fashion parallel to Dawson.¹² After the discovery of silver deposits in 1903, the town experienced a rapid increase in population and it grew quickly. But it took shape as an Ontario town, closely linked to Toronto by rail, road and telegraph. Its Methodist minister, for example, itinerated from Toronto and Haileybury. The most recent authority on Cobalt examined the town in the context of metropolitanism.¹³ D.O. Baldwin declared that the growth of the silver mines stimulated the development of the region as a whole and Cobalt acquired full metropolitan stature. Dawson, however, did not and Baldwin provided few ideas for a study of Dawson.

A very different theory may account for Dawson's failure to acquire the usual metropolitan attributes. Richard Stuart discerned elements of "the process of underdevelopment" at work in the Canadian north.¹⁴ Stuart contended that by 1903 the society and economy of the Yukon had become colonial and the territory had fallen into a pattern of "underdevelopment". As its resource base was depleted, it was unable to develop secondary industry or agriculture and when the wealth generated locally ran out, all further development depended on imported capital. In this scheme of things, the Yukon was not a frontier but a peripheral exporter of raw material. The territory lacked the political and economic power to alter the situation and it could not follow the pattern of development of other areas of Canada as long as the gold flowed out.

Stuart asserted that there was nothing inevitable about the forms of the Yukon's economy and society. Indeed, the South African experience in the same period demonstrated that a staple could be exported without the structures of underdevelopment becoming established. According to Stuart, South African governments regarded the Witwatersrand deposits as too important to be left to "the tender mercies of the market". They exacted high mining royalties, taxes and duties, and controlled monopolies, especially dynamite and railways, and used the revenues generated to stimulate the rest of the economy. A similar dirigist policy in the Yukon would have required local political and economic authority, control of external transportation and internal communications, primary resource diversification and a stable population.

The alternative to development in this fashion was "primitive accumulation", the extraction of the placer gold as quickly and as cheaply as possible. Stuart attributed this latter process to the twin evils of a laissez-faire economy and federal government rapacity. The federal encouragement of nationally chartered banks and Canadian corporations and reluctance to establish the institutions of representative government reduced the territory to a mere producer of a primary resource. While Dawson had the potential to become a modern urban centre, balanced economic development was impossible as long as the gold upon which it depended was merely extracted and removed. Before long, superior production and resource development depended on outside capital and secondary industry and agriculture could not be sustained. By 1906, he concluded, the city and the territory were firmly locked into the process of underdevelopment.

While this analysis appears to explain how the Yukon acquired its social and economic character, there are serious problems with it. Too much depends on Stuart's interpretation of the South African experience and his summary dismissal of environmental factors is especially suspect. Despite his affirmations, the parallel between the Klondike and the Rand was hardly exact. The northern climate, Dawson's geographic location, the presence of permafrost and absence of high quality iron and coal, all militated against the development of a diversified industrial economy. These factors are discussed in the conclusion.

Dawson, then, does not easily conform to the frameworks ordinarily used by historians of urban communities. It differed from other cities and towns for several reasons but one had overriding importance. The myth of Dawson was a common thread throughout the literature on the Klondike. The vast majority of the published sources described Dawson as an exciting frontier town where saloons ran wide open day and night, where prostitutes roamed the streets at will, and where fortunes changed hands at the gambling tables. In the popular imagination, Dawson was a wild west town transplanted to the Arctic. American journalists created that impression and it was conveyed across the continent by the popular press. Stories of gold discoveries and fantastic tales of a northern Eldorado sold newspapers but they also gave Dawson its reputation as a loud, lusty and lawless town. The origins of the myth and the vehicles which perpetuated it are discussed in the first chapter.

There may not have been much substance to the myth, especially after the summer of 1898, but nonetheless the myth pervaded and still pervades Dawson. The myth affected

the town's development, both directly and indirectly. Stories of lawlessness led outsiders to demand that the North-West Mounted Police enforce the law more strictly than the circumstances required. Reformers in southern Canada pressured the federal government to crack down on a town whose streets supposedly were lined with saloons and houses of ill repute. The currency of those assumptions allowed federal officials extraordinary latitude in their behaviour, sometimes with disastrous consequences for the local residents. The myth of Dawson was part of the myth of the Klondike as a whole and the gold rush had an enormous impact on the community. The great stampede accelerated Dawson's growth and compressed the whole process of "urbanization" into a matter of weeks. By the fall of 1898, Dawson was the supply and service centre of an industrial region. But the gold rush and the nature of placer mining also established the demographic pattern examined in chapter 3.

As the rush subsided and as Dawson acquired relative stability, its citizens faced a series of administrative and logistical problems. They had to find solutions to questions about the form of local government, law and law enforcement, protection from fire and the development of proper services and utilities. Each of the chapters on these subjects is a departure from previous thought. The residents also had to resolve the social problems associated with saloons and the traffic in liquor, prostitution and threats to public health. On many occasions, they responded with a pragmatism that failed to satisfy "reformers" not acquainted with the situation. A combination of myth and demography explains the character of those solutions. The demographic pattern was, in large part, a result of the myth and it accounts for the kinds of crime and disease that Dawson experienced as well as the

presence of saloons and prostitution and the chronic shortage of public funds for welfare measures.

This thesis, then, has a theoretical framework but it is not one of those ordinarily used by urban historians. It applies some of the themes used in studies of demography, metropolitanism, urban society and resource towns, but it places them in context with a myth. The myth of Dawson is crucial to an understanding of the town. Although one authority suggested that it no longer persists and certainly "not among scholars and intelligent people", for evidence to the contrary one need only consult North of 53°: The Wild Days of the Alaska-Yukon Mining Frontier 1870-1914 by William R. Hunt, a professor of History at the University of Alaska. The myth was more recently illustrated in The Klondike Fever, a motion picture based on the stories of Jack London, starring Rod Steiger as Soapy Smith, Gordon Pinsent as "Swift-water Bill" Gates and Lorne Green as Sam Steele, and made with the assistance of the Canadian Film Development Corporation. The myth may indeed not be widely believed now but it is still being perpetuated in the popular media. More important, however, is the fact that it was widely believed in the decade after 1898. The myth and its influence explain Dawson in that period better than any theoretical framework. Dawson was unique because it had a myth of international proportions and the town cannot be studied without that context. This thesis may not provide a model for application to other places but its peculiar framework does account for Dawson's singular character in the years after 1898.

Klondyke Reminiscences

I stood on the Ogilvie Bridge one night
where the Klondyke swiftly flows
And wonder'd if ever I'd make a strike
in this land of frost and snows?

I thought of the thousands who tramp'd the trail
bent down with heavy pack,
Of where the devil they'd all gone to
and if they'd ever come back.

How we used to line up to record a claim,
likewise to get our mail;
Of the mosquitos and flies that ate us alive
mushing the swampy trail.

Of the malemites deck'd with plumes and bells,
that raced through the streets like Hell;
Of the awful messes they used to eat
and their darn'd unearthly yell.

Of the mad stampedes we all went on
like a lot of bewilder'd geese;
Of the blood red coats and yellow stripes
of the North West Mounted Police.

Of their cowboy hats and tassled boots,
brass buttons and gold lace;
Of the Grand Panjandrum twirling his cane
as he strutted from place to place.

Of the bugle calls heard through the frosty air
when all was calm and still;
Of the flapjacks nail'd on cabin doors
and the virtues of "Swiftwater" Bill.

Of the pokes we handed the sports at the bars
who levied a little on each;
Of the cheechacos haggling with "Waterfront" Brown
about the rent of their tents on the beach.

Of men and horses loaded with gold
that were always passing by;
Of the dogs jumping into the Yukon
when we kept up the Fourth of July.

Of "Sev.-'come-'leven" and "Little Joe",
and "Hit it again" all night;
Of the piano's bang and the violin's twang
and the juicy waltz at its height.

Of the Coaloil Johnnies swilling champagne,
of the diamonds the fairies wore;
Of the moccason'd mushers around the stoves
and the dogs slinking in at the door.

Of the nuggets we used to fling down on the stage
at the dancer's twinkling feet;
Of the burning thirst she always had
whenever we chanc'd to meet.

Of the roulette wheels and the blackjack games
and the rattle of ivory chips;
Of the dance-hall girls at "Nigger" Jim's
and the pout upon their lips.

Of the moral spasms that hit the town
and sent her down the lie;
Of the psalms and prayers we got instead
of the days of Auld Lang Syne.

Of the high old times we sure did have
when everything came our way;
Of Dawson as she used to be
and the joke she is today.

Fred Crewe,
Poems of Klondyke's Early Days
and Alaska's Long White Trail
(Milwaukee: North American Press,
1921).

1 The Making of the Myth

Few events have captured the imagination of the North Atlantic world as did the discovery of gold in the Klondike valley. The news of George Carmack's strike on Bonanza Creek caught the attention of depression-weary men and women. The rush to the Klondike focused on the city of Dawson, a mining camp whose reputation soon reached mythic proportions. Dawson rose meteorically. Two years after its beginning in 1896, it was the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. Less than a year later the bubble burst and the exodus began. It was in those first years that Dawson acquired its reputation and ensured its place in history. The popular image of Dawson is inextricably entwined in the romantic view of the gold rush. The Klondike stampede has been described as a fleeting phenomenon which began quickly and ended suddenly. In that brief interlude Dawson became famous. The city of the summer of 1898 became frozen in time, and the "San Francisco of the North" of those few days has become an enduring theme in the folklore of the North American frontier.

Dawson was not the first gold mining town in the Yukon and Alaska region, nor would it be the last. But it was unquestionably the best known. Returning miners brought word of its existence and Klondike guides portrayed it as the new El Dorado. When journalists raced north, their reports made Dawson famous wherever newspapers were read. In their memoirs, the early citizens embellished the city's reputation and the writers of "penny dreadfuls" perpetuated their impression in fiction. For all these people, the Klondike

stampede was the last great gold rush and Dawson was the last great gold camp. So it is remembered.

When the ocean steamers Exelsior and Portland arrived at San Francisco and Seattle in July 1897, little was known about the Klondike region and few people were interested. The tales of the steamers' cargoes of gold, however, touched off an almost insatiable demand for information. Within weeks, printing houses across the United States, United Kingdom and Canada let loose a flood of Klondike guide books. Many of these slim volumes were hastily assembled scrapbooks, filled with newspaper interviews with those who had struck it rich, plus "practical information" concerning routes to the gold fields, methods of travel, lists of provisions and utensils required, and synopses of mining regulations. If they contained a mixture of exaggerations and enthusiasms, falsehoods and fabrications, they nonetheless reflected the vision of Dawson as a lively arctic metropolis whose streets were paved with gold.

The American interest in the Klondike is illustrated by the number of guides published in the United States. In 1897 and 1898 guides were printed in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. E.O. Crewe's Gold Fields of the Yukon and How to Get There was one of the first released. Crewe described Dawson as the busiest camp on the Yukon River, even though it was less than six months old.¹ L.A. Coolidge's Klondike and the Yukon Country quoted one of the miners who had arrived on the Exelsior to the effect that Dawson had a population of 3,500 and "all the ambitious scope of a bonanza town."² In a book of maps, mining laws and advertisements for San Francisco outfitters, P.S. Montague noted that there were 4,000 people at Dawson, and no shortage of saloons, dance halls and restaurants.³ In Ernest Ingersoll's Gold Fields of the Klondike and the Wonders of Alaska, Dawson emerged as "the metropolis of

the Klondike country and if not the largest city in the world, it now takes first rank among the liveliest and most thriving."⁴ In one of the better guides, the founder of Dawson, Joseph Ladue, described his town as the most important point in the new mining region and destined to be the greatest camp in the history of mining operations.⁵

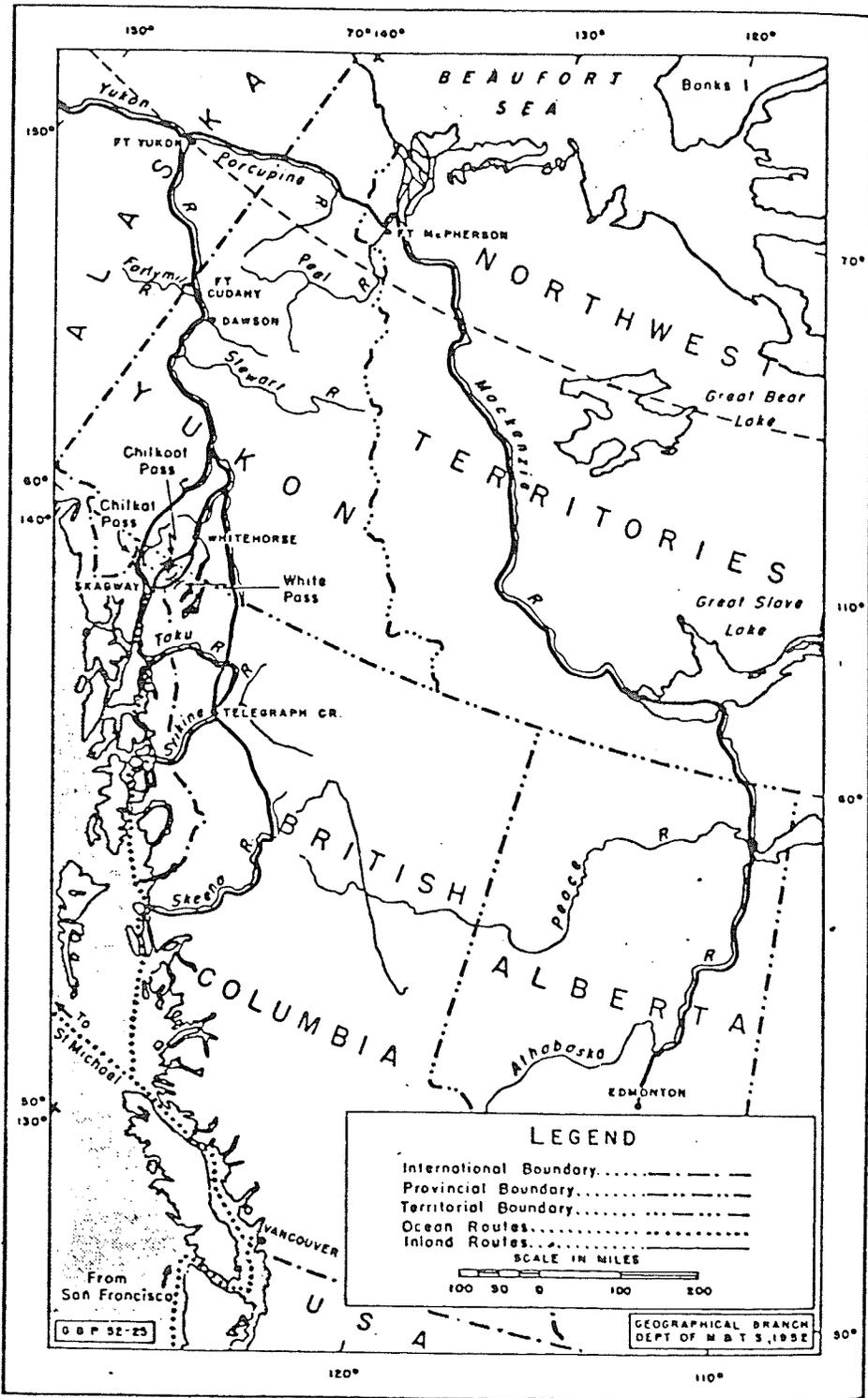
The thirst for information about the Klondike spread across North America and to the United Kingdom. Several British guides were published and Canadian publishers also became caught up in the hysteria. The British and Canadian authors were not immune to the scissors and paste methods of their American counterparts. Almost invariably they declared that, after gold, the chief objects of interest at Dawson were the dance halls, gambling dens and saloons.⁶ The best of the British and Canadian guidebooks was A.N.C. Treadgold's Report on the Gold Fields of the Klondike. In the preface Treadgold remarked: "About no country has there been more irresponsible talk in so short a time, more assumption of knowledge by men who not only have never been to the Yukon, but could not give an account of its conditions if they had."⁷ In this book Treadgold undertook to correct his predecessors' faults, but by the time it was released in the summer of 1899 the gold rush had subsided and there was little demand for information about the Klondike.

The most significant feature about the guidebooks is that they were designed to sell. The use of the words "gold", "el dorado", and "Klondike" virtually ensured large sales. Several went into two and three editions. The advertising in them shows who was most interested in their production. Outfitters and wholesalers in Seattle and San Francisco used them to create enthusiasm for the Klondike stampede and to sell their wares. A few companies went so far as to publish their own guides. A Seattle outfitter wrote The Official Map Guide Seattle to Dawson City, and the North American Transportation

and Trading Company issued its own guide, modestly entitled All About the Gold Fields of Alaska. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company was only one of several rail and steamship companies to publish brochures advertising their routes to the gold fields. Most of the guides, then, were designed to sell something, from gumboots to luxury cabins on Pacific Steamships. In order to encourage prospective stampeders, company publicists drew their pictures of the Klondike region in rosy tints. On the whole, they did not say much about Dawson but they put the town at the centre of the gold fields. There were several routes to the Klondike, but only one destination, and the trails all ended at Dawson.

The Klondike gold rush was one of the best reported events of the 19th century. It occurred at a time when improved transportation had made travel to remote areas relatively easy and inexpensive, and it coincided with the rise of mass communications which had created a market for stories from exotic places. It also happened at a time when refinements and developments in printing allowed for the publication of photographs in newspapers and magazines. Perhaps equally important, it took place when newspapers everywhere competed for the attention of the reading public.

Every major newspaper or newspaper chain in the United States either sent or hired correspondents to report on the stampede to the north. William Randolph Hearst, for example, sent a team of reporters and his papers published special Klondike editions. British publishers were also interested. Reuter's news agency was among the first to receive stories from the Klondike, while the Manchester Guardian, The Times of London and the Daily Graphic each despatched special correspondents. Canadian newspapers were represented as well. The Toronto Globe sent Faith Fenton and Henry J. Woodside went to the Yukon on behalf of the Manitoba Free Press and a syndicate



Routes to the Klondike

of smaller papers.

Many of these people, particularly the Americans, dramatized the gold rush and they led A.N.C. Treadgold to comment that the Klondike had been "a newspaper property, and the newspaper correspondents have not, as a whole, been possessed of the qualifications of mind and body needed by those who desire to convey information about so important a goldfield..."⁸ One problem was that the Klondike was remote; it took months for the correspondents to get there and an equally long time for their reports to return. Yet the Klondike was a "hot" property only in the fall and winter of 1897-98. To keep the attention of readers, and to maintain circulation, some papers fabricated stories until reliable information arrived. The Hearst papers were particularly guilty of this practice. An anonymous contributor to the special Klondike supplement of the New York Journal wrote that at Dawson "there abound reminiscences of the slaughter of innumerable bands of early colonists and explorers."⁹ In later issues, Edward Livernash, one of Hearst's "intrepid argonauts", contributed colourful tales of life in the Klondike. On one occasion he declared:

Dawson is gold, whiskey and women in a riotous whirl. Not Leadville in vermilion heyday, nor Tombstone with the lid off, nor San Francisco in the flush of '49, had more picturesqueness than this camp has today...Front Street never sleeps. There may be some connection between this insomnia and the circumstances that there are fourteen bar-rooms on the street.¹⁰

These articles, and those which described the very real deprivations at Skagway, created the popular impression of Dawson.

Subsequent accounts of conditions in Dawson never adequately erased this initial image. Indeed, if anything, they enhanced it. The better correspondents drew their pictures and created Dawson's reputation through honest reporting and not through purple prose. In the summer of 1898, however, the war with Spain replaced the Klondike as American front page news. The reports filed by Hearst's team at Dawson were

relegated to the back pages of his newspapers. The Klondike rush, then, was a phenomenon exploited by Hearst and his rivals to sell newspapers, and when it was of no more use to them they gave it up. Yet the impression they created passed into the folklore of the American frontier.

For British and Canadian newspapers the Klondike remained good copy. The Reuter's special correspondent filed his first story from Dawson on 12 July 1898. He was the first to discuss the iniquities of the territorial administration. Worse than the official corruption was the influence exercised by saloonkeepers, gamblers and the proprietors of dance halls, whose premises lined Dawson's main street.¹¹ The reports of the Times colonial correspondent, Flora Shaw, reinforced this view of Dawson. In a series of letters, she conjured up a scene of frantic activity and went on to describe the music halls "where the idle drink, dance, and gamble", and where gold dust was the medium of exchange. Her last letter contained a biting indictment of the local government. The general feeling in Dawson, she wrote, was that the laws were bad and the officials corrupt.¹² A.N.C. Treadgold's letters to the Manchester Guardian, on the other hand, declared that there was little crime in Dawson, and that the saloons were well regulated. Treadgold also portrayed Dawson as an exciting cosmopolitan city whose streets were thronged with men of all nations.¹³

The most prolific Canadian correspondent was the Toronto Globe's Faith Fenton. As the employee of the broadsheet of Canadian Liberalism, she denied that the government was corrupt, and charged: "There are difficulties of administration that Miss Shaw, with all her ability, could not possibly comprehend within the limits of two or three weeks' stay in the territory." But she too reflected the excitement prevalent in Dawson in the summer of 1898. It was, she declared, "a city of 16,000 souls, and the centre of a district of 30,000, a live busy city, with its streets thronged with men..."¹⁴

She concluded that Dawson was a mining centre whose future was assured.

The rush to the Klondike occurred at the transition stage in publishing when photographs had just begun to replace lithographs in illustrated newspapers and magazines. In 1898, a few publishers assigned special artists to join the stampede and to send back first hand pictorial reports. The London Daily Graphic sent Charles Edwin Fripp. Between April and October 1898, Fripp submitted 18 phlegmatic letters on the miseries of the Stikine River route, and his letters about Dawson were laced with sarcasm and satire. They are delightful reading. His sojourn in Dawson was hardly the reward he expected after the hardship of the trek northward, and his comments were decidedly pessimistic. The text which accompanied his sketches betrayed as much about himself as it did about Dawson. His drawing of Front Street noted that there were some pretentious buildings:

most of which were dedicated to the sale of spirits to the noble white men, the pioneers of civilization, who were seen swarming about the doors in every variety of rough clothing, all of course, with their hands in the trouser pockets, heads craning forward elegantly, and most of them straddle-legged, smoking, chewing and spitting. The open sale of liquor in the prohibition province of the North-West territory appears strange; more curious is the tolerance of the social evil so glaringly apparent in Dawson.¹⁵

The Dawson of these letters was a rough and bawdy place.

Other magazines sent their own artist-correspondents. The Illustrated London News despatched Julius Price. His sketches were much like Fripp's but his comments were hardly as ascerbic.¹⁶ Edwin Tappan Adney represented Harper's Weekly, and his articles were profusely illustrated with original photographs. Adney found saloons to be the centre of Dawson's social life, and he related his experiences at the Opera House, at "Pete's Place" and at the El Dorado Café. The photographs included several scenes of crowds waiting on

the waterfront or lounging in the street in front of the saloons.¹⁷ The Scribner's correspondent, Frederick Palmer, echoed many of Adney's remarks and added some comment on the "pilgrims" who arrived in Dawson in 1898. They were members of the "parasitic class", women of the demi-monde, prize-fighters, speculators, capitalists, bankrupt shopkeepers and ne'er-do-well sons. Palmer had nothing but contempt for the stable attendants turned clerks and inspectors who administered the Klondike. The mounted police were the only officials who merited respect, and it was all they could do to maintain order in Dawson.¹⁸

If they did not send correspondents, most popular periodicals printed manuscripts which they received. These tended to concentrate on the perils of the trip northward but few neglected to mention Dawson. They referred to the town in phrases ranging from "a squalid collection of log huts", "the most wicked in the history of camp towns", to "the most remarkable mining camp in the wide world".¹⁹ Almost all commented on Dawson's liveliness and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Dawson's reputation as a booming and bawdy frontier town was in large part the creation of newspaper reporters and magazine writers. To them, Dawson was a great curiosity, an unsophisticated mining camp which had risen on a bog. When they were there, the accessories of civilisation had not arrived, and most left before Dawson became a stable community. They saw Dawson as a raw and wild youth, and their portrait became accepted as the standard version.

While this portrait had elements of truth, much was exaggerated. Dawson was never as lawless as some of the journalists described it. On the surface it appeared to conform to the American model of the frontier town where saloons, gambling and vice flourished in the absence of authority. In Dawson, however, the mounted police kept them under control. The police became part of the mythology surrounding Dawson, as the British equivalent of the gunslingers who brought order to the American west. At the same time, almost all the major

journalists travelled to the Klondike via Skagway. There they found the town they expected, run by Soapy Smith and his band of thugs and footpads. Skagway was an integral part of the Klondike experience, and it may have coloured readers' impressions of the rest of that experience. The allegations of official corruption and maladministration in Dawson might easily have been interpreted as evidence of another wide open town. The emphasis on saloons, gambling dens and dance halls surely added to that impression.

For many of its participants the Klondike rush was the highlight of their lives and they were determined to leave posterity a record of their adventures. The first volumes of reminiscences appeared before the turn of the century when public interest was at its peak, but they continued to be produced throughout the next 60 years as authors harked back to their younger days. These works reflect the predominant character types involved in the gold rush, the romantics, the adventurers, the misfits. Errors, of course, there were and in profusion. As time went on and memories clouded over, names were forgotten, directions confused and numbers exaggerated. But if they were not always absolutely correct, these volumes captured the ethos of the period and they throb with life and excitement.

The memoirs, better than any other source, relate how Dawson appeared to the new arrivals. They invariably commented on the tents and log huts, on the soggy streets, and on the number of saloons and gambling houses. Arthur Walden, a dog driver of some repute, contended that saloons and gambling halls were Dawson's chief industries.²⁰ When Michael MacGowan arrived, every second building was a public house, and they were the best built places in the city.²¹ As the rush to the Klondike reached its crest the saloons were always full, not only with thirsty men but with prospective miners seeking information. Most authors recalled their visits to Harry

Ash's "Northern", Bill McPhee's "Pioneer", 'Swiftwater' Bill Gates' "Monte Carlo", and Pete McDonald's "M & N". Few neglected to mention that these places had a room at the back where patrons were encouraged to risk their gold at poker, faro, roulette and other games of chance.²² Saloons were the centres of Dawson's social life. There was always someone there. They were open 24 hours a day, every day except Sunday, and even then Stratford Tollemache alleged that they all had a back door where they dispensed libations on the Sabbath.²³

Some of the saloons also served as dance halls and theatres. "Scotty" Allen recalled that Dawson's dance hall girls were attractive enough to men who had been isolated in the wilds, but Basil Austin thought the miners were "just damn fools to swap pure gold for such bait."²⁴ The theatrical performances always attracted large audiences and Thomas Wiedemann remembered that unless he got there early, he had to stand behind the crowd where it was difficult to see the stage through the clouds of tobacco smoke.²⁵ The programmes sometimes included song and dance artists, clog dancers and prize fights. One old sourdough described "a good show" by a new "serio-comic" who had done "one of the finest and completest undressing acts you ever seen."²⁶ Other writers stoutly denied that there had been "ribald scenes and shocking familiarity" in the dance halls they frequented, although they conceded that the entertainment might have been less discreet than that offered in saloons elsewhere.²⁷

Another conspicuous feature which the memoirs always mentioned was the large number of women of the demi-monde. Mary Lee Davis declared that "scarlet women were the most notable accents of Dawson's sights and bright lights. A blind man could have sensed their common presence."²⁸ Nevill Armstrong asserted that they were everywhere, and it was difficult to walk down the streets, without confronting them.²⁹ Victorian

proprieties did not prevent others from making similar comments, and even Martha Louise Black, wife of a Yukon commissioner, described the painted women in her autobiography.³⁰

Dawson could have been a wide open town where anything was possible, but it was not. It had saloons and dance halls and brothels, but it also had the North West Mounted Police. It is curious, however, that few of the memoirs refer to the police presence in Dawson. The "mounties" were an important element in the Klondike experience but not one that was emphasized in Dawson. The writers of memoirs often recalled the heroic exploits of constables at various points on the routes to the gold fields, and it was there, rather than in Dawson, that the mounted police became enshrined in the Klondike myth.

For many people the journey to the Klondike was the most exciting part of their lives. Dawson was part of an unforgettable experience. Many had never seen a mining camp before and would not see one again, and for them Dawson was the only one of its kind. In their memoirs, these men and women emphasized its individuality, its saloons, dance halls and houses of ill fame. To old-timers and veterans of other rushes those institutions were fixtures of mining camps and the "cheechakos" were the only novelty. Many of the writers fell into the same trap as the newspaper reporters, and their memoirs reinforced the popular impression created by the yellow press. For them, the adventure was over when they reached Dawson and they left after a few days or weeks. A large number of the memoirs exhibited the "I was there" syndrome, the boast that the authors had participated in momentous events. That may explain the number of witnesses to things, such as the shooting of Dan McGrew, which never happened. Later monographs, Kathryn Winslow's Big Pan-Out and Pierre Berton's Klondike, emphasized the circus atmosphere at Dawson because their authors relied heavily on memoirs and recollections which conveyed this impression.

Tales of prominent participants form a small part of the literature of the Klondike gold rush. The heroic or villainous exploits of men and women who rose from rags to riches provided the stuff from which popular biographies were made. Few readers could resist the stories of humble people whose strength of character enabled them to complete the arduous trek to the gold fields, where they achieved success, it seemed, by sheer force of will.

The variety of subjects reflects the traditional view of the gold rush. That it was not a matter of political or administrative importance is suggested by the absence of biographies of territorial officials. There is, on the other hand, an abundance of biographies of saloonkeepers and entertainers. The True Life Story of Swiftwater Bill Gates recounted the efforts of Gates' mother-in-law to corner him in the "roughest kind of mining camp."³¹ Tex Rickard, the New York fight promoter and sports entrepreneur, got his start in Dawson as gambler and barman at the Monte Carlo and Northern saloons.³² The Dawson of saloons and dance halls formed the background for biographies of entertainers such as Wilson Mizner.³³ Ellis Lucia's Klondike Kate, an overblown biography of a second rate variety actress, is steeped in the Dawson of 1898, even though the self-proclaimed "Queen of the Yukon" did not arrive until 1900.³⁴

Churches were important institutions at Dawson and there are a few biographies of prominent Klondike clergymen. Paradoxically, John McNab's account of the work done by Presbyterian missionary Andrew S. Grant only confirmed Dawson's bawdy reputation. According to McNab, Grant was a tireless crusader against the "palaces of gilt and guilt", and he fought hard to eliminate the "semaphores of sin". But all his efforts went for nought, as "the sheer animalism of many miners when they struck it rich, led to midnight debauches with the ladies of easy virtue in the dance halls."³⁵ Nonetheless, McNab affirmed that Grant's persistent leadership eventually

made Dawson the cleanest mining camp in the world.

On the whole, the popular biographies reinforce the myth of Dawson as the "San Francisco of the North". Many were designed either to villify or to venerate their protagonists, and they contain little reliable background material. Their subjects often were in Dawson for only a short time during the gold rush and they left to become famous elsewhere. The biographers drew their settings from the newspapers and other secondary sources and thus reinforced the myth of the lawless frontier.

Fiction set in the Klondike, perhaps more than any other vehicle, has perpetuated the myth of Dawson. The gold rush spawned an enormous number of novels and stories of adventure and romance which sought to re-create the Klondike experience. As W.K. Hubbard has noted, this literature generally conveys two major themes: the struggle between men and an hostile environment in which only the fittest survived, and the depiction of Dawson as a lusty mining camp in the tradition of the American west.³⁶ Few of these novels have any literary merit and most have been relegated to well deserved oblivion. Yet in the last years of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th they were churned out and apparently avidly read by a large audience.

The literature of the Klondike appealed to readers of all ages. There were children's pulp magazines such as the Young Klondike series, whose publisher advertised: "Every Story Complete and Based on Facts", "Valuable and Useful Information Woven into Tales of Wonderful Adventures". The 39 issues which appeared between 16 March 1898 and 19 April 1899 were written by Francis Worcester Doughty, and supposedly "were considerably researched." In the first, Ned Golden alias Young Klondike and his companion Dick Lucky set off for the north to make their fortunes. En route they rescue Edith Walton from a

YOUNG KLONDIKE

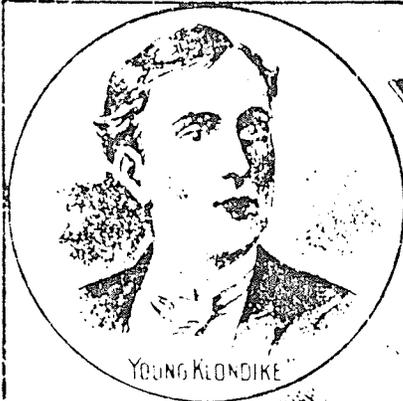
STORIES OF A GOLD SEEKER

Issued Semi Monthly—By Subscription \$1.25 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York, N. Y., Post Office by Frank Tousey.

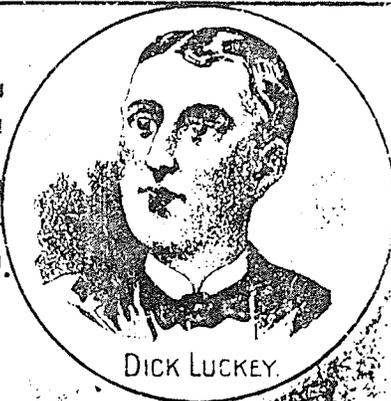
No. 1.

NEW YORK, March 16, 1898.

Price 5 Cents.



YOUNG KLONDIKE



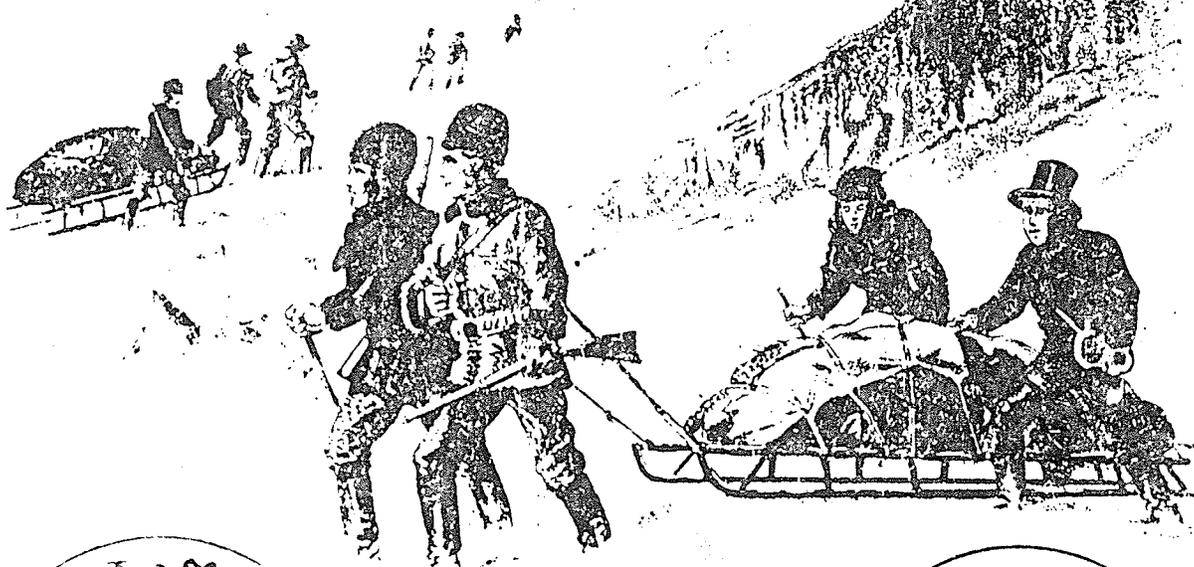
DICK LUCKEY

YOUNG KLONDIKE

— OR —

OFF FOR THE LAND OF GOLD.

BY AN OLD MINER.



EDITH



THE OLD MINER

wrecked steamer and the three complete their journey in the company of the "Unknown," an anonymous detective following the trail of an escaped criminal. Time and time again "the Unknown" saves the children from the clutches of thieves, murderers and bloodthirsty Indians. The first story ends with their safe arrival in Dawson.³⁷ In subsequent issues Ned, Dick and Edith acquire phenomenal claims, become Dawson's richest residents and have fantastic adventures while prospecting on Rocky River and at other imaginary locations in the Yukon and Alaska.

The bulk of the gold rush literature was aimed at an adult audience. There were a few works written by people who had spent some time at Dawson and whose characters were only thinly disguised. In W.H.P. Jarvis' The Great Gold Rush, Colonel Sam Steele emerges as Major Strongbow, while in S. Hall Young's The Klondike Clan Father Judge appears as Father Justus.³⁸ Most of the Klondike novelists, however, had never been near the Yukon or Alaska and they included some of the popular writers of the time. Jules Verne, for example, published The Golden Volcano, a two volume novel of the north. James Oliver Curwood, one of the most prolific writers of potboilers in the early 20th century, produced nine novels set in the Klondike. C.W. Gordon, as Ralph Connor, contributed The Prospector and Corporal Cameron. All these, and the spate of melodramas of which they were a part, drew much of their colour from descriptions of Dawson's red light district and saloons.

Only two figures gained literary reputations from their Klondike fiction. Jack London had spent the winter of 1897-98 in the Yukon and that experience formed the background of a good portion of his writing. His Klondike novels and stories are primarily concerned with the perils of life in the wilderness, and only A Daughter of the Snows contains long scenes in Dawson. Yet there are incidents in or references to the city in almost all his Klondike fiction. In The Call of the Wild, two men in a Dawson saloon wager a thousand dollars on the ability of a dog to pull a thousand pound sled. The

companion piece, White Fang, used Dawson as the site of a vicious dog-fighting ring. In "An Odyssey of the North", London described Dawson as "the Golden City where dust flowed like water and dance halls rang with never-ending revelry."³⁹ These stories, and his other Klondike tales, proved to be very popular fiction and Jack London, perhaps more than anyone, is responsible for the image of the Klondike that is remembered today.⁴⁰

The other figure of literary repute was Robert W. Service. Service did not participate in the Klondike stampede, and did not arrive in Dawson until almost a decade later. He was, however, in Los Angeles and San Francisco at the time the Hearst papers broadcast news of the Klondike and it is hard to believe that he was not aware of the frenzy that surrounded him. Indeed, his poetry is reminiscent of the early newspaper reports. In his best known piece, "The Shooting of Dan McGrew", Dawson appeared as a town where the boys "whooped" it up in saloons, where shoot-outs settled gambling disputes, and where dance hall women fleeced the unsuspecting. Many of his other poems reinforce this image. "The Parson's Son" harked back to the days when Dawson ran wide open and includes the line: "No spot on the map in so short a space has hustled more souls to hell." The "tenderloin" was a recurring theme in Service's poetry and his light hearted "The Ballad of Touch-the-Button-Nell" celebrated the redemption of that lady by a miner named Riley Dooleyvitch. In his autobiography, Service confessed that he thought vice a more "vital subject for poetry than virtue, more colourful, more dramatic", so he specialized in the "Red Light" atmosphere.⁴²

Service also wrote a Klondike novel. The Trail of '98: a Northland Romance is a second rate melodrama, ridden with clichés, and with an heroine named after a brand of condensed milk.⁴³ He intended it to be "an authentic record of the Great Stampede and of the gold delerium, tragic and moral in its implications", with characters who were "types", blended in a mixture of realism and romance.⁴⁴ The characters, in fact,

are caricatures: the hero sensitive and ineffectual, the villain a great lusty brute, and the heroine so pure that even life in a dance hall could not tarnish her. There are the obligatory scenes in Dawson, an evening of debauchery in the Grubstake Saloon and the Tivoli theatre, where gramophones blared and brazen women leered at new arrivals. The crowd inside laughed, brawled, shouted and sang, while at the gambling tables "miners with flushed faces and a wild excitement in their eyes" plunged recklessly. The dance hall was "a fairy-land of a place" frequented by women of "generous physique" whom drunks sometimes grabbed; it was "the trump card in the nightly game of despoliation."⁴⁵ In the end, the hero rescued the fair Berna from a life of iniquity and all was well until she disappeared after a fire in a Dawson hotel.

This novel was one of several to be turned into motion pictures. The cinema has produced on celluloid the Dawson about which an earlier generation had read. One need only think of Chaplin's The Gold Rush or the various versions of the Call of the Wild to see how the cinema has reinforced the image of the wild west transplanted to the arctic. Pierre Berton has written that, in the Klondike of Hollywood, the people as well as the buildings bear the stamp of American frontier fashions. The men swagger about in cowboy hats, with six-guns on their hips, entirely "out of tune with their surroundings", while the ubiquitous French Canadian strolls by in a toque.⁴⁶ Berton singled out one particular Klondike picture, The Far Country, as typical of the genre. It was "a shoot-em-up" western set in the Yukon in the days of the gold rush. In the film, Dawson is a community without law and when the main characters arrive, "men are being gunned down like rabbits." The only mounted policeman in the territory suggests that the townsfolk pick a good man and swear him in as marshall, and the inevitable climax comes when the hero and the villain blast away at each other in the main street.⁴⁷ It is all pure fiction, based in the novels of an earlier era, and in the fake reporting of the yellow press.

Gold rush novels and motion pictures were not just early 20th century phenomena. There have been additions to the literature of the Klondike almost annually and they invariably reinforce the myth of Dawson. Two recent ones are William D. Blankenship's Yukon Gold and George Markstein's Tara Kane. Yukon Gold begins: "On the evening of January 15, 1898, I witnessed the killing of Mike Lynch, a bartender at the Bank Saloon and Gambling House in Dawson, Yukon Territory. It was the first murder of the year in Dawson, and greeted as a welcome event."⁴⁸ Blankenship's protagonist, Brian Bonner, is a maverick mounted policeman with a taste for Perry Davis painkiller acquired during 'Jacob' Riel's Saskatchewan rebellion. The novel recounts Bonner's efforts to rid the Yukon of Soapy Smith and his gang and to win the heart of Hannah Young, lawyer, feminist and wealthy mining operator.

Tara Kane, on the other hand, is a saccharine romance, heralded as "The Gone With the Wind of the Yukon". It concerns a young woman's pursuit of the husband who had left her to join the rush to the Klondike. Much of the action takes place in Dawson, a town which was "noisier, rougher, crazier than any place Tara had ever seen." Dawson never slept; "thousands were making fortunes, going bankrupt, gambling, cheating, drinking and womanizing twenty-four hours a day." Saloons, gambling dens and houses of ill repute "sprouted like toadstools", and barmen were hired "as much for their skill in breaking up fights as in pouring drinks." In this tale, Soapy Smith was "the King of the Klondike" and the owner of four of Dawson's saloons. The "Monte Carlo" was his largest and it was always filled with gamblers, drunks and scarlet women. A second, the "Eldorado", served as a vigilante courtroom where a dipsomaniac judge sentenced murderers to death. Outside, fists settled arguments and drunks lay face down in the mud. In sum, Dawson was "a lawless community pretending to be a town" and the heroine left it without regret.⁴⁹

It is curious to note that while Yukon Gold and Tara Kane

were published in hardcover by minor North American presses, only the latter appeared in a paperback edition. Major publishers in the United Kingdom, however, released both in paperback in anticipation of a large British audience. A third piece with a Dawson setting was aimed at a much smaller market. Buck Patterson's Klondike Captives was designed for a small part of the prurient subculture of the American west coast. The librarian of the Yukon Archives described it as "a sado-masochistic fictional pamphlet which relies on the atmosphere of Dawson to provide its scenic background."⁵⁰ It is not difficult to understand how the author could exploit the myth of Dawson for his own pornographic purposes.

The pervading theme of Klondike fiction and of its recreation in the cinema is the lawlessness of Dawson. As Hubbard noted, it is the one most at variance with reality.⁵¹ Most of the authors were Americans who transferred the tradition of their frontier to the Yukon. Americans tended to view the Klondike as the extension of earlier gold rushes, and their experience dictated the presence of a long period of disorder. But Dawson was hardly an exact parallel of the American gold camp. The period of chaos lasted only a few weeks in the summer of 1898, and even then the mounted police laid down and enforced the law. Once firmly rooted in American literature and in motion pictures, however, the myth of Dawson became an enduring element in the folklore of the American frontier.

In sum, the impression conveyed by the mining guides, newspaper reports, memoirs, biographies, fiction and motion pictures is that Dawson was a wide open frontier town, a loud, lusty and lawless mining camp. While there is a large element of truth in this image, those features have been blown out of all proportion. At best Dawson was such a town for only a few months

in the summer of 1898, when the gold rush was at its peak. That was the only period when the streets were filled with newcomers, when the saloons and gambling halls were packed, and when the painted ladies seemed to walk the streets at will. Dawson's possession of those institutions did not render it unique; every frontier community had them. In Dawson they existed within a strict framework of martial law. There were no shoot-outs in Dawson, although the police expected them, and the card sharks and confidence men were chased out of town before they became established. This situation was hardly consistent with the experience of the American wild west.

What there was of the Dawson of myth and folklore disappeared as the gold rush ebbed and as the forces of respectability asserted themselves. By the turn of the century, gambling was against the law and saloons and prostitutes faced the same regulations as they did elsewhere in Canada. As the community entered its long decline, it did so as an outpost of modern civilization. But the Dawson of the summer of 1898 lived on in memoirs, in biographies, in fiction and in motion pictures. It has endured because the romantic view of the Klondike gold rush has endured. And, because people like to read stories of adventure and romance, especially when they are set in far away places, the myth of Dawson will endure. The following chapters look behind the myth and focus on the major themes in the community's first two decades.

II City of the Gold Rush

Dawson owed its existence to the discovery of gold in the valley of the Klondike and its early years reflected the mining activity in the district. The publicity which followed George Carmack's strike advertised the town and contributed to its meteoric growth. Dawson reached the apex of its population within two years of its beginning and, for a few weeks, it was the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. When the gold rush subsided, Dawson shrank and underwent a prolonged decline. The boom years did more than create the myth of "the San Francisco of the North". Conditions in Dawson during the gold rush era in part determined the extent of the city's functions and shaped its institutions. Dawson may have been the city of folklore at the height of the Klondike stampede. Yet the more significant legacy of the gold rush era lay in the fact that Dawson remained the mercantile centre of an industrial region and the commercial and administrative headquarters of the Yukon Territory. The first three years were crucial in Dawson's development and the events of that period had lasting significance in the town.

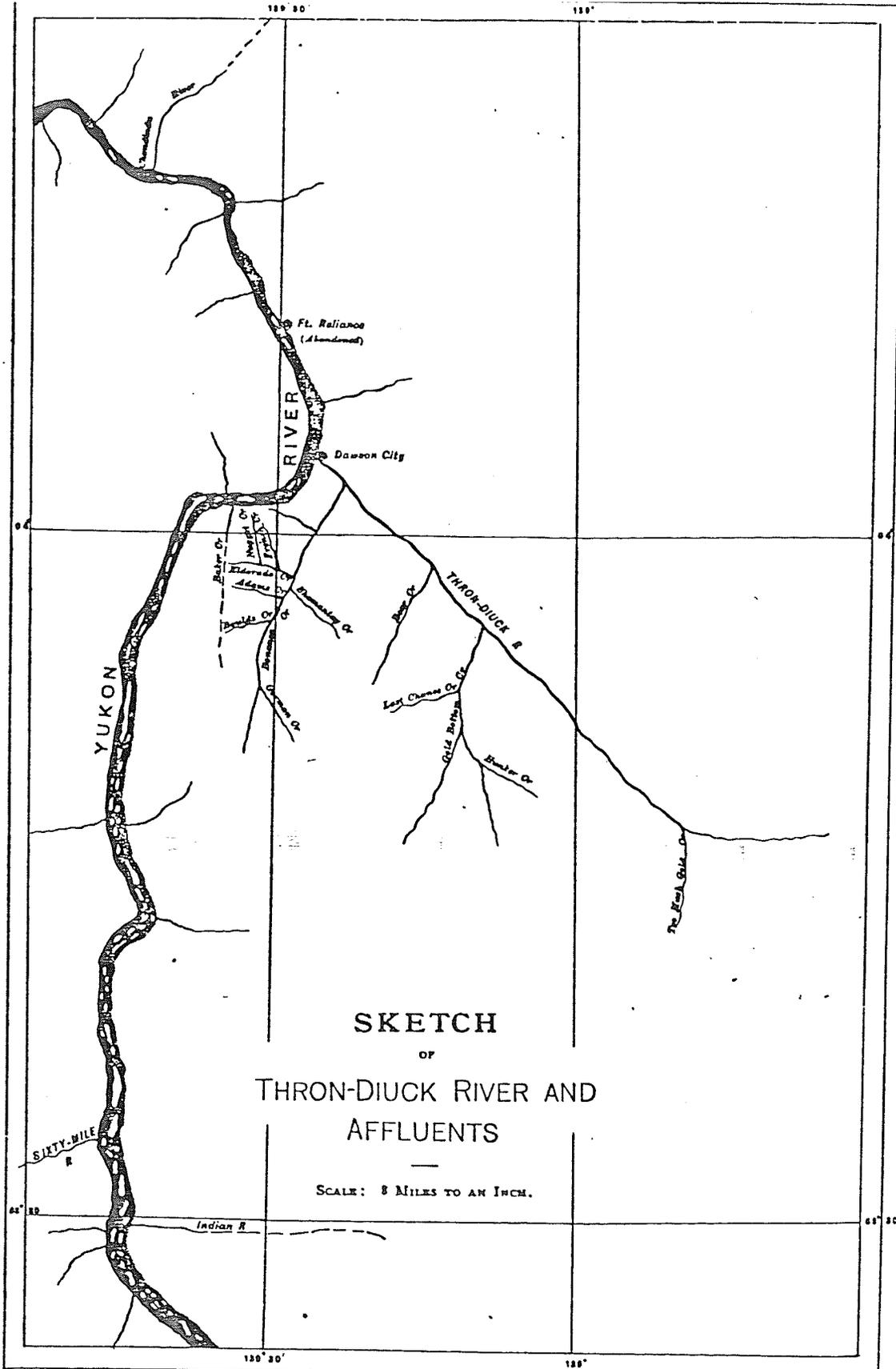
The confluence of the Yukon and the Klondike was a picturesque location and early travellers in the region often recorded their impressions. Although their references to the smaller river involved a variety of names and spellings, their descriptions of the surrounding topography were consistent and unmistakably represented the future site of Dawson. In 1883 Frederick Schwatka, an American army lieutenant on a

military reconnaissance of the Yukon river system, commented that there was "a fine stretch of hay land at the mouth of the Troandike river" which might be suitable for grazing cattle.¹ Schwatka also alluded to a prominent landmark which overlooked the rivermouth. A landslide on the face of a steep hill at the northern end of the flat had left a vivid scar which resembled "a gigantic moose-skin stretched out to dry."²

Four years later, the Yukon expedition of the Canadian Geological survey explored the upper Yukon region. The government land surveyor, William Ogilvie, described the "Trondiuck" as a small and shallow river, 40 yards wide at the mouth, and with clear water "of a beautiful blue colour."³ Ogilvie also reported that the Indians caught salmon there and that the river for some distance was filled with fish traps. The word Trondiuck, he explained, meant "hammer water" and derived from the Indians' practice of hammering stakes across the river mouth in order to spread their nets.⁴

Other travellers recalled the Indian fishing camp located on the south bank of the Klondike across the river from the low flat which became Dawson. In an article in Scribner's Magazine, Fred Funston described his voyage down the Yukon and mentioned "the big Indian village of Klonjek" several miles up river from Forty Mile.⁵ Josiah Spurr, an American prospector and geologist, covered the same route before Carmack's strike and he too remembered the Indian village at the junction of the Klondike and the Yukon. There had been about 200 Indians there, he asserted, and some of them had built log cabins for the annual salmon season.⁶

The discovery of gold in the Yukon valley increased the white presence in the district. In the last two decades of the 19th century there were prospectors and traders at various points and thriving communities at the junctions of the Yukon and a few gold bearing rivers and creeks. The first town on the upper Yukon grew around the trading post established



MAY 31 1897

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The Klondike Gold Fields 1897

by Andrew Harper and "Jack" McQuesten in 1887 at the mouth of the Forty Mile river.⁷ Six years later, McQuesten's post at the mouth of Birch Creek became the nucleus of Forty Mile's first rival, Circle City. By the middle of the 1890s the white population had grown so large that the Anglican missionary at Buxton, near Forty Mile, believed that the country was becoming civilized.⁸ Two large commercial companies ran steamboats on the river, a detachment of North West Mounted Police enforced Canadian law and collected customs duties, and hundreds of miners spent the winter at Forty Mile and Circle City.⁹ While those two places were the largest centres, there were a few smaller communities. On an island at the mouth of the Sixty Mile river, 100 miles upstream from Forty Mile, Harper's partner, Joseph Ladue, built a large trading post and set up a sawmill.¹⁰ The stores established by Harper, McQuesten and Ladue served the miners and facilitated the systematic exploration of the upper Yukon. The three traders encouraged prospectors, supplied almost unlimited credit, directed them to untouched areas, and followed up each discovery by staking a townsite and building a general store.

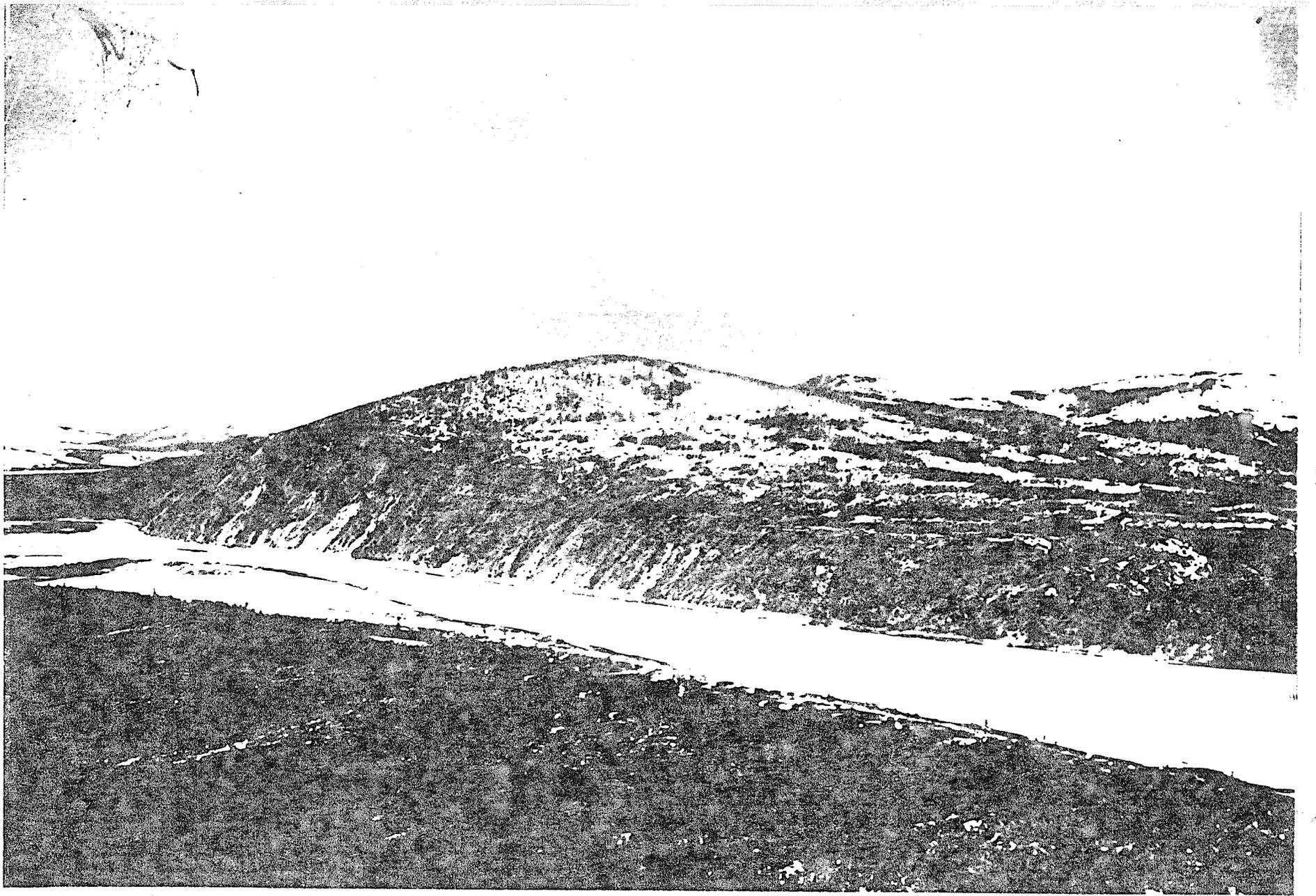
One of the men outfitted and grubstaked by Ladue was a career prospector named Robert Henderson. In the summer of 1896, Henderson discovered gold in quantities large enough to work on Gold Bottom creek on the Klondike watershed. In August, Henderson returned to Ladue's store for supplies and he reported his find to the trader. Ladue realized that there might be a stampede to the new field when word of Henderson's strike reached other settlements and he immediately sent two men and four horses to the spot. More important, Ladue closed his store, dismantled his sawmill and, because the Klondike was too shallow for steamboats, he prepared to locate them on the flat at the mouth of the river. He staked the land as a townsite and, as it was the only suitable place in the vicinity, he considered himself lucky to secure it.¹¹

Ladue began his move before George Carmack found gold on Rabbit Creek and he arrived at his new site at about the same time as Carmack made his discovery. The two did not meet, however, as Ladue returned to Sixty Mile to collect the rest of his stock and Carmack went to Forty Mile to record his claim. It was little more than fortuitous coincidence that Ladue found himself at the right place at the right time to capitalize on the greatest gold rush in the history of the Yukon.

Carmack, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charley wasted no time in registering their claims and in spreading the news of their discovery. They filed claims at Forty Mile on 21 August 1896, and on that date in his official diary the district police commander referred to the "great excitement" aroused by the news from "Clondyke".¹² This information precipitated the first rush to the Klondike. When a commercial company steamboat arrived at Forty Mile it was quickly unloaded and chartered to carry 200 men upriver.¹³ When these people arrived at the mouth of the Klondike they found that Ladue had already staked a townsite and named it Dawson in honour of George Mercer Dawson, the assistant director of the Canadian Geological Survey and the man who established the Alaska boundary line.¹⁴

At the beginning of September, Dawson was a town only in name. While the flat had been staked, it remained covered with brush and scrub timber and stumps.¹⁵ During the fall, Ladue erected his store and sawmill, cleared the site and laid it out into rough lots. He sold his first lots at prices ranging from five to 25 dollars, but as miners and camp followers poured in from downriver the price doubled and continued to rise throughout the winter.¹⁶

In November 1896, the Canadian authorities at Forty Mile began to appreciate the significance of Carmack's discovery. William Ogilvie, the government surveyor and astronomer,



Dawson 1896 (Public Archives of Canada)

reported that he expected an "unprecedented influx" because the news had gone to the coast and he predicted that the territory's population would exceed 10,000 within two years. The people would be concentrated in the "Klondak" valley and several speculators had already applied for townsites at the mouth of the river.¹⁷ Charles Constantine, the superintendent in charge of the North West Mounted Police, also realized that Forty Mile's days were numbered. He sent a group of policemen to establish a post at Dawson and directed Ogilvie to reserve 40 acres of the best land for "Police & other Government purposes." He specifically requested that Ogilvie include the wooded area around a slough in the government reserve as the timber would be required by the police barracks to be erected in the spring.¹⁸

As the winter went on, Constantine became concerned about the ownership of "the Klondike townsite" and he forwarded his advice to the minister of the interior. The land had escalated in value and he was afraid that it would fall into the hands of a few speculators. Early in December he had received six applications to purchase the townsite, all submitted by Americans or representatives of American companies. Joseph Ladue, he explained, had applied for 160 acres and had sold lots on the assumption that his application and survey deposit were tantamount to a title. Ladue had accumulated a sizeable fortune since some of his lots sold for \$300 or more. Constantine recommended that the interior department retain control of the townsite and sell parcels of land directly through the crown land agent or by public auction. It was not in the public interest, he added, for titles to be granted to the applicants because there were "a certain number here who will get everything into their own hands to the exclusion of smaller men."¹⁹

It soon became apparent that Constantine was afraid that the townsite would end up in the hands of the Alaska Commercial

Company. His antipathy toward the AC Co. was underlined by his recommendation that the NWMP turn all Yukon contracts over to the North American Transportation and Trading Company. He had found that company to be obliging, reasonable in its rates, honest and reliable. The AC Co., on the other hand, were "all Jews and not to be depended on."²⁰ Joseph Ladue, he suspected, was an agent of the AC Co. which wanted "to keep all other persons or trading Coy's [sic] out of the field at that point." Constantine emphasized that his principal concern was the government reserve but he warned that monopoly was "a dangerous thing", especially in mining country. The only way to prevent it would be for the government to sell lots directly. That practice would benefit the people on the scene and provide some of the revenues necessary for the administration of the district.²¹

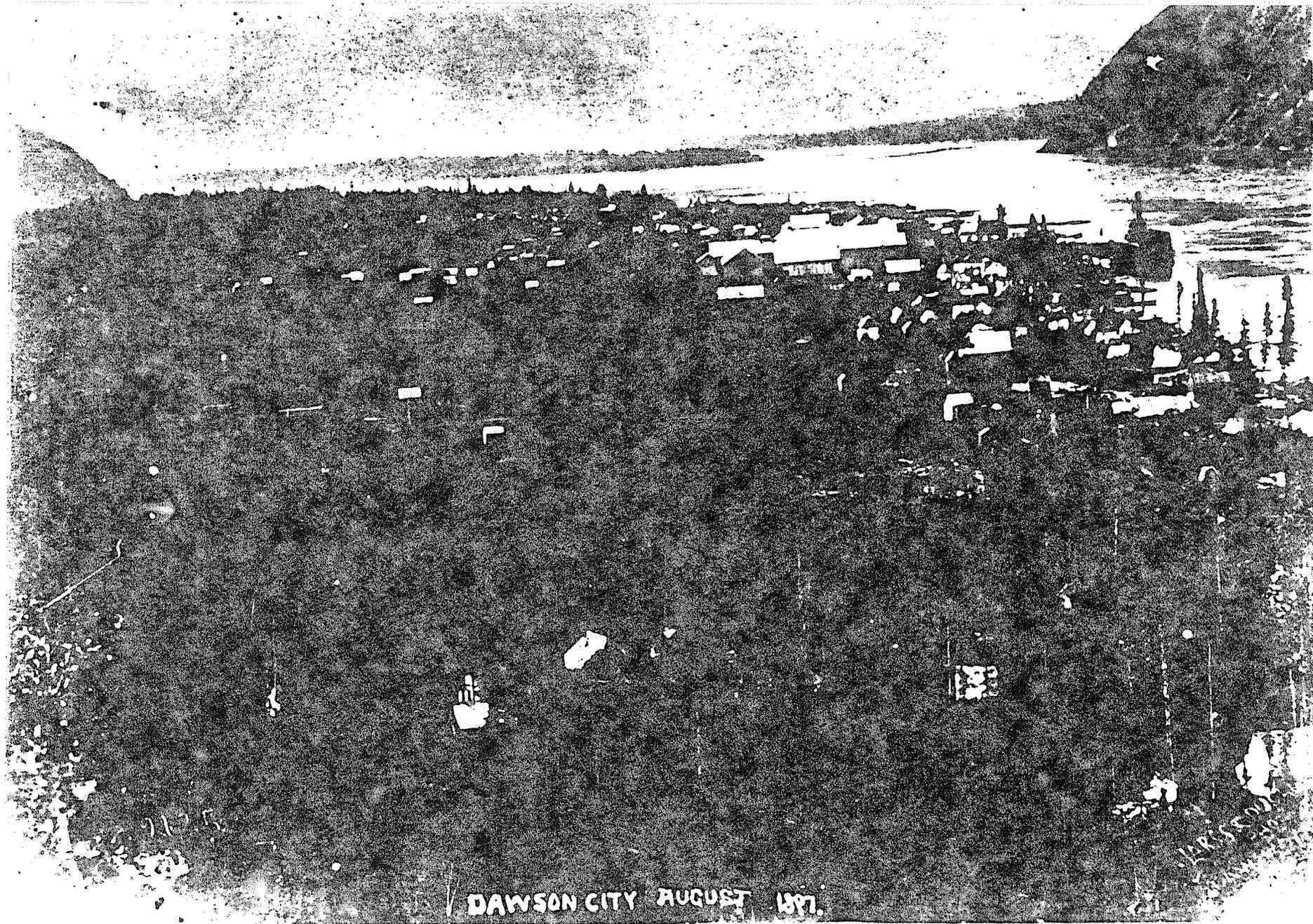
It took months for Constantine's communication to reach Ottawa and until he received instructions he used his discretion on matters regarding the Dawson townsite. To resolve some of the confusion he asked Ogilvie to survey the flat before it was overrun by squatters. In the second week of January 1897, Ogilvie started to lay out the 160 acre townsite. He ran a line along the riverfront from the southwest corner of the block identified by Ladue and completed the work in three days.²² This survey conformed to the conventional grid pattern where streets intersected at right angles and the rectangle formed covered most of the flat. He laid off a few streets, making the avenues parallel to the Yukon 66 feet wide and the cross streets 50 feet wide, and divided a fraction of the site into lots of 100 by 50 feet. This preliminary survey only established the rough outline and the plan would be completed when the snow melted.²³

Dawson grew slowly during the winter. At the time of the first snowfall the town consisted of Ladue's trading post and saloon, a couple of log cabins and a few tents.²⁴ Most of the men from Forty Mile went directly to the creeks and few spent

the winter at the mouth of the Klondike. Early in 1897, the population rose slightly as the first people from Circle City arrived after the long tramp upriver over the ice. In January, there were still only three or four cabins in Dawson but the number of tents had multiplied. By the end of March, when the initial Klondike rush was over, the town's population still numbered less than 500. There were hundreds of men on the goldfields, however, and it was clear that Dawson would be the commercial centre of the district.²⁵

The second gold rush occurred when the Yukon broke in the spring of 1897. During the winter, a thousand men who had never heard of Klondike scaled the Chilkoot and White passes bound for the gold mines near Circle City. Most camped at the head of the Yukon river system and built rough boats and scows while they waited for the ice to break. In April, the river became navigable and the rough flotilla set off for the gold fields. In mid May, the first boats swept round the bend above Dawson and the newcomers unexpectedly found two camps scattered on both banks of the Klondike.²⁶ These arrivals swelled the town's population. By the end of the month, there were over 1,000 people in Dawson and it had become almost an exact replica of Forty Mile or Circle City.²⁷

As Dawson grew, its social and political institutions emerged. The Anglican church was one of the first to appear. In 1895, that church had established a mission to the Indians near the mouth of the Klondike and the Reverend F.F. Flewelling was in the vicinity at the time of Carmack's strike. When the stampede from Forty Mile occurred, Flewelling moved the mission and its Indian residents to the area which became the government reserve and his cabin was one of Dawson's first buildings. The mission remained there for only a few months. The Bishop, W.C. Bompas, had complained about white traders who had debauched the Indians at Forty Mile and other points and he was determined to protect them from the questionable morals of the hordes of goldseekers. When the police ordered Flewelling's



DAWSON CITY AUGUST 1897.

Dawson 1897 (Public Archives of Canada)

rectory removed from the government reserve, Bompas directed the missionary to relocate about two miles downstream.²⁸ Most of the Indians went with Flewelling and thereafter Dawson was a town reserved for whites.

The Anglican church was concerned primarily with the mission to the Indians and Bompas was reluctant to send one of his clergymen to minister to the miners.²⁹ Early in 1897, however, after Forty Mile had been deserted, he sent the Reverend Henry Naylor to start a church at Dawson. Naylor encountered serious difficulties soon after his arrival. He was not well received and he attributed his failure to the absence of true believers in the town. The logistical problems in building a church were more serious. He had no funds nor materials for construction and his attempts to get volunteers failed completely. The men were either unconcerned about their souls or they demanded excessive wages for their labour.³⁰ In June, Bompas recalled Naylor to Forty Mile and replaced him with Richard J. Bowen. Bowen was more suited to the work and his tradesmen's background enhanced his popularity among the miners and labourers. Bowen dismantled Flewelling's cabin and used the logs to build a small church on the plot which Constantine set aside at the north-west corner of the government reserve.³¹

The Anglican missionaries were not the only clergymen in the Yukon valley. There also were Catholic missions on the lower Yukon and a Jesuit priest, Father William Judge, had built a chapel at Forty Mile. Judge had been in the process of moving to Circle City when he learned of Carmack's strike. An early freeze up forced him to remain at Forty Mile and early in 1897 he changed his plans and decided to build a church at Dawson. He walked the forty odd miles over the ice and arrived at the Klondike early in March. Soon afterward he received three acres at the north end of the town and commenced work on Immaculate Conception church and St. Mary's hospital. Judge celebrated masses and treated the sick in

tents until the buildings were completed late in the summer. The hospital gained a Presbyterian chaplain in October when the Reverend S. Hall Young arrived. Young represented the American Presbyterian church and on Sundays he held services in a cabin rented from a saloonkeeper.³²

In 1897, the men of the North West Mounted Police were almost the only representatives of the government of Canada in the Yukon valley. At Constantine's direction, the force made its presence felt at Dawson right from the beginning. He had sent an inspector and 20 constables to the townsite after the first rush from Forty Mile and they had manned a police post on the government reserve. In the spring of 1897, he sent most of the remaining constables and transferred his headquarters from Fort Constantine at Forty Mile to the new post at Dawson. Throughout the summer the policemen put up several log buildings and Constantine named them Fort Herchmer after Lawrence Herchmer, the NWMP commissioner and his partner in a few mining ventures in the district.³³

In the spring of 1897, Dawson experienced its first building boom. Although the bulk of its residents remained in tents, by the beginning of July there were eight or nine large log structures on the riverfront and the commercial section of the town had begun to take shape. Three of the buildings were saloons and gambling houses which had been moved there from Forty Mile when the river opened.³⁴ The remainder were owned by the two commercial companies. The Alaska Commercial Company arrived first and it secured a prime business location on the waterfront. The company set up a sawmill on the north bank of the Klondike to provide the lumber for its store and warehouses. That mill could not keep pace with the company's demand and the AC Co. managed to monopolize the output of all the sawmills.³⁵ It may have purchased all the available lumber at high prices to prevent its competitor becoming established. The NAT & T. Co. arrived in mid June

with plans for a large store and warehouse but it had to curtail its ambitions because of the shortage of building material. Throughout the summer it imported logs from its other posts and it managed to put up a large store to compete with the AC Co.. The two companies provided a wide range of merchandise and they divided the business of the district between them.³⁶ They also were Dawson's first financial institutions as they acted as repositories where miners deposited their gold and they grubstaked prospectors who ventured further up the creeks.³⁷ In the gold rush era, the AC Co. and the NAT & T Co. became the dominant business concerns at Dawson and they strengthened their position in the community through investments in mining, real estate, transportation and in the wholesale and retail trades.

As Dawson grew in size in the summer months the completion of the survey of the townsite became a necessity. In the spring, a few Americans had offered to lay out the additions to Ladue's block but the mounted police declared that only a licensed Canadian surveyor could do the work.³⁸ James Gibbon, a dominion land surveyor, arrived in mid July and he set to the task immediately. He surveyed the 40 acre additions of Stewart Menzies and A.L. Day and then finished Ogilvie's projected plan for the Ladue townsite. By the end of the first week of August he had staked out 655 lots and begun work on Francis Atkins' 14 acre site in Dawson's north end. This addition was an important one as it included a spring at the base of the hill beside the property reserved for St. Mary's hospital. Gibbon deliberately altered the plan to place the spring on a street and thus reserved it for public use. At the end of August he had laid out more than 1,000 lots and the town plan was complete.³⁹

The most dramatic change in Dawson in 1897 was the growth of its population. The second Klondike rush had brought hundreds of men from the south and many of them camped on the waterfront until they decided what they were going to do. According to Henry Naylor, some of them had come expecting

to find nuggets on the riverbanks and they were crestfallen to find the creeks already staked.⁴⁰ Most found work in Dawson as builders and labourers and they put up the hotels, restaurants, saloons, and other establishments which catered to the men and women who arrived by steamboat from the Pacific coast. Some of these new arrivals were goldseekers of a different stripe. Constantine wrote that the steamers had unloaded "a considerable number of fast women and 'tin-horn gamblers' galore."⁴¹ These people gravitated to the saloons and gambling dens which had risen along the waterfront.

Constantine's reports reflected the transformation which Dawson experienced in its first year and they expressed his apprehension for the future. Early in June, he became alarmed by the number of disillusioned men and he asked Ottawa to send police reinforcements and a maxim gun.⁴² Three months later, he wrote that there were over 5,000 people in the Klondike valley and that 3,000 more were en route from Skagway and St. Michael.⁴³ His year end report described Dawson's growth from half a dozen log shacks to a town with hundreds of cabins. The majority of the newcomers were American and a significant proportion were characters whom the community might well have been spared. The rush, he explained, had brought in "toughs, gamblers, fast women, and criminals of almost every type from the petty thief to the murderer." Their presence had increased the incidence of crime "to a very great extent", and the original residents had been forced to guard their property for the first time.⁴⁴

The reports of the federally appointed district gold commissioner Thomas Fawcett, conveyed the same impression. Soon after his arrival on 15 June 1897, Fawcett wrote that Dawson had a floating population of about 3,000 and that tents occupied every available space. Most of their occupants had found work erecting buildings, cutting wood, transporting logs

or in other honest endeavours. There were, however, some who had come "simply to prey on others whenever an opportunity occurs." Thefts had become particularly frequent and he had taken to sleeping in his office to protect it from safe-crackers. Fawcett was also concerned about the physical state of the townsite. Dawson was located on a swamp, "which if not eternally frozen would be to all intents and purposes as far as traffic is concerned, bottomless." The place was unhealthy at the best of times and if nothing were done to cleanse it of the accumulating filth it would become a death-trap in the coming summer. The absence of any municipal organization made improvements difficult and he hoped that the government might do something to remedy the situation.⁴⁵

While matters of law enforcement and sanitation became increasingly important, in the fall and winter of 1897 the greatest worry of the Canadian authorities at Dawson concerned the supply of food. There had been predictions about a shortage as early as the previous spring. Part of the problem arose from the fact that the commercial companies had not imported a surplus in 1896. The final steamers of the year had brought 3,000 gallons of whiskey instead of food and there had been barely enough provisions to last the winter. Moreover, the steamboats had all become trapped by ice and one broke before the river opened. This occurrence, which Bompas saw as "Providential retribution", delayed the arrival of supplies in the spring as the steamers could not sail downstream to meet the supply ships until the middle of May.⁴⁶ At the same time, a poor salmon run and a more northerly caribou migration precluded any dependence on natural sources.⁴⁷ Many of the new arrivals in the spring of 1897 had consumed their rations on the way to Dawson and they placed additional strains on the already limited supplies. To make matters worse, the steamboat Porteus B. Weare ran aground on the way to St. Michael and was disabled for most of the season by broken machinery.

The removal of the Weare from service meant that the year's imports were reduced by up to a thousand tons.⁴⁸ These problems were compounded by the lack of rainfall in the summer. As the level of the river fell, some boats were unable to negotiate the sandbar-ridden Yukon flats in Alaska.⁴⁹ Two of the few which managed to evade the shoals were commandeered by destitute miners at Circle City and their cargoes were purchased and unloaded at gunpoint.⁵⁰ By September, there was no hope that enough food would arrive to carry Dawson through the winter and its residents prepared for famine conditions.⁵¹

Some of the responsibility for the shortage of food lay with the two commercial companies. Each fall their managers calculated the number of men they expected to be in their districts in the following year and they imported quantities sufficient for that number. The estimates prepared in 1896 were far below the size of the market in 1897. Some residents suspected that the companies had deliberately insured that demand outpaced supply in order to force prices up.⁵² Others believed that the companies had warehouses full of provisions which they held for speculative purposes. A few more objected to the companies' practice of selling steamer loads of food to wealthy miners before the cargoes actually arrived, and the missionaries complained that whiskey and wines too often took up space on the boats which ought to have been filled with more essential provisions.⁵³

There were grounds for each one of these charges. Although the companies assured Constantine that there was no scarcity of food, they refused to sell bacon, beans, flour and other staples in bulk and they charged high prices for the small quantities they released.⁵⁴ At the same time, they appealed to the police to fix the prices charged by men selling their surplus provisions, supposedly to prevent a panic from developing. Constantine however, declined to interfere and he replied that fair market value depended on the free working of supply and demand.⁵⁵ A few weeks later, when the

residents became restive and destitute men took to raiding caches, the managers requested police protection for their stores. This time Constantine acquiesced and he swore in a number of special constables for the purpose.⁵⁶

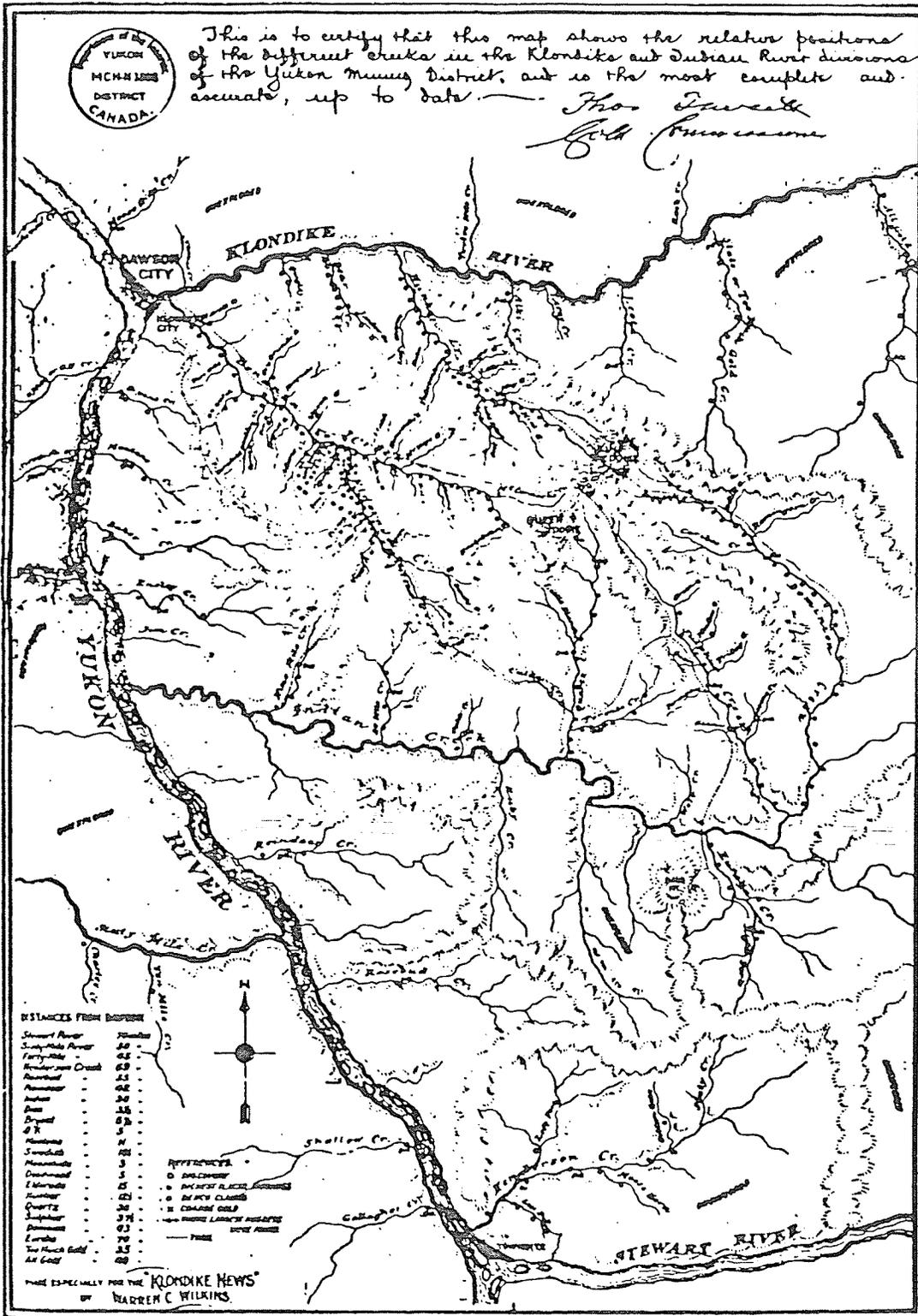
While the commercial companies may have had adequate supplies, the popular impression was that famine was inevitable. In September, when the first ice appeared in the Yukon, various officials took precautions to alleviate the situation. At the end of the month, Constantine put his men on half rations and informed them that they would have to do without coal oil, bacon and beans.⁵⁷ The government surveyors also went on half rations because they obtained their supplies from the NWMP.⁵⁸ Bishop Bompas cancelled the transfer of two missionaries to Dawson after Bowen reported that his provisions were insufficient for his own needs.⁵⁹ When Constantine announced that camps downriver had ample food for the winter, 800 people packed up and left. He also summarily evicted 150 members "of the unprovided and bum class", and the captain of the steamer Bella agreed to transport them when the government offered to pay for any damage to his vessel caused by ice.⁶⁰ This exodus relieved the pressure on the food supply and Constantine expected that there would be no shortage in Dawson until the following April when a large influx was expected. The prospect of starvation at that time was averted by the police at the summit of the Chilkoot and White passes. They required all persons desiring to enter the territory to carry with them a full year's supply of solid food.⁶¹

In the spring of 1898 the authorities at Dawson began to prepare for the arrival of the third Klondike stampede. These people were attracted to the Yukon by stories of the fabulous rewards awaiting those who ventured north. The steamboats which had brought newcomers in 1897 also took out the first "Klondike millionaires". These men were miners who had worked all winter on their dumps and, when they had sluiced their fortunes from the gravel, they left Dawson



This is to certify that this map shows the relative positions of the different creeks in the Klondike and Stikine River divisions of the Yukon Mining District, and is the most complete and accurate, up to date.

*Thos. Lawrence
Gold Commissioner*



The Klondike Gold Fields 1898

on the first boats available. They sailed to San Francisco and Seattle on the ocean steamers Exelsior and Portland and the arrival of their "ton of gold" aroused tremendous excitement. Newspapers broadcast the news along the coast and across the continent and the Klondike quickly became front page news. Some people obtained passage on ships returning to Alaska before the end of the season and a handful actually arrived in Dawson before the close of navigation. Among them were the newspaper correspondents sent by William Randolph Hearst. Edward Livernash of the San Francisco Examiner reached Dawson in mid August and his report, published two months later, contributed to the size of the rush which followed:

I feel justified in saying there has been no exaggeration; the placers of the Yukon are peerless, and the outlook is so full of promise that one dare not forecast the limit of the riches men will drag from these frozen lands.⁶²

Other stories reiterated this optimism and persuaded hordes of fortune hunters to set off for the Klondike. Before long, the rush assumed momentum of its own as outfitters advertised their wares and as a variety of entrepreneurs made arrangements to capitalize on the growing market at Dawson. In the fall and winter of 1897, about 100,000 people went northward but less than a third of them actually reached their destination.⁶³

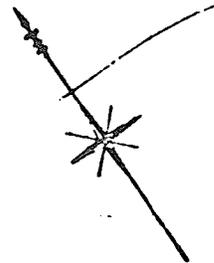
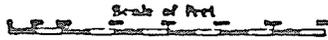
Although a small number of these people crossed the passes and went on to Dawson during the winter, most camped at the head of the Yukon system until the river opened. The official party which accompanied Major James Walsh, the chief executive officer sent by Ottawa to administer the Yukon district, spent the winter at Tagish, 400 miles south of the goldfields. Frederick Coates Wade, the federal crown prosecutor, went on to Dawson and arrived in the middle of March. His letters to Clifford Sifton described the town as he found it and betrayed his fears about what would happen when the thousands waiting upriver finally arrived. Wade was

particularly concerned by land and sanitary matters. He objected to squatters living on the riverbank without paying rent and he thought that it would become littered with shacks and remain in an unsanitary condition if they were not removed. One way of clearing them out would be to lease the property to a private citizen who would put up buildings and collect rent from their occupants. He anticipated no problems in leasing the strip on the river's edge because Front Street was several feet wider than all the other avenues and the limited horse traffic in the town did not warrant maintaining the extra width. Accordingly, on his own authority as crown prosecutor and despite the objections of Ogilvie and Constantine, Wade asked for offers. On 20 March, he accepted a bid of \$30,000 submitted by Alexander McDonald and Roderick Morrison.⁶⁴

In his report to the minister of the interior, Wade explained that the lease was the most expeditious means of keeping the waterfront clean and that the revenue would be valuable for the government. He added that McDonald was "the most responsible man here", and that the lessees had agreed to the provision that the government might terminate the agreement on a month's notice. There were additional safeguards to protect the public interest. The terms of the lease reserved 300 feet for a steamboat landing, 100 feet for government purposes, three spaces for log runways for sawmills, and the ends of all the cross streets to provide 50 foot approaches to the river. The lease, then, covered a good deal less than 2,000 feet and the rent amounted to more than \$14 a foot. Wade considered the lease to be beneficial to both sides and he believed that McDonald's construction of a good sidewalk and three public conveniences confirmed his judgement. He did not inform Sifton, however, of the conflict of interest inherent in his position on one hand as agent of the government and on the other as solicitor for McDonald and Morrison.⁶⁵

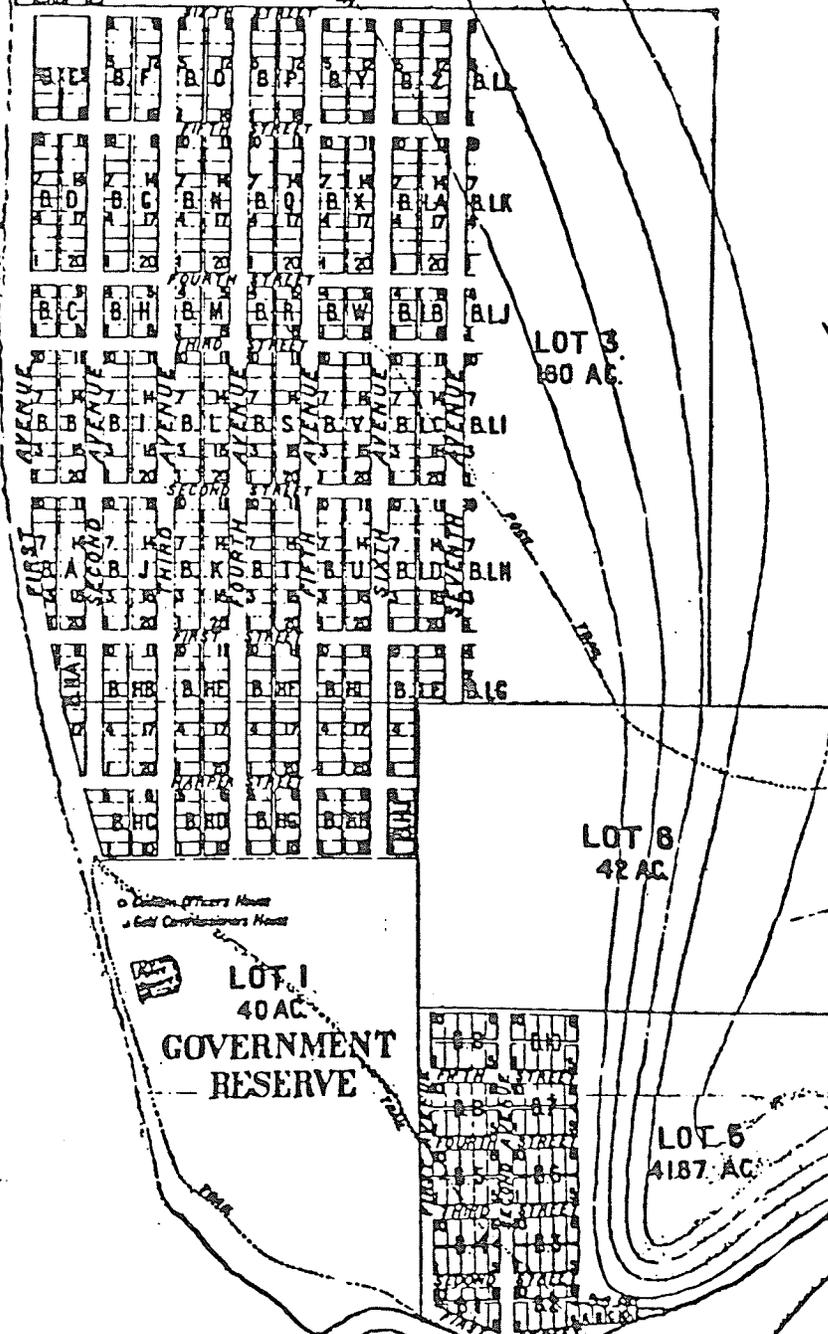
TOWN OF DAWSON

Surveyed by James Gibbon, D.L.S.
January 7th, 1898.



Y U K O N R I V E R

R.C. 11930N
Riverside Park of Town. Nearly all built upon.
Barrage ground.



LOT 3
80 AC.

LOT 6
42 AC.

LOT 1
40 AC.
GOVERNMENT RESERVE

LOT 6
4187 AC.

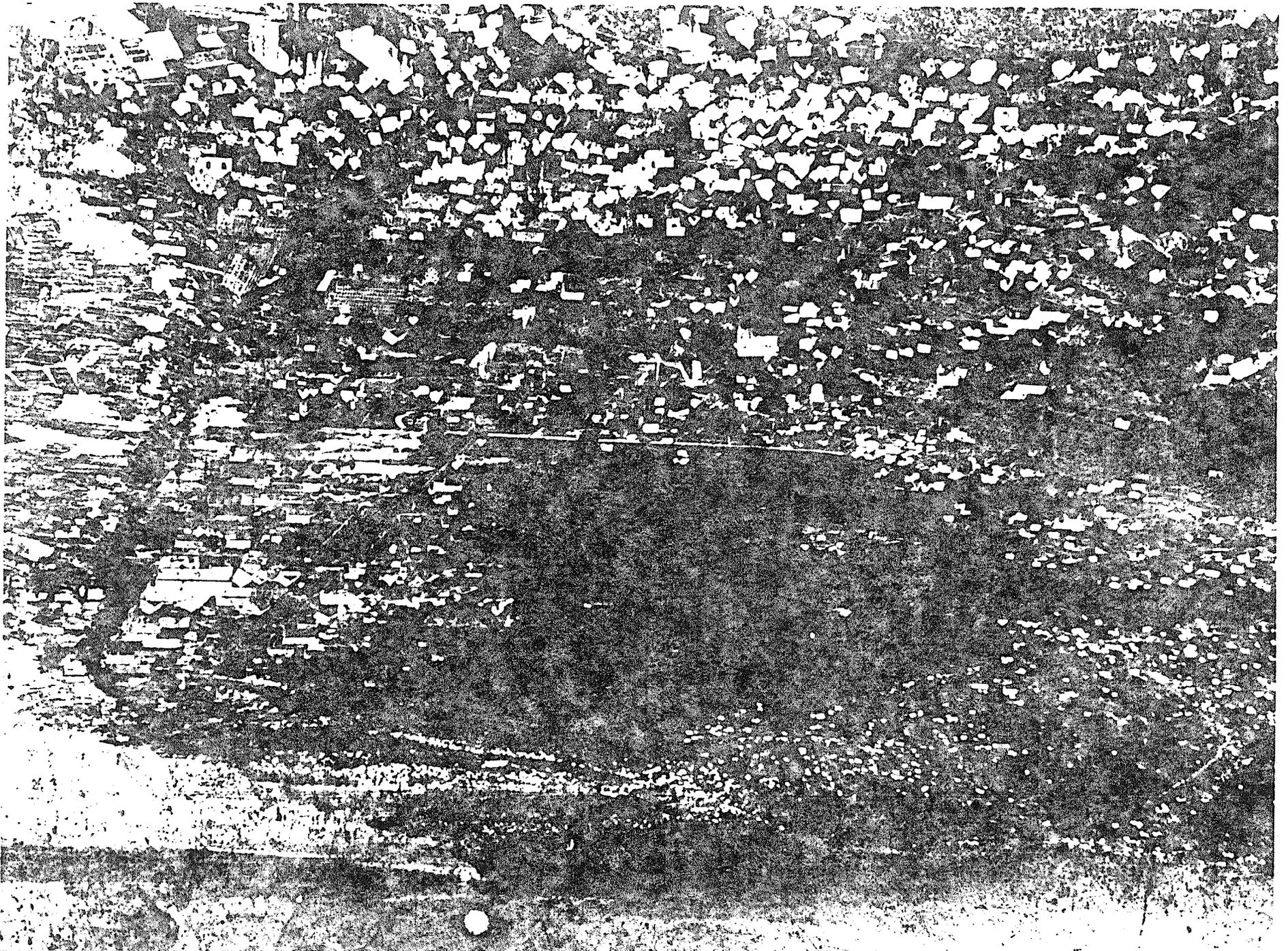
KLONDIKE RIVER

o Custom Officers House
o Gold Commissioners House

When he had leased the waterfront, Wade turned his attention further inland. He wrote Sifton that "land matters" were in deplorable shape. No one seemed to know whether the government had granted patents to Ladue, Menzies, Day and Atkins. Nonetheless, those men persisted in selling lots at inflated prices to people who might afterward have to buy from the government. They also evicted people who refused to pay until they saw titles to the land and generally acted in a high handed manner. When the manager of the Ladue townsite company reported that the government had accepted Ladue's application, Wade expressed his dismay. "All around they are nothing but a lot of sharp extortionists and ----- parasites," he told Sifton, and giving up the townsite would undermine the strength of the government at Dawson. If the government were determined to surrender the land, then it should do so only on condition that the company drain the flat and do something to improve the landscape.⁶⁶

In the meantime, to prevent "these U.S. freebooters" from wringing fortunes out of those requiring accommodation, Wade took steps to open the crown land outside the townsite for squatters. Those areas had not been surveyed completely and, until they were, the situation remained chaotic. Newcomers set up tents and cabins on streets, across lots and in any open space. They followed no plan and squatters often erected their outbuildings in front of neighbours' shacks or in other inconvenient locations. Wade found his hands tied as only the commissioner had authority over crown land and little could be done until Major Walsh arrived. The confusion, he concluded, was a reflexion on the administration and it ought to be resolved.⁶⁷

The problems created by overcrowding, inadequate facilities and vacuum of authority were compounded when the Yukon river broke. An ice jam downstream caused the water to rise at Dawson and it spread slowly over the townsite throughout



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the month of May. After three weeks, the business section was five feet underwater and boats filled with police provisions floated freely on the government reserve. Although the water began to fall early in June, the town was quickly submerged by a flood of a different type. On 21 May, Major Walsh and his party arrived with the news that 3,000 boats had already passed Tagish and might be expected at any time.⁶⁸ That armada was delayed by ice at the mouth of the Pelly and Walsh had two weeks in which to prepare the town for this influx of population. Walsh, however, had already resolved to resign and quit the territory and he declined to make important decisions out of fear of offending his successor.⁶⁹ The administration of the town and the district was further hampered by the constant and often petty bickering which coincided with the transition of power from Constantine and the original officials to the new federal appointees.⁷⁰ Dawson, then, was governed by inertia and it was ill prepared for the climactic summer of 1898.

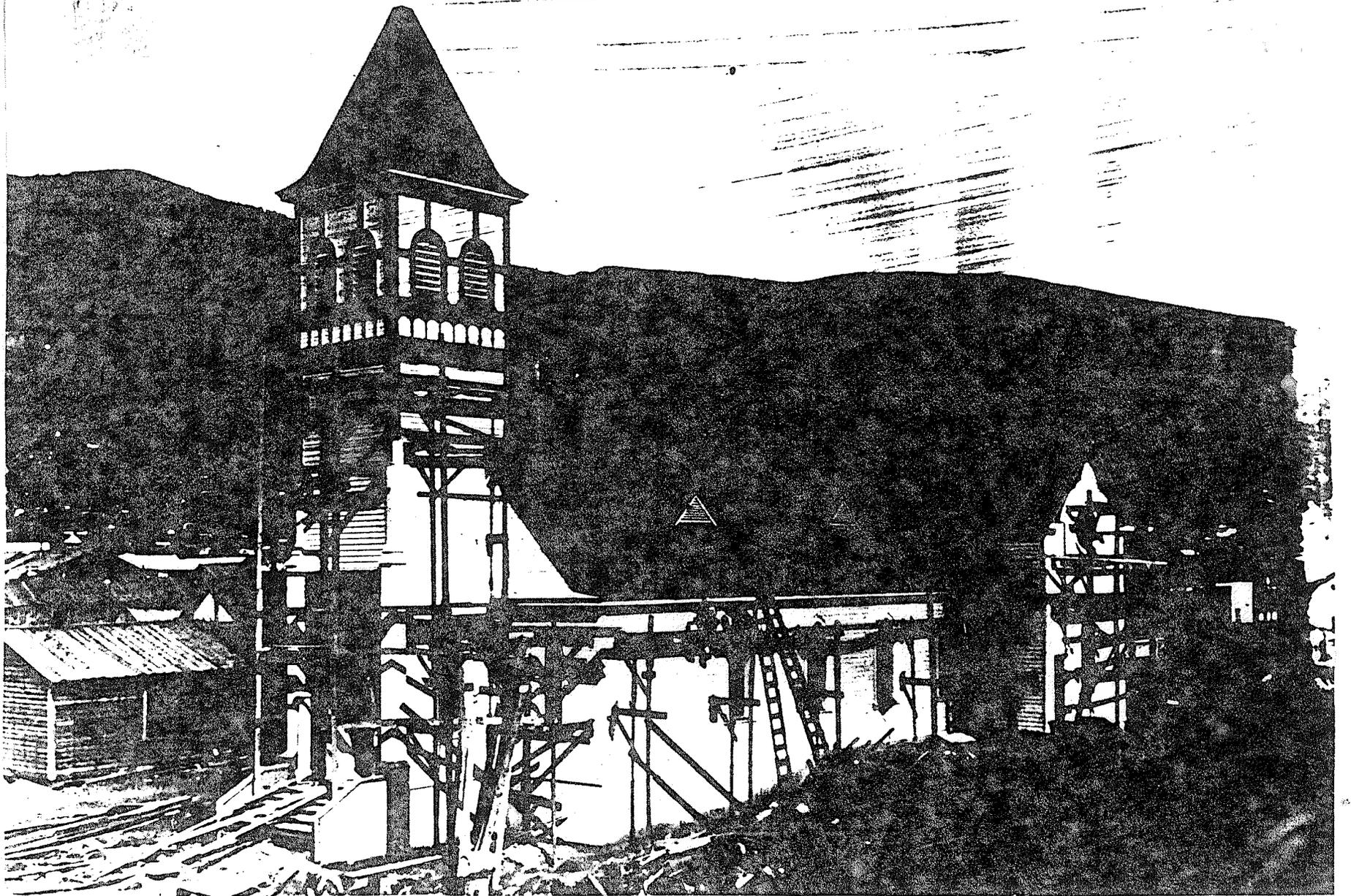
On 9 June 1898, the first small boats appeared from up-river and they sailed in by the hundreds in the days and weeks which followed. The first steamboat from St. Michael docked soon afterward and others began regular runs by the middle of the month. Thousands of people poured into Dawson. Their boats were lined up two or three deep for over two miles along the riverbank and their tents covered the waterfront and spread up the hillside behind the town.⁷¹ Most stampeders first saw the town as they rounded the bend in the Yukon and their initial view was of "a crowd of little white dots on the side of a hill." As they drew closer they saw boats, rafts, huts, cabins and warehouses and when they landed they found the streets thronged with men of all descriptions.⁷² Almost all had difficulty finding suitable camping spots as the dry places were already taken and landlords exacted astronomical rents even for tents. The bulk of the newcomers ended up on

the side of the hill which overlooked the town.

When the first boats unloaded their cargoes Dawson became a beehive of activity. Building proceeded at a frenzy and land prices shot upward. Corner lots for saloons sold for as much as \$20,000 and the price of Front street lots often exceeded \$40,000.⁷³ The demand for land forced values up away from the river. When the American consul arrived, real estate on Second avenue, "which is but a bog", cost up to \$10,000 and cabins rented for \$200 per month.⁷⁴ Construction continued round the clock and the town's three sawmills could not keep pace with the requirements. The shortage of lumber meant that most buildings were made of logs while the interior walls consisted of canvas and wallpaper. In a matter of weeks two and three storey structures lined Front street and the commercial centre of Dawson was filled with log shops of all descriptions.⁷⁵

Among the first arrivals in 1898 were representatives of Canadian churches. Early in the spring, the nursing sisters of St. Ann arrived from downriver to take over St. Mary's hospital. In June, they were followed by two priests of the Oblate order. Archbishop Langevin of St. Boniface realized that the Yukon was under the temporal jurisdiction of the Oblates of the Mackenzie river district rather than the Jesuits of Alaska and he sent Fathers Gendreau and Lefebvre to replace Father Judge. The Jesuit was reluctant to surrender his position in Dawson and only withdrew when the Oblates agreed to assume all debts incurred by the hospital and to complete construction of the church. Although Judge remained hospital chaplain and preached every third Sunday, he and Gendreau often disagreed on financial and jurisdictional matters and the conflict continued until Judge's death in the following year.⁷⁶

The Anglican church remained active at Dawson despite awkward circumstances. Before 1898, the Church Missionary Society of the Church of England had supplied clergymen to

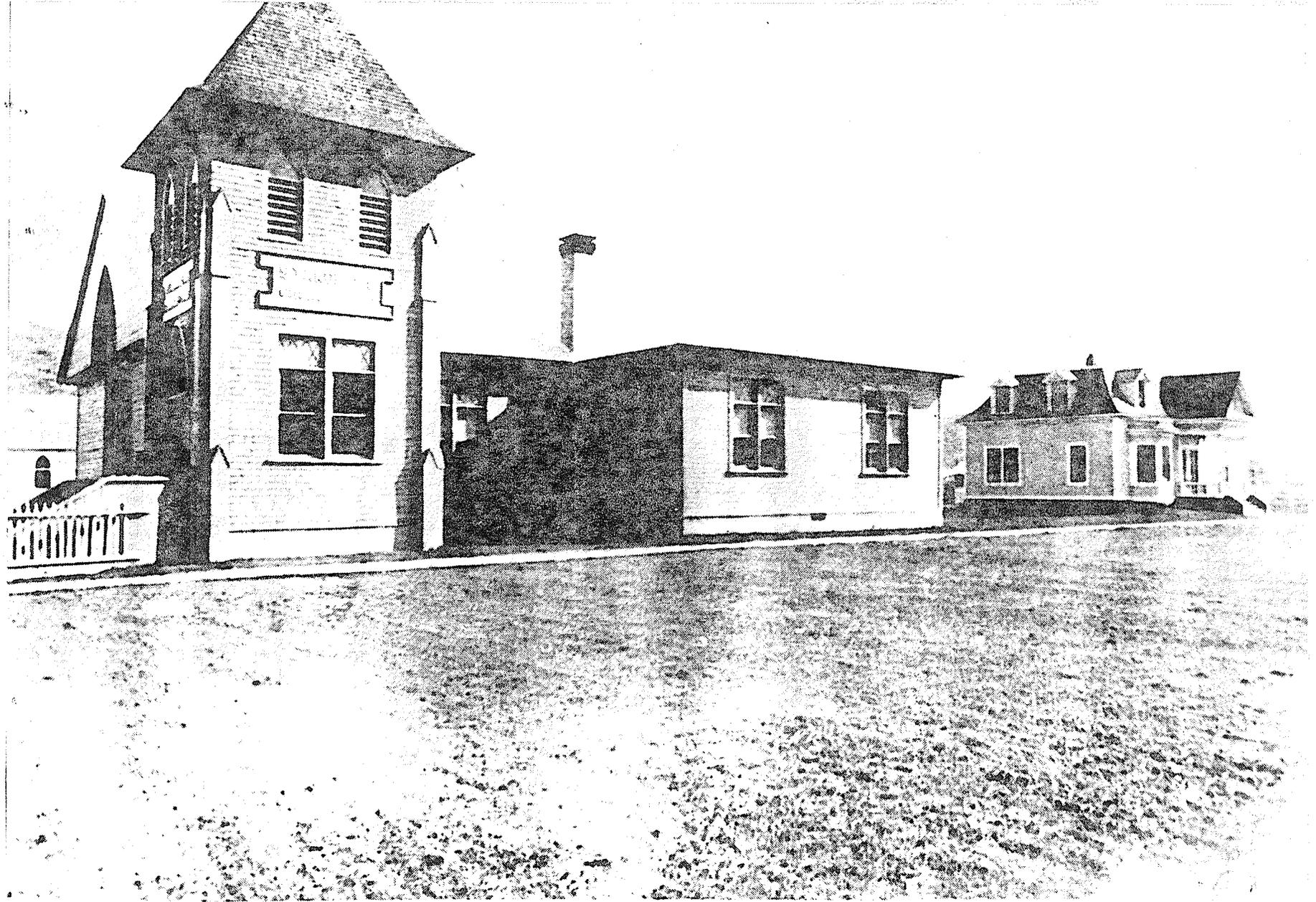


St. Paul's Church c.1901 (University of Toronto Rare Book Library)

minister to the Indians of the Yukon valley. When the CMS learned that R.J. Bowen served a white congregation, it terminated the grant for his support. Bompas then appealed to the Colonial and Continental Church Society in London to send a clergyman to Dawson and to guarantee pecuniary assistance. The CCCS responded by despatching the Reverend W.G. Lyon. Lyon, however, drowned in a boating accident on the upper Yukon. Bowen then remained at Dawson and as the CCCS funds did not cover his expenses the church there was forced to become self-supporting.⁷⁷

Other Protestant churches also sent clergymen. The Presbyterian Church in Canada sent a team of four missionaries to the Yukon and the Reverend Andrew S. Grant took charge of the church at Dawson. When he arrived, Grant found Hall Young already serving a Presbyterian congregation. His first words to the missionary inferred that Young had encroached on territory reserved for the Canadian church. He as much as told Young to step aside and the American graciously withdrew. Grant took charge of the church and then formulated plans for a Presbyterian hospital. In June, he leased a site on the edge of the government reserve for the nominal rent of one dollar per year and in the next two months he supervised construction of St. Andrews church, the manse and Good Samaritan Hospital.⁷⁸

While Grant and Bowen were the most prominent Protestants, there were representatives of other denominations. The Methodist church sent the Reverend James Turner. Turner encountered serious difficulties in erecting a church because of inadequate resources but also because the Presbyterian church had been established for almost a year.⁷⁹ On 25 June, eight members of the Salvation Army arrived in Dawson and they held their first tent meeting on the following night. Under the leadership of Adjutant George Dowell and Ensign Thomas McGill, the Army held daily services and raised money for the



St. Andrew's Church and manse c.1903 (University of Toronto Rare Book Library)

construction of a meeting hall and shelter for indigents. The Salvation Army also operated a woodyard which provided work for the unemployed and it used the proceeds from the sale of the fuel produced to provide meals and clothing to Dawson's poor.⁸⁰

There was a high degree of cooperation among the Protestant clergymen at Dawson. In the early summer, Bowen and Grant conducted services in the same building and Bowen assisted in the organization of Good Samaritan Hospital. Grant also preached at the Methodist church on the occasions when Turner was ill and one of the Presbyterians from the creeks often assisted the Salvation Army. Together, the churches made an important contribution to the community in its early years, especially on matters concerning administration of the hospitals and the welfare of indigents.⁸¹

While the churches performed important social functions, other incoming institutions catered to the community's economic and financial needs. In the spring of 1898, the Canadian Bank of Commerce and the Bank of British North America each sent an advance party to establish a branch in Dawson. The representatives of the Bank of British North America arrived first and they began to transact business in a tent on 19 May. Although the Bank of Commerce opened its doors a month later, it had a number of advantages over its rival. The Bank of Commerce party had brought a complete assay plant and it had a monopoly of that business for almost two months. The Commerce men also carried one million dollars in bank notes, each stamped "Yukon" to render them worthless if stolen en route, which they issued in exchange for gold dust. The greatest privilege enjoyed by the Bank of Commerce was its contract to look after the government business as the federal minister of finance had negotiated an agreement under which that bank became the agent of his department in the Yukon territory. He authorized the bank to collect the gold royalties and secured permission for it to locate its premises

on the government reserve to expedite that process.⁸²

The banks joined the commercial companies as the focus of business in Dawson. Almost all the mineral production of the district in the gold rush era was deposited with these four large concerns and they became the paramount economic institutions in the town. The banks took over the commercial companies' functions as repositories and lending institutions but the expected reduction in interest rates did not materialize. Indeed, the banks granted loans at annual rates of 24 per cent or more despite the fact that in law they could charge no more than 7 per cent.⁸³ Their managers, David Doig of the Bank of British North America and H.T. Wills of the Bank of Commerce, became two of Dawson's foremost citizens. Both became active in church and community affairs and they assisted in such things as the direction of the hospitals and the formation of the fire department. In the gold rush era, and in the years which followed, the bank managers were never far from the centre of local affairs.

In many respects the Klondike stampede was a newspaper event and in the summer of 1898 dozens of correspondents converged on Dawson. The rush also included a few enterprising journalists who brought printing presses and intended to publish local papers. Eugene Allen raced to Dawson over the ice ahead of his press in an attempt to ensure that the Klondike Nugget was published before any other. The inaugural issue, a typescript banged out on a typewriter borrowed from the New York Times correspondent, appeared on a Front street bulletin board on 27 May. A rival press arrived first, however, and the Midnight Sun went on sale on 11 June. Five days later, the Nugget press went into action. Later in the summer they were joined by a third paper, the Klondike Miner, and in the next spring two more hit the streets, the Dawson Daily News and the Sunday Gleaner. In the beginning, all were owned by American interests but a group of Canadian businessmen, who supported the Laurier government, quickly

purchased the Sun. They hired the correspondent of the Sifton-owned Manitoba Free Press to be its editor and the Sun soon became the official gazette. Each paper pledged itself to protect the interests of Yukoners, which to the Nugget meant Americans, and all but the Sun were relentless in their attacks on the government. Although only the News lasted more than five years, in the gold rush era Dawson was well served by a vigorous press.⁸⁴

The newspapers were among the first companies established in Dawson. The gold rush attracted corporations of various sizes and men of business from Canada, the United States, Great Britain and Europe. Six major companies entered competition with the two original commercial companies. The only Canadian one was the McLennan and McFeely hardware company of Vancouver, while the Ames mercantile Company, the Ladue Company and the Seattle-Yukon Trading Company represented American capital. The British concerns were the Trading and Exploration Company and the Alaska Exploration Company, both of which were connected to the Alaska Goldfields Company, a huge conglomerate based in London.⁸⁵ There were many other smaller businesses and butchers, bakers, grocers, haberdashers, tobacconists, blacksmiths and a host of others opened shops in Dawson's commercial district. Many of these people became permanent residents and their presence enhanced Dawson's growth as a stable community.

Although in 1898 an estimated 30,000 people crossed the passes bound for Dawson, there were hardly more than half that number in the town at any single time. Indeed, at the end of July, when the gold rush was at its peak, a mounted police census found Dawson's population to be only 16,000.⁸⁶ While the influx continued throughout the summer, there were scores of departures every day. The rush brought a horde of entrepreneurs who had no intention of staking claims or digging for gold. Instead, they hoped to make their fortunes by selling gumboots, tinned milk, mosquito repellent and a wide

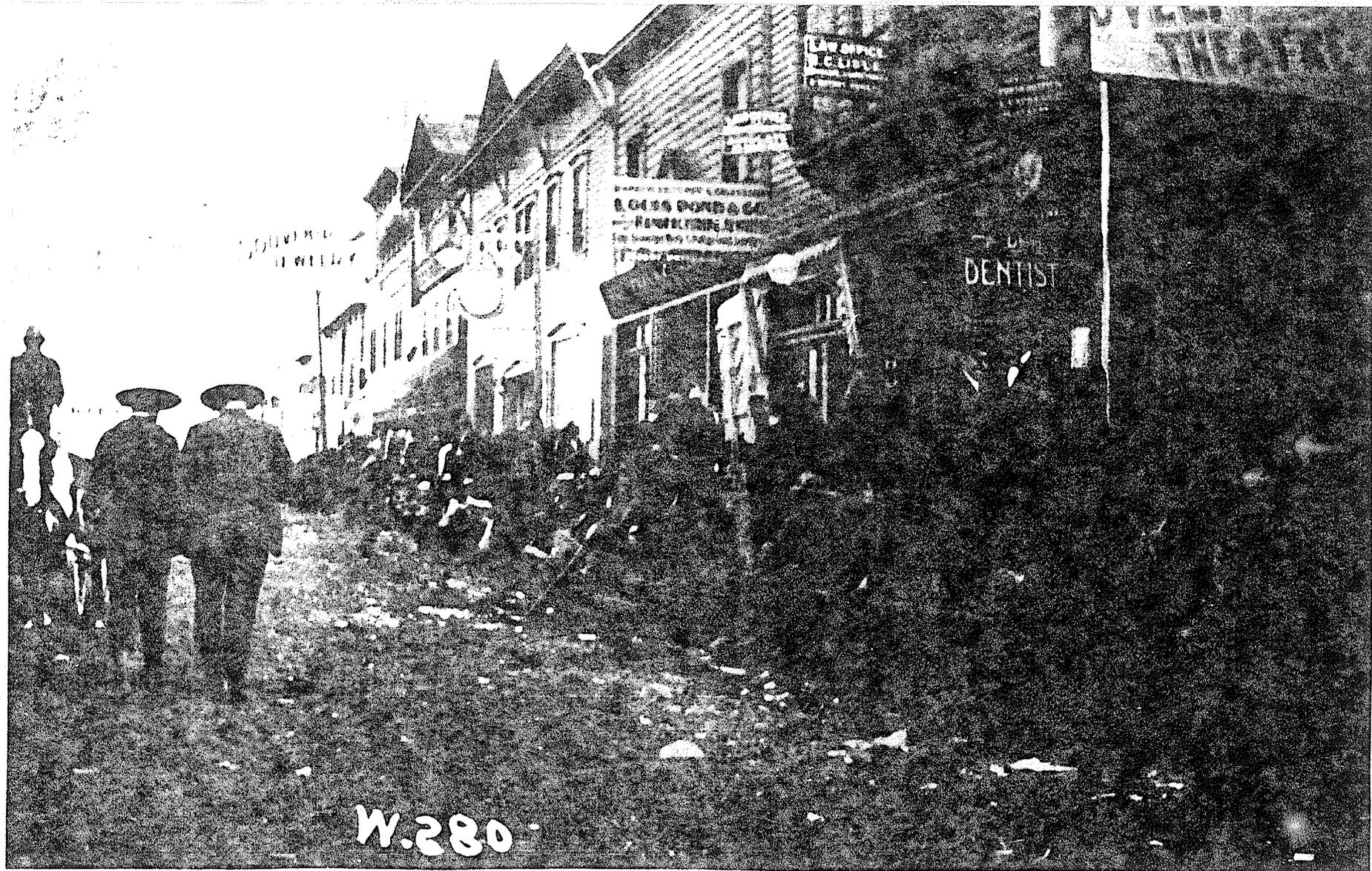


Front Street 1898 (Public Archives of Canada)
The waterfront was always crowded.

range of other items to the miners at Dawson. These people set up stalls near the waterfront and when they sold out, sometimes in a matter of hours, they packed up and went home. Others, who had come to establish businesses, found that rents and the cost of building materials were prohibitive, and many of them gave up after only short periods.⁸⁷ The men who had been drawn by the rewards reportedly available in the goldfields quickly became disillusioned when they learned that the creeks had all been staked and that speculators had purchased all available locations. The failure of some of the mines to equal expectations eliminated opportunities for employment and the Canadian royalties discouraged profitable mining enterprises from expanding.⁸⁸ When they looked for work in Dawson, moreover, they found that the supply of labour had driven wages down while the demand for food and clothing had forced prices to enormously high levels. These conditions and often simple homesickness prompted hundreds to sell their effects and to take the first steamboat for the outside.⁸⁹

A large number of the new arrivals, however, were either exhausted by the long journey to Dawson or without the resources to pay for their passage on the steamboats. Others simply bided their time, hoping that something would turn up, and they milled with the crowds on the streets. Most of the newspaper correspondents commented on the number of idle men who wandered about the waterfront. According to Charles Edwin Fripp of the London Daily Graphic, loafers "lounged gracefully among the bags of beans and bacon, smoking or sleeping. It was difficult to realize that these were men of enterprise in the race for wealth, pioneers of civilization too, bringing all the blessings of modern progress into these uninhabited valleys."⁹⁰ These men whiled away their time in the saloons, gambling halls and houses of ill repute for which Dawson became famous.

The newspaper correspondents emphasized that these resorts lined Dawson's major streets. They usually neglected to add that saloons, gambling halls and brothels were the only



W.280

Street Scene 1898 (Public Archives of Canada)
Men stood in doorways and loitered on the sidewalks.

businesses able to afford the astronomical rents exacted for prime commercial locations. The Seattle Post Intelligencer reported that there were 22 saloons in Dawson and that every available space on Front street had been converted into an eating house. Meals were particularly expensive as a \$2.50 dinner would not compare favourably with a 15¢ one in Seattle.⁹¹ Flora Shaw of The Times of London added that extraordinary amounts of gold changed hands in the saloons and that the gaming tables were habitually crowded.⁹² While most correspondents made only oblique references to prostitution, Fripp wondered why the authorities allowed the social evil to be "so glaringly apparent".⁹³ These institutions and the constant bazaar on the waterfront were the town's only entertainments and they provided a sense of excitement and gaiety for thousands of deprived and disgruntled men.

Despite the existence of saloons, gambling halls and prostitution, the carnival atmosphere was not the overriding sensation in Dawson. In the summer of 1898, the allure of those places was far less significant than the heat, mud, filth, stink and disease which confronted the newcomers. The simple unpleasantness of the townsite was a constant theme in the newspaper accounts and in the correspondence, diaries and memoirs of Klondike stampeders. The Yukon river flood had turned the flat into a quagmire and it never quite dried out before the fall. The streets had the texture of a bog; horses became stuck and wagons sank to the axles. The sidewalks and dry places were littered with piles of lumber and bales of canvas and the right of way was blocked by saw-horses, scaffolding, sawdust and stumps.⁹⁴ The absence of sanitary arrangements for the thousands of newcomers turned the town into a "cesspool of filth" and pedestrians often had to wade kneedeep through the most vile kind of slop.⁹⁵ The place literally reeked and an epidemic of disease was almost inevitable. Typhoid broke out early in July and throughout August and September the hospitals were filled to



Street Scene 1898 (McGill University rare Book room)
Horses became stuck and waggons sank to the axles.

over-flowing.⁹⁶

This wretched state of affairs convinced Major Walsh that some official action was necessary. On 28 June, he issued a formal notice which ordered the removal of building material and all other obstructions from Front street and instructed the squatters whose tents blocked a number of other streets to move to the plateau at the upper end of the Bonanza trail.⁹⁷ The next day the police arrested all those who had not complied with the regulations. A week later, Walsh responded to Father Judge's request for assistance for the hospital by donating \$5,000 from the waterfront rent and he instructed the civil servants in the town to collect additional funds.⁹⁸ Finally, in late July, Walsh appointed a committee to govern the town. It consisted of Inspector Starnes of the NWMP, collector of customs D.W. Davis, crown prosecutor F.C. Wade, accountant H.A. Bliss and police surgeons Richardson and Thompson. The committee's first task was to clean up the riverbank so that steamboats could land near the commercial companies' docks and it continued Walsh's policy of removing obstructions and health hazards from the streets.⁹⁹ This committee governed Dawson in the interval between Walsh's departure and the arrival of his successor.

Prior to July 1898, the Yukon had been a district of the North West Territories officially administered by the authorities at Regina. In practice, however, the minister of the interior in the federal government exercised full authority in the Yukon. Jurisdictional disputes were unavoidable when the governments of Canada and the North West Territories each sent representatives to establish political control in the district. Walsh, for example, had become embroiled in a dispute with a member of the executive council at Regina over the regulation of the liquor traffic in the Yukon. Before that problem could be sorted out in court, the Laurier government passed the Yukon Act which made the district a separate territory with its own executive, legislative

and judicial institutions. The act conferred executive powers upon a commissioner who was directly responsible to the minister of the interior and upon a council of six members who tendered advice and assisted the commissioner in his duties.¹⁰⁰

The first commissioner was William Ogilvie and his council consisted of four members: legal advisor Fred Wade, registrar of lands J.E. Girouard, Judge T.H. McGuire and S.B. Steele of the mounted police. By the time of its first sitting, W.H.P. Clement and C.A. Dugas had replaced Wade and McGuire. The commissioner and council inherited a situation where almost every local problem had been left unsolved. They gave priority to Dawson's needs and in the early weeks the administration had to act in the capacity of a mayor and council. Ogilvie's duties were particularly onerous. He set up a board of health and appointed medical health and sanitation officers; he organized a fire department and served as fire commissioner; and as city engineer he supervised the grading of streets and the construction of temporary drainage ditches. In September and October, the commissioner and council improvised almost all the machinery required to govern Dawson and they spent a large portion of the territorial revenue on local improvements.¹⁰¹

The great gold rush of 1898 had passed its crest by the time that Ogilvie and his party arrived in Dawson. In June, Major Walsh had predicted that a great number of people would leave during July and August and in those months the steamboats seldom left without full loads of passengers.¹⁰² Many of the newcomers lacked the resources to pay their way out and these people decided to walk out over the ice when the Yukon river froze. Early in August, the American consul began to receive appeals for aid from destitute stampedeers who could not afford to spend the winter in Dawson.¹⁰³ Although that official had no funds at his disposal, he and the Canadian authorities and a few American businessmen cooperated to

assist indigents in their efforts to return home. In December, Bishop Bompas estimated that 5,000 men were in the process of leaving Dawson to walk to the Pacific coast, and the exodus continued throughout the winter.¹⁰⁴

Despite the excitement and growth of the summer months, business was slow in Dawson during the winter. There was little money or gold in circulation, partly because the miners could not sluice their dumps until the Klondike thawed. Andrew Grant reported that at one service his church had been crowded to the door but the collection amounted to only \$7.¹⁰⁵ A storekeeper thought the months from October to March were "the dullest" he had ever spent and he contended that conditions were "about the hardest that ever existed in any placer camp discovered, or that ever will be for that matter."¹⁰⁶ There was a good deal of poverty and hardship in Dawson, and the Yukon Council was forced to spend large sums for the amelioration of distress.

From the time of his appointment Ogilvie voiced his concerns about land matters in Dawson. Walsh had urged Sifton to delay action on the applications for the townsite until he reached Ottawa and had argued that the ground they covered was worth "more gold than will be got from the royalty in the next three or four years."¹⁰⁷ Ogilvie, however, advised the minister to accept them because the applicants had acted in good faith and had abided by the regulations. As the government had already granted Ladue's townsite, which had since been transferred to "a wealthy American syndicate", he thought it impolitic to deny the others especially when two of them were British subjects.¹⁰⁸

Ogilvie also declared his objections to the waterfront lease. He explained that his survey had made Front street 66 feet wide because he expected that otherwise it would be too narrow when steamboats unloaded cordwood and other materials on the riverbank. Although the rent was a tidy sum, the \$30,000 did not justify alienating the community, especially

since the lessees realized many times that amount.¹⁰⁹ In January 1899, Ogilvie informed Sifton that the people who had bought lots on the inland side of Front street had paid high prices for them because they assumed they would have free access to the river, and a few of them were considering legal action to recover damages. Their chances of success were very good, he added, because the Dominion Lands Act forbade anyone to lease land on a public highway. He recalled that he had learned of the waterfront lease in a conversation with Sifton and that his response had been "It is not ours to lease." It had been included in Ladue's 160 acres and the applicant had paid for it. According to Ogilvie, the minister had replied that some arrangement would be made with the owners, but Wade had leased it without their consent. The only solution to the question, he concluded, would be to cancel the lease at the end of its term.¹¹⁰

When Ogilvie's position became known in Dawson, a number of tenants on the waterfront initiated legal proceedings to test the validity of the lease. McDonald and Morrison declined to pay their monthly rent until they received judgement in the test case. The court eventually decided that the tenants could not question the landlord's title after they had entered an agreement with him.¹¹¹ Sifton, however, decided that the lease ought not to be renewed. At the end of March, the commissioner issued an order for the waterfront to be cleared by 1 May.¹¹² When the occupants protested, Ogilvie refused to rescind the order and in mid May the police summarily evicted all squatters and tenants who had not moved.¹¹³ The end of McDonald's lease did not see the waterfront incorporated into Ladue's townsite. Instead, the government of Canada took possession of it and the crown land agent leased it directly to companies requiring wharves, warehouses and lumber yards.¹¹⁴

With the settlement of the waterfront question the authorities at Dawson prepared for the annual arrival of new-

comers when the river opened. Although the gold rush continued, its climax had passed and the influx of 1898 did not occur again. This change resulted in part from the fact that the Klondike had become old news. As events in Cuba and South Africa took over front pages, fewer people set off for the north. Yet hundreds poured into Dawson each month, lured by the lingering promise of gold. At the same time, the town experienced a net loss of population. In June, the police reported that 1073 people had landed at Dawson and 1265 had left. The respective figures for August were 760 and 1130. The greatest change happened in July when there were only 476 arrivals but 1919 departures.¹¹⁵ This exodus occurred in part because the winter's mining output yielded only 75 per cent of the wealth expected.¹¹⁶ More important, however, was the discovery of gold on the beach at Nome.

The news from Nome had filtered into Dawson during the winter and hundreds of goldseekers had set off downriver over the ice. Many more waited until the opening of navigation, and the first steamboats of 1899 left Dawson crammed full of passengers. Early in July, the license inspector at Dawson estimated that 7,000 people had joined the rush to Nome and Henry Naylor predicted that the town's population would be reduced by half.¹¹⁷ The Klondike Nugget counted the loss at only 4,000 and suggested that the removal of that many of the "unproductive" element was a blessing in disguise. The paper added that the commercial recession which the town experienced was only temporary and that Dawson was too well established as a distributing centre "to be perceptibly affected by transient causes."¹¹⁸ Some members of the business community were hardly as optimistic. Small shopkeepers were hurt most and several prepared to leave because there were too many stores and not enough customers.¹¹⁹

Most residents of Dawson expected the town to recover when the stampede to Nome abated and the people returned. Although large numbers left Dawson all through 1899, early

in 1900 the process was reversed. The first disappointed stampeders returned when the river opened and together with the annual influx from the south they swelled Dawson's population once again. At the end of the year, William Ogilvie reported that Dawson was "a town of respectable proportions with fairly well graded streets, the natural conditions being considered, and some very nice appearing buildings." He was convinced that continued activity in the goldfields of the Klondike valley assured that the town would ultimately have a stable population of 10,000 or more inhabitants and a life of not less than 20 years.¹²⁰ Ogilvie's optimism and the apparent richness of the goldfields persuaded the government of Canada to make a material commitment to the territory and to the town. With the construction of an administration building, courthouse, post office and commissioner's residence, Dawson acquired the physical characteristics of a proper territorial capital and the stature of a permanent community.

The gold rush left Dawson with a mixed legacy. The Klondike stampedes accelerated its growth from a frontier mining camp to a modern urban centre. The promise of the gold fields seemed to guarantee the future of the town and the reports of the fortunes available contributed to the injection of large amounts of outside capital for local improvements. The influx of people, especially in the summer of 1898, provided the labour force and the materials for the construction of permanent buildings and facilities. It also brought the institutions of social and economic stability which eventually resolved the chaos inherent in the situation. The churches established hospitals, implemented social welfare programs and generally improved the quality of life in the community. The town also acquired a workable if unrepresentative form of local government and a strong tradition of law and order

maintained by the mounted police. Above all, when the rush was over Dawson remained the major centre of population in the upper Yukon valley.

At the same time, this formative period witnessed a number of negative developments. The fact that the commercial companies and banks became established before the local government was organized gave them extraordinary weight in the town. The appointment of the commissioner and council by the federal government meant that the minister of the interior was able to exercise a pervasive influence on most aspects of life in Dawson. The more immediate social problems, and those which plagued the town in the years which followed, were directly connected to the character of the gold rush population. Few Klondike stampeders intended to become permanent residents and many were reluctant to make serious investments in the town. This "floating population" patronized the saloons, gambling halls and brothels and provided the victims for their attendant evils. Destitution and disease affected these men more than any others and they severely strained Dawson's welfare resources. The high proportion of transients in the early years also began the demographic pattern in which the size of the town fluctuated in accordance with discoveries of gold elsewhere.

The paramount effect of the gold rush period was that Dawson became the metropolitan centre of the Yukon territory. The great advantage of the townsite, which Ladue recognized from the beginning, lay in its proximity to the gold bearing creeks and its location on the major transportation corridor of the region. Because the Klondike was too shallow for steamboats, all goods destined for the goldfields were unloaded at Dawson. As a port, the town developed the service industries required by the people who disembarked: hotels, restaurants and saloons. The arrival of the commercial companies early in 1897 virtually assured Dawson's future as a distribution centre and the advent of the banks and other corporations

confirmed the town's mercantile function. As the population grew, Dawson secured social institutions such as hospitals and fraternal organizations which drew men in from the hinterland. The establishment of the territorial government enhanced the town's position, as it became the administrative and judicial centre of the region as well. The need to impose political control over the upper Yukon valley expedited the development of communications facilities which in turn strengthened Dawson's metropolitan stature.

In the gold rush era, however, Dawson did not conform to the classic metropolitan model.¹²¹ The first migration to the Klondike focused on the gold-fields and Dawson was little more than Forty Mile transplanted to a new location. In a sense, then, the hinterland acquired a service centre, rather than the centre a hinterland. Geographical and climatic factors precluded Dawson from directing the development of the mining frontier. Indeed, the activity and demands of the region had a greater impact on the growth and development of Dawson. The exodus to Nome in 1899, for example, illustrated the town's vulnerability to changes in the goldfields, and Dawson never overcame that problem.

Although the gold rush made Dawson predominant in the region, the full definition of its metropolitan character awaited the years which followed. Paradoxically, the town became stable and orderly only after it had begun its long decline. The summer of 1898 saw the population reach its apex and it never rose to that level again. As the gold rush subsided, people left Dawson and the drain continued throughout the following two decades. Yet a solid core of permanent residents refused to leave and they presided over the town's future. Still, even for them, the first three years remained Dawson's golden age.

III Transience and Persistence

Dawson was, in many ways, the city of the gold rush. It grew from a frontier mining camp to a major urban centre almost in a matter of weeks. The great gold rush of 1898 raised the town's population to its apex and for a short time Dawson claimed to be the largest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. By the end of that summer, however, people had begun to leave Dawson and they continued to leave in the months and years which followed. Their departure has traditionally been regarded as evidence that by 1899 the great Klondike stampede was over. Part of that view is the result of exaggerated estimates of Dawson's population when the rush was at its crest. The most popular estimate is that there were 30,000 people in Dawson, though others range as high as 50,000. There were, in fact, barely 16,000 in Dawson when the town was at its largest, but there might have been 30,000 spread throughout the whole Klondike valley. Given those inflated estimates, it is easy to see how Dawson's rapid decline could be interpreted as reflecting the end of the last great gold rush. The loss of as many as 20,000 people in so short a time was not to be underestimated. Yet, in reality, the decline was hardly as dramatic nor did it comprise a sudden exodus. For 20 years Dawson continued to shrink, "its population trickling from it like water from a leaky barrel."¹

This simple analysis is misleading and there is reason to suggest that the gold rush did not end so abruptly. To date, no one has challenged Pierre Berton's assertion that "the

great stampede ended as quickly as it had begun."² Circumstantial evidence alone, however, indicates that while the dramatic stampede to the Klondike may have subsided, the northward migration continued at a significant rate. A brief examination of two statistics points in this direction. At the height of the gold rush, in July 1898, a mounted police census found that there were just over 16,000 people in Dawson.³ By all accounts that number had begun to fall before the Yukon river froze and the decline continued throughout the winter. A further exodus after the discovery of gold at Nome reduced the population by an estimated 7,000 and disappointed miners and labourers continued to depart in droves.⁴ In the spring of 1900, before the river opened, the police found only 5,400 people in Dawson.⁵ The following year, the Census of Canada declared that the town's population exceeded 9,000.⁶ Although the federal census was taken during the summer, the seasonal variation does not account for the size of the discrepancy between the figures for 1900 and 1901. That difference suggests that there was a heavy influx of people to the Klondike in the years after the gold rush supposedly ended.

To test that hypothesis and to ascertain the degree of population stability in Dawson required a demographic analysis. The only available sources for the two decades after 1898 were the directories compiled by R.L. Polk and Company of Seattle, a major publisher of directories for towns and cities on the Pacific coast.⁷ In 1903, the company produced its first directory for settlements in the Yukon and Alaska and Polk's Alaska-Yukon Gazetteer and Business Directory appeared biennially until 1918. These directories listed the residents of Dawson alphabetically with their occupations and street addresses and, as far as one can tell, the entries are accurate. They are certainly among the more reliable sources and if they are unrepresentative it is likely in the direction of over-representing the householders and men of commerce who comprised

the stable component of the population. The directories, then, appear to be valid tools for identifying the rates of demographic change in the community.

This study used Polk's directories for the years 1903, 1905-06, 1907-08, 1909-10, 1911-12, 1915-16, and 1917-18.⁸ A small pre-test suggested a high turnover of residents.⁹ A random sample was selected from the 1903 directory and a search was then conducted in all subsequent directories to determine the frequency with which the sample individuals reappeared.¹⁰ This process was repeated with a sample from each directory to ascertain when the subjects first and last appeared in a directory as residents of Dawson. The data derived from this search are presented in Table I. The term "immigration" refers to the proportion of the sample which appeared for the first time in every directory year, while "emigration" refers to the proportion which did not reappear in subsequent directories.

Table I

Rates of Demographic Change over 2 and 4 Year Periods

Year	Immigration		Emigration	
	% over 2 years	% over 4 years	% over 2 years	% over 4 years
1903	--	--	66.6	82
1905	42.6	--	49	60.8
1907	39.5	58.7	34.1	49.7
1909	23.8	50.3	24.5	59.9
1911	37.2	56.3	--	51.4
1913	--	--	--	--
1915	--	76.5	27.7	44*
1917	35.3	--	--	--

*Estimate of rate of change over 4 year period based on data of 1915-17 interval extrapolated to 4 years using ratio of 2 year to 4 year difference in other years.

These data illustrate some interesting phenomena. By 1905, two-thirds of the people listed in the 1903 directory had left Dawson and by 1907 the proportion has risen to 82 per cent. Almost half of the 1905 residents had departed within two years and over 63 per cent within four years. This pattern continued throughout the decade, and although the number of departures in less than two years declined, the number in less than four years consistently exceeded 50 per cent. At the same time, each directory carried a significant number of names of new arrivals. In 1905 more than 40 per cent of the population had been resident in Dawson for less than two years, and the same proportion is reflected in the data for 1907. More striking, however, is the evidence that in every year from 1907 onward more than 50 per cent of the population had been resident in Dawson for less than four years. These findings support the hypothesis that the gold rush did not end abruptly, since immigration must account for the entries in each directory who were not residents in earlier years. Moreover, the data suggest that a significant portion of the population of the city of Dawson at any given time consisted of individuals who had been residents for less than four years. In fact, if the data are to be trusted, one may conclude that in the years between 1903 and 1918 the city's population included a consistently high proportion of new arrivals.

Plotted graphically and expressed in numerical terms, the data reveal additional information. Figure 1 illustrates the fluctuations in Dawson's net population during the period 1903-18. The points connected by the coloured lines represent the number of people from one directory listed in all other directories, and the apex of each coloured line represents the total population listed in each directory.

Figure 1



Figure 1 illustrates the mobility of Dawson's population. The black line which connects the apices of the coloured lines shows the change in Dawson's net population between 1903 and 1918. The blue line which represents the 1907 directory listings suggests that there were about 1350 residents in Dawson that year. Only 550 of that number had been residents in 1903 and only 810 in 1905. In 1909 less than 750 of the 1907 residents were still in Dawson and two years later only 535 remained. Six years later just over 250 of the 1907 residents were still there. The other coloured lines reflect a similar pattern. The data, then, suggest that there was a significant immigration in every directory year and that there was a net loss of population until 1909 because the number of departures outran the number of arrivals.

Plotted graphically and expressed in percentages, the data also illustrate a marked consistency in the rate of change. Figure 2 shows the percentage rate of change over two year periods. The base year touches 100% since it represents the total population for the directory year. The points on each coloured line represent the percentage of the base year population present in Dawson at two year intervals preceding and following the base or directory year.

Figure 2

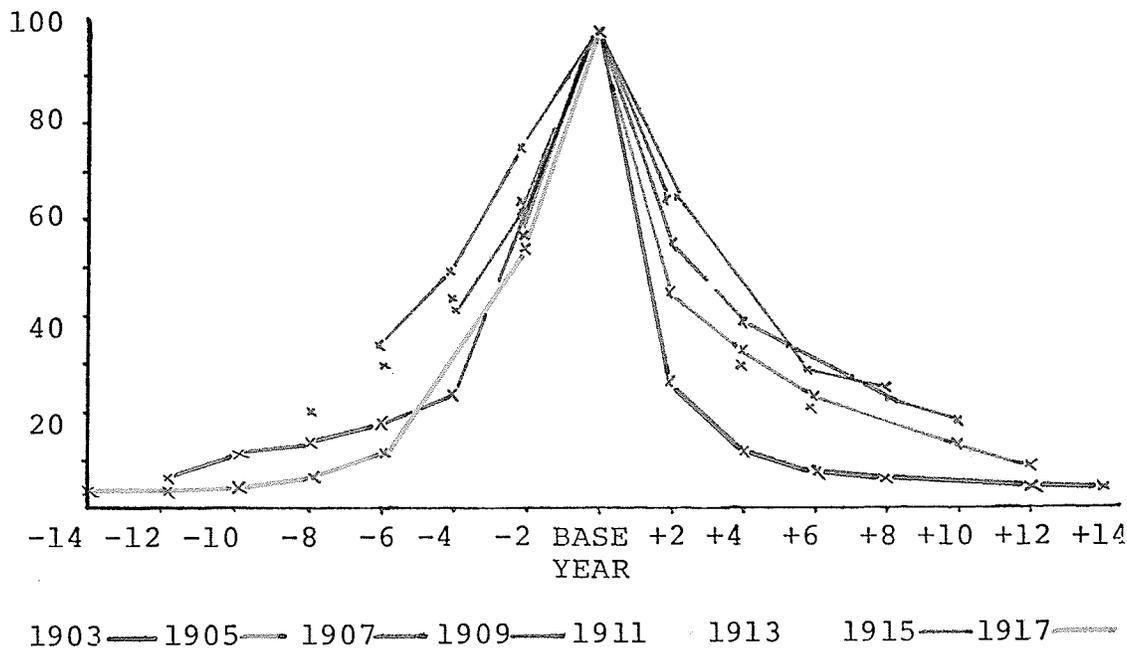


Figure 2 suggests that the rate of demographic change between 1903 and 1918 remained relatively consistent. Again the blue line represents the directory listings for 1907. Approximately 41% of the 1907 entries had been resident in Dawson since 1903 and just over 60% since 1905. Slightly more than 55% remained in 1909, under 40% in 1911, 23% in 1915, and by 1917 the proportion had fallen below 20%. Figure 2 suggests that this pattern of change was relatively constant in other years. The steep slope of the lines on either side of the base year for all directory years clearly illustrates the consistent instability of Dawson's population.

Thus, the data support the hypothesis that the population of Dawson was highly mobile and that there was a four year turnover rate in excess of 50 per cent. Until 1909, the population declined and appeared to "trickle away" because the number of departures exceeded the number of new arrivals. Figure 1 suggests that after 1909 that trend was reversed. Although the rate of change remained relatively constant, immigration to Dawson exceeded emigration, and the town experienced a net gain in population.

While the data strongly point to these conclusions, it may be difficult to accept them outright. They depend upon the reliability of Polk's directories as accurate registers of Dawson's population. Unfortunately, in 1911 the figures of Polk's directory do not correspond with those of the Census of Canada.¹¹ In part, the discrepancy may be explained by the fact that the directory listed only householders and tenants while the census listed all residents, including members of families. Seasonal variations might also make a difference as the population rose during the summer and fell in winter. As suggested earlier, however, if the directories misrepresent the population at all, it is in the direction of over-representing the more stable elements. The estimate of the transient component of the population, therefore, may be too conservative. For the purposes of this study, the directories must be accepted as reliable, and they provide clear evidence that Dawson had a highly transient and unstable population.

The fact that a significant proportion of Dawson's population every year consisted of new arrivals indicates that the gold rush did not end abruptly in 1899. Indeed, it appears that the migration to the Klondike continued at least until 1910 and perhaps even longer. Men continued to be drawn north by the reports of the fortunes which awaited the adventurous and transportation improvements after the turn of the century

facilitated their arrival. The spate of Klondike novels which perpetuated the myth of Dawson also helped to prolong the movement northward. The mythical town of gold, bright lights and easy virtue attracted hundreds of men each year; their disappointment with the reality undermined the stability of the community.

At the same time, Dawson was always subject to changes in mining activity in the gold fields. The rapid decline in population between 1903 and 1905 may be explained by the discovery of gold in the Tanana valley of Alaska. The ensuing stampede to Fairbanks included many residents from Dawson. This fact prompted one commentator to describe Fairbanks as a second Dawson and more like Dawson than the original: "everyone" in Fairbanks had come from Dawson but "everyone" in Dawson had come from somewhere else.¹² The exodus for the Tanana valley coincided with a dispute about the incorporation of Dawson and it is not difficult to see a connection between the rise of Fairbanks and Dawson's local problems. Paradoxically, the excitement of the Fairbanks gold strike and the debate over civic concerns in Dawson overshadowed the Alaska boundary controversy in the only part of Canada directly affected by that question.

Dawson's decline continued in the four years after 1905 but at a slower rate. That period saw the slow transition from labour intensive mining methods to capital intensive mining technology. Although the first dredge appeared in the Klondike valley in 1901, it took the large mining companies the better part of the decade to buy out the individual claim owners on the gold-bearing creeks. By 1909, however, that process was virtually complete. In the intervening years, companies such as the Guggenheim's Yukon Consolidated Gold Company and J.W. Boyle's Canadian Klondike Mining Company applied for charters of incorporation and imported mining machinery.¹³ These large concerns had little direct impact on Dawson's

population since they imported their employees and housed them at camps near their sites. When they began large scale dredging, however, especially after 1909, they precipitated the evacuation of the small settlements on the creeks. Camps such as Grand Forks and Dominion disappeared and their inhabitants gravitated to Dawson. This migration within the territory accounts for the net increase in Dawson's population after 1909. One clear reflection of this trend appears in the rise in the number of school children. Each year after 1910 the territorial superintendent of schools reported an increase in attendance at the public school.¹⁴ Since few families arrived from outside, and since the figures exceeded the expected natural increase, it may be argued that the children and their families had come to Dawson from the creek settlements.

The high proportion of transients in Dawson's population accounts for many of the social and economic problems which the city encountered. The major social problems on the mining frontier were associated with drinking, gambling and prostitution. Dawson had plenty of saloons, gambling dens and houses of ill repute because they catered to the needs of a young male population in unfamiliar territory and without the restraints imposed by family. Those institutions supplied the companionship and entertainment which the men required. The authorities recognized their function and, rather than eliminate them, they resolved to control the sale of alcohol and to make the prostitutes less visible. At the same time, the evils attendant on saloons, gambling halls and prostitution aggravated the problems inherent in an unstable population. Transients were often reduced to destitution and indigent patients drained the hospitals of their resources.

The chronic shortage of funds for public health and municipal services is also directly attributable to the character of the population. Transients did not own property nor operate lasting business concerns. Many of the newcomers

secured their first accomodation in one of Dawson's many hotels and then rented houses in the town. As tenants, they paid no property taxes directly. The permanent residents, the large corporations and owners of property, had to pay high taxes for the public improvements enjoyed by all. Taxation was a thorny question for every Dawson administration. As long as the transient component of the population remained high, funds for municipal services were in short supply. The difficulties in securing adequate sewage disposal, cost efficient water and electrical utilities and systematic fire protection were the direct consequence of Dawson's unstable population.

That population was also preponderantly male. There were women in the Yukon during the gold rush but they comprised a very small minority of the local residents. As the rush subsided after 1898, the balance shifted toward a more natural distribution but in each year there were still far more men than women. According to a mounted police census, in September 1899 there were 786 women in Dawson or 18% of the town's population of 4445.¹⁵ By April 1900, Dawson's population had risen to 5,404. In the same period, the number of women fell to 646 or 12% of the total, likely due to the exodus of prostitutes and dance hall women for greater opportunities at Nome.¹⁶ In the same seven months, the number of children in Dawson rose from 78 to 242, or from 1.8% to 4.5%.¹⁷ There can be no doubt that the number of women and children increased throughout the following decade. The 1901 Census of Canada reported that the Yukon population was 15% female but the published volumes did not include a table of distribution by sex for Dawson.¹⁸ Maria Ferguson's Dawson City, Yukon Territory and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer for 1901 did list the names of 1031 women. According to her figures, Dawson's population was 8% female. There is, however, a large discrepancy between her count and the number published in the census. The directory

included more than 12,000 names while the census declared that Dawson had only 9,142 residents. This confusion is compounded by the fact that Polk's directories for the following years did not list the names of non-working women. One may assume that the number of women went up in absolute and proportionate terms. Indeed, the 1911 Census of Canada revealed that of the 3013 people in Dawson, 710 or 24% were female.¹⁹

The directories may also be used to determine the number of continuous residents and the rates of "persistence" in Dawson. The rate of persistence, expressed as a percentage, is the proportion of the population which remains in a specific area for a given period of time, usually a decade.²⁰ The persistent proportion of the population in each directory was determined by dividing the number of continuous residents in each sample by the total number of entries in the same sample. The data appear in Table 2.

Table 2

Rates of Persistence in Dawson 1903-1917

Year	%	Year	%
1903	6.4*	1911	13.6
1905	14.7	1913	----
1907	27.5	1915	8.4
1909	29.3	1917	8.4

*Because of the absence of a directory for 1913, this figure reflects persistence over a period of 12 years.

Table 2 shows that the rate of persistence rose continuously until 1909, after which time it fell dramatically and then

became relatively consistent. If persistence can be equated with demographic stability, then Dawson's population was most stable in 1909 when nearly 30% of its residents had lived in or would live in the town for more than a decade. In numerical terms, this continuous population ranged in size from about 250 householders, at the beginning and end of the period, to a high of approximately 375 in 1907. Although the number fell by 1909, there were proportionately more continuous residents in that year because the total population had declined at a greater rate. The dramatic decrease after 1909 occurred in part because of the increase in the population illustrated in Figure 1.

The directories may also be used to ascertain the distribution of persistence among occupational groups in Dawson. This study concentrated on the period 1903 to 1909 because there are difficulties involved in using the directories for 1911, 1915 and 1917. The advent of mining companies with large numbers of employees complicated matters because they introduced occupational descriptions which are hard to classify.

The distribution of persistence according to very general occupational classifications²¹ appears in Table 3. The term "professional" refers to people who made their livings in professions such as law, medicine, dentistry or teaching. The "commercial-mercantile" category includes the proprietors of shops and restaurants, the keepers of hotels and saloons, managers of industrial establishments, and real estate and insurance brokers. Clerks, bank tellers, shop assistants and stenographers are listed under "clerical", while "skilled" encompasses men in the building trades, blacksmiths, printers and firemen. The category "unskilled" contains labourers, cooks, bartenders, drivers and woodchoppers.

Table 3Occupational Distribution of Persistence 1903-1909

Occupational Classification	1903	1905	1907	1909
professional	13%	3%	5%	0%
commercial-mercantile	26%	41%	46%	51%
skilled	6%	14%	7%	18%
clerical	23%	17%	15%	8%
unskilled	32%	24%	27%	23%

These data suggest that, in the period after 1903, the clerical proportion of Dawson's continuous population fell consistently as, with the exception of 1907, did the proportion of unskilled workers. While the professional and skilled proportions varied in size, the commercial-mercantile component increased until by 1909 it comprised more than 50% of the persistent residents.

This pattern differs from the ordinary distribution of occupational groups in Dawson during the same period. That distribution appears in Table 4.

Table 4Occupational Distribution 1903-1909

Occupational Classification	1903	1905	1907	1909
professional	3%	3%	5%	3%
commercial-mercantile	27%	40%	35%	32%
skilled	12%	11%	12%	13%
clerical	20%	14%	12%	9%
unskilled	37%	30%	35%	42%

A comparison of Tables 3 and 4 reveals a few significant differences. The most apparent ones occur in the commercial-mercantile and unskilled categories. While the commercial-mercantile element among the continuous residents increased between 1903 and 1909, the same element in the ordinary distribution actually decreased. This fact suggests that men of business and commerce were proportionately more persistent than persons of other occupational groups. At the same time, a similar comparison for the fifth category suggests that the unskilled were proportionately less persistent than people of other occupations. Occupational classification did not appear to affect the persistence of professionals, skilled tradesmen and clerks.

These data on persistence provide further evidence of the chronic instability of Dawson's population. There is a direct correlation between persistence and "turnover", which may be defined as the sum of all population movement into and out of a specific area during a particular period. The rate of turnover has been defined loosely as 100% minus the rate of persistence.²² According to this definition, in 1907 and 1909 the rate of population turnover in Dawson exceeded 70%, while in the other years it surpassed 85%. Those rates are extraordinarily high. They reveal the extent of the changes in Dawson's population and they account for the administrative and social problems which the community faced. The consistently high turnover rates affected the form of local government and the character of law enforcement, fire protection and municipal services. The turnover in population also made it difficult for the residents to resolve the social problems associated with saloons, gambling, prostitution and infectious diseases. Those matters are examined in the following chapters.

IV . The Issues of City Government

In the first fifteen years of its existence the city of Dawson faced many of the problems associated with mining boomtowns. Of paramount concern were impediments to the process of social, political and communal organization. One important element of that process in Dawson involved the incorporation of the city. Examination of the recurring agitation for and against incorporation as well as assessment of the experiments in municipal government may illuminate the character of the city in this early period.

The first discussion of the incorporation of Dawson occurred in the fall of 1897 when a group of American residents approached the mounted police commander for information on how it might be accomplished. Inspector Constantine's reply dispelled their initiative as he pointed out that the North West Ordinances stipulated that the applicants had to be British subjects.¹ The Canadian officials on the scene realized that the high proportion of "aliens" among the property owners meant that Dawson could not be organized in the usual way but they recognized that some form of municipal government was necessary. In his year end report, Gold Commissioner Fawcett described the difficulties which resulted from the absence of a local authority and he added that he had postponed the institution of a town government pending the arrival of the chief executive officer sent from Ottawa.² Major Walsh, however, did not arrive until late in the spring of 1898, by which time he had decided to resign his position and return to Ontario. In the intervening months, there were no significant

appeals for incorporation and the community remained without proper local authorities.

The incorporation issue arose again in the summer of 1898 when Dawson's public facilities and utilities were unable to cope with its inflated population. The first editorial reference favoured incorporation less as a means of securing local improvements, than as an expedient to subvert the authority of the North West Mounted Police. The Klondike Nugget objected to the police decision to outlaw all work on Sunday as it prevented Dawson's sawmills from making up the town's lumber shortage during its brief building season. The extension of municipal rights to Dawson would enable its citizens to throw off "this yoke of martial restraint" and would accelerate the development of the town.³

Soon afterward, the issue was taken up by other individuals and organizations. At the end of July 1898, C.M. Woodworth, a lawyer and founding member of the Miners' Association, opened a citizens' campaign for incorporation. In a letter to the Nugget he declared that Dawson ought to be incorporated and governed by a mayor and council representing and responsible to the townspeople and having jurisdiction over the municipality. A city government was required to take action on such urgent matters as streets, drainage, scavenging, public health, water supply, fire protection, poor relief, public works, nuisances, hospitals, burials and the licensing of theatres and other businesses.⁴ Woodworth proposed that a petition be presented to Walsh's successor as Yukon Commissioner and he chose the Miners' Association as the vehicle for its circulation.

The Miners' Association was a direct descendent of the mass meeting, the traditional means of political activity on the mining frontier. Originally summoned to discuss the placer mining regulations, the Dawson association broadened the scope of its grievances to include demands for representation at all levels of government and for the establishment of municipal institutions.⁵ Miners, however, were absent from the

townsite for long periods and in any case their interests were not identical to those who owned business and residential property. For these people the question of fire protection provided the incentive to consider incorporation.

Fire was always a serious threat to Dawson. The town was built quickly of poor quality timber which was extremely flammable when dried out by wood stoves over the long winter. In the summer of 1898, there was no fire brigade and at the end of August the major property holders met to discuss the matter of fire protection. This meeting, called by two saloonkeepers and the owner of a theatre, learned that one of the commercial companies had acquired a steam fire engine worth \$18,000 which it would not release until it received full payment. A public subscription had raised \$10,000 and three companies and two banks had each pledged \$1,000 but no one had volunteered to cover the balance nor to pay for the construction of an engine house. The meeting had been called to find a solution to this impasse. H.T. Wills, manager of the Bank of Commerce, suggested that the most appropriate one was to demand the incorporation of Dawson and the assessment of its residents. To that end, he proposed that a petition be draughted for presentation to the new commissioner, William Ogilvie, on his arrival in Dawson. The meeting adopted Wills' resolution and appointed a committee of four to pursue the matter. This committee, of Messrs. Wills, Chute, Davis and Rutledge, the "Citizens Committee," soon became one of the most vocal advocates of municipal government.⁶

The committee of four appeared before Ogilvie soon after his arrival in September 1898. The commissioner contended that incorporation was not desirable at that time and asserted that "the officers of the Government" could administer the town efficiently for some time to come. He agreed, however, that funds were required for local improvements and that municipal taxation would provide revenue to put the city in "a

proper condition." Despite his opposition, Ogilvie admitted that it would be difficult to refuse a petition signed by a majority of the landowners and businessmen, but emphasized that 2,000 signatures were required for Dawson to be incorporated as a town and 5,000 for its incorporation as a city.⁷

After this interview, the Citizens Committee convened a second meeting to discuss the situation. Wills pointed out that as matters stood Dawson had a fire engine that could not be used until it was paid for, no sanitation, disgraceful streets, and no system of charity or public welfare. C.M. Woodworth added that incorporation would raise property values and that taxes raised in Dawson would be spent on local improvements and not be sent to Ottawa with other "tribute." The meeting drew up a petition which stated that the absence of fire protection threatened Dawson's already inadequate food supply, that poor sanitation was responsible for the high death rate, that the streets were impassable and that no other town of comparable size in the Canadian northwest had been refused incorporation. Before the meeting adjourned, Wills declared that his bank was prepared to issue a note to pay for the fire engine if 15 or 20 citizens agreed to sign it.⁸

The Citizens Committee had strong editorial support. The Nugget declared that the only people against incorporation were the large landowners who expected to be taxed out of existence and who preferred that Dawson remain "an overgrown mining camp, without a voice in its own affairs, without protection from fire or an epidemic of disease, and with only such privileges as are kindly granted us from a distant government."⁹ It is clear that the property owners were divided on the issue, and other citizens began to have second thoughts. At two joint meetings of the Miners' Association and the Citizens Committee, E. Leroy Pelletier, "mining operator" and sometime correspondent of the New York Times, contended that since few in Dawson intended to remain there

permanently, it would be unfair to tax its current residents for the benefit of those to follow. Moreover, duties and mining royalties provided the dominion and territorial governments with ample funds and that was the direction from which redress should be sought. Pelletier opposed incorporation because it absolved those governments from their responsibility for improvements. This argument failed to persuade a majority of those present, and Wills' withdrawal of the offer of a loan because the necessary 20 people had not appeared, may have turned the tide. In the end the Miners' Association absorbed the Citizens Committee and resolved to circulate the incorporation petition.¹⁰

The petition circulated freely throughout Dawson for over a month, but by mid-October there were only 1,200 signatures.¹¹ As the winter of 1898-99 set in, pressure group activity declined. When the nights were long the Miners' Association functioned more as a social organization than as a political one. The incorporation issue became entwined with the grievances against mining regulations and its fate was assured when the officers of the association boycotted hearings arranged by the commissioner. At the same time, much of the agitation for representative institutions disappeared when the dominion government made it clear that when the time came only British subjects would be enfranchised. By the spring of 1899, the Miners' Association had passed out of existence.¹²

While the Miners' Association died the incorporation agitation merely went into etination. It reappeared in the fall of 1899 when the Dawson Daily News asserted that incorporation was the best way of ensuring that "the local revenue of Dawson may be spent in Dawson by the people of Dawson for the improvement of Dawson."¹³ But the response, at a time of mass exodus from the Klondike, caused the newspaper to reconsider its position. Three weeks after the first editorial a second wondered what power a city council would have if

the territorial government retained its authority over the police and fire department. A municipal government with jurisdiction over petty matters such as streets and sidewalks might not be as desirable as one with full civic powers.¹⁴ At this point, C.M. Woodworth argued that the Yukon Council refused to incorporate Dawson out of fear of a municipal rival and he convinced the Dawson Board of Trade that incorporation was desirable because the city needed lighted streets and sidewalks, schools and other public conveniences.¹⁵ The Nugget added fuel to the debate when it reported that the dominion government had passed an enabling act which empowered the Yukon Council to pass an ordinance incorporating the town of Dawson, and that the Council had decided to take no action until a consensus was reached in Dawson. The Nugget also polled a number of prominent merchants and found them divided about equally on the question of incorporation. One group opposed it out of fear of increased taxation while the other saw it as evidence of Dawson's advance and progress.¹⁶

In its reference to the actions of the dominion government, the Nugget overlooked the section of the Yukon Act which gave the commissioner in council the power to impose taxation without the authority of Parliament. The question of taxation became the thorny issue upon which incorporation was impaled. When it appeared that the Yukon Council intended to raise fees and licences and was in fact preparing a Dawson assessment bill, Woodworth raised the spectre of taxation without representation. A mass meeting elected a new Citizens Committee of four miners, a stenographer, a banker and lawyer Woodworth to direct the campaign for representative institutions.¹⁷

This Citizens Committee was concerned primarily with securing an wholly elected Yukon Council and the incorporation of Dawson was not one of its principal demands. Indeed, it turned out that only Woodworth and Joe Clarke were unequivocally in its favour.¹⁸ When the Yukon Council met the Citizens Committee

it rejected the petition for representation but resolved that Dawson could be incorporated when its citizens so wished. The Council also withdrew the proposed city taxation ordinance to give the residents time to reach a decision.¹⁹ This action aroused a mixed response. The News charged that the Council had raised the incorporation question to side-track the people from the real issue of representative government at the territorial level. Moreover, the Yukon Council had not enumerated the powers it would surrender to the municipality and it was thus impossible to estimate the effectiveness of any city government.²⁰ The government organ, the Yukon Sun, asserted that incorporation was not in the city's interest because it was already administered economically by a body of men who enjoyed the confidence of the people. In the event of incorporation, the Sun feared that a band of "demagogues and shady characters" would get hold of the civic machinery and inaugurate "a saturnalia of corruption and lawlessness."²¹ A newspaper poll found the prominent men of commerce in Dawson united in the opinion that the cost of incorporation would be wholly out of proportion to the benefits to be derived and a mass meeting affirmed that an elected Council was the issue, rather than incorporation.²²

The Council's determination to proceed with the municipal taxation bill, however, spurred the incorporators into action. By mid-July 1900, the assessor had completed his work and the Council prepared to establish the mill rate. At this point the Nugget suggested that perhaps the time had come for the incorporation of Dawson. If taxation could not be avoided then some means was necessary to ensure that the revenue derived from the town was used for local improvements and a city council with municipal powers seemed to be the best alternative.²³ The News concurred and declared that the people of Dawson would only pay taxes on legal grounds; when there were elected representatives on the Yukon Council and when

Dawson was incorporated the taxation question would be easily settled.²⁴

This agitation for incorporation never really got off the ground. It is difficult to say what might have happened had the Yukon Council carried out its intention and collected taxes in Dawson. Much of the unrest was defused when the Laurier government announced that an election for two Yukon Councillors would be held sometime after 13 August. Soon afterward the Council itself revealed that a \$70,000 refund from Ottawa had removed the need for local revenue, and Councillor Girouard's announcement that taxes would not be collected effectively silenced the critics who had objected to taxation without incorporation.²⁵

The absence of a popular clamour for incorporation did not put the issue to rest. If the people did not want it the members of the Yukon Council apparently did. In his annual report for 1899, William Ogilvie had complained that as commissioner he also had to serve as Dawson's mayor, engineer and fire commissioner.²⁶ In October 1900, he commented that the members of his council were weighed down by their responsibilities for local government.²⁷ When the newspapers discovered that that councillors favoured the incorporation of Dawson as the easiest way to lessen their work, the debate on civic government began anew. The Nugget found it difficult to see how incorporation could be made acceptable to Dawson's business people and the Sun declared that incorporation would double taxation without providing better government.²⁸ Both papers urged property owners to sign a petition opposing it. Significantly, the first signature was that of the North American Transportation and Trading Company, Dawson's single largest prospective taxpayer.²⁹

On the evening after the Yukon Council received this petition, C.M. Woodworth convened a pro-incorporation meeting. The Nugget reported that the chairman had "showed in brilliant

hues the advantages of incorporation, after which aliens will vote, gambling will be continued wide open, lewd women will pay fines into the treasury and everyone will be happy and gay."³⁰ This outburst of sarcasm contained a large element of truth. Among the most vocal advocates of incorporation were the keepers of saloons and gambling halls whose interests were threatened when the minister of the interior ordered a police crackdown and enforcement of new liquor and gambling regulations. These people saw a municipal government as a means to overcome the strict enforcement of the law. Their hopes evaporated when legal advice confirmed that a city council could not enact ordinances which conflicted with federal laws.³¹ Yet, although the saloonkeepers faded away, a small but noisy band of agitators continued the incorporation campaign.

Dawson was, then, divided by the issue when Ogilvie's replacement, James H. Ross, arrived. Ross soon discovered that much of his time was taken up by the affairs of the town and it was not long before he revealed his hand.³² In July and August 1901 he piloted through the Council an ordinance which empowered the commissioner to incorporate towns and provide for the election of overseers. When it passed, the Nugget warned that the next step was the incorporation of Dawson as the commissioner was determined to unload responsibility for the town onto a local government. There were two opinions on the matter, the Nugget added, "but the governor has sentiments in favour of only one of these, and Dawson must therefore be an incorporated town whether its inhabitants shall so elect or not."³³ Indeed, the final decision would not be up to its residents at all.

It is clear that the impetus for incorporation came, not from C.M. Woodworth and his band of incorporators, but from within the Yukon Council and particularly from the commissioner. In his annual report, dated 10 October 1901, Ross asserted that Dawson had become a steady, prosperous and progressive

community well deserving the management of its own municipal affairs. "The citizens", he continued, "generally...approve of a scheme of incorporation, to which legislative effect will shortly be given."³⁴ In November, the newspapers reported that an ordinance incorporating Dawson had been prepared and it was introduced at the meeting of the Council in the first week of December.³⁵

The incorporation bill was a comprehensive document which did more than create the Dawson municipal corporation. It provided for a plebiscite to determine the character of the city government, the alternatives being an elected mayor and council or a commission of three appointed by the commissioner in council. The bill contained a clause extending the vote only to British subjects whose names appeared on the assessment roll and another which established property qualifications for candidates for civic office. The city government was to have the powers of every city council, including control of the fire brigade, care of the streets and sewers, establishment of licences, management of buildings and property, but only limited power to borrow money for civic improvements.³⁶ This bill proceeded through the Council with few amendments.³⁷ On 16 December 1901, when it received third reading, passage and royal assent, the incorporation of Dawson was complete.

Few historians have addressed themselves to the question of why Dawson was incorporated in 1901. In his pioneer study of Yukon politics, David Morrison focused on the early agitation for an elected territorial council and member of Parliament. Morrison suggested that the extension of municipal government to Dawson was the by-product of this agitation, but he did emphasize the role played by Commissioner Ross.³⁸ Although the incorporation question was tied to the larger issue of representative government, it was not difficult for Morrison to exaggerate the relationship. Morris Zaslow, on the other hand, adhered more closely to the evidence



THE GOVERNOR: "COME, MY BOY, IT IS TIME YOU BEGAN WEARING PANTS."

Klondike Nugget, 26 November 1901

available when he traced the incorporation of Dawson and other Yukon communities to the desire of the Yukon Council to rid itself of the responsibility for their affairs.³⁹ Neither Morrison nor Zaslow explained the timing of the decision, nor did they take into account the attitude of the Laurier government and the minister of the interior.

Part of the answer to those questions may be suggested by a short examination of the federal government's position before 1901. In those years, Dawson and the Yukon had an unstable population and one that was largely non-Canadian. The Yukon Act, which had made the district a separate territory, conferred executive powers upon a commissioner who was directly responsible to the minister of the interior and upon an appointed council which tendered advice and assisted the commissioner. Zaslow argued that the federal government had delayed granting the institutions of self government to the Yukon out of fear that Americans would either dominate them or conversely would resent their monopolization by British subjects, and would thus create a situation similar to that which had resulted in the war in the Transvaal.⁴⁰ It is easy to see why self government was not conceded to a population which Canadian officials on the scene described as comprising "toughs, gamblers, fast women, and criminals of almost every type from the petty thief to the murderer", "the sweepings of the slums and the result of a general jail delivery", or more charitable as seeming to be "strangely ignorant of nearly everything".⁴¹

Those statements may have been true in 1897 and 1898 but by 1901 Dawson had become as secure and staid as any community in central Canada.⁴² Moreover, the proportion of Americans had diminished. The census of 1901 revealed that in the Yukon Territory as a whole there were twice as many Canadians as there were Americans.⁴³ In that case, the Laurier government should have been more willing to extend representative

institutions, as indeed it was. Morrison might have been right in assuming that the incorporation of Dawson was the logical corollary of an elected Yukon Council.

There may, however, have been even more to it than that. In the absence of documentary evidence one may speculate on the basis of a reconstruction of events. Any study of the Yukon's formative years must take into account the pervasive influence of the minister of the interior. Clifford Sifton kept a tight rein on Yukon affairs and little official action was taken without his knowledge and approval.⁴⁴ Ross had had several interviews with Sifton before embarking for the Yukon and the incorporation of Dawson might have been one of the topics they discussed. The speed with which Ross declared his incorporation intentions after his arrival in Dawson suggests that such was the case. The taxation question may have been the crucial matter. Sifton was determined to make the Yukon pay for itself⁴⁵ and the reduction in the federal appropriation was to be made up by local taxation.

At the same time, Sifton's administration of the Yukon had been under close scrutiny by the Conservative opposition and the subject of much political controversy. The imposition of taxation without representation would have given the opposition another issue on which to focus its criticism. Ogilvie's reports had described Dawson as a stable community with a respectable population and the minister might have regarded the incorporation of Dawson as a source of local revenue, on one hand, and as a political expedient on the other. One may suspect that the absence of reference to the matter in the Ross-Sifton correspondence meant it was a foregone conclusion. Since documentary evidence is not available, however, this argument is difficult to prove. Yet, given the time, the circumstances and the characters involved, it is entirely possible that the issue was decided in the office of the minister of the interior.

In any case, once Dawson was incorporated, it remained for a plebiscite to determine the character of its government. That question created a clear division in the city. The small property owners and tenants came out in favour of a mayor and council while the "business community" preferred an appointed commission. To the Nugget, the issue was whether to leave local affairs in the hands of "reliable, responsible citizens", or to turn them over to a clique of "headless youths...without a conscience who have everything to gain, nothing not even a reputation to lose and are in politics for revenue only."⁴⁶ Both sides held mass meetings and there was some skirmishing about the voters list, but eventually the people whose combined taxes "would not pay for a single wheel of the fire engine" won the day.⁴⁷

The rival committees in the plebiscite campaign then selected candidates for the first civic election. The committee titles reflected the character of their supporters. The "Citizens" represented the larger business interests and heavy taxpayers while the "Kids" included the "headless youths" who had agitated for an elected council in earlier months. The result of the balloting on 6 February 1902 represented a victory for the Citizens as they elected the mayor and took four of the six seats on the city council. This council clearly represented Dawson's commercial interests as the mayor was a wholesale importer and liquor dealer, and the council consisted of a pharmacist, a butcher, a saloonkeeper, a commercial company department manager, a grocer and a partner in a hardware and general merchandise business.⁴⁸

Once elected, the city council set out to establish the machinery of municipal government. At their first session the aldermen approved a city seal which bore two miners rampant on either side of a windlass, with a gold pan couchant and the inscription "In God We Trust". The council then organized standing committees and turned to the question of

civic officials. There was little remarkable about the appointments which followed, except that the important positions of city clerk, counsel, and health officer went to prominent members of the Liberal party. On the matter of law enforcement, the aldermen resolved to have the constables of the existing town detachment sworn in as city police and to provide a small supplement to their salaries as members of the North West Mounted Police.⁴⁹

Dawson's first city council tackled many other important questions. At the session of 1 April, the mayor and four Citizens aldermen, who had campaigned on a platform which renounced remuneration for their positions, voted for a by-law which provided salaries of \$4,000 for the mayor and \$2,000 for each alderman for the remaining nine months of the year. The two Kid aldermen dissented.⁵⁰ The council's conduct on the matter of street improvements also did nothing to enhance public confidence in its judgement. In May, it allocated \$15,000 for roads, \$10,000 of which was spent to make Third avenue a trunk road, heavily graded from one end of the city to the other.⁵¹ It may only have been coincidental that the mayor had a fine house on Third and that three aldermen had business premises abutting the street.

If the council sometimes took a cavalier attitude to Dawson, it did face a number of serious difficulties. The mayor and aldermen often laboured over the precise wording of ordinances and by-laws only to discover that they were handcuffed by the limitations of the city charter. Many city ordinances conflicted with territorial ones and thus could not be put into effect until the Yukon Council cleared the way. That body, however, usually declined to pass the necessary legislation.⁵² Municipal finance was a particularly vexing problem. It required enormous sums to provide good streets and sidewalks, electric light, water, adequate drainage, and other amenities of urban life for a city of only

9,000 people.⁵³ The single greatest problem was where to get the necessary funds. In April, the council passed a schedule of licences for all businesses from auctioneers to tobacconists.⁵⁴ Transient traders were a special target, as they required a licence of \$500. But licence fees provided only a small fraction of the city's budget and in June a special session empowered the mayor to borrow \$50,000 from the Bank of Commerce to pay expenses.⁵⁵

As the year went on, the city council found its position increasingly impossible. It needed money to pay for essential improvements but it did not have the power to float a bond issue to pay for them. The council cut corners wherever it could. It reduced the salaries of firemen, road workers and other city employees, it cut down the size of a system of waterworks, and in July it refused to turn over any more revenue to the Yukon Council.⁵⁶ The situation was desperate and it remained desperate as long as the bills had to be paid out of current revenues. The only way out was through municipal taxation.

At the inaugural meeting of the city council, Mayor Macaulay had announced that the city assessment would be carried out during the summer and that tax notices would be delivered in the fall. In mid-October, the city clerk reported that the total assessment exceeded \$12,000,000 made up of over \$4,000,000 in land and buildings and almost \$8,000,000 in personal property and incomes.⁵⁷ At a rate of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent this amount would yield \$150,000 in taxes, the sum required by the city budget. The six largest corporations, however, immediately appealed and they succeeded in reducing the total assessment by \$1,500,000.⁵⁸ The revised assessment would not produce revenue sufficient to pay the year's expenses but the council resolved to carry over some indebtedness rather than raise the mill rate.⁵⁹ At the end of October, the city clerk issued the first municipal tax notice.

In the last two weeks of 1902 the people of Dawson began to prepare for their municipal election. When Henry Macaulay announced that he would not seek re-election, two aldermen declared themselves candidates for mayor. Neither received editorial support. The Nugget asserted that Dawson needed sound financial guidance and it began a campaign to persuade R.P. McLennan, a wealthy hardware merchant, to seek the position. When he received a petition signed by "several hundred representative citizens" McLennan agreed to run and his supporters embarked on a vigorous campaign.⁶⁰

By the end of 1902 the old Kid and Citizen organizations had long been dissolved and neither was resurrected to contest this election. Although the commercial interests tended to support McLennan, the election was fought by loose coalitions bound together only by the personalities at their heads. There were four candidates for mayor and each led a slate of candidates. Thomas Adair was the only alderman to seek the mayoralty but the other five incumbents sought re-election. The field eventually contained 24 candidates, many undoubtedly tempted to run for office on account of the salaries available.⁶¹

In this election, three of the mayoralty candidates paid the expected homage to business methods, economical administration and sound government. They promised to reduce salaries, to adjust the rates of taxation, and generally to limit all civic expenditures. The fourth candidate, former collector of customs D.W. Davis, campaigned on a platform which called for the repeal of the regulations governing dance halls and saloons and for the restoration of "the good old Dawson" of earlier days.⁶² The voters went to the polls on 5 January 1903 and the result was exceedingly close. Of the 649 votes cast, McLennan received only 178, Davis 174, Adair 157, and the other candidate 140.⁶³ A recount confirmed McLennan's four vote plurality. Only two incumbent aldermen won re-election and they were joined on the council by an hotelkeeper,



MAYORALTY CANDIDATES AND THEIR CAMPAIGN BANNERS.

Klondike Nugget, 30 December 1902

two haberdashers and a physician.⁶⁴ In its post election comment, the Nugget congratulated the victors and added that McLennan had been "essentially the representative of the substantial law-abiding interests of the community", a statement loaded with perhaps unintentional irony.⁶⁵

The new administration took office at a difficult time. There were only a few thousand dollars in the city exchequer and the old council had already allocated the new year's taxes.⁶⁶ The aldermen also found themselves faced by a vigilant and sometimes hostile press. At the outset they made it clear that they intended to carry out their promises of retrenchment. When the council met for the first time it dismissed a number of officials and reduced the salaries of their replacements.⁶⁷ But when it came to their own remuneration, the aldermen were less impetuous. In March, the council adopted the report of the finance committee which lowered the mayor's salary to \$3,000 but retained \$1,500 for each alderman.⁶⁸

As the year went on, the council became obsessed with financial matters. In February, it authorized the mayor to borrow \$90,000 and asked the banks to tender for the city's business.⁶⁹ It also tinkered with the schedule of licences and eventually lowered the fee for transient traders to \$200 to encourage them to remain in Dawson.⁷⁰ Three months later, the city appealed to the Yukon Council for additional powers by amendment of its charter. The aldermen drew up bills for the reduction of the exemption on income to \$1,000, for differential tax rates on land and improvements, for the right to levy a poll tax, and for the power to licence banks in lieu of assessing them on income.⁷¹ The avowed intention of each was to provide additional revenue. Instead of acceding to all these requests the Yukon Council exercised its residual powers to cut \$500 from the salaries of the mayor and aldermen and then only reduced the income exemption on condition that all ratepayers be eligible to vote.⁷² This action angered

the city council and prompted Alderman Macdonald to interject that the incorporation of Dawson had become a farce.⁷³ More important, it denied the city the additional sources of revenue it needed.

In September, preparation of the assessment roll signaled that tax notices were imminent and raised speculation about the next municipal election. On 9 September, the Dawson Record charged that the city clerk had systematically disenfranchised many men of small income by not listing those whose incomes were just above \$1,000.⁷⁴ This attack on the clerk, E. Ward Smith, was only the first of many which denounced him as a tool of the Yukon commissioner and the servant of the Liberal party.⁷⁵ The third week of October saw the rise of a ratepayers' association, an avowedly non-partisan organization which became dominated by Conservatives.⁷⁶ As the deadline drew near, this association urged all taxpayers to make sure their names were on the list of voters and it supplied blank forms for applicants before the court of revision.

As winter set in, the municipal election became a prominent topic of conversation. When Mayor McLennan and Alderman Murphy announced that they were leaving Dawson to return to their businesses in the south the search for candidates began.⁷⁷ In December, the Taxpayers Association met to nominate a ticket. It selected six aldermanic candidates and chose D.W. Davis to run for mayor.⁷⁸ The remnants of the previous year's McLennan organization fell in behind Alderman James F. Macdonald and a third group nominated W.L. Walsh.⁷⁹ When nomination day arrived, a number of independents filed papers as the three mayoralty candidates were joined by 24 men seeking seats on the council.

The campaign itself was short and only lukewarm. It was novel, however, because of the intrusion of partisan politics. It is clear that Macdonald had the support of Yukon Commissioner F.T. Congdon and his Liberal followers,⁸⁰ and

that Davis was backed by the territorial Conservative organization.⁸¹ Yet, neither candidate referred to his political affiliation. Macdonald, in fact, barely campaigned at all. Davis, on the other hand, worked very hard. At public meetings he promised to reduce taxes and to end the "reckless expenditure of public money." He also proposed to have the city empowered to issue debentures so that improvements did not have to be funded out of current revenues.⁸² Walsh, the third candidate, was an unknown quantity, the spanner in the works. He pledged himself in favour of full self-government for Dawson and his candidacy introduced an element of uncertainty into an otherwise straight party fight.⁸³

The weather on election day was cold and stormy, and, despite the enlarged electorate, fewer voters went to the polls than had the previous year. The result again was close as Macdonald led Walsh by nine votes and Davis by 32.⁸⁴ Only one of the incumbent aldermen was re-elected, and the new council had a distinctly Liberal complexion as the mayor and three aldermen were of that persuasion.⁸⁵

Once installed in office, the new mayor and council set out to fulfill their election promises. When the council held its first meeting the aldermen reduced the salaries of virtually all civic employees. They even cut \$500 from their own salaries and that of the mayor.⁸⁶ When the finance committee reported that expenditures still exceeded revenues the council cancelled orders for a fire engine and alarm system and went so far as to refuse to reimburse the companies involved for freight and other expenses already incurred. It did so on the technicality that the contracts had not been stamped with the city seal.⁸⁷ The council even cancelled its annual grant to the Presbyterian hospital on the pretext that it was a sectarian institution.⁸⁸ Still, despite these economies, the city was forced to resort to an overdraft of \$100,000 at the Bank of Commerce in order to pay its current expenses.

It was soon apparent to the aldermen that revision of the city charter was the only way out of the morass. To that end, a special committee drew up amendments to enable the city to levy a poll tax, to issue debentures, to contract for periods of up to five years and, most important, to give the city the full revenue derived from liquor licence fees within its bounds. The Yukon Council, however, was no more amenable than it had been before and the amendments were defeated.⁸⁹

If the third city council appeared much like its predecessors, it was nonetheless unique. It was the only council to be wracked by internal political squabbles. The tension between the mayor and some of the aldermen reflected the split in the ranks of the Yukon Liberal party. That division was the direct result of F.T. Congdon's behaviour as Yukon Commissioner. The anti-Congdonites objected as much to the commissioner's autocratic manner as they did to the way in which he dispensed patronage. Congdon's followers, on the other hand, were kept in line by the promise of political rewards.⁹⁰ That James F. Macdonald was a confirmed Congdonite was demonstrated by his appointment as chief preventative officer for the territory.⁹¹ One of the leading anti-Congdonites was T.D. Pattullo, popular alderman and chairman of the city committee on fire, light and water.⁹² Given these two personalities, it was only a matter of time before conflict erupted at city hall.

The animosity between the mayor and Pattullo reached a head over the dismissal of Alexander Macfarlane, the Congdonite captain of the fire brigade. When the city committee in charge of the fire department resolved to reduce the size of the brigade for reasons of economy, Macfarlane received his notice. But the committee made it clear that the captain had lost his job because he had been "a heeler and deliverer of votes" and "the creator of dissension among the men."⁹³ The

report recommending Macfarlane's dismissal passed without dissent. At a farewell gathering in the fire hall, however, Mayor Macdonald presented the captain with a gold watch and expressed his regret that he had been made the victim of political persecution.⁹⁴ When the city council met the next day, there were bitter exchanges between the mayor and the members of the fire committee and this hostility continued in all subsequent sessions.⁹⁵

The summer of 1904 was a crucial period for Dawson and for its city government. The discovery of gold in the Tanana region in 1903 had precipitated a stampede from the Klondike to Fairbanks. When it became apparent that the new find was not just another flash in the pan, the migration down river continued. At first it consisted primarily of miners and labourers but they were soon joined by many of Dawson's small merchants who saw greater opportunities in Alaska.⁹⁶ By the end of June, Dawson had suffered a serious decline, not only in its population, but also in its business vitality.

The rise of Fairbanks had severe repercussions in Dawson. As the population fell, the city went into a commercial recession. More important, as the tax base diminished but civic expenses remained high, the spectre of increased rates loomed large. For the large corporations and owners of property low profits were bad enough but heavier taxation was the last straw. In their anxiety they looked for ways to cut the city's costs and they realized that the elimination of the salaried city council would effect a substantial saving. These interests had opposed incorporation in the beginning and they did not hesitate to organize a petition appealing to the Yukon Council to revoke the city charter and to replace the city council with an appointed commission.⁹⁷

At first the aldermen were not alarmed by the circulation of the petition. They believed that they had reduced expenditures to a bare minimum, that they still enjoyed the confidence of the people, and that the Yukon Council would not

act without consulting them.⁹⁸ The News, however, began an editorial campaign in defence of elected municipal government. Although it conceded that the petitioners were sufficiently important to be worthy of attention, it charged that if they succeeded Dawson would fall "into the hands of the worst carpet baggers that ever infested a community anywhere." The real problem, it averred, was that the charter was inadequate and the solution was to give the city council full municipal authority.⁹⁹

On the advice of the commissioner and of the chairman of the Yukon Council committee on municipal law, the petitioners transformed their request into a bill to establish a plebiscite which would determine the future of the Dawson city charter.¹⁰⁰ The Yukon Council gave it first reading on 15 August and second reading the following day. When the bill went into committee, three aldermen appeared to register their protests but they were not heard. The commissioner and registrar of lands both defended the bill and argued in favour of disincorporation.¹⁰¹ Congdon, in fact, sponsored and saw carried an amendment providing a rebate of one-third of the year's taxes if the people of Dawson surrendered the city charter.¹⁰² When the session came to an end, the plebiscite bill was one of several passed and the battle lines were drawn.

The combatants squared off when Congdon named the date of the plebiscite. The six aldermen found themselves opposed not as much by the propertied interests as by the commissioner and mayor. They fought the first battle over the appointment of the returning officer. The Yukon Council appointed the city clerk, E. Ward Smith, and empowered him not only to issue certificates to those entitled to vote but to count the ballots without witnesses.¹⁰³ When the aldermen dismissed him on grounds that he could not be both city clerk and returning officer without their permission, Smith removed the assessment roll from the city hall and turned it over to Mayor Macdonald. Macdonald reinstated the clerk and

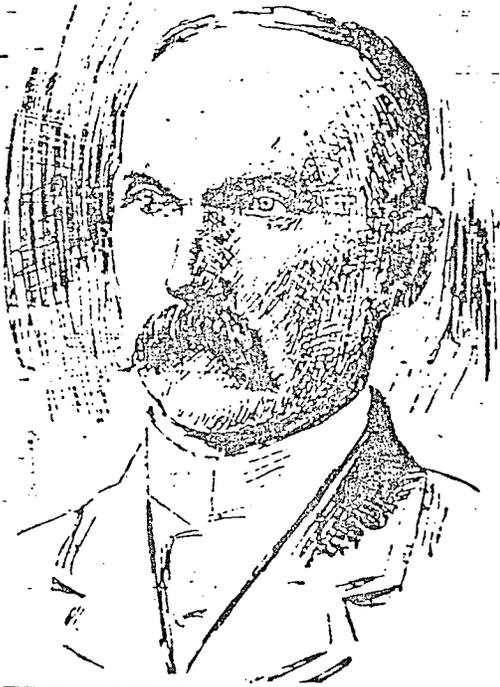
ordered him to finish preparing the voters list. The mayor and a squad of mounted policemen accompanied Smith back to the city hall where Macdonald took possession of all city records and changed the combination of the safe.¹⁰⁴ The next day, when the aldermen arrived, they found the doors locked and Smith in full possession of the building. Duff Pattullo climbed through a window and found evidence of "something very like crookedness", but Smith refused to take his orders and would not be budged.¹⁰⁵

In the week before the plebiscite, both sides held public meetings and the rival newspapers broadcast their opinions. The climax finally came when F.W. Clements applied for a judicial injunction against the plebiscite on the grounds that the returning officer had wrongfully issued voting permits and had closed his office hours before the deadline.¹⁰⁶ Mr. Justice Craig gave his decision on the evening before the vote. He ruled that the city council had been within its power in dismissing the clerk, that the mayor had no right to reinstate him, and that the voting certificates were invalid. He continued:

My own views are that no fair expression of public opinion can be obtained under the election to be held tomorrow under all the conditions as they now exist, both as to time given for issuing the certificates and owing to the doubt in the public mind as to the legality of the certificates issued.

But he refused to grant the injunction. The plebiscite could proceed but it was up to the Commissioner whether the results were proclaimed. Craig concluded that he was confident that the commissioner would exercise "reasonable discretion" in making that decision.¹⁰⁷

The plebiscite was held on 13 September and the result revealed the extent to which it had been "rigged". There were only 381 votes cast, 289 for revocation and 92 against.¹⁰⁸ The News betrayed its bitterness at the outcome. The only positive thing about the vote was that it showed the weakness



Fred. T. Conqdon



T. Dufferin Pattullo



E. Ward Smith



Mr. Justice James Craig

of the Congdon gang, as "with all the machinery in their hands; with a plainly fraudulent ordinance; with a complaisant city clerk willing to append his signature anywhere; with all the force of the territorial government behind them and with all opposition virtually disenfranchised, the proposition to surrender received but 289 votes."¹⁰⁹ The city council itself survived less than a week. On 19 September, when Congdon proclaimed the result official, control of the city reverted to the territory and the Dawson City council ceased to exist.

With the advantage of hindsight it is not difficult to see why the experiment in elected municipal government lasted only three years. It must be remembered that the Yukon Council had incorporated Dawson despite the opposition of a large segment of the city's business community. The large commercial companies and property owners had resisted the institutions of representative government out of fear of heavy municipal taxation. These men preferred the city to be governed by an appointed commission, ostensibly to save the cost of salaries, but also, it may be argued, because it put the local authorities beyond the control of the bulk of Dawson's residents. The commercial corporations did not have the numerical support necessary to carry city elections. Indeed, many of the large companies were managed by Americans who paid taxes but were not entitled to vote. It was to the advantage of these people to have Dawson remain under the jurisdiction of the Yukon Council.

At the same time, the relative power of the large corporations increased as the population of Dawson declined. As the city's tax base shrank their proportion of it rose. By the summer of 1904, the petitioners might have represented 75 per cent of all taxes paid but they did not approach anything near 75 per cent of all taxpayers. Yet, given their wealth and their positions in the community, they could influence the commissioner and his supporters in the Yukon Council.

In any case, they wanted to reduce their taxes and the dissolution of the city council was a means to that end. It may only have been coincidental that the disincorporation petition appeared in an election year.

On the surface it is apparent that the commissioner and the Yukon Council revoked the city charter in direct response to the wishes of the business community. It is paradoxical that in 1904 the commissioner and Council acted on the request of the same people they had ignored three years earlier. The explanation may lie in the fact that the appeal for disincorporation developed at the same time as the schism in the ranks of the territorial Liberal party.

The division in the Liberal ranks was in part the result of the personal and political incompatibility of F.T. Congdon and T.D. Pattullo. In the spring of 1904, Pattullo wrote a series of letters to Laurier and Sifton which complained about the commissioner's behaviour. In one he declared: "Harmony can only be restored by the removal of Mr. Congdon from office in this territory..."¹¹⁰ As the anti-Congdonite faction grew, the commissioner needed larger amounts of patronage to keep his supporters in line. At the same time, his opponents on the city council began to weed out Congdonite civic employees. Congdon realized that a city council dominated by Duff Pattullo posed a very real threat to his power in the Yukon and to his political ambitions. It was not just a question of his authority as commissioner. It is clear that Congdon had his eyes on the Liberal nomination for the Yukon seat in the House of Commons. A city council run by anti-Congdonites bent on splitting the Liberal party might prevent his success both in convention and at the polls. Indeed, in private correspondence with the minister of the interior, Congdon charged that "the City Council had become a hot-bed from which sprung [sic] all sorts of agitation and movements, adverse to the Government, and the end of its existence will mark the end of much trouble."¹¹¹ The

petition of Dawson's corporate citizens provided him with the opportunity to eliminate his rival, Pattullo, and to get his hands on additional patronage positions. His personal involvement in the question was underlined by his tax rebate proposal. Congdon neglected to mention that offer in his official report to the minister. Instead, he cited a number of British precedents to defend his action and that of the returning officer.¹¹² Privately, however, he telegraphed Sifton that the plebiscite had produced a "strong endorsement" of his position.¹¹³ Congdon could not have dissolved the city council on his own, nor could the petitioners have got what they wanted without the support of the commissioner. Together they could not be denied.

In the end, the petitioners and the commissioner only took advantage of an unfortunate situation. The root cause of the fall of the Dawson city council lay in the limitations of the city charter. The Yukon Council had incorporated Dawson in order to rid itself of the burden of local government. While it delegated responsibility to the city council, it refused to surrender a corresponding degree of power. The hands of the city councillors were tied, especially where questions of revenue were concerned. The city could not enter contracts for periods exceeding two years, nor could it sell municipal bonds to finance public improvements. These handicaps, and the refusal of the Yukon Council to remove them, insured that Dawson remained in dire financial straits. The city needed good streets and sidewalks, adequate drainage, electric light and other utilities, but it had to pay for them out of current accounts. Taxes were high simply because there was no alternative source of revenue. Had the city been able to spread the debt charges over long periods, taxes might have been much lower and the quality of public improvements a great deal better. As it was, the residents received the barest minimum at the highest cost. When the biggest taxpayers complained, the end was near. The fall of

the Dawson City Council, then, was the direct result of the Yukon Council's reluctance to give it full municipal powers. Dawson was a city only in name and under those conditions the experiment in incorporation was bound to fail.

In the aftermath of the dissolution of the city council a number of questions arose on matters of municipal import. The police, for example, did not know whether to enforce the city by-laws as it was not known whether they had been annulled. The territorial legal advisor and crown prosecutor informed the commanding officer that in their opinion the by-laws were still in force.¹¹⁴ A second question, and a more important one, concerned the matter of city government itself. Congdon had appointed an advisory board to assist in the management of municipal affairs, but when its term expired another was not appointed and the business of the city was managed through the office of the territorial comptroller.¹¹⁵ All requests for the establishment of a city commission fell on deaf ears.

A change of commissioner did not make any difference. In September 1905, the new commissioner, W.W.B. McInnes, issued a proclamation which stated that the city by-laws in force in the previous year were still in force, and they included the municipal assessment.¹¹⁶ City taxation remained the thorny issue it always had been. Although assessments fell slightly in succeeding years, Dawson merchants never ceased to complain that they were being taxed out of existence. On the other hand, there never was enough money to pay the city's bills and the Yukon Council annually sought new sources of revenue.¹¹⁷ In 1909 the court of revision directed the assessor to add the names of all federal employees to the tax roll to be taxed on their incomes and stipulated that persons who refused to provide the necessary information were to be enrolled at whatever figure he thought correct and denied any right of appeal.¹¹⁸ A RNWMP spokesman responded that the

police were a semi-military organization whose members were exempt from income tax. Judge Craig argued that judges were exempt under an imperial statute which the Yukon Council could not overrule.¹¹⁹ The court of revision would have none of it. It reduced the assessment on policemen but not that on judges as the members knew that judges in the rest of Canada were assessed on income.¹²⁰

While the judges paid their taxes in 1909, the matter was far from settled. When assessment time arrived in 1910, Judge Craig delivered a long letter of protest to the assessment appeal court. Its main points were that no assessor had been appointed by any properly constituted body, that as no assessment by-law had been passed for 1910 such assessment was wholly illegal and void, and that no legal power existed in any person to levy, assess or collect taxes in Dawson.¹²¹ This letter had as much effect on the court of revision as his original protest, for his assessment for 1910 was confirmed.

The judges still were not silenced by this second setback. Judge Dugas immediately launched an action in the territorial court, attacking the assessment on nearly every conceivable ground. The case was heard by Judge Craig, another appellant, and a third appellant, Judge Macaulay, appeared as a witness.¹²² After six months of reservation, Craig rendered his decision in favour of Dugas. In a lengthy judgment he found the assessment rolls of 1909 and 1910 to be void, and that there existed no power to collect any rate against the plaintiff. More important, Craig ruled that the plebiscite ordinance of 1904 had been ultra vires of the Yukon Council and that all action taken thereunder since that date had been outside the law. Craig pointed out that a city charter could not be rescinded and yet kept in force. If Dawson's charter had been revoked there was no provision for taxation; if it were still in effect the authority for

taxation remained vested in the mayor and council. Quite simply, the commissioner in council did not have the power to levy municipal taxes.¹²³

The decision left Dawson with no legal existence and no legal machinery for carrying out the needs of the community. It not only threw local matters into chaos, but it provided an incentive for all citizens not to pay taxes. Yet, as the News emphasized, the city had to have funds regardless of the ethics of the method used to collect them. There were two alternatives: appeal to higher courts or local remedial legislation.¹²⁴ The acting commissioner decided to appeal Craig's decision and pending the result instructed the tax collector to continue as usual. He declined to introduce remedial legislation, however, until a new chief executive arrived.

The new commissioner was no stranger to the Yukon nor to its politics. George Black had gone to Dawson in 1898 and had remained for more than a decade. As Yukon councillor and the territory's most vocal Conservative, Black was an experienced political warrior anxious to exercise power. Upon his appointment as commissioner he announced that he would suffer no further nonsense from Judge Craig and his cronies and that he would enact whatever legislation was necessary to erase all uncertainties about the government of Dawson.¹²⁵ Accordingly, when the Yukon Council met, Black undertook responsibility for the passage of an ordinance which validated the Dawson assessment rolls of the previous seven years and empowered the commissioner to exercise municipal authority.¹²⁶ The following year, Black secured passage of bills validating all by-laws laid down by other commissioners and enabling the commissioner to enact and execute for the city of Dawson when the Yukon Council was not in session.¹²⁷

There the issue might have ended had not another matter arisen. In 1912, the Dawson City Water and Power Company applied for renewal of its hydrant contract with the city. Black

declined to sign it after a citizens' delegation argued that the quality of service had been too low and the costs too high. When the Company refused to adjust its rates, a Citizens League suggested that the city either purchase or construct its own utilities. An investigation, however, revealed that the city lacked the power to borrow sums of money sufficient for that purpose.¹²⁸ Black replied that a new system of municipal government was needed in order to give the city the power to purchase and operate its own utilities, if the ratepayers saw fit to do so. He outlined a plan under which the commissioner remained the chief executive officer, but in a city council of himself and the four Yukon councillors who represented the two Dawson constituencies. This council would have all the authority of the original city council, plus the power to raise or borrow money on debentures for the purpose of acquiring and operating municipal water, light, telephone and power plants.¹²⁹ At the end of March 1914, the Yukon Council passed a bill establishing this city council, with the provision that a plebiscite was necessary in order for it to become effective.¹³⁰

At a series of public meetings the commissioner explained the bill. Its intent was twofold. It would resolve the situation created by Judge Craig's decision in the tax case and at the same time it would enable the city to deal with the utilities question. Moreover, under the proposed system the ratepayers would have a say in the government of the city without the cost of civic elections and additional salaries.¹³¹ These arguments found a receptive audience and the plebiscite endorsed the new city council by an overwhelming majority.¹³² The taxation and incorporation questions were finally settled and the people of Dawson looked forward to an era of sound municipal government.

This new system broke down only two years later. In 1916, Commissioner Black and two of the Dawson councillors

enlisted in the Yukon Infantry Company and their departure left the community without a civic administration.¹³³ Although a new council was elected in February 1917, it too was destined for an early demise. On 23 March 1918, the Yukon Council was surprised to learn that the federal government intended to reduce the grant for the territory from \$320,000 to \$185,000 and had been in the process of amending the Yukon Act.¹³⁴ Arthur Meighen, minister of the interior, had resolved to abolish the elective council and the position of commissioner and to have the territory governed by the gold commissioner and an appointed committee. The councillors immediately telegraphed their protest and a committee of residents appealed for the minister to increase the Yukon allowance and to maintain their representative form of government.¹³⁵ Two weeks later, Meighen replied that the estimates would not be raised and he informed Gold Commissioner George Mackenzie of his intention to change the structure of the territorial government.¹³⁶

Early in the winter, however, Mackenzie and Dr. Alfred Thompson, the Yukon's member of Parliament, persuaded Meighen to relent. Although the minister refused to increase the territorial appropriation and would not re-establish the office of commissioner, he agreed to have the gold commissioner assisted by a Yukon Council of three elected members.¹³⁷ In this system there was only one Dawson representative and for that reason the city council established in 1914 ceased to exist. After 1918 the town again fell under the jurisdiction of the whole Yukon Council.

Examination of the incorporation issue between 1898 and 1918 reveals much about the Dawson of those years. The inseparable connection between the questions of taxation and incorporation is most apparent. At first, incorporation

seemed the panacea by which revenue might be raised for the improvement of an instant town. Paradoxically, Dawson was incorporated not at the height of its population nor of the agitation in favour of incorporation, but at a time of decline and in the face of vocal opposition. Moreover, Dawson was incorporated in order that its residents might be taxed and ostensibly disincorporated at their request when the burden of taxation became too great.

The incorporation issue also reflects the degree to which Dawson was affected by party politics and politicians. From the beginning Dawson seemed to be a pawn in territorial and federal politics and its incorporation was a political solution to a financial and political problem. The ministers of the interior were major figures, as were the commissioners whom they appointed. It should not have been surprising that three different commissioners played crucial roles in the incorporation scenario and that each acted in response to a different set of political exigencies. In this sense, Dawson may have been different from other cities. Its property interests needed the support of the commissioner to get what they wanted, and they were impotent without it.

The incorporation of Dawson undoubtedly accelerated the community's decline. In the aftermath of the great stampede Dawson entered a long commercial depression. The periodic rushes to other mining camps reduced its population and the advent of capital intensive mining technology limited its metropolitan functions. The introduction of heavy municipal taxation only contributed to this economic stagnation. The laws to regulate transient traders, on one hand, merely drove out a potential source of revenue, and on the other eliminated competition and encouraged the concentration of wealth and corporate power. In 1911, for example, only one of the original commercial companies remained in business, and it faced little opposition from local shopkeepers. There may

have been no alternative, and the high costs of living may not have been avoidable, but for many of Dawson's residents the incorporation of their city was a decidedly unhappy experiment.

Yet the people of Dawson refused to abandon their municipal ideal. The decade after the revocation of the charter saw the search for a balance between the town's limited resources and its urban aspirations. For the tax-paying citizens, the incorporation question became almost a classic approach-avoidance conflict. They wanted Dawson to have all the attributes of a modern city but they didn't want the responsibility of paying for them. The taxation question was of primary importance as it lay behind the agitation for and against incorporation and disincorporation. Taxation was the municipal dilemma and the compromise of 1914, which provided for civic taxation in a modified representative system, was the best solution. The economic stagnation which set in after the outbreak of war in Europe, the decline in population, and federal financial retrenchment combined to undermine that system, and at the end of 1918 Dawson found itself with virtually the same form of municipal government as it had had 20 years earlier.

V Law Enforcement and the NWMP

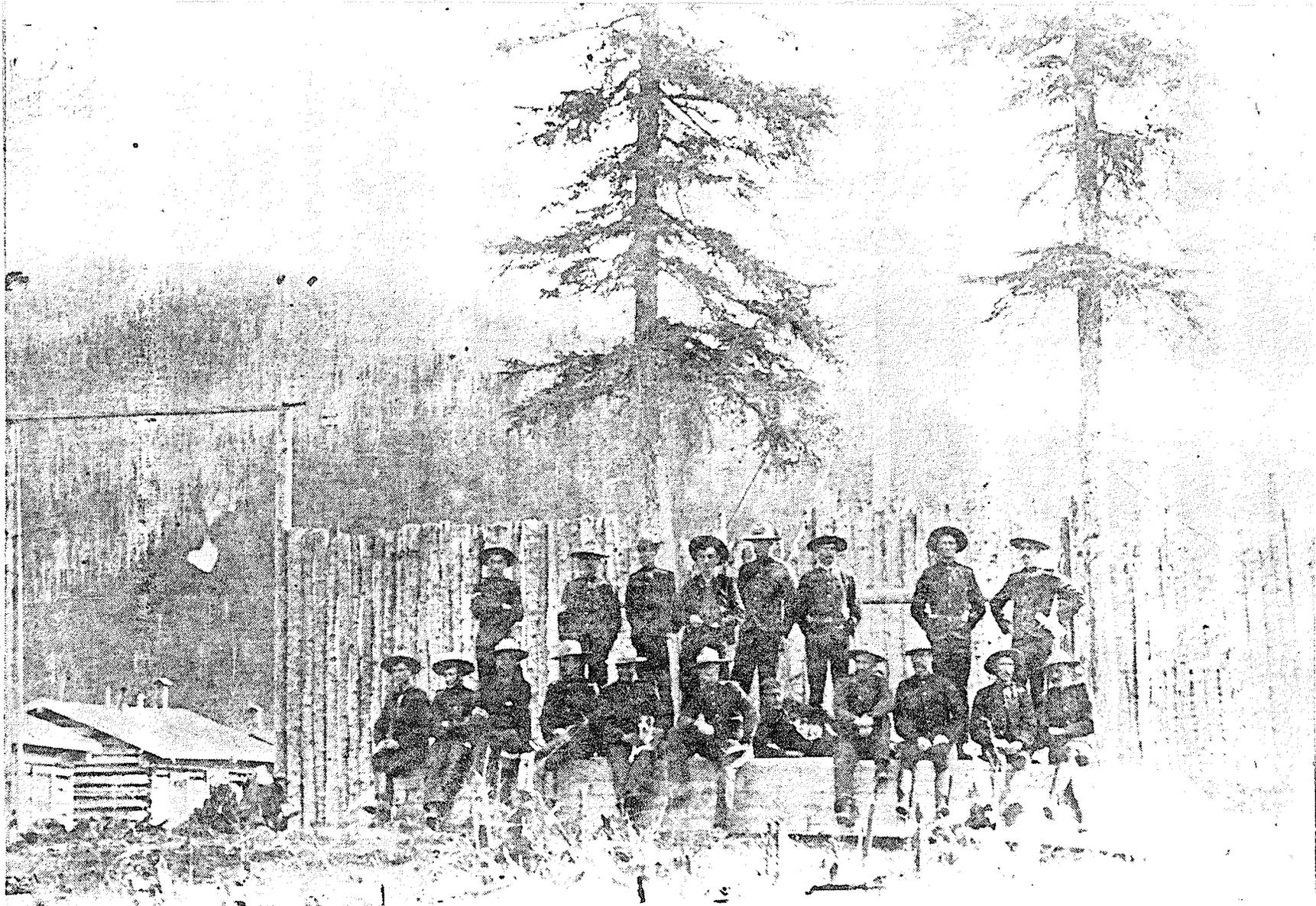
Dawson was unique as a mining boomtown in that it had an agency which enforced Canadian law almost from the beginning. The North West Mounted Police had been in the Yukon district since 1894 when Inspector Charles Constantine and Staff Sergeant Charles Brown had gone north to investigate the complaints of the Anglican Bishop of Selkirk. Bishop Bompas had written the minister of the interior that American traders were importing goods without paying Canadian customs duties and using alcohol to debauch the Indians. Constantine's report substantiated the Bishop's charges and he suggested that a force of 40 constables and a few officers would be sufficient to assert Canadian sovereignty, collect customs revenues and control the liquor traffic. In 1895, half that number arrived. They established a post, Fort Constantine, at the mouth of the Forty Mile River, sixty miles downstream from the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon.

As the first representatives of the government of Canada, the policemen faced a variety of duties. Constantine was crown land agent and collector of customs in addition to his judicial positions of police commander and local magistrate. In a very real sense, he was judge, jury and executioner and he used his authority to impose police law in place of the informal institutions of the mining frontier. By 1896, the mounted police exercised full control over the district.¹

The discovery of gold on Rabbit Creek and the ensuing influx of miners to the Klondike valley dramatically increased police responsibilities. When the residents of Forty

Mile and other camps along the Yukon flocked to Dawson, the police were compelled to follow. In November 1896, Constantine directed the government surveyor to reserve a block of land at the mouth of the Klondike for a police post and he sent an inspector, and twenty constables to build it.² In the following spring he reported that a fort was necessary in order to "hold down" the new mining camp. The potential for trouble arose with the congregation of three to four thousand men, "not altogether of the Sunday school type," and he awaited the arrival of a maxim gun, as force was the one argument they might understand. Controlling the population, he added, was a formidable task for the men at his disposal.³ In reply, headquarters sent three groups of reinforcements and in less than a year there were nearly 200 policemen dispersed throughout the district.⁴

Constantine's annual report for 1897 described the development of Dawson from a handful of shacks to a town of hundreds of log cabins but it focused on the crime which accompanied that growth. This communication contained his often quoted line that a considerable number of the people appeared to be "the sweepings of the slums, and the result of a general jail delivery". Theft, he continued, was the most common crime and, for the first time, miners had to guard their caches and lock their cabins.⁵ One evening thieves ransacked the gold commissioner's office, forcing that official to guard it himself in the weeks that followed. His report commented: "As I sit here writing at midnight with my heavy overcoat on to keep warm and expecting that every noise I hear may be caused by someone preparing to break into the place, you will conclude that my present position is not an enviable one."⁶ He also suggested that the police force was inadequate and that the constables could not be expected to enforce the law when they were exhausted from building their winter quarters. Yet the police did catch many law-breakers and Constantine initiated the procedure by which offenders were arrested and ordered out



NWMP Constables in front of Fort Herchmer (Vancouver Public Library)

of the district. He recognized that such action was arbitrary and probably illegal but it was "absolutely necessary" as the police did not have the resources to feed, clothe and imprison them.⁷ This practice became the standard punishment in the gold rush era.

With the arrival of the first wave of gold seekers from the Pacific coast in the winter of 1897-98, Constantine realized that the police had to take additional precautions to prevent the anarchy which had characterized many American mining camps. In February 1898, he informed his superiors that he expected the police would have "to do some killing this spring to hold the toughs and bums down."⁸ A show of force might intimidate the lawless element and emphasize Canadian authority in the region. Throughout his tenure as police commander, Constantine was obsessed with the threat of armed insurrection. He was well aware of the miners' objections to Canadian regulations and he suspected that there were plots to seize the police barracks, haul down the Union Jack and put the country under the rule of the mob. To avert those possibilities he recommended that the police presence be augmented by an additional 300 men with two fast river boats to move them quickly up and down the river.⁹ He also requested that a few Canadian detectives be employed to infiltrate secret meetings and to keep the authorities aware of all plans for rebellion.¹⁰ The federal minister of militia responded by despatching 200 officers and men of the regular militia to assist the police in the Yukon. Although the Yukon Field Force was stationed at Fort Selkirk, 100 miles upriver from the Klondike, 53 soldiers were seconded to the mounted police at Dawson.¹¹

During his years in the Yukon, Constantine became accustomed to the power which he exercised in the district. The establishment of the Yukon as a separate territory had serious repercussions for his position. For the first time,

he was forced to share his authority with the Yukon commissioner, the "ex-officio commander" of the mounted police. Conflict between the two officials was almost inevitable, especially since the commissioner, J.M. Walsh, was a former NWMP officer who had resigned under a cloud of suspicion.¹² Both Constantine and Walsh were jealous of their prerogatives and their rivalry began even before the commissioner arrived in Dawson. In December 1897, while still at Tagish, Walsh wrote the minister of the interior to complain about the police and to charge that the "inability of the men is only a reflection of either the indifference or the inability of their commander."¹³ Constantine, for his part, resented the interference of the new officials. He was especially angered and embarrassed by the federal crown prosecutor who arrived ahead of Walsh and tried to govern Dawson on his own.¹⁴ The situation grew worse when Walsh appeared in May but the tension was defused in June when Constantine departed for duties elsewhere. Two months later, Walsh resigned and left the territory as well.

The transfer of Charles Constantine was the first step in a general reorganization of the mounted police in the Yukon. In the summer of 1898, the force was separated into two divisions, "B" with headquarters at Dawson and "H" at Whitehorse. The new Yukon commander, Supt. S.B. Steele, was stationed at Dawson and he had a profound influence on the town. Steele had an impressive military presence and he was "gruff and bluff and absolutely fearless of everybody and everything."¹⁵ He also had a reputation as a trouble shooter for the force and he was sent to restore the discipline in the ranks which had deteriorated under Constantine.

When Steele arrived in Dawson he found the police in a very poor condition.¹⁶ In part, the problems reflected the calibre of the manpower. Steele later remarked that if he were asked to select men for service in the Yukon he would call

for volunteers and then take only those who declined.¹⁷ He was determined to break the men of loose habits and to force them to resist the temptation offered in the town. To that end, he laid down strict regulations and ensured that they were obeyed. The daily journals of the Dawson barracks recorded the names of constables fined, confined to barracks or imprisoned for various kinds of misconduct. Their offenses included associating with suspicious persons, being "in a box with a loose woman", frequenting houses of prostitution, fighting and being disorderly, being absent without leave, being asleep on guard duty, gambling, and dancing with women of ill repute.¹⁸ Steele, clearly, was a martinet who tolerated no nonsense and he declared that any policeman denied his "rights" had only himself to blame.¹⁹ In a matter of weeks he had the men under iron discipline.

Steele had travelled to Dawson through Skagway, a town which he described as "about the roughest place in the world" and "little better than a hell upon earth".²⁰ That town was run by Soapy Smith, whose band of footpads committed robbery, fraud and murder almost daily. There were shoot-outs in the street and the walls of Steele's hotel room were pierced by bullets during the night.²¹ Steele resolved to prevent Dawson from becoming another Skagway. He noticed the same thugs, murderers, train robbers, burglars, safe crackers and thieves in the two places and he took firm action against them.²² Upon arriving in Dawson he ordered the constables on town duty to be vigilant and to record the names of "bad characters". He also hired a few secret service detectives, usually trusted ex-policemen, who mingled with the toughs and were known only to Steele himself.²³ With the machinery of law enforcement assembled, Steele settled down to a routine which might have killed a lesser man.²⁴

Unlike their predecessors, the new police commander and commissioner worked well together. Sam Steele and William

Ogilvie enjoyed each other's company and they complimented each other in their official correspondence. Steele wrote that Ogilvie had cleared up the confusion created "through incompetence on the part of a considerable number of the officials sent in and dishonesty on the part of others who, in my humble opinion, proved themselves to be an ungrateful lot of hounds."²⁵ Ogilvie sent the minister of the interior glowing reports of Steele's activity in "licking the Police into correct shape fast."²⁶ Together, Steele and Ogilvie clamped a tight lid on Dawson.

Steele was the dominant figure on the Yukon Council and many of its decisions were the result of his initiatives. This fact is best demonstrated by Steele's concern for public health. In the summer of 1898, when the gold rush was at its peak, Dawson was a city of sixteen thousand floating on a cess-pool.²⁷ There were no attempts at sanitation and typhoid patients filled the hospitals to capacity. Steele recommended the establishment of a board of health, accepted the position of Chairman and secured the appointment of a medical health officer and sanitary inspector. He used his authority to best advantage as the police carried out measures to clean up the town, and the revenue derived from police court fines went for the relief of the indigent sick.²⁸

In the fall of 1898, when the question of Dawson's incorporation was in the air, the Yukon Council decided that the NWMP would continue to police the town and that its officers would be local magistrates.²⁹ Steele's first instructions were for the constables to crack down on criminals of all descriptions. When gaol accommodation proved inadequate he had 34 additional cells built adjacent to the barracks.³⁰ He recognized that Dawson was a frontier mining camp and he took a pragmatic view of vices such as gambling and prostitution. Rather than force those evils out of sight, he allowed them to continue under careful control and used the



William Ogilvie
(Early Days on the Yukon)



Samuel Benfield Steele
(Forty Years in Canada)

revenue from fines to finance his schemes to improve public health. Thieves and cheats, however, were entitled to punishments of the utmost severity and the magistrates either banished them from the territory or sentenced them to terms in custody. For the most part, the police investigated petty crimes and brought men to court for a variety of misdemeanors. In 1898, the police court was filled with men charged with being drunk on the street, disturbing the peace, possessing a firearm, assault, theft and violations of the health ordinance. In most cases, the magistrate levied fines but thieves received standard sentences of six months at hard labour.³¹ That punishment was especially severe as it entailed hours of service on the wood pile providing fuel for the barracks and government offices. The police also forced businesses to close on Sunday and prohibited construction on that day. They made allowances only during Dawson's brief building season.

By the spring of 1899, Steele was confident that crime had decreased to a remarkable extent and that the police had the town well under control. He reported that no persons had taken the law into their own hands and that all people seeking redress of wrongs "invariably came to our force and obtained all the law required."³² The residents of Dawson could walk the streets without fear of insult or interference and "no riot or noise" could be heard at any time. Moreover, the transformation of "road-agents, holdups, burglars, gamblers, thieves and prostitutes" into "law-abiding, respectable citizens" was especially noteworthy and due, he added, entirely to the efforts of the men under his command.³³

The police control of Dawson was tantamount to martial law. Historians of the NWMP have recognized that the force paid little heed to civil liberties in the Yukon, but they have argued that the gold rush called for extreme measures which were acceptable in a more authoritarian age. W.R. Morrison, the best historian of the Yukon detachments, conceded

that "the Yukon, during the gold rush, was in some respects a police state, if the phrase can be used without prejudice." He added that the absence of complaints suggested that the police did their work well.³⁴ Yet, there were complaints, some of a serious nature, about police methods and the severity of sentences handed out by police magistrates. A few American citizens charged that they had been persecuted on account of their nationality and they demanded that the U.S. Consul register their protests officially. When that official confronted Steele he was told not to concern himself with "petty complaints", that there were 200 others "who ought to be in gaol", and that "it would be more to the advantage of the U.S. population for such people to be in confinement than to get off free."³⁵ In the same letter Steele alluded to the deprivations at Skagway to show how the laws were administered by comparison in Dawson. This reference marked the first instance of what Morrison labelled "the motif of the evils of Skagway" as the measure for police success in Dawson. It reflects Steele's determination to avoid the example of Skagway through strict enforcement of the criminal code and by arbitrary and extra-legal means if necessary.

When Consul McCook persisted in his appeals, Steele declared that men who broke the law had to be punished regardless of their nationality. He also noted that the police protected American citizens as well as Canadians and that all those who disliked the way the laws were enforced could move elsewhere.³⁶ McCook then informed Washington of several cases where Americans had been sentenced to six months for vagrancy in which the only evidence was testimony that police constables had not seen the defendants working. Three weeks later, however, he applauded the NWMP for maintaining law and order in a town of Dawson's character. The police made the city safe, he wrote, and their indifference to political influence and fair treatment of rich and poor went a long way in preventing

crime.³⁷ His inescapable conclusion was that the NWMP were harsh and heavy handed because that was what the circumstances required.

The most controversial duty, and one which the police found distasteful, was the arrest and detention of people for the non-payment of debts. To prevent debtors from leaving the territory and thus evading their obligations, creditors swore out "capias warrants" and required the police to put potential defaulters in gaol. Being held "on a capias" appeared to be imprisonment for debt, and the practice left the police open to virulent criticism. Bishop Bompas wrote that it was "illegal to detain a man in prison for debt on such pretences but with Romanish Government and French judges we can hardly expect English law."³⁸ Much of this criticism was unjustified. Capias warrants were used to prevent people who had made money from eluding their creditors by fleeing Dawson, rather than to imprison simple debtors. Although the system was sometimes abused, that distinction was not apparent to many residents and the police became the target of their complaints.

After Steele, the most important policeman in Dawson was his senior officer. That officer, usually an inspector, fulfilled a variety of civil and judicial functions. In addition to being police magistrate and commander of the constables in the town, he served as postmaster, sheriff, coroner, bailiff and justice of the peace. Those duties required a responsible and conscientious policeman, immune to the temptations of a frontier town. The officer who held those positions in 1898 and 1899 was not entirely reliable and his tenure was characterized by controversy and low morale. Inspector Frank Harper had arrived in Dawson in October 1897 at the head of a group of police reinforcements and Constantine had put him in charge of the town police. At first, Harper seemed an exemplary officer but it was soon apparent that he

had a bullying streak, compounded by weaknesses for alcohol and women of ill fame. Early in 1898, Constantine reported that the men "despised" Harper and that several had lodged complaints against him. Constantine also revealed that he had been forced to put the inspector under arrest for being drunk in saloons and for frequenting houses of ill repute.³⁹ The discipline had the desired effect and Steele allowed Harper to retain his rank when he assumed command that autumn.

The improvement in Harper's behaviour was only temporary. On several occasions in the spring of 1899, Steele reprimanded him for improper conduct and dereliction of duty. Steele also ordered an investigation into charges that Harper and other policemen had demanded bribes before releasing mail during their service in the post office.⁴⁰ Harper was cleared but he was soon in trouble again. In July, he disappeared from the hospital where he had been confined for pneumonia and did not return for three days. When he went absent from his court duties and failed to return to barracks a second time, Steele despatched a full report to the NWMP Comptroller in Ottawa. Harper, he declared, had become a disgrace to the force. He had disregarded his duties, consorted with low characters, and neglected his wife and children. Because of Harper's "long and until lately faithful services" and because any severe punishment would cause hardship to his family, Steele recommended that he be simply reprimanded and assigned to another district. In the meantime, he sent Harper to Tagish to remove him from temptation and to give him time for reflection.⁴¹ To relieve his replacement of some of his Dawson responsibilities, he appointed Corporal Wilson to look after the town and he ordered a small station house built for the new Dawson detachment.

When Harper returned to his duties in Dawson he fell into his old ways. In a second report, Steele expressed his regret that Harper was "beyond redemption" and added: "I

have done all that I could for him both by precept and example trying to cause him to act differently but all was of no avail."⁴² He had finally suspended Harper because of questions about his behaviour as sheriff. It appeared that Harper had not produced the \$5000 in judgements which the court had entrusted to him for payment to the parties to whom they were due. When ordered to appear in court, he disappeared and could not be found. Ogilvie thought he should have been arrested and regarded him as a criminal but Steele declined to make the matter public. Harper eventually turned up with the relevant documents and was cleared by an investigation which found that his deputy had absconded with the cash.⁴³

Harper never returned to active service in the Yukon. He left Dawson in the fall of 1899. Paradoxically, when Steele organized the Lord Strathcona Horse for service in the Boer War, Harper received a lieutenant's commission. Yet his behaviour remained erratic. He was court martialled in South Africa and Clifford Sifton intervened to prevent his rejoining the NWMP. He then left Capetown for England and the NWMP lost his track when he disembarked.⁴⁴

Harper was not the only policeman suspected of misconduct in 1899. In mid-November, two off duty constables arrested a card shark named Thomas Forrest and charged him with using marked cards.⁴⁵ When he appeared in court, Forrest proclaimed his innocence and alleged that Constables Booth and Cunningham had tried to blackmail the proprietor of the Aurora Saloon and the operator of its gaming room.⁴⁶ He also suggested that the two policemen had been out for revenge and to recoup the losses they had suffered at his table in earlier weeks. This charge may have been accurate as Booth and Cunningham had each been admonished for gambling, in violation of police regulations, only days previous to Forrest's arrest.⁴⁷ In any case, Forrest was released on \$4000 bond and bound over for trial in the territorial court.

When the case was before the court, a Dawson newspaper, The Sunday Gleaner, declared that Booth and Cunningham were not the only policemen running shakedown rackets. The following day, the editor and proprietor, D.W. Semple, was found guilty of contempt of court and fined \$1000 for his reference to the two policemen, whom the judge regarded as "crown witnesses."⁴⁸ The other newspapers and a group of friends paid the fine and secured Semple's release.⁴⁹ It is clear that the police had been watching Semple for some time. The secret service report described him as an associate of variety actresses and prostitutes, as a voyeur, drunk and user of vulgar language, and as a man of exceptionally low character. It also contended that he had been a swindler and smuggler and that he used the Gleaner to eulogize his unsavory acquaintances and to abuse all laws, officials and respectable people.⁵⁰ After his release from gaol, Semple reiterated his comments and the police received another warrant against him for contempt. Rather than pay a stiff fine or face imprisonment, this time Semple fled downriver to Alaska.⁵¹ The NWMP commander in Dawson declared that his flight showed the "hollowness" of all the attacks made on the police and he hoped the other papers in Dawson had learned a lesson which was long overdue.⁵²

Semple's charges, however, might have been accurate. When the jury in the Forrest case was unable to reach a verdict in December, a second trial was held in the following spring. Cunningham and Booth again emphatically denied attempting to blackmail anyone, although Cunningham confessed that he had accepted \$36, the sum he had lost on a prior occasion. The owner and operators of the Aurora both "swore positively" that Cunningham and Booth, especially the latter, had tried to extort money from them by threatening criminal prosecution. Although the jury found Forrest guilty, the Nugget declared that the verdict was due entirely to the masterly efforts of

the crown prosecutor, since much of the testimony reflected "great discredit" upon the two constables. Booth, it added, was "certainly a disgrace" to his uniform and Cunningham was little better.⁵³ The accuracy of this judgement was soon borne out as Booth was cashiered for improper conduct in the summer.⁵⁴ In the same year, the police suspected that Cunningham had agreed to assist some prisoners in an escape attempt. His complicity could not be proved but he was immediately sent to the furthest outpost where he could do the least damage. Early in 1902, he applied for a discharge and, as he was "a thoroughly bad character", the commanding officer was glad to be rid of him.⁵⁵

Sam Steele remained at Dawson until the fall of 1899. In his last report, he declared that the persistent efforts of the police had driven out most of the "Criminals and tough characters congregated here from all parts of the world."⁵⁶ The news of Steele's removal created an unexpected public reaction which emphasized the popular esteem he enjoyed. The Dawson Daily News applauded his skillful use of "discernment, judgement and tact" during difficult times and described him as "a credit to the government" which had appointed him.⁵⁷ The Nugget declared that Steele had been "the one competent and absolutely honest official in Dawson" and asserted that his transfer was the result of a conspiracy of crooked civil servants.⁵⁸ Prominent citizens wrote Laurier to have the decision reversed.⁵⁹ But the government had other plans and Steele himself was quite happy to leave.⁶⁰

Steele's successor, Supt. A. Bowen Perry, inherited a police force which was "much feared and thoroughly respected". In a letter to Sifton, Perry noted that Steele had made the criminals behave themselves and that the only problems of any concern were gambling, prostitution and the Sunday observance laws.⁶¹ In his official report, Perry referred to the "proverbial" good order in the district which resulted

from "the vigorous and just administration of the law by a powerful constabulary."⁶² In the appendix on Dawson, Supt. Primrose noted that police duties were provided by a non-commissioned officer and eight men who patrolled the town on 12 hour shifts. He added that the gaol had been full and that "stern discipline and heavy punishments" had been meted out to a handful of "hard cases". Two prisoners had been in-subordinate but five days in irons and a diet of bread and water had soon broken their spirits. There were few villains still at large in Dawson, he concluded, and he expected that the town constables would have them in custody before long.⁶³ These reports suggested that the Dawson police had the situation well in hand. When the Yukon river opened in the spring, they had even less to do as the rush to Nome siphoned off much of the town's unsavoury element.

Perry had little time to place his stamp on the Yukon police as within six months he was recalled to Regina and elevated to the rank of commissioner of the entire NWMP.⁶⁴ In April 1900, Major Zachary Taylor Wood assumed command and he held it throughout the next decade.⁶⁵

Wood's appointment coincided with a government decision to withdraw the Yukon Field Force. The minister of militia had recalled half the men in the previous September and transferred its headquarters to Dawson. There the remainder served as an auxiliary police force and, in the winter of 1899-1900, the police and military barracks housed well over 200 officers and men.⁶⁶ Soldiers were prominent features in the town, as they guarded banks and government buildings, escorted prisoners on the road gangs, provided reinforcements for the fire brigade, and generally released policemen for other duties. As the gold rush subsided and as the possibility of armed insurrection became even more remote, the government resolved to withdraw the force entirely. The News greeted this decision with a long editorial which described



The Yukon Field Force at Drill, Fort Herchmer, 1900 (Public Archives of Canada)

the YFF as "a useless appendage" whose removal was not regretted. The men, it added, had been sent to the Yukon "under false pretences to intimidate the miners" and it was time for them to go home.⁶⁷ Major Wood, however, lamented the garrison's departure, as there were not enough policemen to perform the additional duties. He was especially alarmed when a large number of "the tough element" returned from Nome, and he wrote Ottawa to register his protest.⁶⁸ Yet it was to no avail, as the YFF sailed from Dawson when the river opened.

Despite Wood's apprehension, there was no wave of serious crime and his first year at Dawson went smoothly. The general conduct of the ranks was "very satisfactory", apart from a few desertions and one policeman who was dismissed for allowing three notorious prostitutes to join the official party which greeted the Governor General.⁶⁹ The crime sheets from the police court reflected the absence of serious offenses, as most cases concerned gambling, drunkenness or violations of the health ordinance.⁷⁰ As the incidence of crime decreased the police had more time to spend on other matters. Sergeant Wilson of the town station supervised the grading of Dawson's streets and he made arrangements for two scows to remove garbage from the town. Other constables inspected drains and sewers and escorted groups of prisoners who cleaned the streets and pulled stumps out of alleyways. By the end of 1900, the police had settled into a routine and they were confident that their maintenance of law and order in Dawson was comparable to that of any force outside.⁷¹

Unlike his predecessors, Wood took practical measures to raise morale and to deter his constables from the temptations of the town. He set up a canteen and lounge equipped with a billiard table, piano and other devices for recreation, and secured a liquor permit for it in his own name to keep policemen out of saloons. It was a cooperative scheme which offered

a variety of "delicacies and articles of luxury" at a fraction of their cost on the open market.⁷² Wood also directed the formation of a police band which played at the barracks and in the park beside the Administration building. When he wrote for additional men, he requested two particular constables because he needed clarinet and cornet players.⁷³ The band itself became so proficient that the musicians in Dawson complained about the competition and petitioned Wood to prevent it playing at civilian engagements. Wood replied that the band had contracts which ought not to be broken, that it charged the same rate of remuneration as the petitioners, and that he was not inclined to tell its members what to do in their off duty hours.⁷⁴

Wood was the first Yukon commander to face interference from Ottawa. In the parliamentary sessions of 1900, the Conservative opposition had focused on the alleged corruption in Clifford Sifton's administration of the Yukon. Sifton was concerned that "immorality" there not become an election issue, especially when he faced a stiff challenge from Hugh John Macdonald in his home constituency.⁷⁵ To that end, Sifton directed the police in Dawson to crack down on gambling and prostitution. Although Wood opposed those vices, he had carried on Steele's pragmatic policy of allowing them to continue under strict police surveillance. Sifton's instructions arrived at a difficult time and both Wood and Ogilvie attempted to persuade the minister to modify his position. Yet Sifton remained firm and the police eventually carried out his orders. In later months, Wood used his position on the Yukon Council to sponsor further regulations of the dance halls and saloons.⁷⁶

With the enforcement of the laws against gambling and prostitution, Dawson became a quiet town and the police had little to do. There was a remarkable decrease in drunkenness and disorderly conduct and the magistrates often found

themselves in empty courtrooms. When vagrants and "bad characters" left the district, the secret service was disbanded and Wood retained only one detective.⁷⁷ It was at this time, paradoxically, that Dawson's only serious armed robbery occurred. On 15 November, two masked men held up the Dominion saloon and escaped with \$1400.⁷⁸ The following day, Wood doubled the size of the town detachment, issued orders for the prosecution of all "vagrants", and notified 280 men to leave the territory.⁷⁹ That same day, the police arrested two suspects and after one confessed both spent time in the B.C. penitentiary.⁸⁰ The swiftness of the police response to the Dominion saloon robbery gave fair warning to all villains and the incident was not repeated.

In 1901, there was a new round of complaints against the police. Once again, the American consul acted on behalf of a few men who objected to being gaoled for vagrancy. In one case, Inspector Starnes confined a Dawson tobacconist despite sworn affidavits from several respectable citizens and in the face of evidence from his bank. Starnes also refused bail and the accused remained behind bars until he appeared in court where the charges were dropped. In a second, a carpenter received six days for being \$2 short when he lost a lawsuit and had to pay costs. Starnes refused to let the man leave the barracks to go to his bank, even in the company of a constable, and he served the full term at hard labour.⁸¹ These problems were partly solved when the minister of justice appointed a civilian police magistrate for Dawson and relieved NWMP officers of that responsibility.⁸² Of the few other complaints against the police,⁸³ the most serious occurred at the end of the year when the new magistrate publicly censured the constable who had arrested a prominent physician at the Catholic Church on Christmas Eve.⁸⁴

In the following two years, internal discipline became an increasingly serious problem. Early in 1902, the constable

in charge of the dog pound received six months in prison for embezzling \$1100 from its treasury.⁸⁵ Wood soon realized that many of the men were untrustworthy. In January, he tried to end the practice of policemen serving as night guards in the banks on the grounds that the police would be blamed if the banks were robbed. The bank managers, however, refused to believe that their premises were as safe as those in Toronto and Montreal and they pressured Ottawa to retain the guards.⁸⁶ Wood's fears were confirmed less than a year later as a mounted policeman on night guard duty stole a sack of what he thought was gold dust from the Bank of Commerce and sold it to a merchant in town. The gold dust turned out to be copper filings and the merchant had the police arrest the constable who had sold it to him.⁸⁷ Even this event failed to alter the bank's position and the night guards remained on duty for a further six months.

A recent historian has suggested that "the best and most experienced men" of the NWMP were sent to the Yukon.⁸⁸ That may have been the case in 1898 but by 1902 the reverse appeared to be true. As the year went on, there was a change in the character of offenses for which policemen were punished. The daily journals of the Dawson barracks reflect fewer cases of drunkenness and dereliction of duty and more cases of police bullying and harassment. In January, two constables were sentenced to six months hard labour for roughing up customers at Klondike City brothels, and others were disciplined for assault, abusive language and disgraceful conduct.⁸⁹ In December, after a case where a citizen had lodged a complaint against a sergeant, Wood warned the men to be more careful in their behaviour as the press and public usually took the word of a civilian over that of a policeman when matters went to court.⁹⁰

In their official reports, Wood and his officers contended that the increase in the number of breaches of discipline was due to the long winter nights and the enticements

which led men astray.⁹¹ Privately, however, Wood suspected that the problem was the low character of many of the new recruits. After a particularly bad batch arrived, he complained to the NWMP Comptroller, but with the transparent qualification that he did not mean to imply "that the Officers in the Territories purposely foisted a number of indifferent characters upon us." He listed by name several who had been imprisoned for letting prisoners escape, for theft from comrades, for theft from a bank, for desertion, and for selling government property. Of the others, one had 13 charges against him in less than a year, two were "absolutely untrustworthy", a few were utterly useless and irresponsible, and one, who had appeared to give evidence to clear another, "while under oath made statements so false and contradictory that even the accused repudiated his testimony." Wood added that when he asked for a list of unreliable constables the sergeant-major contributed the names of 20 in a matter of minutes. He concluded that, although he was reluctant to employ them as bank guards or to expose them to temptation, he would have to do the best he could with them.⁹²

Most of the policemen, however, were upright and honest. Two of the best were Sergeants J.J. Wilson and Frank Smith. Smith took charge of the town station in 1900 after Wilson's retirement and he carried on his predecessor's high standards. Wood detailed the best men to the town station and compelled them "to appear smarter and neater than their comrades."⁹³ These constables enforced the law so well that there was no move to replace them when Dawson was incorporated. When the city council first met in March 1902, it decided to retain the NWMP and the members of the police committee interviewed Wood to make the necessary arrangements.⁹⁴ They agreed that the city would provide a monthly supplement to the wages of the men of the existing town station at a rate of \$40 for

Sergeant Smith, \$35 for Corporal Piper, and \$25 for each of 12 constables.⁹⁵ Each month this scheme cost the city \$375 as opposed to an estimated \$2800 for a separate municipal police force.

This system seemed to work well at first, but it broke down after only a few weeks. In mid-June, the city police committee recommended that the arrangement be terminated because the men of the town station refused to be accountable to the city council. The committee chairman asserted that Sgt. Smith had ignored his instructions and made it clear that he only took orders from officers of the NWMP. It turned out, however, that only two aldermen were in favour of any change and both sat on the police committee.⁹⁶ Rather than make a decision, the councillors consulted Major Wood. Wood explained that he could not have his men taking orders from every alderman, especially when some were direct contradictions, and he proposed that the council select one member to serve as police commissioner with full powers over police affairs.⁹⁷ While the appointment of James F. Macdonald satisfied four aldermen it did not deter the two who wanted change. Aldermen Murphy and Macdonald argued that the city council did not govern Dawson as long as the NWMP served as its police and that a separate force would pay for itself through fines collected for violations of civic by-laws. When the matter came to a vote the motion to hire a force was defeated.⁹⁸ Six weeks later, Murphy and Macdonald reintroduced the motion and once again it failed to pass.⁹⁹ Near the end of the year, the two aldermen tried to make the police an issue in the civic election campaign. Their support dribbled away when it became clear that the receipts from fines could not pay for a police force, as only \$71 were collected in the month of November.¹⁰⁰ Moreover, three of the mayoralty candidates pledged themselves in favour of the NWMP and the fourth did not think the police were an issue.¹⁰¹ The new city

council was satisfied with the work of the town station and no changes occurred during the remaining years of the town's incorporation.

When the city charter was revoked in the fall of 1904, police matters were thrown into turmoil. Although the city council ceased to exist after 19 September, the NWMP were under contract until the end of the year. With the disincorporation of Dawson, the policemen of the town station lost the supplements to their monthly salaries, but they eventually received an extra 50¢ per day to enable them to meet the expenses incurred in maintaining their appearances.¹⁰² More important was the question of whether civic by-laws remained in force. In March 1905, upon the advice of the territorial legal advisor and federal Crown prosecutor, Major Wood instructed his men to enforce the by-law which required property owners to clear the sidewalks.¹⁰³ Three months later, Judge Macaulay ruled that the territorial government had taken over the provisions made by the city council for the government of Dawson when it assumed the responsibilities of municipal government. The by-laws of the city, then, were still in force. The Yukon commissioner had the same power to act on them as had the mayor and aldermen, and the NWMP assumed that they were to be obeyed.¹⁰⁴

In the months prior to the 1904 federal election, the NWMP at Dawson became subject to the political machinations of F.T. Congdon and his Liberal cohorts. Because policemen performed a variety of electoral functions, Congdon set out to use them to ensure his victory at the polls. As early as August, he wrote Sifton that the attitude of the police would be important. Congdon suspected that Wood was a Conservative who would not assist the government and he asked that he be transferred out until the election was over.¹⁰⁵ There is ample evidence that Congdon's suspicion was groundless, as Wood had corresponded privately with Sifton's office on

several occasions and had looked after the interests of the Liberal party in the territory.¹⁰⁶ In any case, Sifton declined to act on Congdon's request and Wood remained at Dawson.

In the fall of 1904, relations between Congdon and Wood deteriorated into open conflict. When Congdon's henchmen tried to induce NWMP constables to attend meetings of the Liberal association, Wood issued an order which drew the men's attention to the clause in the police act which forbade "manifestations of political partisanship".¹⁰⁷ The tension arose because the two officials had different views toward political organization and law enforcement. Wood was an incorruptible policeman determined to carry out the criminal code; Congdon was an ambitious politician willing to look the other way in return for contributions to his campaign fund. Congdon saw that the liquor ordinance could be used to his advantage and appointed William Temple and two other supporters to the board of licence commissioners. As the ordinance left the prosecution of its violators to the chief licence inspector, who was a Congdon appointee, the police found themselves unable to enforce the regulations against gambling and the use of percentage women in saloons. When the licence inspector refused to act on police information, Wood had his men raid the gambling halls until they went out of business.¹⁰⁸

This action increased Congdon's hostility and he began an active campaign to discredit the officers at Dawson. At the same time, he collected a political debt from a secret service man he had appointed by asking him to report on the inner workings of the force.¹⁰⁹ As the election date drew near several officers took steps to protect themselves by contacting men of influence at Ottawa. Supt. Cuthbert informed Senator Davis that:

every Officer here is loyal to the present Government and to its nominee in the person of

Mr. Congdon, notwithstanding threats made against the Police generally and some of the Officers who Mr. Congdon's followers imagine do not shout loud enough or who in the ordinary course of duty have unfortunately and unavoidably been brought into contact with some of these followers.¹¹⁰

Wood contacted F.C. Wade whom he knew retained Sifton's ear. To Wade he explained that Congdon was angry because the police had prevented Temple from carrying out his Tammany schemes and had thus ended "his receiving 'protection' money" from gambling dens and dance halls.¹¹¹ He asked Wade to intercede with the minister and to ask for a chance to defend himself.

When the voters turned down Congdon's bid for the Yukon seat in Parliament, the former commissioner lost much of his influence. Although Sifton asked Wood for an explanation of police activity in Dawson, he made no changes in the ranks and intervened personally to dismiss Congdon's secret agent.¹¹² Congdon himself never forgave Wood or the NWMP and he took advantage of every opportunity to criticize them.¹¹³

While 1904 had been the year of the Congdon gang and of Dawson's disincorporation, it was also the year of the stampede to Fairbanks. The discovery of gold in the Tanana valley attracted goldseekers from throughout the Yukon and Alaska. A significant part of Dawson's "floating population" rushed downriver when the Yukon opened and there was a corresponding decrease in the amount of crime.¹¹⁴ Although a large number of "undesirables" arrived from the Pacific coast, plain clothes policemen advised them to move on and over 200 were so persuaded.¹¹⁵ During the years which followed, Dawson continued its slow decline. Every year the police concentrated their efforts to have "persons with questionable records" transfer their attention to other localities and their success was reflected in the criminal statistics.¹¹⁶ In 1905, there were so few convicts working the woodpile that Major Wood was forced to purchase a steamer load of coal.¹¹⁷

The only controversial police matter in 1906 began when a saloonkeeper telegraphed the prime minister that the police in Dawson refused to act on his information about crooked gambling.¹¹⁸ On two occasions Thomas Chisholm had reported that "an American tin horn sure thing gambler" was running a game, and each time had been ignored. Finally, he wrote Supt. Cuthbert that "as a Canadian and a heavy taxpayer" he objected to the harassment of innocent gamblers in his saloon while this dishonest gamester ran his place "with apparent impunity."¹¹⁹ After this letter evoked no reply, he sent his telegram to Laurier. When the NWMP Comptroller requested an explanation, Cuthbert detailed Sgt. Smith to investigate Chisholm's charge. Smith reported that it had little foundation and that Chisholm appeared to be using the police for his own purposes.¹²⁰ Cuthbert relayed that information to Ottawa and later added that the usual comment was that the police were too strict with respect to gambling.¹²¹ In further communications, Cuthbert declared that Chisholm was part of a conspiracy among "half a dozen discredited and discreditable individuals" to defame the police, and that his saloon was frequented by "a drunken outfit of long-shoremen, deck hands, crooks and gamblers and a very rough class of people."¹²² Chisholm, in short, was not a man to be believed.

In June, the affair took on a different character when a lawyer for Chisholm laid information in the police court that in 1902 Detective William Welsh had accepted \$4000 in bribes from gambling houses in Dawson.¹²³ That same day, Wood telegraphed Ottawa that Congdon was behind the case.¹²⁴ Two weeks later, Wood wrote that Welsh was "absolutely trustworthy and reliable" and that he had made enemies in the course of his duties. He was convinced that "a certain clique" was determined to sully Welsh's reputation before he retired and set up a private detective bureau, "on account of their fears of the consequences". He suspected that Congdon was behind

it because he and Chisholm's lawyer had frequently been seen in each other's company.¹²⁵ When the case came up in court, Welsh pleaded not guilty and elected trial by jury. The judge then issued commissions to take evidence from men in Victoria, Vancouver and Seattle, and scheduled the trial for the third week in August.¹²⁶

When Welsh finally appeared in court he decided to be tried without a jury and the case lasted only two days. On the first, Chisholm gave sworn evidence that Welsh had offered protection, accepted bribes, and then reneged on the deal and assisted in the prosecution of six or eight saloonkeepers.¹²⁷ The following day, the prosecuting lawyer tried to suppress the depositions collected during August. Two of the three, it turned out, contained testimony that Chisholm had guaranteed protection and collected money to use "to fix the police", and that Welsh at no time had appeared willing to accept bribes.¹²⁸ One witness in fact swore that Welsh had told him that Chisholm was operating a shakedown racket and swindling his competitors and told him not to contribute.¹²⁹ In his decision, the judge ruled that all evidence except Chisholm's suggested that Welsh had not accepted bribes and that conflicting testimony had cast aspersions on a fellow judge. Thomas Chisholm, he concluded, was "a coward, a dastard and a liar", and William Welsh was found not guilty.¹³⁰

An era ended in 1906 when Sgt. Frank Smith retired after ten years at Dawson and six in charge of the town station.¹³¹ A month later the station itself was closed and the NWMP constables again patrolled Dawson from the barracks.¹³² In October, there was a minor crime wave of "two or three bold and daring daylight robberies".¹³³ Thieves rifled a jewellery store, emptied the till at a bath-house and ransacked the sheriff's desk in the Administration building.¹³⁴ Although the police failed to apprehend the men responsible, they suspected that the perpetrators were among several "rough characters" who had stopped in Dawson on their way from Fairbanks

and assumed that they had escaped on one of the steamers which left soon afterward.¹³⁵ To prevent further lawlessness, Wood reopened the town station and staffed it with two non-commissioned officers and five constables.¹³⁶ It remained occupied until February 1907 when Wood decided that it was too expensive to heat and that the town would not lapse into anarchy if it were patrolled from the barracks.

As Dawson dwindled in the years which followed, the number of crimes committed also fell. In his report for 1907, Wood wrote that the NWMP did not have much to do except supervise "the tough element" which passed through Dawson on its way to or from Alaska.¹³⁷ When the river broke, he had reopened the town station and staffed it with six men and so prepared for the arrival of "undesirables". Inspector Wroughton suggested that the dance halls and "their accompanying evils" accounted for what crime there was. He noted that the closing of those institutions had seriously curtailed the opportunities for "the wanton, and the sneak thief, the confidence men and women". Nonetheless, the police continued their campaign against "all types of adventurers" who gravitated to mining localities.¹³⁸ In 1908, the police cracked down on prostitution and on the men who lived on the avails. They also carried out the execution of a prisoner convicted of a murder on the trail to Whitehorse.¹³⁹ In the fall of that year, they began their annual roundup of "suspicious and dissolute characters" and told them to move on before the close of navigation.¹⁴⁰

After 1908, the police were as much concerned with preventing crime as in apprehending offenders. Their efforts were very successful as 1909 saw little crime in the district and none of a serious nature. Z.T. Wood completed a decade of service at Dawson in 1910 and with the rank of assistant-commissioner he left for Regina.¹⁴¹ His departure was followed by a minor outbreak of open gambling but his successor

wasted no time in stamping it out.¹⁴² Indeed, in the winter of 1910-11, the police court was almost empty. There was only one case, a drunk, in December, none in January, and only two charges of gambling in February.¹⁴³ This state of affairs persuaded Wood's successor to close the station house permanently, but he rented a cabin in Dawson for the three policemen who patrolled the town.¹⁴⁴

Eighteen months later, Supt. Moodie decided that he could only spare one man for town duty and in March 1913 he informed Commissioner Black that "regular police duty" and barracks work required the services of all men available.¹⁴⁵ When a few "loose women and gamblers" tried to take advantage of the situation, the police and government officials cooperated and deported them under provisions of the immigration act. Moodie reported that this method of removing undesirables, without the necessity of action through reluctant courts, was a great benefit to the police and to the town.¹⁴⁶ In the summer of 1914, the police kept careful watch over the gamblers and crooks who waited for the dredging companies to pay their workmen, and they informed the local immigration inspector of all suspicious characters. In the face of this expedient, most of the "sharks and sharpers" left Dawson and never returned.¹⁴⁷ Thereafter, the amount of crime in Dawson was "remarkably small" and the police reports were filled with comments on the weather, local business conditions and on prohibition.¹⁴⁸

The men of the NWMP played a crucial role in the early history of the city of Dawson. Because the police arrived soon after the town's inception, Dawson grew up within the framework of Canadian law. It never experienced the anarchy which characterized contemporary mining camps in Alaska because the mounted police enforced the criminal code and drove

out all who failed to heed their commands. In the early years, the police commanders were haunted by the spectre of Skagway. To prevent Dawson becoming another Skagway, they resorted to arbitrary and extra-legal tactics and they used the American example as the measure for their success in Dawson.

Yet Dawson probably would not have been another Skagway for reasons of climate and geography. The Yukon winter and Dawson's isolation may have reduced its criminal potential. Those factors and the police presence meant there were few places for law-breakers to hide and those who fled by water had to run a gauntlet of police outposts. Given these conditions, the efficiency of the police in preventing crime and apprehending offenders is not difficult to understand. At the same time, the ruthless response to criminal activity made villains aware of the consequences they faced. The police determination to maintain law and order occasionally led to abuses and persecutions which might not have been tolerated in a less authoritarian age. Even the most virulent critics of the NWMP, however, conceded that they were harsh and heavy handed because that was what the circumstances required.

Other commentators have suggested that the character of the policemen was the decisive factor in Dawson's history of order and stability. They used Sam Steele, a man of scrupulous integrity and military bearing, to illustrate this point. Steele undoubtedly had a profound influence on the town. He assumed the role of a benevolent despot in the crucial years after 1896 and his firm stand against lawlessness set the example for his successors and created the authoritarian climate in which they functioned. Z.T. Wood was Steele's protégé in this respect and he, like Steele, initiated many regulations which eliminated petty crime and vice. Steele and Wood and some of their officers were exemplary policemen but the ranks were not filled with paragons of virtue. While a large majority of the men were upright and honest,

some were suspect and a few were little better than the criminals they prosecuted. Yet it must be emphasized that the force regularly purged itself of the more disreputable constables.

At the same time, as Supt. Perry noted, the police in Dawson were regarded with a combination of respect and fear. While the men on the beat could be overbearing, it was perhaps the sheer force of numbers which created the impression. In 1898, when there were over 200 uniformed men, Dawson was a garrison town and, as Harwood Steele noted, the police could swoop on demons "with the fury of a scarlet avalanche."¹⁴⁹ The presence of the barracks on Dawson's fringe maintained this image, even when they contained only a fraction of that number.

The police in Dawson did more than just enforce the law. Indeed, their civil duties were sometimes more important than their judicial ones. Sam Steele took action to improve public health and his officers inspected drains, latrines and other hazards. In later years, the policeman in charge of the town station supervised the grading of the streets and other constables looked after local improvements and the collection of rubbish. The men of the North West Mounted Police were an important segment of the population and their influence pervaded all aspects of life in Dawson.

VI Politics, Finance and Fire Protection

In its first ten years, fire was perhaps the greatest menace the city of Dawson faced. Dawson was a wooden town, hastily built and dependent on primitive furnaces and stoves. The climate and geography of the Klondike region made the usual problems of fire protection especially difficult. Fires usually occurred when the temperature was at its lowest, when hoses froze quickly and when manual labour was dangerous. Protection from fire was a matter of paramount concern, particularly when annual conflagrations wiped out whole districts. It was of crucial importance because of Dawson's function as a service centre and trans-shipment point. The waterfront was lined with warehouses where goods were stored for long periods of time. The owners needed fire insurance but they could not get it until a fire department was organized on an effective basis. The ratepayers, however, were reluctant to provide the enormous sums required to make the fire brigade efficient. The problems were political and financial, in addition to logistical. Yet the decade after 1898 saw the fire department develop from a volunteer bucket brigade into a professional service, equipped with an hydrant system and mobile apparatus, and equal to any outside. But this evolution was slow and often painful. Fire protection, then, was a question of major significance in the early history of the city of Dawson.

The town was only a year old when it experienced its first serious fire. The temperature was 58° below zero on Thanksgiving Day, 25 November 1897, when a blaze broke out in the M & N Saloon. According to legend, it began when a dance

hall girl threw a flaming lamp at a rival.¹ By the time the alarm was raised, the fire had spread to the buildings adjacent and the Dominion Saloon and the Opera House quickly went up in smoke. Their occupants organized a bucket brigade which carried water from a hole chopped in the ice of the Yukon River. But the volunteers realized that they could only contain the fire by demolishing the buildings in its path and they quickly pulled down most of the structures on Front Street. During the night the fire burned itself out and in the morning the centre of Dawson was a desolate wreck of charred ruins.²

This fire demonstrated to the people of Dawson the need for an organized fire brigade. When Front Street was rebuilt, the business community turned to the question of fire protection. On 10 March 1898, the leading men of Dawson met at the law office of J.J. Rutledge to subscribe funds for the purchase of a fire engine and they pledged a total of \$9,000. This committee decided to order an engine through the North American Transportation and Trading Company and the company sent for one which cost \$18,000.³ When it arrived in Dawson on 10 July, the subscribers would not pay for it until they received a guarantee that the territorial government would reimburse them and take the apparatus off their hands. Since the company refused to turn it over until it received full payment, the engine sat in its crate on the street in front of the store for the next three months.⁴

During the summer the people of Dawson looked for a solution to this impasse. At the end of August, a meeting of property holders discussed ways of getting revenue to pay for the fire engine. The manager of the Bank of Commerce, H.T. Wills, suggested that the most appropriate one was to demand the incorporation of Dawson and the assessment of its residents.⁵ At a second meeting, Rutledge reiterated that incorporation was the only way out of the "quagmire". But the Yukon commissioner refused to consider the matter as there

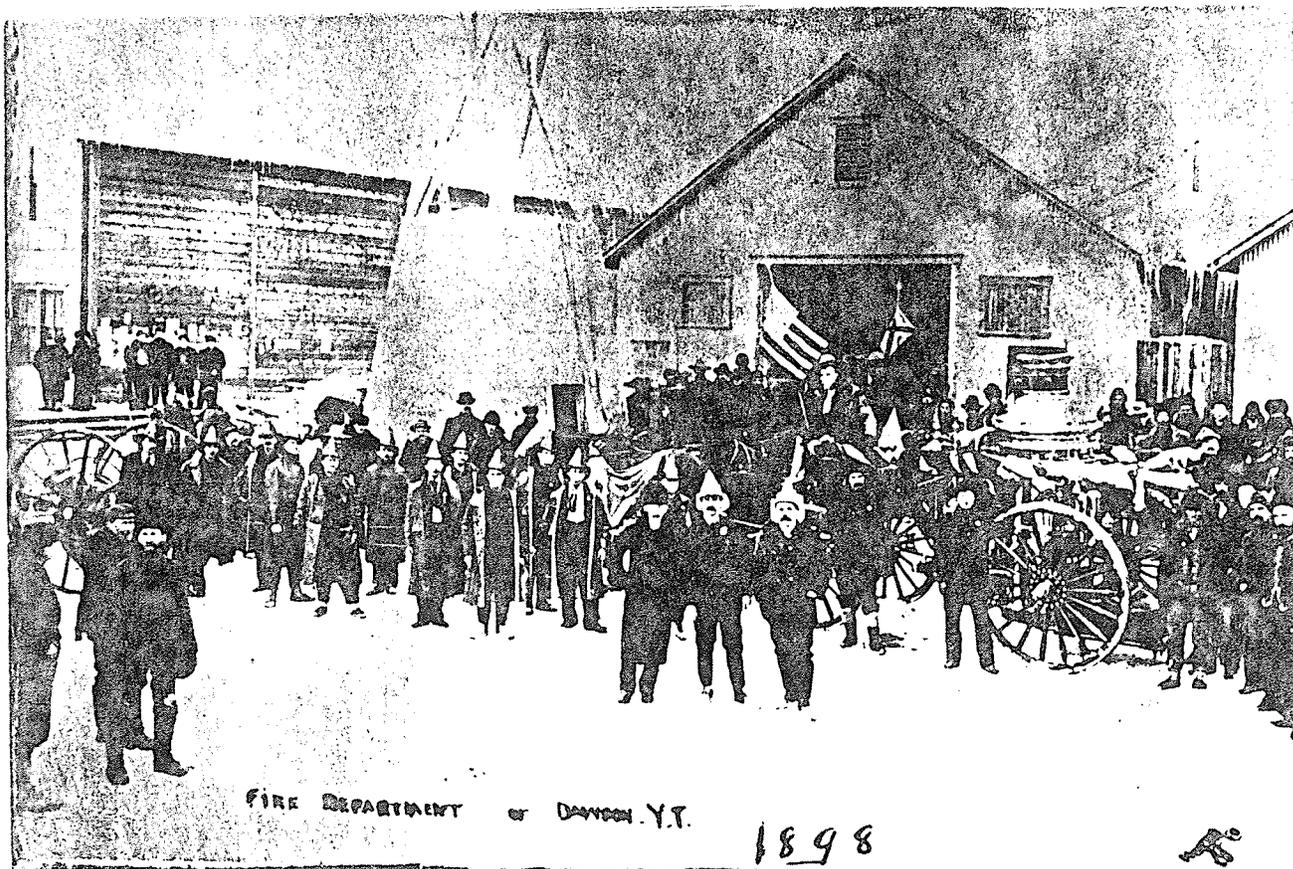
was no popular clamour for Dawson to be incorporated.⁶ Wills then announced that his bank would issue a note to pay for the apparatus if 15 or 20 citizens agreed to sign it.⁷ Even then the necessary people did not step forward and at the end of September the engine remained in its crate.

The engine did not stay unpacked for long. In the early morning of 14 October 1898, a fire broke out in the upper floor of the Green Tree Hotel and soon burned out of control. The flames spread to the post office next door and then radiated out in three directions. Within minutes most of Front Street was ablaze. The mounted police and members of the Yukon Field Force organized a bucket brigade and an estimated 2,000 men turned out to assist them.⁸ Yet, once again, the only way to contain the fire was to tear down the buildings around it. While the police and soldiers set to this work, a steam fire engine appeared at the scene and began to pour a steady stream onto the flames. It turned out that a small band of men had uncrated the NAT & T Co. engine and in four hours had put it together and made it work, without asking the company's permission. By the time all the combined efforts had brought the fire under control, 26 buildings on Front Street had burned down and the surrounding area had been badly scorched. The total loss amounted to more than \$500,000.⁹

This fire encouraged the business men of Dawson to loosen their purse strings. The following day, 25 men endorsed a bank note to pay for the engine and they elected a committee of seven to look after it. This "Citizens Committee" consisted of J.J. Rutledge, collector of customs D.W. Davis, John G. Healy of the NAT & T Co., Captain J.E. Hansen of the Alaska Commercial Company, Joe Cooper of the Dominion Saloon, Tom Chisholm of the Aurora Saloon and George J. Apple, a tinsmith and hardware merchant.¹⁰ As Dawson's first fire commissioners, they hired the men to run the fire engine and they chose them from the group which had assembled it. At first there were only two salaried firemen, a chief engineer and a stoker.



Dawson Fire Department 1898
(Frank Fletcher in centre)



(Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives)

The engineer, Charles Bush, had spent 17 years with the Victoria fire department and it was he who had put the engine together. The stoker, Joseph Stingle, had been fireman on a variety of steam machinery.¹¹ These two men formed the first fire department in Dawson.

While the men of business saw to the management of the apparatus, there still remained the question of manpower. On 19 October, the Klondike Nugget called a meeting to organize a volunteer fire brigade. The assembly elected a fire chief, and it chose Frank Fletcher, the only experienced fireman in attendance. In the following week a committee from the volunteer association met with the commissioners to discuss the amalgamation of the fire department and the fire brigade. Although the commissioners appointed Fletcher chief of the department and eventually paid him a salary, the two institutions were not united. The Citizens Committee retained its authority over the engine and the men who ran it, but never assumed jurisdiction over the volunteers.¹² Fletcher was the only link between them. On matters concerning the engine, he took his orders from the commissioners, but where the volunteers were concerned he had the ultimate authority. Although this system allowed the chief full direction when fires broke out, it also put him in a precarious position, which Fletcher soon realized.

The problems in this scheme of fire protection became apparent early in 1899. On 15 February, fire destroyed the Fish and Company grocery store and eight other buildings. The Nugget estimated the loss at \$60,000 and the damage would have been much worse had the fire brigade not demolished a handful of other buildings.¹³ The firemen resorted to that tactic when the fire engine did not work. A subsequent investigation found that the coal had not been of sufficient quality to heat the boiler properly and the commissioners absolved the engineer and stoker of all responsibility. In

tests with better coal the men put the engine into action and produced a steady stream in only twelve minutes.¹⁴ At other smaller fires, the engine worked without any difficulty, and the American consul in Dawson, whose property had been saved on one occasion, reported that the "Fire Laddies" had done excellent work with their big engine.¹⁵ The commissioners decided that the Fish fire had been an unfortunate accident and they affirmed their confidence in the department.

The real test came on 26 April when Dawson suffered its first million dollar conflagration. The fire began in the Bodega Hotel on Front Street and within minutes had spread along the waterfront and across Second Avenue. Virtually the whole business district was aflame. The fire department pulled the engine down to the river and the volunteers prepared to combat the blaze, but 25 minutes passed before the water was turned on. During this delay, the fire took hold on Second Street. Once again, the police and volunteers had to pull down buildings in its path to bring the fire under control.¹⁶

In the aftermath, the commercial district lay in ruins and the fire department became the target of much criticism. The fire commissioners held Chief Fletcher responsible and they dismissed him. The Nugget charged that the failure of the engine had been absolutely criminal and demanded an inquiry into what had happened.¹⁷ In fact, there were two investigations, one by the police and the other by the Yukon commissioner and council. The first, carried out by Inspector Harper and six citizens, concluded that the fire had begun in an apartment occupied by a prostitute. The jurors recommended that "all women of the town" be excluded from public buildings other than licenced hotels. Armed with this decision, Colonel Steele began the long campaign to remove these ladies from the business district. He also exacted a "voluntary" contribution from each of them to pay for new fire-fighting apparatus.¹⁸

The Yukon Council investigation was more concerned with

the reason for the failure of the fire engine. The councillors questioned the fire commissioners and all the salaried firemen including ex-chief Fletcher. The testimony suggested that the fire department and volunteer brigade had been working at cross purposes and that petty disputes had impaired their ability to fight fires. Part of the problem had been that the engine had become stuck on the riverbank. The extra effort required to move it had pushed it out too far and the firebox had been submerged. The engineer and stoker had to clean out the grate and relight the fire with dry coal. When no water was forthcoming, Fletcher had sent a volunteer down to check the fire in the boiler but the engineer and stoker would not let him near it. When he did see it, he remarked that it looked as if it had been built "by some greenhorn". When the fire was going again, the volunteer charged that the engineer had put too much cold water in the boiler and it took a long time to build up pressure. The engineer denied these allegations, accused the volunteer of making false statements and attributed the delay to poor coal.¹⁹

The conflicting testimony illustrated the disorganization which existed in the fire department and its fierce rivalry with the volunteer brigade. More importantly, it demonstrated that the whole system of fire protection had to be put in order if Dawson were not to disappear in smoke. After the volunteer brigade disbanded, the Yukon Council undertook a complete reorganization of the fire department. It replaced the fire commissioners, took possession of the apparatus and combined the salaried men and the volunteers into one body. A new set of fire commissioners, led by William Ogilvie, D. W. Davis, Registrar Girouard and the fire chief, assumed responsibility for fire protection.

One of the first decisions of the new commissioners was to order another fire engine, a second class one, through the Alaska Commercial Company. When it arrived, the Nugget announced that Dawson had a fire engine equal to those used in

the largest cities.²⁰ A close inspection, however, revealed that the engine was a used one since the wheels and tongue and working parts showed considerable wear. Ogilvie claimed that the company had sold him a second hand engine for the price of a new one, and he proposed payment more in keeping with its market value. The company refused the offer and left the commissioner with the dilemma of either paying too much for a used engine or leaving Dawson without adequate fire protection. He decided to pay under protest, and warned that the company would receive no more official business.²¹ Fireman Stingle then overhauled the engine, cleaned its parts, and tuned it until it seemed in perfect working order.²²

The commissioners also appointed a new fire chief, William J. Allen, at a salary of \$3,000. Allen had been a fireman in several American cities and he set out to recruit a volunteer brigade of 40 men from the clerical staffs of the business community.²³ When he resigned at the end of August to seek his fortune on one of the creeks, the commissioners replaced him with Hector F. Stewart. Stewart had little fire-fighting experience and no skill in managing men, and his appointment is difficult to explain.²⁴ His tenure was characterized by almost constant unrest in the ranks, and the tension between the chief and the men did not abate until he finally resigned.

Stewart's unpopularity did not alter his determination to make the fire department a solid professional service. The department was well equipped with fire engines, extinguishers, hose carts, and hook and ladder, but these devices were useless if the men did not know how to use them properly. Stewart's efforts to train the men encountered much opposition. The volunteers resisted the chief's orders that they drill in the evenings because they were tired after having worked all day. The newspapers endorsed the chief's position and went even further. The News remarked that Dawson needed "practical

firemen, enlisted by the government for that purpose exclusively, and paid enough to make it an object to belong to the department and to be an incentive for the men to take pride and interest in their work."²⁵ At the time of Stewart's appointment there had been only six salaried firemen and the Yukon Council thought that a full time force would be too expensive. When a proposed arrangement to use the services of the Yukon Field Force fell through, the Council saw no alternative and authorized Stewart to hire 14 others at monthly salaries of \$175 to \$200.²⁶ The new men signed on for six months and agreed to abide by the strict regulations draughted by the chief. When Stewart divided the force into two companies, stationed them in engine houses at either end of the waterfront and borrowed horses from the police to increase their mobility, the reorganization of the fire department was complete.²⁷

As winter set in, Stewart made the men practice until they were able to lay 1500 feet of hose, produce 100 pounds of steam pressure and supply a stream of water, in only five minutes.²⁸ This drill prepared the men for the 18 fires which broke out in Dawson in the first three weeks of December. All were extinguished before they could spread.²⁹ The number of fires, however, pointed to the need for rigid enforcement of the territorial fire regulations. Accordingly, the foreman of the fire department began an inspection of all buildings and he issued notices to those people whose premises did not conform to the law.³⁰

The new fire department faced its first severe test on 10 January 1900. Once again, the business district of Dawson was swept by fire. It began in the Monte Carlo Theatre and spread through the saloons and music halls on either side until that whole block of Front Street was a mass of flames. The firemen arrived quickly and got their hoses going but after only two minutes the water failed and a sharp wind

carried the blaze along the street. As the fire proceeded northward, one company ran out of hose and the water was turned off while additional lengths were inserted. Eventually four streams of water were poured on the buildings, but they were not enough. The men of the mounted police and the Yukon Field Force joined the fight and the fire was only contained after five hours by their decision to tear down the Bank of Commerce. The total loss in this fire was very great. The Nugget put it at \$750,000, the News at \$500,000, but the officer commanding the police thought it was more like \$100,000.³¹ In any case, it was Dawson's fourth major fire in less than three years.

When the last embers had been extinguished, the fire department was left with 5,000 feet of frozen hose which had to be carried back to the fire halls, piece by piece, to be thawed and dried. Chief Stewart had nothing but praise for the way the firemen had contained the fire and he thanked the AC Co. brigade for its assistance. He also explained that the initial failure of the water had been due to a hose which had burst under pressure. The News also complimented the fire department but added that the fire could not have been controlled without the efforts of the soldiers and policemen. Indeed, the News asserted that it was preposterous to think that a fire department of 20 men with four lines of hose would be able to cope with any extensive fire. If the people of Dawson were to learn anything from the fire, it was that the department could use more men and additional paraphernalia.³²

The fire commissioners agreed with the News and they began negotiations for the purchase of a third fire engine. This time Ogilvie wrote directly to the Ronald Fire Engine Works and described the town for which the engine was required. Dawson, he wrote, was built entirely of spruce, sticky with gum and exceedingly flammable. Once these buildings were on fire it was difficult to approach them because of the intense heat. What the town needed was an engine "that would throw

a powerful enough stream of water to break down inch board partitions and smash window glasses." He also wanted an engine with a capacity of 1,000 gallons per minute and a hose able to withstand extreme cold and, if possible, one that was self-propelled because of the expense of maintaining horses.³³ The company replied that it had no engine which met these specifications and the costs of designing and building one forced Ogilvie to reconsider the whole idea.

A new fire engine was only one element in the concern about fire protection. In February, the Yukon Council amended the fire ordinance and gave the fire inspector the authority to order improvements.³⁴ As spring drew near, and as the danger of fire abated, the Council resolved to reduce the fire brigade to 15 men in order to curtail expenses.³⁵ But at the same time, it empowered the fire chief to draught onlookers to assist at fires and to arrest any who refused his orders. The chief also received the authority to destroy any building which could not be saved from fire or which constituted a menace to other buildings.³⁶ When the Council discussed the budget, it decided to augment the size of the fire brigade by resorting to the call system, under which the additional men received payment only for the time they spent actually fighting fires.³⁷ The budget itself allocated \$73,000 for the department, which included \$46,000 in salaries and \$9,300 for new equipment.³⁸

When the budget had passed, Ogilvie wrote to the Waterous Engine Company of Brantford, Ontario, to see if it could send an engine to Dawson before the shipping season closed. The company replied that it had sent its last fire engine to Vancouver and had none in stock. Ogilvie was disappointed by this news and wrote back that he had wanted "a good Canadian engine here as an object lesson to a great many foreigners who seem to fancy that the Yukon Territory is Canada, and that nothing is made in it, nor can any good thing come out of it anywhere."³⁹ This letter must have changed the company's mind,

as it arranged to build a new engine for Vancouver and to send the original one to Dawson.⁴⁰

This bit of good fortune rebounded to Dawson's disadvantage. The new engine arrived before the close of navigation and was installed on a scow near the riverbank. It was tested several times and on each occasion the boiler leaked. The engineer made some adjustments and thought he had solved the problem but when the engine was used again the leakage continued and eventually extinguished the fire in the grate. The commissioner then consulted an expert boilermaker who charged the government for his repairs. Ogilvie asked the Waterous Engine Works to pay this bill, as the engine had not been subjected to extraordinary use, and he added that since the greater part of the population was American, "we are very anxious to keep this matter as quiet as possible."⁴¹ Thus, when he sent payment to Brantford, the cheque did not cover the full payment on account of the modifications the engine required.⁴² The company protested and, after Ogilvie made it clear that no further payment would be made, it appealed to the minister of the interior. When the deputy minister contacted the commissioner, Ogilvie answered that he had sent a draught for the amount which he considered appropriate and would send no more.⁴³ Over the next two years, the company continued to pursue the matter, but Ogilvie and his successor refused to make any further payment.⁴⁴ In the end, when it was of no more use, the commissioners donated the leaky engine to the fire department at Whitehorse.

The winter of 1900-01 was the first to pass without a major fire in Dawson. The Yukon Sun alluded to the wisdom of William Ogilvie and the Yukon Council in securing extra fire apparatus which had prevented the annual conflagration. There had been fires but the fire department had extinguished them quickly and efficiently.⁴⁵ The Sun continued that the department could not be improved upon in any way. Its discipline

was perfect, the horses were well trained and the equipment was the best available. The only thing missing was an alarm system and Chief Stewart said one was needed if the men were to save the time normally lost in looking for fires.⁴⁶ In October 1901, Commissioner James H. Ross ordered construction of a 20 box alarm system. This system used five miles of wire and each box contained telegraph and telephone connections to both fire stations.⁴⁷ Fire protection, it seemed, was now better than ever.

On the surface the fire department seemed well ordered in 1901, but underneath it was in turmoil. Hector Stewart had never been popular with the men and their resentment soon burst into the open.⁴⁷ In July, the men laid their complaints before the fire committee of the Yukon Council, but that body declined to act upon them.⁴⁸ The situation deteriorated as Stewart became more imperious and the men grew increasingly restive. The tension found expression in the department's daily reports. In the official diary of Engine House #2, Captain Alexander Macfarlane referred to the chief's "noticeably bad humour," to "his dirty low nature", and on Thanksgiving day noted: "we add supplication for speedy deliverence [sic] from despotic rule."⁴⁹ In October, the firemen petitioned for the dismissal of the chief and Macfarlane and others testified to "his overbearing attitude". When the Yukon Council cleared Stewart of all charges, the entire force submitted resignations which were not accepted.⁵⁰

The protagonists in the conflict were Stewart and Macfarlane and the climax came on 3 December when the captain resisted the chief's efforts to remove some barrels of soda from the fire hall. Stewart promptly suspended Macfarlane for insubordination. The fire committee investigated the affair and concluded that the captain had been guilty. Yet, it decided not to dismiss Macfarlane because he had acted in what he believed to be the best interests of the department. Instead, the chairman wrote that it was the captain's duty

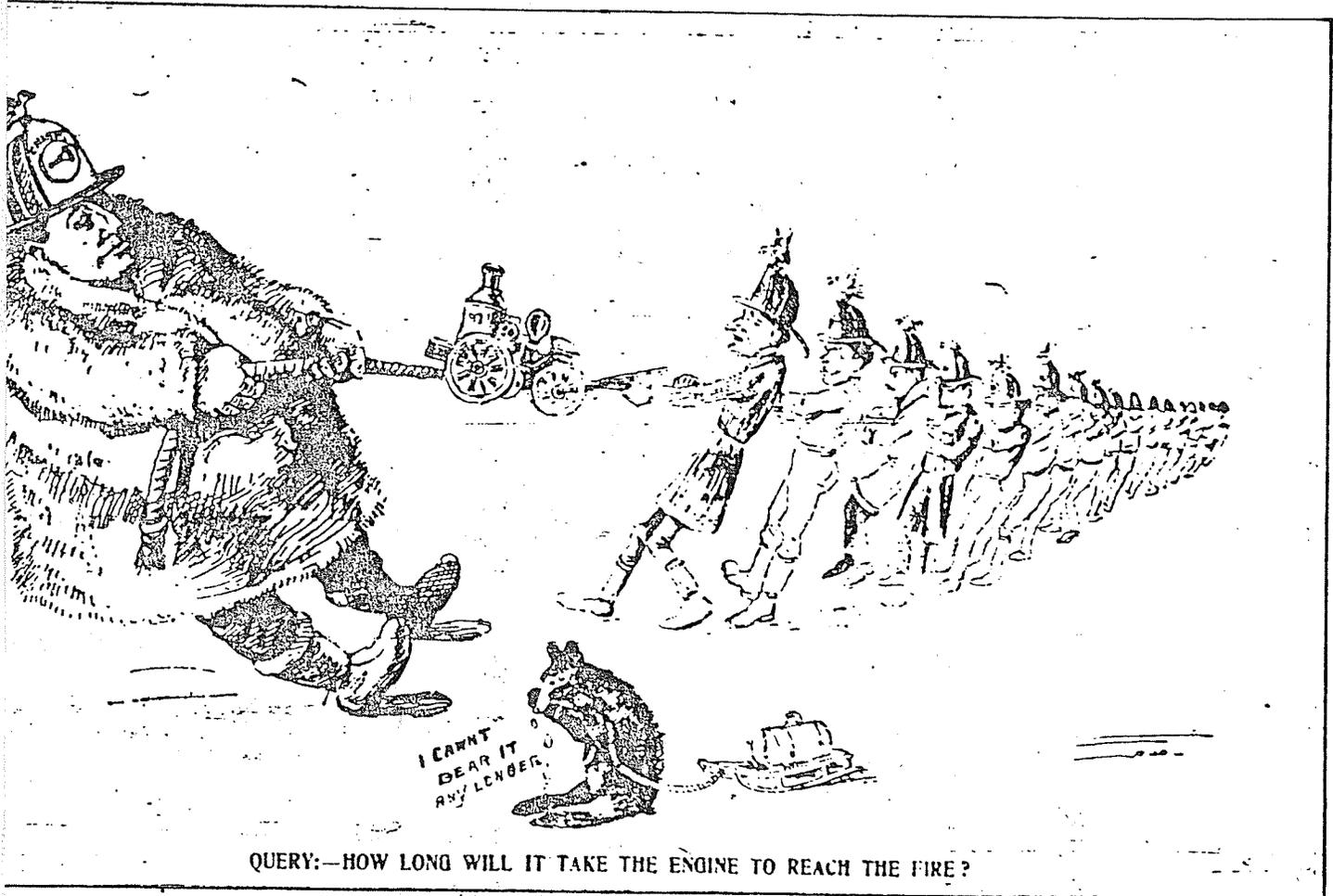
to set a good example for the men "by showing prompt and cheerful obedience to the orders of the Chief." While the committee was reluctant to make any change in the fire department because the new municipal government was about to assume control, the letter concluded that if the officers or men were dissatisfied, their resignations would be accepted.⁵¹

This warning did not put an end to the unrest. There was a fire on the day Macfarlane returned to active service and in the daily report he recorded that the cabin had been a total loss because the chief had ordered the water turned off pending the arrival of the chemical apparatus. The men had laid 3300 feet of hose and 800 feet had become wet, and yet the chief had refused to let them continue.⁵² This decision angered the men and they let the chief know what they thought. Two days later Stewart resigned rather than "be subject to dictation from men underneath him."⁵³ Because of the impending incorporation of Dawson, the Yukon Council rejected the resignation and Stewart remained chief. In its last days of responsibility for the department, the fire committee endorsed Stewart's demotion of Macfarlane for being drunk and fighting in the fire hall.⁵⁴

The city of Dawson, then, on its incorporation inherited a fire department wracked by internal dissension. In the week that it took office, the city council investigated the petition which the firemen had presented to the Yukon Council the previous fall. In it the men had charged the chief with action unbecoming his position:

with overbearing and repugnant demeanor towards his subordinates, with removing barrels which were the property of the department, with keeping a race-horse in the way of speedy action in the case of an alarm, with incompetency, with not being on duty when needed and with various, divers and sundry failings on the part of the chief and on which the firemen are a unit demanding his removal.⁵⁵

When the councillors looked into these charges, Stewart resigned. He had suffered "all kinds of unpleasantness" in the last six



Klondike Nugget, 31 October 1901

months, and he refused to continue directing men who were "incapable, incompetent, reluctant, and disobedient".⁵⁶ At the next city council meeting the fire committee reported that it had decided that some reorganization of the department was required. They had found no irregularity in Stewart's sale of soda to the bottling works because he had received the permission of the Yukon Council. But the committee held the chief responsible for the friction in the department and it recommended that his resignation be accepted. The committee also asked Stewart to remain chief until his replacement arrived, since the new chief would not be drawn from the ranks of the department.⁵⁷

When the city began to look for a new fire chief, the mayor consulted two insurance companies in Victoria and one in Vancouver. The Victoria firms suggested ex-chief Thomas Deacy of that city's fire department and the city council offered him the position at a salary of \$250 a month. When he declined, the aldermen turned to James A. Lester, the choice of the Vancouver underwriter.⁵⁸ Lester had applied for the position in October 1901⁵⁹ and he accepted the city's offer. Two weeks later he was in Dawson and he took office on 21 April 1902.

From the beginning it was apparent that Lester was a fine fireman and an excellent chief. He had served eight years in Vancouver fire department, five as captain, and his experience showed when he took over the department in Dawson. He established a third fire station in South Dawson, but moved all hoses and hose carts to a central location from which they could be delivered to all areas more efficiently.⁶⁰ He also reduced the force to 16 men, "the number necessary to handle the apparatus", and arranged for each man to be free from duty 18 hours per week.⁶¹ Under his direction morale improved dramatically and the chief's determination to maintain the brigade at full strength throughout the summer, despite the opposition of the city council, removed all doubts in the

ranks about his intentions.⁶² In June, when Lester led the department to his first fire, the newspapers watched his behaviour and all pronounced that it had been highly satisfactory.⁶³

In his appearances before the city council, Chief Lester emphasized that a hydrant system was necessary if Dawson were to have effective protection from fire. There had been appeals for a water system in earlier years but the Yukon Council had taken no action because of the expense involved. In 1902, however, the city council was more amenable to the idea. In June, two companies applied for the water franchise and each declared its intent to install a water system with a plant so powerful that the pressure in the hydrants would be equal to that supplied by the fire engines. They argued that such a system would save the city several thousand dollars, since two of the fire engines could be put out of commission and their crews discharged.⁶⁴ This argument appealed to the councillors and they instructed the city engineer to draw up the specifications and to call for tenders. On 1 July, the fire committee recommended that the city accept the proposal of the Dawson City Water and Power Company. Two weeks later the fire committee reported favourably on a contract to pay the water company \$12,000 annually for three years for hydrant service.⁶⁵ After a month of negotiations, the mayor and the company manager agreed on a contract. When the company announced that it could not begin installation before the following summer, the aldermen decided to let the next city council look after the matter and to maintain the fire department as it was.

As 1902 drew to a close, the fire chief prepared his year end report. There had been 36 fires in Dawson since the beginning of April, and a total loss of \$13,720.⁶⁶ The most serious had occurred on 4 December when the temperature was 50° below zero. Although it took 25 minutes to get the water going, the News reported that the firemen "worked like trojans",

and the Sun added that Chief Lester had been "in the forefront of the battle and looked like an abbreviated ice trust when the fire was finally extinguished."⁶⁷ The worst fire of the year, however, broke out on the very day the chief filed his report. On 30 December, a row of small stores on Second Avenue went up in flames. It was a bitterly cold night and 40 minutes passed before the hoses went into action. This time the delay was due to a broken cylinder on one of the fire engines. Even then, it took only three hours for the firemen to extinguish the fire completely.⁶⁸

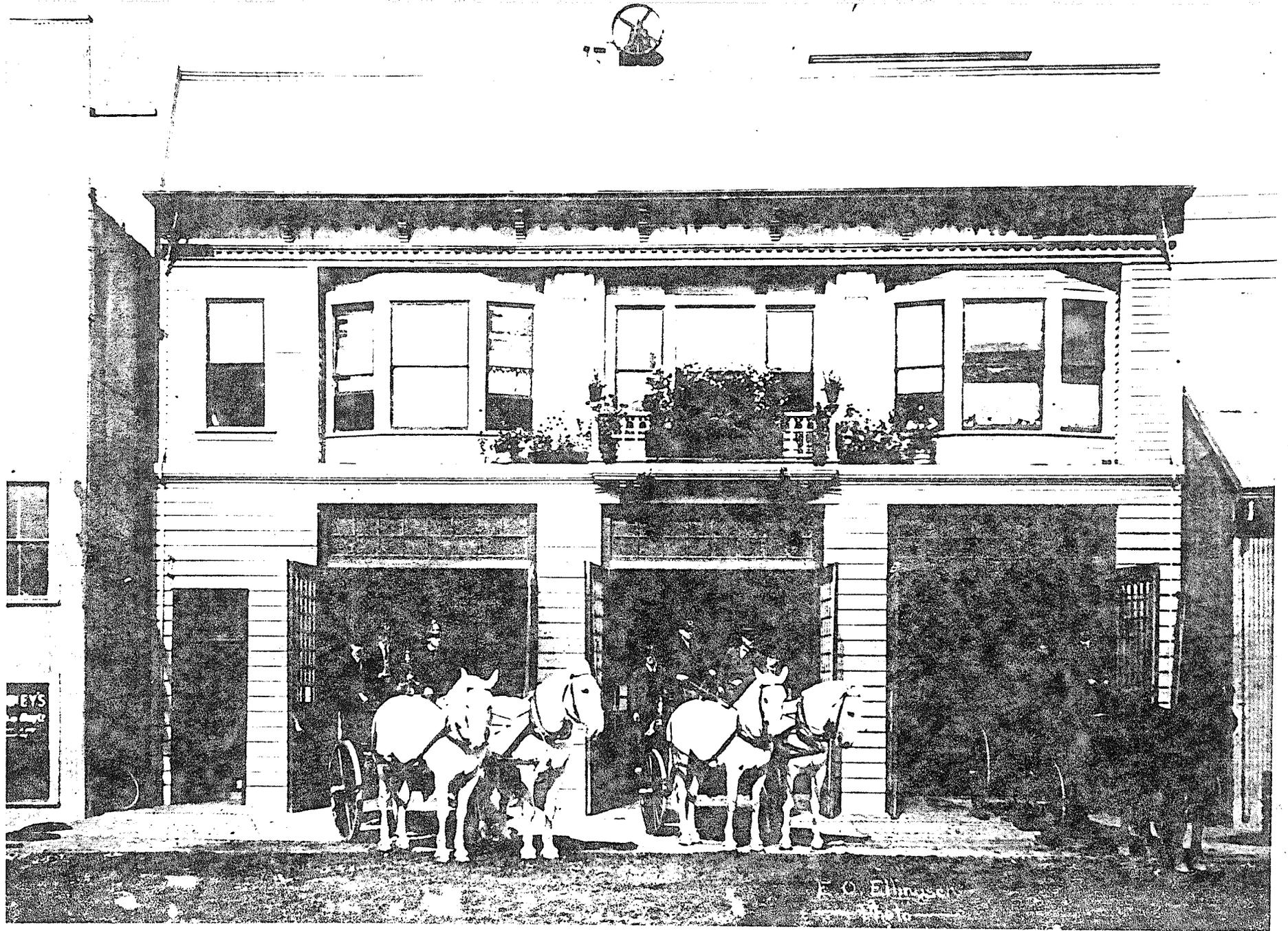
In the new year, the city began to take pride in its fire department. Indeed, the new city council, which had been elected on a platform of financial retrenchment, took the extraordinary step of increasing the salaries of all members of the force.⁶⁹ When they discussed the budget, the aldermen passed the fire department estimates almost without question.⁷⁰ In June, however, they took a second look at the fire department when they received a few complaints that it had been slow to respond to a warehouse fire.⁷¹ The fire committee concluded that the delay was caused by the fact that the men and equipment had had to travel a long distance, much of it uphill, on their way to the fire.⁷² The problem, as they saw it, was that the department was split into three parts, and the solution was to build a large fire hall in a central location. Hector Stewart, on the other hand, charged that the warehouse had burned down because of the indolence of Alexander Macfarlane. He bet \$1,000 that he could put together a gang of men off the street, make the run to the warehouse under conditions identical to those on the morning of the fire and have the water running within four minutes of the alarm being sounded. He backed down when Chief Lester refused to release the apparatus for three trial runs.⁷³

The warehouse fire prompted the city fire committee to consider the consolidation of the three companies of the fire department and the construction of a central fire station.

The aldermen were obsessed with cutting costs and they saw that these measures would reduce the expense of fire protection without impairing the efficiency of the department. The simple fact was that one fire hall would consume less fuel and require less maintenance than three. Moreover, if the new fire station also housed the civic offices, there would be even greater savings. When the committee submitted a report to this effect, the council adopted it unanimously.⁷⁴

When it had arranged for the construction of the fire hall, the city council turned to the need for a new alarm system. The old system had caused considerable annoyance because it did not always register correctly. On more than one occasion the men laid out an extra 1,000 feet of hose because the telegraph had registered the wrong box number.⁷⁵ Lester had singled out the alarm system for criticism and the council resolved to replace it. In mid July, the aldermen decided to purchase and install a 14 box Gamewell system. The city called tenders and accepted a bid of \$3,300. In October, however, when the Bank of Commerce informed the city that the Gamewell Company would not ship the system until full payment was received, the order was cancelled.⁷⁶

There was more to fire protection than a fire hall and an alarm system. On top of the usual problems of maintenance there was the need for repairs and replacements. In August, for example, while the horse was being exercised, a drove of cattle ran into the ladder truck and broke some of the ladders.⁷⁷ Since a hydrant system appeared too expensive, the fire committee recommended that the city purchase a kerosene engine and a rotary fire pump.⁷⁸ When the mayor objected to these expenditures on the grounds that the fire department already consumed more than 60 per cent of the city's revenue, the committee chairman replied that the previous expenditures had been unavoidable. He conceded that a new hosewagon could be put off until next year, but he argued that the engine and pump were absolute necessities. They would, he



City Hall and Central Fire Station (Glenbow-Alberta Institute)

added, cut down fuel costs in the long run, and the saving effected could be used to pay for the new fire hall. This argument clinched the matter and the city sent its order out directly.⁷⁸

At assessment time, the costs of fire protection became an important issue. Taxes were high in Dawson and the rate-payers wondered why three-quarters of their taxes went to pay for the fire department. The Sun published a table which showed that only Montreal and Toronto paid more for their fire brigades, while five other major cities spent much less.⁷⁹ In the campaign before the municipal election, several candidates pledged themselves to reduce the costs of fire protection. Hector Stewart, then seeking to be an alderman, declared that the fire department could be run for \$40,000, instead of the current estimate of \$90,000.⁸⁰ A few others went even further. J.L. Timmins, a successful candidate, promised to eliminate the "hucksters" from the force. Timmins charged that in the previous year the firemen had worked "tooth and nail" for two candidates who, immediately after their election, gave the men an unrequested raise.⁸¹ Chief Lester denied this allegation and demanded to know the names of the men involved. He added that the raises had been provided after representations by prominent men of business and not to pay off political debts. He concluded, quite rightly, that certain agitators were trying to make his department an issue in their campaigns.⁸²

The fire department was an important issue and the council elected for 1904 was not as sympathetic as its predecessor. This council was determined to cut expenditures to a bare minimum and the fire brigade was its first target. The first things to go were the kerosene engine and the rotary pump which had been ordered the previous summer. The company concerned had sent the engine to Seattle and the pump to Vancouver but each arrived too late to be forwarded to Dawson. At first, the new council agreed to accept the devices provided

they arrived before 1 July. On 22 January, however, the city solicitor gave his opinion that the city was not bound to accept them "as there was no contract between the City and Leslie and Co., properly signed and sealed by the City Seal." Three days later, the fire committee, chaired by T.D. Pattullo, recommended that the company be notified not to ship the apparatus to Dawson and Leslie Co. were so informed. In July, the company wrote to request that it be reimbursed for the expenses incurred in transporting the equipment to the west coast and back. The fire committee declined to act, as in law the city was not liable for any agreement lacking the seal of the municipality.⁸³

On 20 January 1904, fire destroyed two stores on Front Street and caused over \$100,000 damage. Chief Lester declared it had been the worst fire he had seen in Dawson, and the News noted that the fire department's quick response showed that it was worth what it cost.⁸⁴ Yet even this disaster did not deter the city council from its efforts to cut expenditures. On 24 January, the council decided to reduce the firemen's salaries to save \$9,000. When Lester protested, Alderman Pattullo replied that the city would run the fire department rather than the fire department run the city.⁸⁵ During the next week a petition circulated among the business men of Dawson, asking that the city reconsider this decision. The News reported that the signers could be divided into three groups: those who agreed with the request, those who would sign anything, and those who had signed to prevent their being put on the fire department's blacklist. The newspaper charged that a large number of men had put their names on the petition because they felt blackmailed, since they had to show the firemen who their friends were. The News concluded that it would be better for the petition to be withdrawn as there was no room for any kind of preference when it came to fire protection.⁸⁶ When the aldermen refused to reverse their decision, seven firemen quit the force. There was no shortage

of new recruits and Lester hired replacements from an "avalanche of applications".⁸⁷

The fire department became an even greater issue in April 1904. The controversy was a direct result of the division in the Yukon Liberal party over the behaviour of Commissioner Congdon. The tension between the factions was carried into the Dawson City council, where the mayor was a prominent Congdon supporter and Alderman Pattullo a notable opponent. Pattullo was also chairman of the fire committee and he used his position to weed out Congdonite members of the fire department. In April, the fire committee decided to reduce the size of the fire department by four men. Although the committee first claimed that the dismissals were for reasons of economy, Alderman Timmins soon confessed that the committee had determined "to wipe politics out of the department". The four men all happened to be members of the Congdonite faction of the Liberal Party. Pattullo claimed that political activity had been contrary to regulations and thus they deserved dismissal. The most prominent of the four, Captain Alexander Macfarlane, had been a member of the department for four years and no one had objected to his being a Liberal in all that time. In fact, it was one of the few sides to his behaviour which had aroused no objection. All four were experienced firefighters, and their dismissal seriously weakened the department. Chief Lester registered "a vigorous protest" and threatened to resign if the council made the department unworkable.⁸⁸

When the fire committee reported to the city council, Pattullo emphasized that the intent was to reduce the cost of the fire department. He described Macfarlane as "the creator of dissension among the men", and Alderman Timmins added that the captain had been "a heeler and deliverer of votes".⁸⁹ The mayor, however, argued that it should have been up to the chief to decide who was dismissed and he refused to believe that Macfarlane was responsible for disharmony in the fire

brigade. When the vote was finally taken, Pattullo and Timmins were in favour of dismissal and the other aldermen abstained.⁹⁰

If the purge were completed, the episode was not quite finished. On 15 May, the chief and members of the fire department held a farewell banquet in the fire hall, at which they presented Macfarlane with a gold watch. The mayor attended and in a short speech lamented the dismissals and attributed them to "the most unworthy methods" of men who had been "grossly misinformed".⁹¹ At the next session of the council, Pattullo and Timmins aimed long tirades at the chair and the city council never really recovered from the chaos which ensued.⁹²

In its obsession with reducing the cost of fire protection, the city council took a second look at the possibility of a hydrant system. Alderman Pattullo arranged for an engineer to prepare detailed estimates of the cost of a water system for fire and other purposes. When the engineer began his investigations, the Dawson City Water and Power Company, which provided water for domestic consumption on a seasonal basis, offered to sell its plant to the city for \$100,000. The company argued that the plant would pay for itself in three or four years and that the city would receive large revenues from the sale of water.⁹³ But the fire committee thought the price was rather steep and Pattullo believed that the city could install its own system for much less. When the engineer presented his plans and specifications and the city called for tenders, the water company announced that it held an exclusive charter, granted by the Yukon Council, to supply water in Dawson.⁹⁴ The city went ahead with its plans until July, when the aldermen abandoned the attempt to install a civic water plant because of the uncertainty about the future of Dawson.⁹⁵ The water company then offered to supply fire hydrants in south Dawson for \$125 each per month in winter, and \$100 per month in the remaining six months. This arrangement

would cut in half the cost of fire protection in that district and the fire committee recommended that it be accepted.⁹⁶

The hydrant contract was one of the city council's last acts, as the people of Dawson voted it out of existence in the second week of September. In the new scheme of things, the fire department returned to the jurisdiction of the Yukon Council. Five days after this change, a major fire destroyed much of the hotel district in Dawson. It began in the Hotel Cecil and spread quickly to the adjacent buildings. The firemen went to the scene, but as the Yukon World reported, "they might have as well remained in quarters for all the good they did at a critical time when prompt action and one stream would have accomplished wonders." Half an hour passed before the water was turned on and when it was the pressure was so low that the stream did not reach the second storey. Clearly there was something "radically wrong" with one of the engines. Witnesses also remarked that the ladder truck arrived late because the harness had been tangled. The fire destroyed property worth \$200,000 and the World concluded that only the timely appearance of the Northern Commercial Company volunteer brigade had saved the city from disaster.⁹⁷

Two weeks after this fire, the Yukon Council appointed a commission to investigate it. At its first session, Chief Lester explained that chips of wood and other debris had blocked the hose nozzle and caused the delay in supplying water. He claimed that the fire department had been undermanned to the point that it could not cope with an extensive fire. He then produced a letter he had written to Alderman Pattullo in which he had pointed to the danger and which the fire committee chairman had not bothered to answer. Lester also regretted the city's "niggardliness" in refusing to pay the fireman an adequate salary, as it was difficult to find men who would work for \$150 a month.⁹⁸ At subsequent meetings, the commissioners heard the evidence of the firemen and of witnesses at the scene and then they retired to consider their

findings.

The interim report of the fire commission advised immediate implementation of 14 recommendations. The major ones called for an increase in the size of the department, weekly tests of its equipment, strict enforcement of fire regulations and building codes, installation of a better alarm system, and more authority for the chief.⁹⁹ The final report was a comprehensive document designed to provide an adequate standard of fire protection. Although the commissioners found the inspector guilty of carelessness, the firemen of poor judgement, and the chief of negligence, they reserved their greatest volley for the last city council. They indicted the fire committee for hindering the chief in his duties and for ignoring his requests. The report continued:

This tactless handling of the department created undue friction, engendered a lack of 'esprit de corps' which is very essential in a public body of this nature.

...In the opinion of this commission at the time this fire occurred the staff of the department had become so reduced as to make it wholly inadequate to cope with a fire of any seriousness.¹⁰⁰

The report recommended that the firemen's salaries be increased, that the department be subject to stricter discipline and more drill, that the chief control the department without interference and that the fire by-laws be rigidly enforced. The commissioners also endorsed the recommendations of the preliminary report and further emphasized that Dawson needed a hydrant system.¹⁰¹

The Yukon Council discussed this report and the issue of fire protection at its first session in 1905. When the councillors debated the estimates, they looked for ways to reduce the \$65,000 required by the Dawson fire department. Their first reaction was to reduce the number of men employed during the summer. Chief Lester objected that the force was already too small and contended that any further reduction would seriously impair it. At a special meeting, he asserted that the use of fire engines on the riverbank was inefficient and

inadequate because the water pressure dissipated in the long lines of hose. The engines had to be run at high speeds in order to obtain even indifferent results. Furthermore, too much time was lost in laying hose. These problems, he argued, would be solved if the city had a "first class water supply for fire protection". A hydrant system would also enable the merchants to get fire insurance, which in turn would enhance the city's welfare.¹⁰²

When the Yukon Council gave these arguments serious consideration, the water company pointed out that the installation of 24 hydrants would cut \$17,000 from the fire department budget, as the force could be reduced by six men. The company offered to install a hydrant system and to supply heated water throughout the year for \$75 per month for each hydrant, if the government agreed to a contract for seven years. When the company made this offer public, a delegation of Dawson merchants petitioned the Yukon Council to accept it. At an informal meeting, the council appointed a special committee to pursue the matter. In mid June, the company reduced the term of the proposed contract to five years and added that it needed a decision immediately if the material were to be imported that season. But the special committee took another week to consider the contract and the negotiations broke down when the company president suddenly left Dawson for Vancouver.¹⁰³ The council then resolved to leave the matter for another year.

In December, however, the Yukon World reported that the commissioner and council had decided in favour of a hydrant system. Two days later the council advertised for tenders and on 25 January 1906, it awarded the contract to the lowest bidder, the Dawson City Water and Power Company.¹⁰⁴ The contract ran for six years, during which time the company agreed to supply 19 hydrants for \$75 each per month. The city of Dawson would pay for 14 and the territory would look after the others. The commissioner then scheduled a plebiscite for 31 January, at which time the ratepayers would decide whether

to endorse the contract.¹⁰⁵

The week before the plebiscite saw the development of some opposition to the proposition. The News charged that the costs were excessive and that the system could be constructed for half the cost; it was a political "job," plain and simple.¹⁰⁶ The main opponents were those who preferred public ownership of the utility. The Dawson Board of Trade endorsed this concept and a public meeting showed there was strong support for the idea.¹⁰⁷ On 31 January, however, the contract received the necessary votes and on 2 February the commissioner signed it on behalf of the city of Dawson.¹⁰⁸

There was only one serious fire in the winter of 1905-06. In the first week of March, the Monte Carlo Saloon and two other buildings burned down at a loss of \$60,000. The fire department and the NC Co. volunteers put on seven streams of water and they put the fire out before it could spread.¹⁰⁹ In the months that followed, the department was plagued by false alarms, many the result of a faulty alarm system. On one occasion, a short circuit in the line ran all the tape off the reel in the fire hall. At another time, the device registered a fire at the opposite end of town from where the outbreak really was. In May, the firemen raced to the Administration Building, only to find they were not needed; the gardener took advantage of the opportunity and had them water his flowers.¹¹⁰

As spring turned into summer, the water company prepared to install the hydrant system. The first sod was turned on 21 July 1906 and the company hoped to have the work completed by the end of August. But much of the material was delayed and the wooden mains did not arrive until late July. The mains themselves were made of B.C. fir, a foot in diameter, wrapped in wire, covered with asphaltum and able to withstand 250 pounds of pressure. They were enclosed in wooden boxes filled with sawdust, and the company designed an overflow to keep the water moving and the pipes free of frost. The hydrants

were housed in metal boxes and kept from freezing by "an electrical device". In many ways the system was experimental, as never before had wooden pipe been laid in perma-frost.¹¹¹

The work was finished on 27 October 1906. The company turned on the water two days later and cleaned out the gravel and other debris which had fallen into the mains. The first official test found only three hydrants unsatisfactory and the water company cleared those problems before the second. On 1 November, Chief Lester reported that the hydrant system met the standards set out and that the company had fulfilled the contract.¹¹²

It took some time for the firemen to adapt themselves to this new system. When called to a fire in the city's north end, the men rushed to the nearest hydrant without a wrench for the valve. When they tried to open the valve, they found the hydrant frozen solid.¹¹³ This behaviour caused some misgivings among the residents and the commissioner granted a petition asking that the fire engines be kept in service until the hydrants had proved themselves.¹¹⁴ He also ordered the department to test each hydrant weekly, especially in cold weather. On 5 December, it was -50° , but all hydrants worked, the pressure was constant, and the water was 90° warmer than the air. The Yukon World finally believed that Dawson was well protected against fire.¹¹⁵

The first real test of the hydrant system came on Christmas Day when the commissioner's residence was gutted by fire. The official inquiry which followed concluded that the hydrant system had worked well, that the water supply had been sufficient and sustained and that the fire department had been efficient in every respect.¹¹⁶ This favourable report convinced the commissioner that only one fire engine was needed in reserve and the second one was put away.¹¹⁷

In 1907, the people became more confident in the hydrant system, although the Yukon Council maintained the fire department at full strength just in case it didn't work. All tests,

however, found everything in order. Chief Lester's year end report illustrated the effect of the new system. In 1906 the losses by fire had totalled over \$50,000; in 1907 there was a similar number of fires, but the total loss amounted to less than \$30,000.¹¹⁸ For the first time in ten years, the newspapers proudly announced, Dawson had adequate fire protection and a fire department as efficient and as well equipped as any in North America.

From the beginning, fire was a serious menace to Dawson. In its first five years, the business district went up in flames annually. Some kind of fire protection was necessary, but the people of Dawson only took the necessary steps in response to a serious of disasters. The problems were in part logistical, but the most important question was the financial one. It cost a great deal of money to man and equip the Dawson fire department. The men of commerce only paid for fire protection when they had no alternative and the Yukon Council took no action until the private efforts proved ineffective. The cost of fire protection always was a crucial matter. After the incorporation of Dawson, the fire department consumed a high proportion of the civic revenues and it contributed to the heavy municipal taxation. The fall of the city council in 1904 was a direct consequence of the high cost of fire protection. Two years later, the Yukon Council resolved to install a hydrant system because it would be less expensive than a large professional fire brigade.

On another level, the fire department perhaps illustrates some of the problems faced by the city of Dawson. It was remote and immature and frequently was victimized by outside corporations. The episode where the Alaska Commercial Company held the authorities to ransom by demanding full payment for a substandard engine may only have been a case in point. That experience led civic and territorial officials to be very

wary in other dealings, and it may account for the poor business relations with the Waterous Engine Works, Leslie and Company, and the Gamewell Alarm Company. Yet, in the long run, only the city suffered, as it was denied the alarm system and other apparatus which it sorely needed.

The fire department itself was an important institution. It had social and political ramifications, but its service as a utility was more important. The firemen provided a range of services in Dawson. On various occasions they cleared the drains, inspected buildings and even distributed house numbers. Above all, they provided Dawson with fire protection. The quality of that protection may not always have been adequate but it was far better than nothing. Indeed, by the time of its tenth anniversary, the city of Dawson had a fire department equal to that of any comparable urban centre in Canada.

VII. Civic Amenities and Urban Utilities

Dawson's mushroom growth in the early gold rush period created the urban problems often associated with a rapidly expanding population. The first and most pressing need was for a system of drains and sewers and for a method of disposing of rubbish. Many of the townspeople were recent arrivals from the cities of the American west coast and they expected Dawson to have all the attributes of the places they had left. In 1898 and 1899, when Dawson's population was at its height, various entrepreneurs drew up plans for a telephone network, street railway, waterworks and electric power plant. These early utilities were primitive and makeshift, often designed to provide quick profits for a minimum of service. As the gold rush subsided and Dawson's population fell, the permanent residents campaigned for more efficient service and the quality gradually rose. In little more than a decade after its beginning, and despite the problems of climate and geography, Dawson had modern utilities equal to those of any comparable city in southern Canada.

While Dawson's location at the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon made it the logical site for a break-of-bulk point and distribution centre, the alluvial flat itself was hardly an ideal spot for human habitation. Most of Dawson was only 20 feet above the Yukon and thus easily flooded. At the same time, the permafrost lay at depths ranging from a few inches below the surface in the north end to several feet

in the south. When the ground thawed in the spring and summer Dawson became a soft and soggy town. Water created serious problems in the early years and the wettest spring coincided with the greatest influx of people. The first arrivals, when the river broke in 1898, found Dawson under five feet of water and the streets remained quagmires when the flood waters receded. These conditions were compounded by the absence of adequate sanitary facilities and by the confusion resulting from the transition in government, as the first federal officials sent with Major Walsh began to appear. In a biting indictment of the new administration, the special correspondent of The Times of London reported that Dawson's unsanitary condition was a standing menace to the community. Typhoid, she continued, had broken out, the death rate was abnormally high and there were no signs of any measures to alleviate the situation.¹

This complaint, while accurate, was perhaps unfair. The Yukon flood had made the organization of sanitary facilities very difficult and the rapid influx of goldseekers had overwhelmed all attempts to preserve public health. In April, before the river had broken, crown prosecutor F.C. Wade had recognized the potential for an epidemic and had posted notices requiring all residents to clean their premises and disinfect their outbuildings.² The flood and the coincident inflation of the population rendered these efforts ineffective and little could be done until the townsite had dried out. That process took all summer and in September Commissioner Ogilvie reported that the flat was still "little better than a frog pond" where pedestrians were liable to slip into kneedeep mudholes at any time.³ Ogilvie also declared that there was no money available for the improvement of sanitary conditions and the Yukon Council's activity in that regard was limited to the construction of three public conveniences along the waterfront.

The first real attempt to alleviate this unhealthy situation came in the spring of 1899, when the Council authorized the commissioner to improvise a system of drainage for Dawson to carry surface water and refuse into the Yukon river. When the ground thawed, Ogilvie supervised the digging of ditches and the placing of drain boxes along the principal streets. This expedient succeeded in drying out the townsite and an epidemic of typhoid was avoided. The arrangement was designed to be temporary until a complete sewer system was constructed in 1900. In that year, the appropriations for the hospitals exceeded expectations and there was no money in the budget for new sewers. The temporary system was then repaired for further use and the mounted police were detailed to keep careful watch over the points where trouble was expected.⁴

These "temporary" drains remained in use throughout Dawson's first two decades. In 1901, the Council improved the system by ordering small steam pipes inserted in the major box drains in order that they might be thawed by a portable boiler during cold weather. Most streets, however, were bordered by open ditches which were a constant cause of complaint. In the summer of 1902, the city council discussed the health hazard posed by streets whose ditches were filled with stagnant water and "putrid" vegetation. The aldermen vilified the city engineer for allowing the King Street sewer to become clogged until the chairman of the streets committee protested that he had done all he could with his limited resources.⁵ That winter the city medical health officer requested that the practice of using steam to melt the drains be discontinued since he believed that the vapour which arose was "impregnated with typhoid germs of a most dangerous character."⁶ The following spring the ditches overflowed because the lower ends were blocked by ice and refuse.⁷ In later years, the authorities decided to board up the drains and culverts to prevent their being filled with ice in winter and so that they would

be clean and empty in the spring.

In the second week of May 1906, the Council decided to extend the deep box drain system from Second avenue to the lane between Fourth and Fifth avenues in order to remove pools of standing water from that residential area. The Yukon World commented that this improvement would "afford gratification to the eye and remove a stench from the nostril...".⁸ A fortnight later, the Yukon river began to flood and the drains and sewers all backed up. When the water receded the whole system had to be disinfected with carbolic acid and chloride of lime.⁹ The proposed improvements never did take place and the "temporary" system constructed in 1899 remained in use for over two decades.

The disposal of rubbish was also a problem in the early years. While the health regulations listed places where garbage could not be deposited, they did not reserve a special area where it might be dumped nor devise any method for its removal. In 1898 and 1899, private scavengers contracted to carry refuse outside the limits of the town, but much rubbish accumulated on the riverbank and on streets and alleyways. In 1900, the Council finally purchased two large garbage scows and placed them in the river at the foot of Eighth street, in front of St. Mary's Hospital.¹⁰ In July, crown prosecutor Wade complained that "filth" deposited there fell into a backwater and was washed onto the riverbank in front of his cabin.¹¹ Other people argued that the foot of Eighth had become a health hazard and that the accumulation of rubbish had made the river so shallow that steamers could not land there anymore.

It was clear that garbage disposal was a serious problem and that the crude measures designed for a temporary camp were not suited to a town of Dawson's size. The News began a campaign to have the Yukon Council purchase two self-

dumping bottomless scows which would empty into the river's current and leave the waterfront clear and clean.¹² In 1901, the Council asked the medical health officer to select a spot where garbage might be dumped and that official selected a pier in the Klondike river in the hope that the current would carry refuse well out into the Yukon. But the Klondike did not flow swiftly enough and in a short time garbage was strewn the length of the Dawson waterfront.¹³ After a week, the Council overruled the medical officer and hired a scow to dump garbage into the current of the Yukon.¹⁴

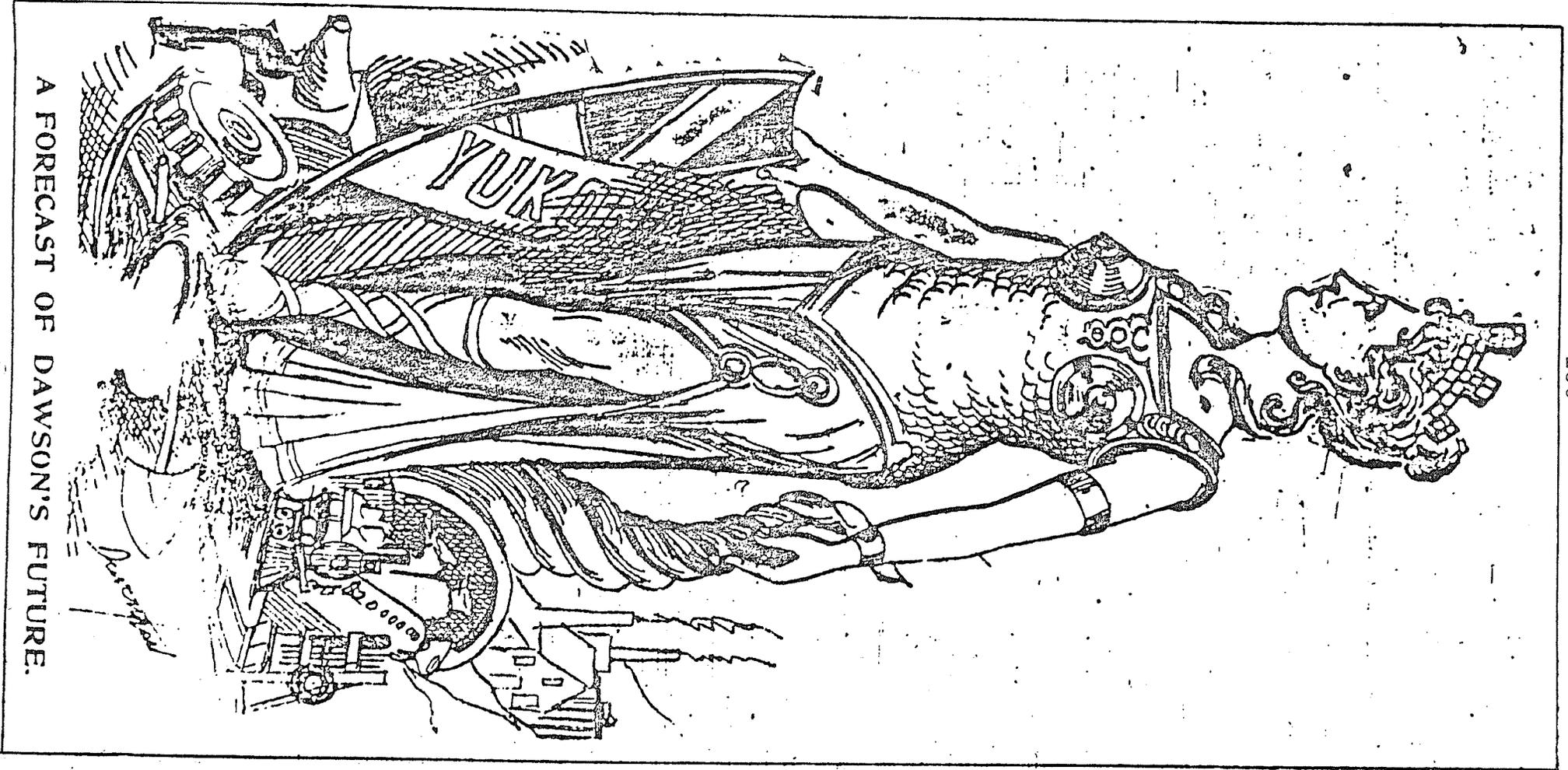
Scows disposed of garbage easily when the river was open, but other means had to be found when the Yukon was frozen. When the scow was taken out of service, residents in the north end of Dawson became irate as rubbish piled up in their neighbourhood. One of the first tasks of the city council elected in 1902 was to settle the garbage question. In April, the aldermen decided to build a road leading to a new wharf and pier 200 yards below the last cabin on the northern edge of the town.¹⁵ They granted a contract early in May and the wharf and road were completed by the end of the month. The new garbage wharf allowed rubbish to be dumped into 25 feet of water and the current carried it away from Dawson and toward the Indian settlement at Moosehide. This expedient also lasted over two decades.¹⁶

The optimism about Dawson's future as a metropolitan centre is perhaps best reflected by the early proposals for proper urban utilities. One of the first was for the construction of a street railway system. Late in the summer of 1899 rumour had it that an American syndicate had drawn up plans and intended to lay tracks that fall.¹⁷ Nothing happened, however, until the winter of the following year. In December 1900, the manager of the Alaska Exploration Company, one of Dawson's largest commercial concerns and part of a conglomerate

with interests in mining, real estate and transportation, applied for a franchise to construct a street railway system on behalf of the Dawson Electric Company.¹⁸ The Yukon Council declined to grant the franchise and the matter did not rise again until 1902.

The incorporation of Dawson prompted a series of applications for a variety of civic franchises. In the spring of 1902, two rival concerns petitioned the Yukon Council for charters of incorporation for streetcar companies. The first, the Dawson Electric Railway Company, was made up of investors in the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company,¹⁹ while the second, the Yukon Electric Street Railway Company, represented the promoter of the Klondike Mines Railway Company.²⁰ Both companies applied for the city franchise before the Yukon Council granted their charters of incorporation and each declared its willingness to spend more than \$100,000 on construction. When the city council considered the applications, the streets and works committee recommended that the decision be postponed until the members learned the plans of the projected railway to the creeks. The city's position was that if the KMR terminated in Dawson it would not need a street railway. Soon afterward the backers of the Dawson Electric Railway Co. withdrew their application and asked the Yukon Council to drop the bill incorporating the company, as it was clear that their rivals had a distinct advantage.²¹

The city council negotiated with the KMR throughout the fall and winter months of 1902. The discussions concerned the company's wish to lay tracks along First avenue and the council's determination to have the railway enter Dawson via a back street.²² In December the streets committee recommended that the railway be built on the company's terms and the council prepared a by-law granting the necessary right of way.²³ The owners of property on First avenue were divided over the issue and the council received two rival petitions. When the aldermen discussed them the city clerk pointed out that the



Klondike Nugget, 12 February 1902

petitions in favour of the bill represented assessments of "several millions" while those against it aggregated less than \$300,000.²⁴ Although the council gave the bill first and second readings, its term of office expired before it could be passed. The new council elected for 1903 found that the company was not willing to abide by all the city's conditions and the matter was deferred indefinitely.²⁵

Part of the difficulty in solving the street railway question lay in the fact that the KMR existed only on paper. Although it had been incorporated in Ottawa in 1899 the company owned no rolling stock and had laid no track. In 1903 the KMR graded four miles and laid down rails but abandoned the project when it failed to secure permission to cross a handful of mining claims.²⁶ In 1904, the right of way controversy was settled and at the end of the year the company announced that its capital was paid up, that it had purchased rolling stock and rails, and that construction would begin in the coming summer.²⁷ Early in 1905, the KMR applied to the Yukon Council for the right to lay track down First avenue and the merchants located there supported the application as they expected the value of their property to rise.²⁸ In February, Acting-Commissioner Z.T. Wood granted the company's request and the work began in the third week of March. After 15 months of construction and at a cost of nearly \$2,000,000, the first KMR excursion left Dawson for claim number 35 below on Bonanza Creek.²⁹ By the end of 1906, the rails extended to Grand Forks at the confluence of Bonanza and Eldorado Creeks, and in the winter the line was built as far as Sulphur Springs, 31 miles southeast of Dawson.

The railway's promoters apparently hoped that the KMR would eventually be part of an inter-continental railway, as they had plans to connect the southern end to the Grand Trunk Pacific and the northern end to a proposed Alaska-Siberian line.³⁰ Those expectations were utterly chimerical. The KMR

suffered severe financial difficulties right from the beginning and it abandoned its winter operations after the first year for reasons of economy. Three years later, the directors reported that expenditures had been almost double the revenues and they requested tax exemptions and financial aid from the territory.³¹ The losses continued as the transition to capital intensive mining reduced the population on the creeks and thus cut down the volume of the railway's traffic. By 1913, the only section in use was the 12 mile stretch to Grand Forks and in the following year operations ceased entirely. Yet, for seven years Dawson had a street railway of sorts, the commercial interests had a vehicle for the delivery of their merchandise to the market on the creeks, and the miners could ride to the entertainments in the town.³³

One utility of more lasting significance was the telephone system. The first telephones were ordered in April 1897 by Thomas O'Brien, one of Dawson's earliest entrepreneurs and the owner of most of the land in Klondike City.³⁴ In the year before their arrival, E. Leroy Pelletier took over O'Brien's interest and sold stock in his Yukon Telephone Syndicate to a number of prominent miners, saloonkeepers and speculators. In the summer of 1898, the syndicate installed its plant of switchboards and long distance transmitters and began to erect poles and string wire.³⁵ On 29 June, the first telephone message went from the Dominion Hotel in Dawson to the company's main office in Klondike City.³⁶ A few weeks later, a second company put its system into operation and for the next ten months Dawson had two telephone networks. The expense incurred by the systems was enormous, as the permafrost around the poles thawed and either rotted the poles or allowed them to fall down. Moreover, they both used iron wire which often rusted and broke, rendering connections exceedingly difficult to maintain. When it became apparent that the duplication of service was inefficient and

unprofitable, the two companies became consolidated under the direction of the general manager of the Yukon Telephone Syndicate, Newman A. Fuller.³⁷

Fuller became the driving force in the telephone company and he was able to improve the quality of its service and fend off its critics. Early in 1900, two of Dawson's newspapers attacked the system. The Nugget contended that it was "not even makeshift" and "constructed a la barbwire fence," and the News charged that it had "deliberately given an inferior service at rates ruinous to the consumer."³⁸ Both papers welcomed the application for a telephone franchise submitted to the Yukon Council by a man who had spent several years with Bell Telephone in New York and who declared his intention to cut rates, allow privacy on the lines and extend the system to the creeks. They objected, however, to his contention that he needed an exclusive franchise in order to interest investors.³⁹ Fuller responded to this challenge by reducing rates from \$60 to \$30 per month, ordering new equipment and moving the company's office into the centre of Dawson's commercial district. He also pointed out that the telephone syndicate had invested over \$50,000 in its system and that it anticipated a six fold increase in the number of instruments by the end of the year. These actions and promises preserved the company's monopoly and the grateful shareholders elected Fuller to its presidency.⁴⁰ Later that year, Fuller increased his holdings until he had a controlling interest in the company.⁴¹

At the end of 1900, there were 143 telephones in Dawson and 40 more at various locations on the creeks.⁴² Over the next two years the telephone syndicate extended its service to new areas, reduced its rates, replaced the old iron wire with copper and erected larger poles. In 1902, the system had 330 telephones in Dawson alone and in January 1904 the company printed the first directory for its 500 subscribers.⁴³ By then, Dawson had a modern and efficient telephone system

and Fuller invested the profits which accrued from it in other utilities.

In the spring of 1898, when the gold rush was approaching its peak and Dawson's future seemed bright, a group of local entrepreneurs formed the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company to provide electricity to the town. They subscribed \$75,000 and chose to import a low voltage system because the pieces were smaller and thus easier to transport over the Chilkoot and White passes.⁴⁴ During the summer, the company erected a building on the north bank of the Klondike and ran wires from it to a handful of saloons and theatres in Dawson's centre. In September, electricians assembled two small dynamos and they turned the power on early in October.⁴⁵ It was soon apparent that the machines were inadequate, in part because they used half inch copper wire, and the company ordered more powerful equipment for the following summer. Until it arrived, the company bought electricity from J.A. Williams whose plant up the Klondike supplied power to the mines.

In October 1899, 87 tons of machinery worth \$38,000 arrived on four scows and were put together in a three storey power house on the site of the original building.⁴⁶ By the end of the year, the company operated a boiler able to produce 250 hp, two 100 hp. boilers, two "1000 volt alternating machines," a "1000 light machine" and the original "500 light machine."⁴⁷ That winter, the company received a contract to provide streetlighting, especially at corners where the sidewalks "ended abruptly six feet above ground"; and, in January 1900, there were 55 lights, each of 32 candle power, on Dawson's streets.⁴⁸ As the demand for electricity grew, the company installed new engines, boilers, generators and switchboards, and these improvements prompted the Nugget to declare that the power plant could provide good service to a city

twice Dawson's size.⁴⁹

Also in 1900, the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company decided to build a transmission line to Grand Forks and to supply electricity to the communities on the creeks. The company took that step because it operated at a loss in the city during the summer, while that season saw demand continue at the mines. Williams, however, already catered to that need. Rather than engage in competition the two companies amalgamated under the title of the Dawson Electric Light and Power Co., with Williams as president and largest shareholder. This new concern was capitalized at \$150,000 and the directors issued 12 per cent bonds which were "eagerly taken up" in Dawson.⁵⁰

In 1901, a new power company entered the field. The Dawson City Water and Power Company was concerned primarily with supplying the town with fresh water but it also owned a small dynamo which provided electricity for its pumps. It sold its excess power at competitive rates to a variety of consumers including the mounted police and the court house. This company found its electricity business so profitable that its manager, Daniel A. Matheson, decided to expand in that direction in 1902. To that end, he spent \$40,000 on a "500 hp expansion engine" and a "dynamo of 500 light capacity" and tendered for the two-year contract to supply streetlighting.⁵¹ Although Matheson failed to get the contract, his initiative drove down the price of electricity to the benefit of the city council and other consumers.⁵² In 1904, the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company again received the street-lighting contract but Matheson's presence forced the price of power down even further.⁵³

Despite this reduction, the cost of electricity in Dawson remained astronomical, almost eight times the rate in Victoria and Vancouver.⁵⁴ It was high because of the difficulties of generating power in an isolated area with an inhospitable climate. In spite of its city contract, the DEL & P Co. went heavily into debt and was unable to maintain the

quality of its service. There were power failures in 1905 and 1906 and the company lost most of the good will it had enjoyed in its early years. When its streetlighting contract expired in 1906, the Yukon World suggested that it not be renewed, since

the company does as it likes, gives the service it chooses, charges the price it fancies (which is about three times the price it should be) and in fact runs things in about the same way as if the town existed for the company's convenience, and not the company for the town's.⁵⁵

It was clear that the company was headed for bankruptcy if an injection of new capital were not forthcoming. At this point, N.A. Fuller joined forces with the minister of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. This unlikely combination may be explained by the fact that the Reverend Andrew S. Grant had made a large fortune through speculation in mining properties in the Yukon and in residential property in Toronto.⁵⁶ In August and September, Grant and Fuller spent over \$300,000 on mining concessions, timber berths, steamers and barges and on coal deposits. They also purchased the Dawson Electric Light and Power Co. and Fuller became its manager.²⁷

Soon after their takeover of the company, Grant and Fuller announced their intention to close the electric light plant in Dawson and to erect a 3,000 hp. power station on their property at the mouth of Coal Creek. This move would save the cost of transporting fuel to Dawson and the larger plant would supply enough power to satisfy the demand in Dawson and to run the dredges on their concession. Grant and Fuller believed that the efficiency inherent in this system would allow their company to make a profit if the electric rates were cut in half.⁵⁸ Despite their optimism, however, they never carried out their plans and instead concentrated on the expansion of their mining endeavours. Nonetheless, the concentration of Dawson's utilities in Fuller's hands was almost complete as the only outstanding one was the water company.

Dawson's unsanitary condition in the spring of 1898 provided the incentive for the formation of a waterworks company. Because of the absence of facilities for drainage and the removal of waste, the townsite was a fetid quagmire and the water of the Yukon was unfit for consumption. In April, F.C. Wade persuaded the gold commissioner to issue a permit allowing a waterworks company to build a system of flumes from the Klondike to tanks and reservoirs in the town.⁵⁹

The flooding of the Yukon halted construction but the company undertook to deliver water by horse and dog carts to all those willing to purchase it. In the winter, the people of Dawson obtained water from holes chopped in the ice of the river and the water company men continued their rounds using dog-sleds.

In the winter of 1898-99, the Yukon Council received a series of applications for charters to furnish water to Dawson. The proposals ranged from plans to pipe water from springs east of the town to a scheme to erect huge storage tanks on the waterfront and import water by barge. In April 1899, the Council decided in favour of a company headed by Col. Samuel Word and backed by the North American Transportation and Trading Co.. This company intended to pump water from a well near the Klondike to a tank on the hillside whence it would be distributed by wooden boxes throughout the town. Word was confident that the service would be good enough and cheap enough to preclude people from going to the river for their requirements.⁶⁰

Word's company constructed the system early in the summer of 1899. It installed a pump with a capacity of 10,000 gallons per hour and built a 10,000 gallon reservoir 45 feet above the base of the hillside. It then ran two lines of wooden pipe, each over a mile long, from there to the Yukon riverbank at each end of the town. A cross-pipe, running half a mile down Second avenue, provided water for the centre of Dawson. There were six hydrants on the circuit, and the back pressure for them was

provided by two stand pipes which ran surplus water up a rise of five feet before allowing it to continue toward the river. The company had water running in these mains before the end of August and it kept the flow constant to remove complaints about "standing water" and to keep the mains from freezing in the fall and winter. It also hired water carriers who delivered water from the hydrant taps to the subscriber's door. Finally, the company's rate schedule stipulated that water could be sold by the week rather than by quantity with the price dependent on the size and character of the consumer.⁶¹

The decision to use wooden pipes was the system's undoing. From the beginning, the company manager had recognized that the pipes would not be strong enough to supply water for fire-fighting but he used wood rather than iron because of the permafrost. At first the choice seemed the right one as the water supply continued after the ground was frozen. He had stoves and small houses placed around the hydrants to keep the outlets from freezing and was confident that the system would survive the winter.⁶² In November, however, the pressure in the mains fell drastically and the supply of water became intermittent. After an investigation, Word decided to drain the system and suspend operations for the season. The difficulty was not due to the cold, he claimed, but because the wooden pipes had become soft and spongy and unable to withstand any pressure. That problem would be solved, he declared, when the company laid iron pipes in the coming spring. In the meantime it would supply water by wagon and dogsled.⁶³

In the spring of 1900, another company began to build a better system of waterworks in Dawson. This new concern, the Dawson City Water and Power Company, installed temporary iron pipes in April and May and prepared to move them into wooden boxes underground when summer arrived. Faced with this competition, Word sold out and the Dawson City Water and Power Co. absorbed his company and assumed its obligations.⁶⁴ In

July, The DCW & P. Co. laid new pipe up the hillside to the storage tank and imported two large pumps capable of lifting 1,000 gallons per minute. By the end of the month all the apparatus was in place and the people of Dawson began to patronize "those queer little street corner affairs that look like leaky letter boxes."⁶⁵

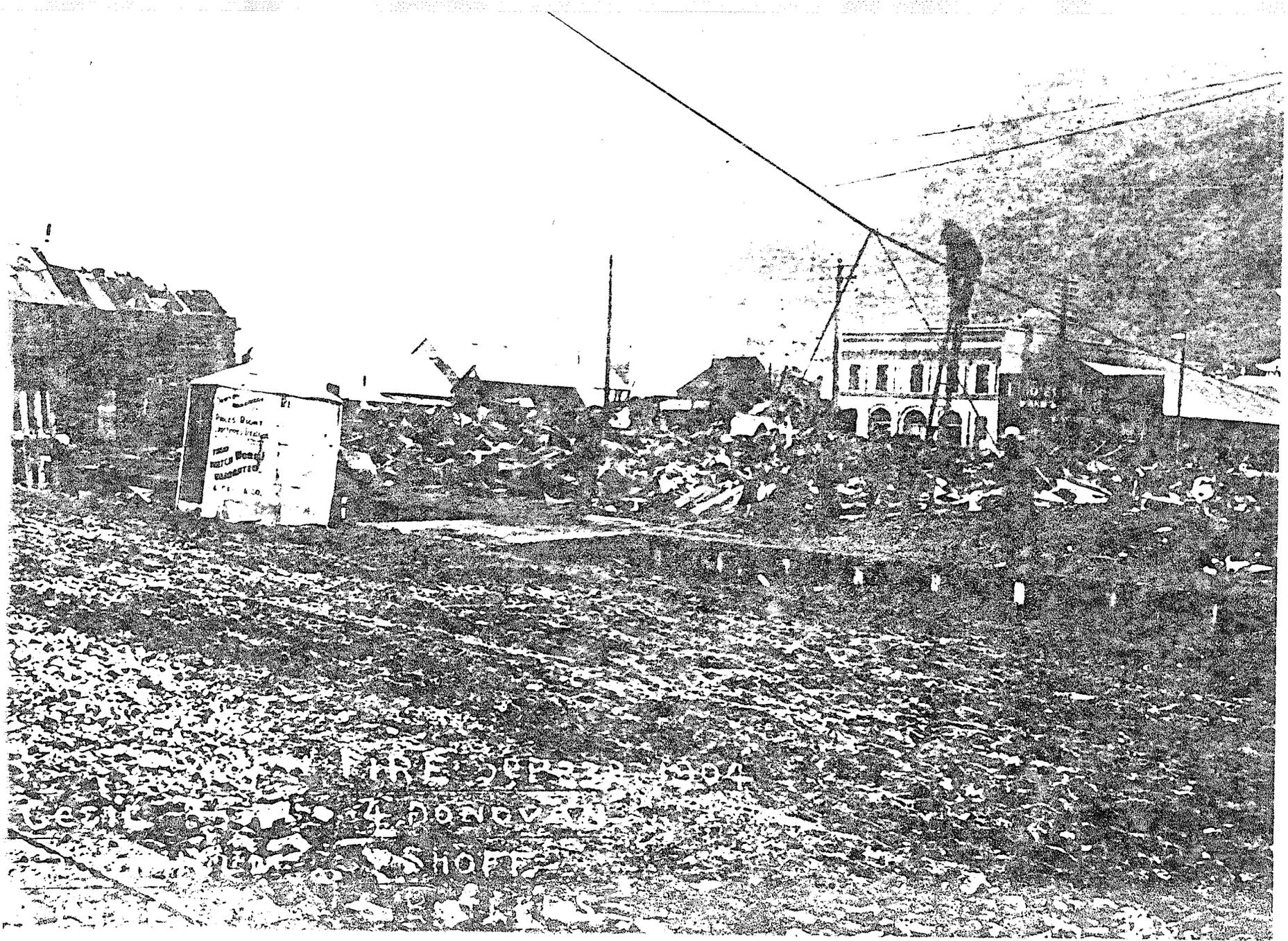
As winter approached, the water company took precautions to enable it to provide service during the cold weather. In October, a large force of men dug ditches and lowered water-mains encased in wooden boxes into them. The company manager, Daniel A. Matheson, announced that he had intended to run an electric current through the pipes to keep them from freezing but the electrical machinery had not arrived before the Yukon froze.⁶⁶ For that reason, he had decided to shut off all the smaller pipes and only allow water to flow through the larger mains on Second avenue and Harper street. To keep the hydrants from freezing the company built small stove houses and hired two men to patrol the system and ensure that the fires were kept burning.⁶⁷

In the spring and summer of 1901, the water company expanded its network of pipes in residential areas and installed larger mains in the commercial district. It also began to use a vending machine which dispensed five gallons of water for a nickel. It took that step after complaining that subscribers often neglected to lock the taps when they were finished and water "pilferers" had reduced the company's "legitimate profit."⁶⁸ When the summer ended, the water company and the Northern Commercial Company joined together in an experiment to provide heat and water to the buildings in the commercial centre of Dawson. The NC Co. heating plant provided steam which was forced through pipes which ran beside the water main on Second Avenue and prevented it from freezing. The guarantee that there would be water there throughout the winter enabled the company to close most of the pipes in the rest of the system.⁶⁹

In the years when Dawson was incorporated, the concern over the water supply focused on the need for an hydrant system with pressure sufficient for fire fighting purposes. When the city council discussed the water franchise, the water company faced competition from the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company. Matheson responded to the challenge by declaring his intention to revolutionize his plant, lay larger mains, install fire hydrants and put in a pump powerful enough to produce water pressure equal to that in a fire engine.⁷⁰ The city engineer, however, drew up the specifications for the system required and the council called for bids. When the tenders were opened, the city accepted Matheson's offer but he and the mayor were unable to agree on a contract.⁷¹ By the time they reached a compromise it was too late in the season to order the new machinery and there were few improvements carried out in 1902.

Matheson intended to proceed with the hydrant work in 1903 but the contract had to be ratified by the city council elected for that year. That ratification became impossible as the new mayor, R.P. McLennan, had a controlling interest in the water company and the incorporation ordinance forbade the members of the city council from signing civic contracts with companies in which they owned stock.⁷² As far as Matheson was concerned, the situation did not improve in the following year as the aldermen elected in 1904 favoured public ownership of the hydrant system. When alderman Pattullo hired an engineer to estimate the costs of construction, Matheson offered to sell his plant to the city for \$100,000.⁷³ The council declined that offer and did not pursue the question of municipal ownership. It decided, instead, to call for tenders for a revised hydrant scheme. Again Matheson's bid was accepted and his company installed new mains and a pump to provide the pressure required by the fire department.⁷⁴

Although the city council accepted the water company's system and paid for one year's service, early in 1905 the fire



A Hydrant House in Winter (Vancouver Public Library)

chief reported that it was inadequate. There were, he contended, not enough hydrants and the water pressure was insufficient.⁷⁵ As the city council had been dissolved, the Yukon Council appointed a committee to investigate the issue, and it recommended that the Council enter a contract with the water company for an expanded hydrant system.⁷⁶ The Council, however, advertised for tenders and scheduled a referendum to secure the ratepayers' approval. After the bids were opened, the water company again received the contract, this time to supply 19 hydrants at a total cost of \$1425 a month for a period of six years.⁷⁷ The News charged that the government had accepted Matheson's bid because of his political affiliation and intended to reimburse the company for two or three unprofitable years.⁷⁸ The commissioner replied that the contract was a good business arrangement and the plebiscite endorsed it by a margin of three votes.⁷⁹ In the summer, the water company constructed a new pumping plant and laid new wire-bound wooden pipes on the town's main street. It also purchased "an electrical device" to heat the water and keep the mains from freezing.⁸⁰ The work was completed before the end of October and after a series of tests the fire chief declared that the system met the requirements and that he was satisfied by its performance.⁸¹ With the installation of electric heaters in the hydrant houses, the people of Dawson believed they had a "real fire protection system" and they looked forward to the time when they would have a year round supply of fresh water.

In 1907, the major shareholder in the water company was still R.P. McLennan. McLennan had returned to his business in Vancouver in 1904, at the end of his term as Dawson's mayor, but he made annual visits to the Yukon to look after his various investments. In 1907, he decided to liquidate his Yukon assets and he sold his shares in the water company to N.A. Fuller. Soon afterward, Matheson resigned and sold his shares to Fuller

as well. With those purchases, N.A. Fuller became the owner and operator of Dawson's three major utilities.⁸²

Fuller retained control of the telephone system, electrical plant and waterworks for only two more years. In the spring of 1909, he and Grant sold them and most of their other Yukon properties to a British consortium, the Northern Light, Power and Coal Company.⁸³ The NLP and C Co. decided to carry out Grant and Fuller's original scheme to supply electrical power for dredging operations from a thermal plant at the mouth of Coal Creek, a tributary of the Klondike.⁸⁴ In July, the company's general manager announced plans to import 220 tons of equipment for generating electricity from coal and in the following month revealed that the company had been capitalized at \$3,000,000, two-thirds of which had been paid up.⁸⁵ Over the next two years, the company erected a 10,000 hp. steam plant at a cost of \$500,000 to supply the whole district with electricity.⁸⁶ It went into operation in August 1910. As the Coal Creek plant was designed to provide power only in the dredging season, during the rest of the year the company generated electricity for Dawson at the old DEL & P Co. power house in the town's south end.

The demand for cheap electricity for mining led to the introduction of hydroelectric power in the Klondike valley. In 1910, a company owned by A.N.C. Treadgold began construction of a power house on the north fork of the Klondike river to provide power for its dredges. This plant was a remarkable feat of engineering as the company dug a six mile canal and used 50 tons of cement, 150 tons of equipment and supplies and 700 tons of pipe and structural steel. It transmitted its first electricity in May 1911.⁸⁷ The following year, a group of Yukon mining companies including Treadgold's were consolidated as the Granville Mining Company, and this complicated business reorganization resulted in the North Fork plant being turned over to the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company of Joseph Whiteside Boyle.⁸⁸

In the competition to supply power to the Klondike region the Northern Light, Power and Coal Company found itself at a serious disadvantage. While Boyle's generating station used water, the Coal Creek power house burned lignite mined from a thin and uneven seam. The thermal plant was a marginal operation at best and the company's only hope was to capitalize on the problems the hydroelectric plant faced when the rivers froze. That opportunity diminished when Boyle's company developed the technology to maintain the flow of water. Moreover, the NLP & C Co. was hampered by indifferent management, by a series of lawsuits and countersuits involving the former owners of its property, and by the demands of shareholders for returns on their investments.⁸⁹ These difficulties were compounded in 1912 when the people of Dawson petitioned the Yukon commissioner not to renew the town's contracts with the light and water companies unless the rates were reduced and made uniform.⁹⁰ When Boyle's company offered to supply power at a lower price, the Dawson Electric Light and Power Company reduced its rates by 40 per cent but the discontent continued.⁹¹ Feeling itself under attack from all directions, the NLP & C Co. sought an escape and it found one early in 1913.

On 15 February 1913, the Dawson Daily News reported that Boyle Concessions Limited had leased the entire holdings of the Northern Light, Power and Coal Company, including the Dawson light, water and telephone systems.⁹² A few days later, Boyle shut down the dynamos in the Dawson power house and supplied electricity to the town from the North Fork plant. He also drew up a new schedule of rates and offered consumers the option of buying power at a flat rate or on a meter system.⁹³ Yet the public concern about utilities continued and a small faction in Dawson advocated that the town either purchase the old power plant or buy power in bulk at the cheapest rate for distribution to its citizens.⁹⁴

The municipal ownership campaign gained momentum until Yukon Commissioner George Black announced that the "city" did not have the authority to borrow money sufficient to purchase or construct utilities, although the necessary legislation could be secured. He added, however, that the industrial rate offered by Boyle's company was fair and he hoped that an arrangement could be made for the company to supply power directly to consumers at that price.⁹⁵ When the Yukon Council met in the following month, Black declared that the utility companies' charters of incorporation stipulated that the Council had the power to approve or disapprove their rates and that it could thus fix the maximum which Boyle's company might charge.⁹⁶

Boyle was not one to take opposition lightly and in April his brother Charles, acting manager of Boyle Concessions, informed the Council that the company was not prepared to make a contract for hydrant service and would not guarantee that the current water rates would continue. The company, he explained, regarded Dawson's three utilities as a unit, and if one segment failed to make a profit the other two could be expected "to help it along." For that reason there would be no reduction of telephone rates, and because the water system ran at a loss and required a major overhaul, the price of electricity would probably rise.⁹⁷ In the face of this implicit ultimatum, the councillors deferred their decision and left the matter in the hands of the commissioner. The whole issue became more complicated when the old Dawson light and power plant, which the advocates of public ownership hoped to purchase, was destroyed by fire in May.⁹⁸

In the months which followed, the most important question concerned the water supply. Although the water company kept the hydrant system in use, it refused to negotiate a new contract and, in June, Boyle raised the price to domestic consumers.⁹⁹ At the end of August, he informed Black that revenue from the waterworks did not warrant a continuation of the

business, especially since increased rates would reduce consumption. The only way to make it pay, he continued, would be to install a dozen additional hydrants and increase the price of that service by \$900 per month. Black responded that the extra amount would double the cost of the hydrants and that he could make no decision without consulting the taxpayers.¹⁰⁰ At two public meetings, Boyle declared that he would not run his business at a loss and that the alternative to his suggestion, a return to the old system of fire protection, would cost far more than \$900 per month. He did, however, remark that the utilities had been profitable before the light rates had been reduced and he offered to maintain the hydrant service if the people were willing to accept the 1911 schedule of electrical rates.¹⁰¹ This proposition was acceptable to a large committee of taxpayers and they recommended that the Yukon Council sign a three-year contract with Boyle for streetlighting at the old rate.¹⁰²

In the weeks before the winter session of the Yukon Council, Boyle forced the matter to a crisis. On 2 October, he announced that the water company would cease operations and that a new schedule of electrical charges would become effective within two weeks.¹⁰³ At a public meeting two days later, Commissioner Black replied that the people of Dawson would not be held to ransom and the audience resolved to take the old fire engines out of storage and to work for public ownership of the utilities.¹⁰⁴

The controversy quickly developed into a game of brinkmanship between two willing and experienced players. Black responded to Boyle's threat to cut off the water supply with a counter threat to have the water company's mains and hydrants removed from the city when the service ceased.¹⁰⁵ The townspeople, however, were not united behind the commissioner's policy of confrontation. Representatives of "large business houses and taxpayers," including the commercial companies and the banks, circulated a petition urging the Yukon

Council to accept Boyle's offer.¹⁰⁶ When Black and the Dawson councillors received it, they resolved to hold a plebiscite to decide the issue and on 14 October the people of Dawson voted against it by a margin of 314 to 211.¹⁰⁷ The following day Boyle reiterated his intention to shut down the water-works that evening.

As the stalemate continued, the fire chief set up the old fire engines and embarked on a policy of rigid inspection and strict enforcement of the ordinances for the prevention of fires. At the same time, the petitioners began a campaign to subscribe the \$900 per month required for continuation of hydrant service. They even asked Black whether the government would contribute half if the remainder were raised privately. Black asked for a definite proposal and suggested that the committee consult the water company.¹⁰⁸ Black's apparent willingness to negotiate led Boyle to offer to let the town use the water mains and pumping plant over the winter for only \$5,000 on condition that it purchased electricity and coal from his company and paid all costs of labour and operation. In the meantime, he maintained the supply of water. Black, however, declined the offer on grounds that it was too expensive.¹⁰⁹ Boyle then delivered a second ultimatum and the fire department took emergency precautions for the winter.

Black's behaviour suggests that he was more concerned with forcing Boyle's hand than with ensuring that Dawson had adequate hydrant service. His antipathy toward Boyle rose from his own aggressive political partisanship and because he suspected that Boyle had assembled his business empire through collusion with the former Liberal government at Ottawa. Late in October, he let it be known that he was prepared to offer government assistance to a new water company or to lead the fight for municipal ownership. Boyle declared that if that competition materialized he would withdraw the service of the light and telephone companies.¹¹⁰ Black retorted that the people of Dawson would not knuckle under and that a new hydrant

contract was out of the question unless the city were reimbursed for the extra expenditures incurred "because of the conduct of the water company." The light service, he added, had been unsatisfactory and he had made arrangements for a generator and telephone system to be used if Boyle carried out his threats. "The public," he concluded, "cannot be expected to leave itself at the mercy of companies that will operate only during the profitable portions of the year." The people of Dawson required reliable services, operated solely for their convenience, and not turned on and off at the whim of their owners.¹¹¹

Boyle's position softened in mid November. He informed Black that he had enough light, water and telephone contracts with consumers to warrant the continuation of those services. He also offered streetlighting for eight cents per kw or \$3,800 per year. The former manager of the water company, he pointed out, had been unable to supply hydrant service for \$14,400 per year and he had said that a monthly increase of \$1,000 was necessary. Boyle offered more hydrants and extended service for the additional sum of only \$500 per month. If a contract on those terms were still not possible, he affirmed that the company would keep the hydrants in service and charge the fire department on the basis of cost per minute of hydrant use plus 30 per cent.¹¹² Black replied that he would consider the proposal and discuss it with the Yukon councillors.

In the weeks pending this decision, there were two major developments. The advocates of municipal ownership organized themselves as the Civic League and began a concerted effort to have the people of Dawson own their utilities.¹¹³ At almost the same time, a group of rebellious shareholders led by Oscar Newhouse began legal action against the Northern Light, Power and Coal Company, its subsidiaries and J.W. Boyle on grounds that Boyle's Canadian Klondyke Mining Company did not have the right to lease the companies, nor did the companies

have the right to grant leases to Boyle, without the shareholders' approval.¹¹⁴

The organization of the Civic League had the more immediate consequences. After a series of meetings early in 1914, the league drew up a petition whose preamble stated that utility rates were excessive, that the service was unsatisfactory and that it was desirable for the people of Dawson to own and operate their light, water and telephone systems. The body of the petition asked the Yukon Council to empower the city of Dawson to raise money by the issuance of bonds, debentures "or otherwise" for the purchase of public utilities.¹¹⁵ The league encountered an unexpected problem when it met the Yukon Council, as it learned that there were serious questions about Dawson's legal existence. The revocation of the city charter in 1904 had left Dawson without any form of municipal government and debentures could not be issued by a town without proper civic authorities. Black emphasized that a legitimate system of municipal government had to be established before any action could be taken. He then outlined a plan by which the commissioner would serve as mayor and the four Yukon councillors representing Dawson would form the city council and exercise full civic jurisdiction.¹¹⁶ At the end of March, the Yukon Council passed a bill establishing the system and in a plebiscite five weeks later the people of Dawson endorsed it by an overwhelming majority.¹¹⁷

Dawson's new city council gave priority to the search for a solution to the utilities question. A committee from the civic league pressed Mayor Black to consult Boyle one last time and, if satisfactory rates were not offered, to prepare a by-law for the raising of money for the purchase of public utilities.¹¹⁸ Soon afterward, Charles Boyle, acting on his brother's behalf, submitted a new list of rates which lowered the cost of hydrant service but made no reductions in the price of light and water for domestic use.¹¹⁹ In the first

week of June 1914, the league unanimously rejected Boyle's new rates and recommended that the city act on the matter.¹²⁰ At its first session, the city council passed a by-law for the sale of \$200,000 in municipal bonds and scheduled the referendum for two weeks later. On 30 June, it was approved by a vote of 313 to 112.¹²¹ When the Council met again, it authorized the civic league to secure bond subscriptions, put the debentures on sale at the office of the city treasurer and prepared to order two electric generator sets.¹²²

The sale of bonds proceeded briskly in Dawson until the territorial court rendered its decision in the case of Newhouse versus the Northern Light, Power and Coal Company. At the end of July, the court ruled that the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company did not have the right nor the power to lease the NLP & C Co. and its subsidiaries, and the judge issued a restraining order.¹²³ This decision in effect cancelled Boyle's lease and removed him from the utilities controversy. In a matter of days, Black opened negotiations with F.W. Corbett, the representative of the N.P & C Co., and submitted a statement of acceptable rates for his consideration.¹²⁴ Corbett returned a schedule which was "considerably higher," but the talks continued because Corbett exhibited "a conciliatory attitude."¹²⁵ On 1 September, Black announced that the two parties had reached an agreement and that they had signed a contract for water service for five years. He added that he had approved the company's schedule for electricity and telephone service and that he expected formal contracts to be signed within the week.¹²⁶

These statements brought the utilities question to a close and put an end to the movement for public ownership. They did not, however, put Joe Boyle in his place. He remained a source of controversy, especially when he attempted to have the decision in the Newhouse case reversed in the British courts. In December 1914, his attempt to remove the generators installed in the Dawson Electric Light and Power

plant after the 1913 fire precipitated another conflict with George Black. The generators provided Dawson's auxilliary power supply and the commissioner and Council resolved to take whatever steps were necessary to retain them.¹²⁷ They became especially important after the Coal Creek power house was shut down completely.¹²⁸ In mid-January, Corbett negotiated a contract under which the Dawson electric company purchased power from Boyle's North Fork plant. That agreement lasted less than a year as Corbett disconnected the lines in November 1915 because of fluctuations in the supply.¹²⁹ After the courts turned down his application for an injunction compelling the NLP & C Co to purchase power from him,¹³⁰ Boyle asked the mayor and council for permission to supply power to Dawson residents in competition with the DEL & C Co.¹³¹ The Northern Light agent in Dawson recognized that the acceptance of Boyle's application would force his company to the wall and he resolved to fight it. In February 1916, he informed Oscar Newhouse that he had used "influence" with councillors O'Brien and Guite to check Boyle's ambition.¹³² Two years later the NLP & C Co sold its Yukon assets to another mining consortium and it operated the Dawson utilities "on a hand and mouth basis" until they were taken over by the government of Canada in 1966.¹³³

Civic amenities and urban utilities played a major part in the development of Dawson. Without drains and ditches and means for the disposal of rubbish Dawson might have remained a stinking bog, littered with refuse and unfit for human habitation. Dawson needed a modern underground sewer system able to function throughout the year, but it survived with a makeshift system of open ditches which was designed to be a temporary measure and which remained a constant hazard to public health. In the town's formative years, the government

had to opt for short term solutions to long term problems because of the nature of the terrain and the character of the population. In later years, the local authorities claimed that a chronic lack of finances forced them to rely on expedients rather than to make improvements for the future, and the experiments in the matter of garbage disposal illustrate this administrative myopia.

The construction of light, water and telephone systems represented attempts by local entrepreneurs to make quick profits from a deprived populace rather than private optimism for the future. Yet, Dawson came to have modern utilities equal to those of any comparable city in southern Canada. Paradoxically, it was the influence of the surrounding industrial region which dictated their development. The telephone system might not have been constructed had there been no demand for communication to the creeks, and Dawson had an adequate supply of electricity only because the dredging companies sold their excess power to the town. Dawson presented the unusual example of a metropolis whose utilities were shaped by its hinterland. This fact meant that the town was especially subject to changes in the goldfields. The consolidation of mining ventures and corresponding concentration of wealth contributed to the centralization of the ownership of the Dawson utilities. Moreover, the transition toward capital intensive mining, which Innis saw as the integration of the Yukon into the Canadian industrial economy, also reflected a shift away from local ownership of the utilities. With the exception of the Boyle interlude, after 1909 Dawson's light, water and telephone systems were controlled by British corporations.

During the controversy in 1913, Dawson became a pawn in a battle between two strong personalities. The affair was not so much a case of a robber baron using his monopoly to extort unreasonable profits as it was a grudge match which rose from

other causes. The whole issue might never have become as serious had Boyle been more tactful and patient and Black been more conciliatory and less abrasively Conservative.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Dawson utilities lies in the fact that they were constructed at all. It was no easy task to develop a water system able to supply hydrant pressure in the face of permafrost and the Yukon winter. While the technology required for the telephone system was not particularly noteworthy, that for the generation of electrical power certainly was. The logistics of importing tons of equipment and materials into the Yukon for assembly miles up a river as shallow as the Klondike required several feats of engineering. It is singularly remarkable that full scale modern utilities were built in an isolated area with an hostile environment for a steadily declining population.

VIII Saloons, Gambling Halls and the Traffic in Liquor

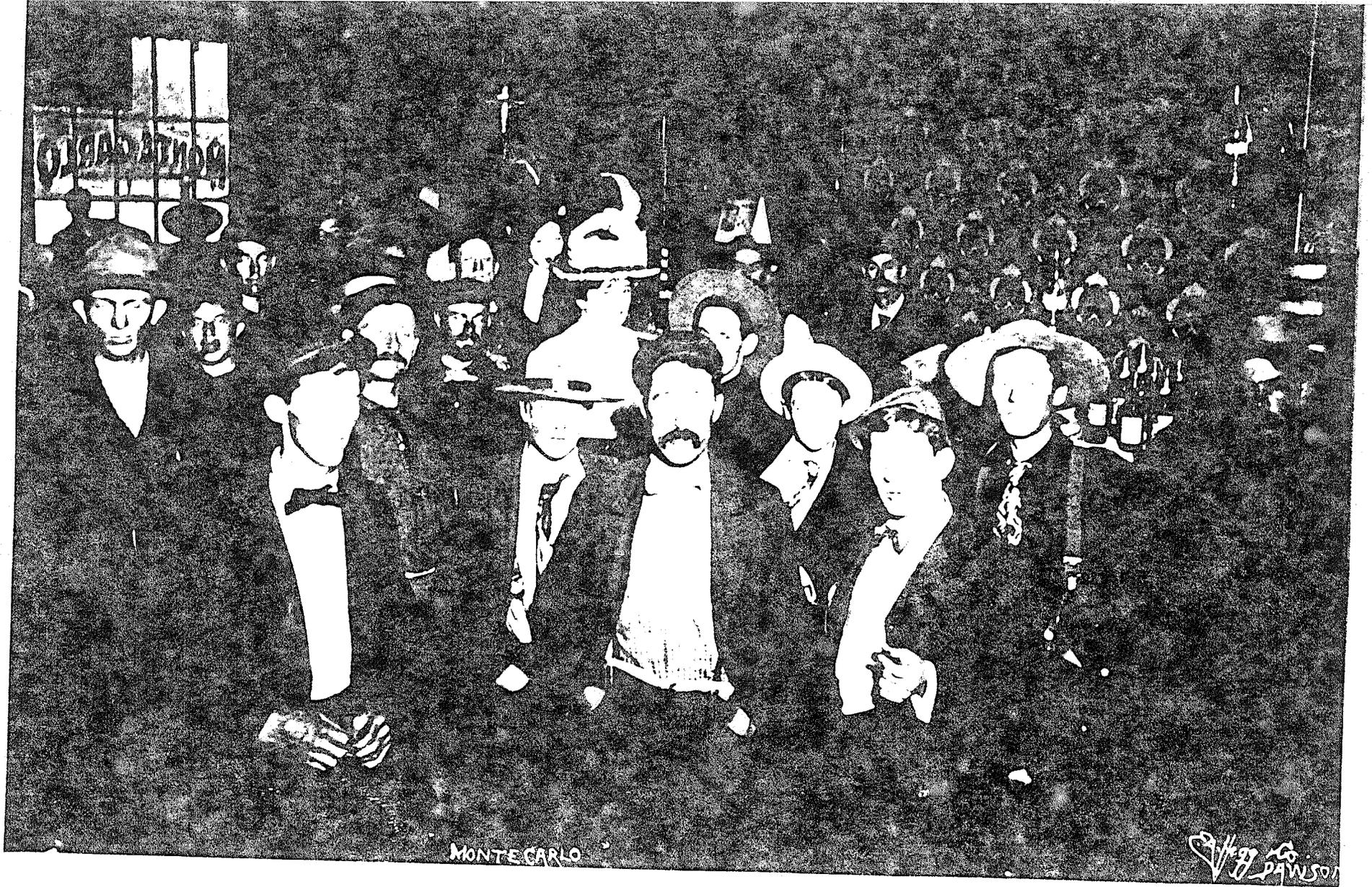
Saloons and gambling halls were among the most conspicuous features of Dawson's early years. Their proliferation in the gold rush era contributed in large part to Dawson's reputation as a loud and lawless frontier town where the lights were bright, the liquor flowed and fortunes changed hands in crowded casinos. There is an element of truth in that image. Saloons and gambling halls indeed ran wide open for a short time in the summer of 1898. The two decades which followed, however, saw police and politician impose increasingly strict regulations on the traffic in liquor. The authorities slowly eliminated its attendant evils and, after the war, a wave of moral reform outlawed the sale of alcohol completely. Yet, for 20 years, Dawson had a large number of saloons and they were important institutions in the community.

One of Dawson's first buildings was a saloon. In September 1896, Joseph Ladue moved his sawmill and saloon from the camp at Sixty Mile to his newly staked townsite at the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon.¹ When the miners of the Yukon valley flocked to the new discovery, other saloons were built and as the influx from outside reached its peak the number mushroomed. By the summer of 1898, there were more than 20 drinking resorts on the main street and in the centre of the town.² For a while, saloons and gambling houses were Dawson's chief industries, and the American consul reported that they were the only businesses whose profits were large enough to cover the astronomical rents and costs of properties.³

The first saloons were ramshackle canvas structures or

log shacks which had been dismantled and shipped to Dawson from the camps downriver. These places "looked frowsy and smelt no better", and they served a variety of whiskey which tasted like carbolic acid.⁴ They were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and were usually filled with miners from the creeks or aimless wanderers who stepped in off the streets. In winter, when they were heated by wood stoves kept red hot, they became fire traps and at least once each year those in the centre of the commercial district burned to the ground. Yet, every time they were rebuilt and it was not long before the original tent saloons were replaced by bigger and better buildings with plank floors, plate glass windows, tin roofs, false fronts and elaborate signs.⁵ Half a dozen were larger than the rest and they were able to hold "hundreds of people".⁶ These six, Harry Ash's "Northern", Bill McPhee's "Pioneer", Bill Gates' "Monte Carlo", Jim Doherty's "Pavilion", Alex McDonald's "Aurora", and Joe Cooper's "Dominion" also served as gambling halls and theatres. Their interiors were much the same. Inside the door the patrons found a small, rather dark room, lighted by hanging oil lamps. On one side stood a sheet iron stove and a long polished bar behind which were plate glass mirrors and shelves filled with bottles. On the other lay the tables where gamblers played poker, faro, roulette and other games of chance. At the back of the room was the "theatre", with a small stage and sometimes a balcony of benches and private boxes.⁷

The performances on these stages attracted large audiences even though, as one commentator recalled, the theatre in Dawson was "necessarily quite a burlesque on the English and American institution."⁸ Usually the programmes were of the music hall variety as they featured song and dance artists, clog dancers, wrestling matches and prize fights. In 1899, Dawson's theatres received Edison's new invention, the "projectoscope", and patrons were treated to moving pictures of the battle of Manila and the destruction of the Maine.⁹ But



Monte Carlo Saloon 1901 (Yukon Archives)

the cinematograph could not replace live performers. By the turn of the century, the town had become part of the Alaska circuit of Vaudeville and repertory companies from the American west coast.¹⁰

These saloons did a thriving business and their proprietors accumulated sizable fortunes, despite the fact that their whiskey was "the most pernicious kind of poison" and their champagne was often only soda water flavoured with alcohol and "champagne essence".¹¹ Part of their success was due to their employment of "percentage women" or "box rustlers". These women, according to one description, "were not what you would call raving beauties, but there was a frank exposure of such charms as they imagined they had, for they wore dresses abbreviated at both ends, thus displaying their neck and arms and their legs up to their knees."¹² The saloonkeepers hired them to encourage patrons to buy over-priced libations for consumption in the private boxes, in return for which they received a percentage of the house receipts. This system encouraged drunkenness and at the same time provided the women with opportunities to commit theft and fraud.¹³

At first there were no regulations to govern the traffic in liquor. In November 1896, Inspector Constantine referred the matter to the government of the North-West Territories, which at that time included the Yukon. He suggested that permits be issued only to reputable dealers who paid a high license, and only if they received the recommendation of the police officer on the scene.¹⁴ As Dawson grew in size the Regina authorities realized the revenues which would accrue from such licences. Accordingly, they despatched a representative to collect the fees which were due under territorial regulations.

In the winter of 1897-98, however, the federal and territorial governments became embroiled in a jurisdictional dispute over control of the Yukon liquor trade. The minister of

the interior had appointed a chief executive officer to oversee federal responsibilities in the Yukon, and his mandate included liquor regulations. While the two levels of government argued over the question of jurisdiction, each sent representatives to Dawson.¹⁵

The territorial official, G.V.H. Belyea, arrived first. In the spring of 1898 he collected fees of \$2,000 from each of 16 saloons and issued licences on behalf of the Regina government. When the federally appointed commissioner arrived in May, he advised the saloonkeepers that Belyea had no authority to issue licences and that he would not recognize them. Instead, he ordered the saloons to operate as they had before, with licences obtained free of charge from the officer in command of the mounted police.¹⁶ Belyea quickly went to court and initiated a test case against a saloonkeeper who had not purchased a licence. But before any judgement was rendered the Laurier government resolved the dilemma by passing legislation which declared the Yukon a separate territory with its own political and judicial institutions.¹⁷

The original federal system of licensing aroused great resentment in Dawson. Miners and labourers complained that they paid licence fees and royalties on their meagre earnings while the keepers of hotels, saloons, dance halls and gambling houses paid nothing.¹⁸ The Yukon Act made liquor laws the responsibility of the Yukon Commissioner and Council and, in December 1898, the Council remedied this situation. The liquor ordinance established different licences for hotels, saloons and bottling works. Hotel liquor licences cost \$2000 per annum and their proprietors were bound to maintain ten bedrooms and the facilities to provide meals for travellers. Saloonkeepers paid \$2500 and were required to close their premises from midnight Saturday until six o'clock Monday morning. Wholesale liquor dealers and theatres with bars needed saloon licences, while bottling works were licensed for \$1000. The

ordinance also established a board of licence commissioners empowered to revoke licences, and stipulated that the proceeds from the sale of licences revert to the consolidated revenue of the territory.¹⁹

The inspiration behind much of this ordinance was the police commander, S.B. Steele. Liquor regulations were only part of Steele's overall strategy to control the saloons and bring order and stability to Dawson. Steele was concerned about the criminal potential of the population which his predecessor had described as including "a considerable number of fast women and 'tin horn gamblers' galore."²⁰ These people congregated in saloons. To prevent the "low element" becoming established, Steele and Commissioner Ogilvie resolved "to make it so uncomfortable for gamblers and others of that ilk that they would have to leave or contribute as liberally as the law of the land would permit it to the revenue."²¹ Thus, in the week after Steele's arrival, two contingents, each of 95 "knights of the green cloth", appeared in his courtroom where they received fines of \$50 and invitations to leave the city.²² Each month thereafter the gamblers contributed a similar sum to the territorial exchequer. The unfortunate connotation of this practice from the police point of view was that the gamblers regarded the regular payments as a form of licence to operate. Some even went to court voluntarily to pay their fines in order that they might come under the protection of the law.²³

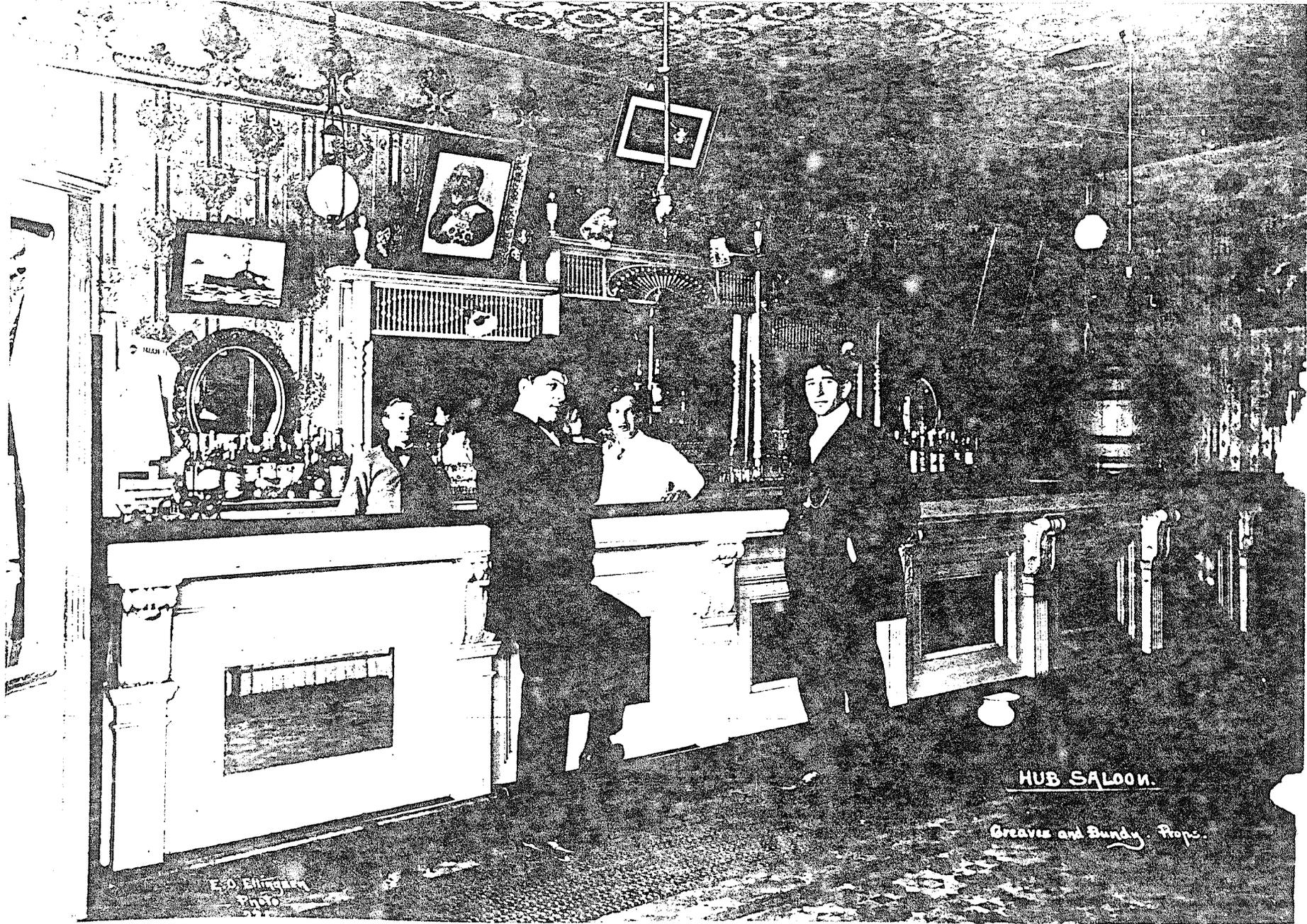
During the winter many of the gamblers had little to do as the miners were working their claims on the creek. In January 1899, Steele ordered his men to arrest all vagrants and several gamblers received "blue tickets" to get out of town.²⁴ Most, however, simply bided their time until the miners returned with the result of their cleanup. In May, the American consul reported that there were at least a thousand people in Dawson who lived off the working men, and

that the saloons and gambling houses were "raking in the shekels." He also charged that crooked gamblers got players drunk and then fleeced them, and that the "box rustlers" used knockout drops in order to rob the unsuspecting.²⁵

By the end of the summer it was clear to the police that, although fines provided revenue for the care of the indigent sick, they were not a deterrent to criminal activity, especially when they were paid by saloonkeepers rather than gamblers themselves.²⁶

As the licence year drew to a close, Steele's successor thought that the abuses might best be attacked at their source. In October, Supt. Perry requested detailed reports on all licensed premises in Dawson. In most cases, the information gleaned was not sufficient to deny the renewal of licences, but it did reveal that some of the establishments were owned, if not operated, by respected men of business. G.K. Nourse, the accountant at the Bank of Commerce, for example, appeared to own the "Pavillion", and Alexander McDonald, the "Klondike King", owned the "Aurora". Perry also discovered that one of his officers, Inspector Courtland Starnes, was a partner with Nourse in the Criterion Hotel. The constable who carried out the investigations reported that most places were run fairly because of the fear of police prosecution, but that in a few the games were rigged and one was suspected of being open on Sundays. He added that the "Dominion" was the best and most honest but that the "Northern" was better fitted up "for comfort and show". The Central Hotel, Rochester Bar and Grotto Saloon, on the other hand, were simply places which catered to "all the crooks in the country", and he recommended that their licences not be renewed.²⁷

It is clear that the police believed gambling to be the most serious problem connected with the saloons. In a private letter to the minister of the interior, Perry described the practice by which gamblers were fined and commented that most



The Hub Saloon 1910 (Public Archives of Canada)

people in the community believed that gambling was a necessity in mining country. He had found that the leading men of business were directly interested in it, either because they owned such resorts or because gamblers spent their winnings in their stores or on prostitutes who in turn purchased freely at extravagant prices. Any attempt to eliminate gambling would encounter strong opposition in the town. His opinion, however, was that gamblers were parasites who ought to be driven out and he and the crown prosecutor had decided to take strong measures at the opening of navigation in 1900. The letter went on to describe the theatre boxes where the percentage women seduced and wheedled drunks out of their money and recounted one case where a prominent young man had been "rolled" of \$1200. The police were going to keep these women under close surveillance, and Perry concluded that he intended to purge the town at the first opportunity.²⁸

This information about saloons had no immediate impact on Sifton. Although the minister ordered a general crackdown on prostitution, he did not direct the authorities to clean up the saloons and gambling halls. The problems diminished to some extent when the Yukon opened, as a large segment of the "sporting fraternity" set off downriver in the stampede for Nome. Yet, many others remained in Dawson. In July 1900, the police reported that there were still 110 gamblers distributed among the town's eight gambling houses.²⁹ In August, Sifton turned his attention in that direction. He informed the Yukon commissioner that fining gamblers was tantamount to licensing them, and he instructed the police to undertake "a considerable increase in stringency".³⁰ The following month, the police commander announced that he was preparing an order to outlaw gambling and limit the activity permitted in saloons.³¹

This announcement did not signify that the territorial officials willingly acquiesced in the minister's wishes.

Indeed, Ogilvie resisted Sifton's commands, and the correspondence between the commissioner and the minister revealed a serious conflict in approach to the situation. Ogilvie argued that the Yukon Council allowed gambling houses to operate openly to ensure that the games were "square", and if they were closed, "the gamblers would resort to secret methods, and the result would be much worse than the present system."³² He also contended that those who had invested in the buildings deserved the chance to withdraw their capital without serious loss, especially since his predecessor had assured these people that their businesses could be run without official interference. Orderly control under the watchful eye of the police, he concluded, was preferable to the complete elimination of gambling in the community.³³

When the minister refused to modify his position, Major Wood of the mounted police wrote that, after consultation with "the leading businessmen" of Dawson, a compromise had been reached. He had drawn up regulations to eradicate box rustling by denying women entry to licensed premises, and he had issued an order to keep dance hall women and prostitutes out of theatre boxes. He had taken this step, despite the owners' claim that they could not pay their expenses without the revenue so derived, because of several cases of theft which had come to his attention. At the same time, he was reluctant to shut down gambling because it would throw 200 people out of work and would undermine that part of the business community which depended on their custom.³⁴

Sifton rejected this compromise and directed the Yukon authorities to carry out his instructions. Finally, in February 1901, Ogilvie and Wood acceded and declared that all places of illegal resort would be closed on 15 March.³⁵ Soon after this decision became known, Sifton's agent and crown prosecutor telegraphed the minister to have its implementation delayed. F.C. Wade asserted that peremptory action

would seriously damage the banks and business houses because the gambling halls and theatres had run at a loss in the winter and had incurred debts of "many thousands". Unless they were allowed to remain open until the cleanup, they would default on those debts and the result would be "great havoc" in the city's commerce.³⁶ This communication contained the same argument which Ogilvie and Wood had advanced, but Wade had more influence with the minister. Soon after its receipt, Sifton's deputy wired the commissioner to defer action until the following year.³⁷

The telegram extending the date of closure did not arrive in Dawson until two days after the order had been put into effect. At midnight on 16 March, Captain Starnes of the NWMP had ordered the gambling halls to close their doors and had stated that thereafter women were not to drink in licensed premises.³⁸ The decision to postpone these sanctions needlessly embarrassed the territorial administration and the "law abiding" citizens were incensed when the sporting fraternity celebrated with "a regular carnival."³⁹ Ogilvie's resentment of Ottawa's interference increased a short time later when he was removed from the office of commissioner and replaced by James H. Ross.

The change of commissioner did not reflect a change in Sifton's position. Soon after his arrival in Dawson, Ross directed the police to visit all places of amusement and to record the names of all professional gamblers. The list soon carried the names of 150 men whom the police intended to watch once gambling was prohibited.⁴⁰ This action encouraged many gamblers to book passage out of Dawson. Those who remained had the law forcibly drawn to their attention by police raids and prosecutions. Private clubs offered no protection. In July, the police raided the O'Brien Club, arrested four gamblers and confiscated a variety of apparatus. The club manager received two fines of \$100 each for keeping a common

gaming house and for allowing gambling to take place on his premises. The magistrate fined the other three \$25 for being found in a gaming house, ordered the apparatus burned, and added the \$1020 found on their table to the territorial revenue.⁴¹

Although Ross had received explicit instructions to end all gambling, his edict in June was a compromise measure. After representations from the business community he only outlawed faro, roulette, craps and other "bank games" which employed "layouts" and in which the house had a distinct advantage. To ease the transition from open gambling, his order permitted games such as poker and blackjack to continue throughout the summer, provided that dealers were not employed, that chips were used instead of money, and that the games were not played in the bar-rooms proper.⁴² In November, after a holdup at the Dominion saloon, Ross rescinded this permission. The police argued that a rigid enforcement of the laws against gambling would rid the town of its undesirable characters and prevent the occurrence of other robberies. Ross agreed and extended his original fiat to include all games of chance.⁴³ Thereafter Major Wood ordered the prosecution of "all men loafing around without visible means of support" and more than 250 gamblers received notice to leave town.⁴⁴ By the end of 1902 open gambling was a thing of the past.

While the police had been preoccupied with gambling, the Yukon Council had prepared new regulations to govern saloons and liquor outlets. At its session in the spring of 1901, the Council had passed a series of amendments to the liquor ordinance. The new law prohibited entry to saloons on Sunday and required licensed premises to keep their window blinds up on that day to allow a free view of the interior. It also restricted the sale of liquor in saloons or theatres to the bar, and made it illegal for women to consume alcohol in those places. Licensees found in violation of these provisions were liable to fines of \$50 or two months imprisonment

for first offenses, and second offenses would result in the forfeit of their licences.⁴⁵

Although these new regulations ended some abuses of the law, they did not solve the problems associated with box rustling and percentage women. The saloons still employed women to induce patrons to drink and it was difficult for the police to prove that the law had been broken.⁴⁶ After complaints from men who claimed to have been robbed while intoxicated, Major Wood suggested that the liquor ordinance be changed to render the percentage system illegal.⁴⁷ When the Yukon Council met in the summer of 1903, he introduced legislation to that effect.⁴⁸ This proposal was incorporated in an amendment which dealt with dance halls, and the confusion on that question resulted in the whole issue being postponed until the next sitting.

During the recess, the Dawson ministerial association and the Protestant churches prepared a petition demanding the suppression of percentage women and stricter regulation of saloons.⁴⁹ When the Council met again, it heard arguments for and against Wood's bill. The Presbyterian and Methodist ministers supported it because it would eliminate women from the traffic in liquor. They contended that percentage women induced men to drink and to spend money by unfair means. Their position was not part of a temperance campaign, they explained, because they intended no hardship to the owners of licensed premises. They had no objection to men being allowed to drink, but they believed that they deserved protection from unscrupulous women. The lawyer for the Licensed Victuallers Association admitted that percentage women ought to be eliminated but he also took the novel position that the measure involved discrimination on the basis of sex which might not be tolerated elsewhere.⁵⁰ In the weeks that followed, the saloon men who opposed the bill squared off against the two congregations who favoured it. The Yukon Council, however, was

preoccupied with other questions and all proposed amendments to the liquor ordinance were shelved when the final session of the year adjourned.⁵¹

The Yukon Council did not consider the matter again until July 1904. At that time the councillors finally passed Wood's amendments and thus outlawed the paying of percentages to women for liquor sold on licensed premises. At first glance this measure seemed to put an end to box rustling. At the same time, however, the ordinance stated that the enforcement of its provisions was the responsibility of the chief licence inspector, who in turn received his orders from the territorial commissioner. Indirectly then, the enforcement of the liquor law was left to the commissioner's discretion and in 1904 Commissioner Congdon was not inclined to enforce it strictly.⁵²

The appointment of F.T. Congdon to the office of commissioner had serious repercussions on the liquor traffic in Dawson. Congdon was determined to use the patronage at his disposal to assemble a powerful political machine to look after the interests of his faction of the Liberal party. Liquor licences were an important part of this scheme. To that end, Congdon appointed his lieutenant, William Temple, and two of his henchmen to the board of licence commissioners. One of their first decisions was to deny licence renewals to eight Dawson saloonkeepers who were not in "friendly sympathy" with the government, and to grant licences to several premises against the recommendation of the police. Moreover, the board declined to act upon police information and the result was that the law came to be violated with impunity. Indeed, Temple allowed open gambling and the employment of percentage women in saloons. He also operated a protection racket which offered exemptions from prosecution in return for monetary contributions.⁵³ The police found themselves in an impossible position, as the commissioner had requested that they take no

action and the licence inspector remained reluctant to initiate proceedings.⁵⁴ This state of affairs continued until the fall of 1904, when Congdon resigned to seek the Yukon seat in Parliament and Temple quit in order to direct his campaign. Then Major Wood carried out a crackdown on gambling and percentage women, and saloonkeepers again felt the full force of the law.⁵⁵

In the next few years the police maintained strict control over the liquor traffic. Major Wood persuaded the new licence inspector to warn the keepers of hotels that their licences would be cancelled if they rented quarters to prostitutes or allowed their rooms to be used for immoral purposes.⁵⁶ Soon afterward, drinking resorts were entirely male preserves. Police surveillance occasionally uncovered incidents where gambling occurred, and the proprietors received stiff fines or lost their licences.⁵⁷ More often the constables on the beat discovered saloons which sold liquor during prohibited hours or failed to have unobstructed views of their interiors.⁵⁸ Warnings were usually sufficient to ensure that the law was obeyed. Before long the police had to do little more than make recommendations when the licence year expired, and only seldom were applications for renewal denied.

Paradoxically, it was a time when saloons were well under control that the Reverend John Pringle charged that the authorities in Dawson allowed gambling halls to run openly.⁵⁹ Pringle's allegations about gambling were exaggerated and unsubstantiated, as were his complaints about prostitution. Major Wood conceded that gambling did occur, but only in "a spasmodic manner" and it could not be eliminated entirely as long as miners had money to wager. What gambling there was took place on the creeks, and none was carried on openly in Dawson. Wood concluded that Pringle's accusations were based on outdated evidence and referred to a situation which had long since ceased to exist.⁶⁰

When the furor over Pringle's charges had died down, the Yukon Council reviewed the number of liquor licences granted annually. The initiative for the ensuing attempt to limit the number of saloons came from the new commissioner, Alexander Henderson. Soon after his arrival in Dawson, Henderson declared his intention to work for "the moral and material betterment" of the territory.⁶¹ While dance halls were his first target, the saloons were not far behind. Henderson, in fact, favoured the elimination of saloons and the issuance of licences only to legitimate hotels. When he declared this position, delegations of bankers, lawyers and businessmen registered their protests, and the commissioner summoned the councillors to a special session to consider their positions. The Council once again heard the arguments that control was preferable to the elimination of the resorts, that the proprietors deserved warning before being put out of business and that the owners had invested heavily in enterprises which had received official approval. After a short debate, a motion to grant renewals to all applicants passed without dissent.⁶² The matter did not end there, however. A few days later the chief licence inspector reported that the number of licences had not declined in proportion to the population. Ten saloons and 21 licensed hotels, he suggested, were far more liquor outlets than the town required. He recommended that the saloons be denied renewals and that the retail liquor business be confined to hotels.⁶³

This report had little effect on the saloons in Dawson. The public reaction to Henderson's original statement forced the commissioner to recant and he even allowed the licensing of two saloons which had been denied renewals because of violations of the liquor ordinance.⁶⁴ Part of the reason for the popular outcry was that the saloons catered to the men working for mining companies on the creeks and not just the citizens of Dawson. More important, however, was the

fact that the revenue derived from the sale of liquor licences formed a significant proportion of the town's finances. In every year after the town's disincorporation, the receipts from liquor licence fees provided between 20 and 30 per cent of the portion of the territorial budget spent on Dawson.⁶⁵ The closure of ten saloons would cut \$10,000 from that income and the difference could only be made up by an increase in the local rates. Municipal taxation was an especially thorny issue in 1908, and the owners of property and businesses were determined to resist any increase. As far as they were concerned, there could not be too many saloons in Dawson.

During the next five years there was little agitation against the liquor traffic. In 1913, the town's Protestant clergymen petitioned the Yukon Council to issue no new licences and suggested that the revenue could be maintained if fewer licensees paid higher fees.⁶⁶ The following year the ministerial association and the local chapter of the Women's Christian Temperance Union appealed for the Council to cut down the number of saloons and to limit their hours of operation.⁶⁷ The Council held a special session in the spring of 1915 at which it adopted the ministerial association's recommendation that fewer licences be granted and expanded the grounds for which licences could be cancelled. This resolution effectively meant that saloon licences would not be renewed in the following year.⁶⁸

The temperance campaign began in earnest early in 1916. During the war years the Yukon was swept by the same patriotic fervour which swept southern Canada. The war provided a new impulse for the temperance forces and the enemies of alcohol organized campaigns in every province. In the spring of 1916, the Dawson temperance advocates united under the banner of the People's Prohibition Movement. Led by local clergymen, both Protestant and Catholic, and by a few prominent citizens, this organization began the battle to banish

the bar.⁶⁹ Its first move was to circulate a petition for presentation to the responsible authorities. The Licensed Victuallers Association responded with a newspaper advertisement which asked how the PPM intended to recoup the revenue which accrued to the territory from liquor licences and taxation.⁷⁰ The PPM, in turn, asked the victuallers to estimate the number of dollars spent over the bars to get that revenue.⁷¹ Throughout May, the two sides carried on extensive advertising campaigns in which the wets emphasized their contribution to the revenue and the dries alluded to the waste of money and manhood during the Empire's great struggle.⁷² The PPM also held public meetings where its leaders denounced the evils of drink and called on all men and women to do their little bit in this great moral crusade.⁷³

At the June session of the Yukon Council, the member for South Dawson, W.G. Radford, gave notice of a resolution to have the commissioner in council enact, or secure by memorial to the governor general in council, legislation to prohibit the sale, manufacture and importation of beverage alcohol after 1 January 1917.⁷⁴ Commissioner Black replied that the Council had the necessary authority, but that he believed that the liquor trade did not cause "the same ratio of harm that it did in other parts of Canada due to the character of the population and local conditions."⁷⁵ Later in the session representatives of the PPM and WCTU delivered a petition bearing 2,000 signatures which the Rev. Arthur claimed represented a substantial majority of the electors."⁷⁶ Soon afterward, the Licensed Victuallers presented a counter petition of 550 names including those of "a number of the heaviest concerns here and others in mercantile lines outside the licensees."⁷⁷ The lawyer for the LVA argued that the wet petition was as valid as the dry one, since only electors had been asked to sign it, while the other carried the names of women "and all the classes of people."⁷⁸ Faced by a clear division in the community, the

Council declined to consider legislation until it ascertained the true strength of the prohibitory sentiment. Thus, it resolved to let the electors decide in a plebiscite to be held in the first week of September.⁷⁹

In the two months before the vote, both sides mobilized their forces. The drys had their first taste of victory when the last two saloons in Dawson closed their doors. On 14 July, the Yukon Council's decision to deny the renewal of saloon licences went into effect, and some of Dawson's best known institutions went out of business. Thereafter, the only places permitted to sell liquor were the town's 24 hotels.⁸⁰ Throughout the weeks that followed, the prohibition forces worked to eliminate these places as well.

While the PPM directed the dry campaign, the wets joined together as the Business Men's Association. This organization consisted of the licensed victuallers plus the managers of both banks, several merchants, and a variety of professional men, tradesmen and miners. It also had the support of the liquor interests in Alaska. W.J. Thompson, editor of the Fairbanks News-Miner and former editor of the Yukon Sun, directed its advertising campaign.⁸¹ The BMA sponsored newspaper columns which pointed to the evils of prohibition and its failures elsewhere, and which argued that prohibition would be a serious blow to Dawson's commercial future.⁸² The PPM, on the other hand, ran a series of ads which appealed to the electors to be patriotic and to protect the young. Flag-draped articles declared that drink was Britain's greatest enemy and that the question of the hour was "The Bar or the War."⁸³ The PPM also held two public rallies. The BMA upstaged the first by offering a free moving picture show at the same time, and it played to a larger audience.⁸⁴ The second, held two days before the plebiscite, featured the secretary of the Dominion Alliance, the Rev. Ben Spence of Toronto. A large crowd heard him denounce the liquor traffic as an "economic monstrosity"

equated with "Germanism", and as the real enemy in their midst.⁸⁵

The electors cast their ballots on 30 August, and the News estimated that 90 per cent of those eligible voted. The polls were set up according to the boundaries for territorial elections and the results reflected a split on a geographical basis. Both of the Dawson districts voted wet, while the outlying constituencies of Whitehorse, Bonanza and Klondike voted dry. In the territory as a whole, 21 polls voted dry and only 13 wet, but the concentration of votes in Dawson gave the anti-prohibitionists an overall majority of three votes.⁸⁶

The Yukon remained wet for only three more years. The number of licensed premises in Dawson fell annually as their proprietors either went off to war or left for more prosperous locations.⁸⁷ Although neither dries nor wets abandoned their positions, they avoided a confrontation until 1919. The issue was virtually settled early in that year when the Union government at Ottawa telegraphed the Yukon commissioner that it would make up the deficit in territorial finances which would occur when the liquor business ceased.⁸⁸ With that information, prohibition groups made strong representations to the local authorities. This time the Yukon Council resolved to terminate all licences on 1 September and to close all liquor outlets until a referendum decided whether alcohol would be sold by bars, government vendors, or not at all.⁸⁹ In February 1920, that vote revealed a small majority in favour of complete prohibition, and Dawson became as dry as any other town in western Canada.⁹⁰

The efforts to regulate the liquor traffic in the two decades after 1898 corresponded to the changes in Dawson and in its hinterland. Laws were passed not to outlaw drinking

but to remove the evils connected with it. There were few regulations during the gold rush era when the community was least stable, and the authorities were concerned primarily with controlling a variety of more urgent problems. When the rush subsided they took action to eliminate the worst abuses. Gambling created trouble because it attracted undesirable characters to a town which could ill afford them. Yet, as S.D. Clark suggested, gambling was an inevitable part of mining life. The playing of cards, he asserted, was a continuation of the gambling carried on during the seasonal search for gold.⁹¹ There was a difference, however, between an honest wager among miners and a game run by a professional gambler in a saloon. The informal sanctions of the community could control the former, but they had little influence on the latter. The influx of "tin horn gamblers" prompted the territorial officials to be vigilant and to expell all cheats. Soon afterward, as large companies supplanted individual miners and as hired labourers replaced the original gold seekers, the parallel between mining and gambling ceased to exist. It was no coincidence that open gambling came to an end when the lone mining entrepreneur disappeared from the district.

While saloons undoubtedly were resorts for the criminal element, they also were legitimate social institutions. Saloons and churches were almost the only establishments in Dawson whose doors were open to all men. In practice, saloons were clubs which satisfied the workingmen's need for warmth and light and human companionship. At the same time, they performed important commercial functions. On one hand, saloons served as civic centres, labour exchanges, and as bureaux for the spreading of mining information. On the other, they were lawful mercantile enterprises which paid heavy municipal taxes and contributed large sums to the revenue of the territory. They also attracted men from the creeks and thus added to the market for other industries. The commercial significance

of saloons explains why the businessmen of Dawson resisted all movements for their suppression.

There was a very clear political dimension to all efforts to control the liquor traffic and its adjuncts. The attitude of the minister of the interior, and of the commissioners he appointed, often determined the character of the laws and the degree of their enforcement. While Sifton demanded strict liquor regulations, Ogilvie and Ross sought a middle ground between the minister's requirement and the more relaxed expectations of the townsfolk. Because the minister faced a larger constituency his will prevailed. Congdon used his authority over liquor licences for the utmost political advantage, and Henderson tried to raise the standards of the community to those of southern Canada. The wartime reform wave demonstrated that many of the attempts to impose tighter control on the sale of alcohol were in fact aimed at integrating Dawson and the Yukon into the mainstream of Canadian society. As far as the liquor traffic was concerned, by 1920 that integration was complete.

IX "Langourous Lillies of Souless Love"¹

While saloons and gambling halls were conspicuous features of Dawson's early years, the town faced many other social problems which beset communities on the mining frontier. One of the more apparent was the presence of a large number of prostitutes. Prostitution was a natural concomitant of Dawson's isolation and of its predominantly male population. In the decade after 1898, various officials recognized that prostitution could not be eliminated and some even believed that it should not be eradicated entirely. Instead, they attempted to control the women, to herd them into a separate district, in order to make them a less visible feature of Dawson's streets. At the same time, there was a tacit recognition that prostitution was a necessary evil, as no movement for the suppression of vice grew spontaneously in the town. Reform agencies in southern Canada, however, prompted by a self-seeking political clergyman, assailed federal officials with constant demands to clean up a town overrun by women of ill repute. Despite their lack of reliable evidence, these agitators blackened Dawson's reputation and reinforced its lawless and bawdy image.

There were prostitutes in Dawson almost from the town's beginning. The news of George Carmack's strike on Rabbit Creek in August 1896 drew the miners and prospectors from the settlements of the lower Yukon to the new town at the mouth of the Klondike. The first rush brought to Dawson townsmen and camp followers who hoped to make their fortunes by catering

to the needs of the community. Prostitutes from Forty Mile and Circle City were among Dawson's first residents. Over the next two years, they were joined by dozens of others from Seattle, San Francisco and other cities of the American west coast. By the summer of 1898, when the gold rush was at its peak, prostitutes were a significant element among Dawson's population.

There are no reliable records of the number of prostitutes in Dawson in these early years. Although the estimates range as high as 400, there were probably few more than 150, since the police rounded up and fined that many in September 1898.² Whatever their precise number, there can be no doubt that prostitutes were visible features on the streets. Henry Naylor, the Anglican missionary at Forty Mile, saw Dawson become "a frightful place" where "sin is so open and religion so despised that it takes a firm man to stand against it all."³ Many Klondike stampeders referred to Dawson's prostitutes in their memoirs. One wrote that "scarlet women were the most notable accents of Dawson's sights and bright lights." They were everywhere and it was difficult to walk down the streets without confronting them.⁴ Another noted that the first rush had brought "the very worst and lowest type of harlot... the cast off creatures of the nearest big towns or settlements."⁵ An old dog driver added: "the girls looked beautiful enough to men who had been isolated in this wild environment for months or years, but I guess they would have been pretty terrible compared with any ordinary woman back home."⁶ Few of the accounts went beyond this kind of description, and only one old sourdough recalled that the ladies had charged four ounces of gold for "a very hurried entertainment".⁷ Generally, the memoirs convey the impression that prostitutes were an unavoidable and unmistakable part of life in Dawson.

At first, the women were allowed to roam the streets and to locate their cabins without official interference. The police, under Inspector Constantine, were more concerned

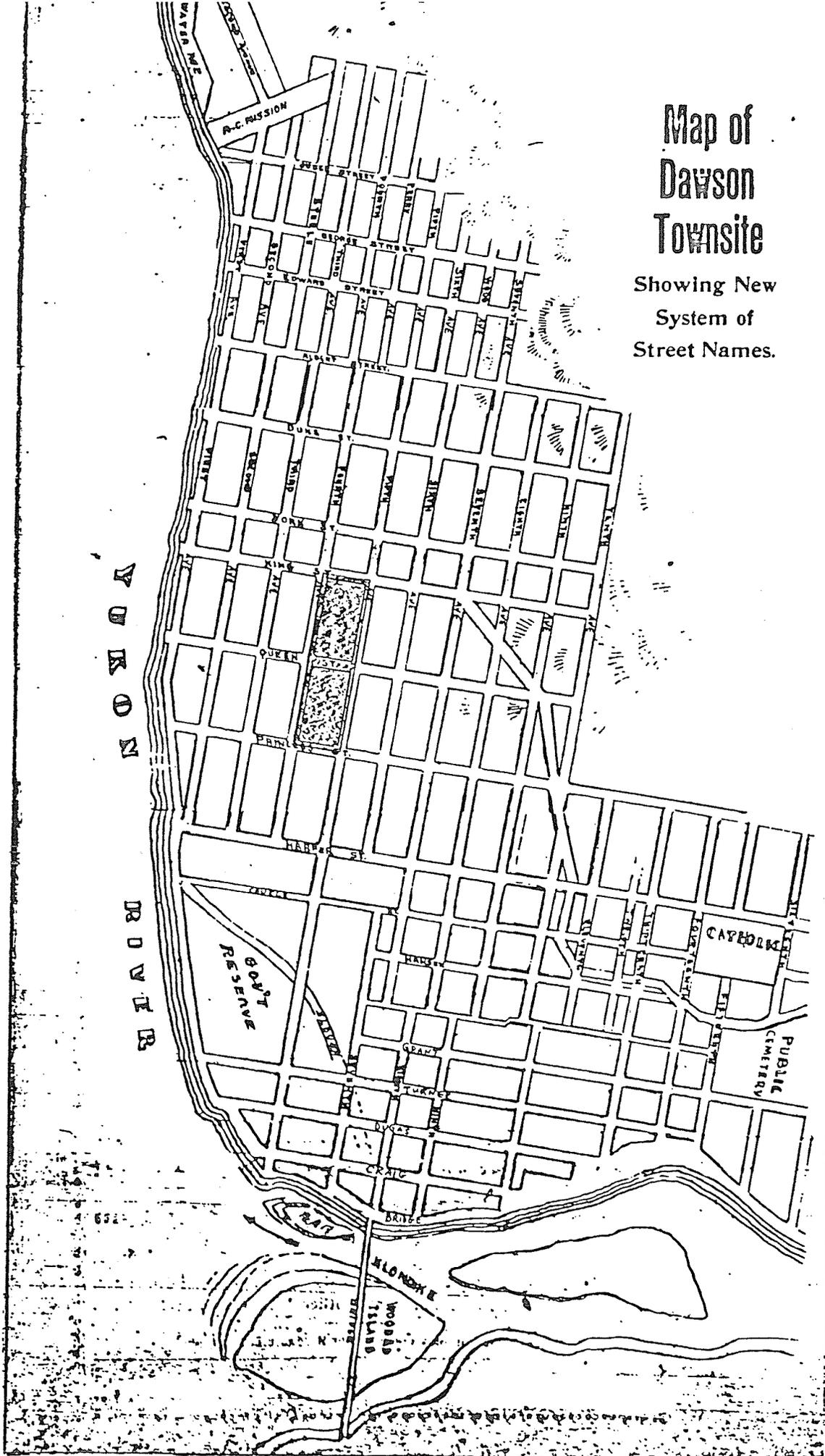
with controlling thugs and petty criminals and preventing crimes of violence, and they let the prostitutes wander undisturbed. His successor had a different attitude. Supt. Steele was determined to make Dawson "tolerable for respectable people." At his direction, the police brought all known prostitutes to the police court each month where he, as magistrate, fined them \$50 and costs.⁸ This practice was less a punishment than a means of raising revenue for the local board of health, since the receipts were turned over to Dawson's two hospitals to pay for the indigent sick.⁹

In October 1898, Steele took the first real step to control prostitution when he ordered a monthly medical inspection of the inmates of all "houses of ill-fame".¹⁰ This decision was the result of discussions between Steele and Commissioner Ogilvie, after the board of health had been "deluged" with applications for hospital treatment from men suffering from syphilis and other diseases which the doctors declined to name. Fearing an epidemic of venereal disease, the board resolved to have the "harlots" inspected fortnightly and furnished with certificates of good health. The members believed that this policy was followed in Vancouver, and that it would be wise to inaugurate it in Dawson.¹¹ Accordingly, the territorial medical health officer and the assistant surgeon of the NWMP began to examine the women. At \$5 per visit, this duty provided the doctors with a tidy supplement to their incomes, and the prostitutes received a form of licence to operate.¹²

When Steele had arrived, the prostitutes were settled among the prime business locations in Dawson. Many had cabins on Second Avenue, with signs and banners which bore names such as the "Saratoga", the "Bon Ton", or "The Lucky Cigar Store".¹³ In the fall of 1898, the police began to receive complaints about these buildings. The Klondike Nugget objected to the proliferation of "maisons de joie" in the centre of town and

Map of Dawson Townsite

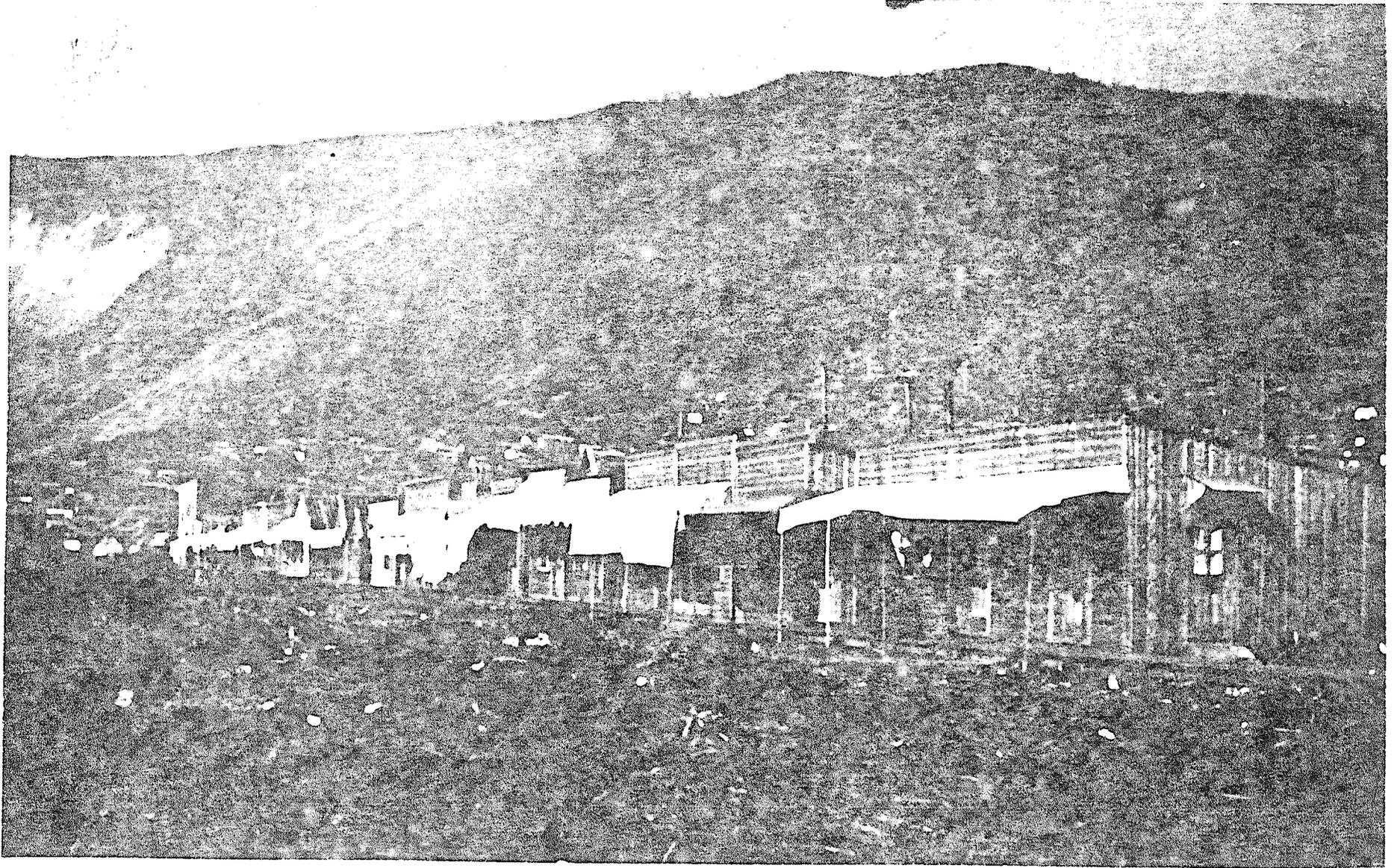
Showing New System of Street Names.



The Segregated Area 1899-1900

proposed that if the police could not close the resorts they might at least have the signs removed so that respectable women and children could walk the streets.¹⁴ Steele agreed that the prostitutes should not have been allowed to live on Second avenue and he favoured removing them to an isolated part of town. But at that time there simply was no lumber or building material available for new cabins and for that reason the women were allowed to remain where they were. Steele, however, issued orders to prevent open soliciting on the street and these orders were strictly carried out.

In April 1899, Steele told the prostitutes to vacate their premises and to move east of Fourth avenue, where they would not interfere with other people. He did so on the grounds that Second avenue was required for "business purposes".¹⁵ The Nugget applauded this action as the victory of the "inexorable demands of progress", and noted that as of 1 May the women would be confined to quarters "less conspicuous and convenient".¹⁶ Soon afterward, the newspaper reported that Steele had set aside the two blocks bounded by Fourth and Fifth avenues and First and Third streets, and had served notice to the women to be located there by the end of May.¹⁷ In his report for that month, Steele declared that his instructions had been carried out, that there was nothing in Dawson which might offend people of a "susceptible nature", and that all causes of complaint had been eliminated. He continued: "These girls seem to be in the eyes of the majority of the community a necessary evil. Apart from the fact that their calling is unlawful they are orderly and sober and in fact much less detrimental...than a large number of the variety actresses..."¹⁸ Yet, despite his optimism, a few of the women failed to comply with the order. When they appeared in his courtroom, he levied stiff fines and gave them 24 hours to relocate.¹⁹ By the end of August, there were no prostitutes left in the commercial district.



Fourth Avenue 1899 (Public Archives of Canada)

The decision to reserve parts of Fourth and Fifth avenue for prostitutes was not entirely fortuitous. There is some evidence that three prominent citizens had purchased the half-acre lot and built the "hutches" in which the women lived.²⁰ Most of the houses were constructed in the same fashion, each about 12 feet wide and 30 feet long, and arranged in rows along either side of the street. Unpainted, they cost about \$800. Many of the women owned their cabins and paid \$30 per month for the land they occupied.²¹ Rumour had it that each of the three landowners collected \$800 in monthly rents.²² There was, it seemed, a respectable way to profit from the social evil.

Living off the avails of prostitution, however, was quite another matter. Once the prostitutes had been resettled, the police began to prosecute the men who were supported by them. The first of these men, "technically called Macques",²³ received 30 days in gaol and a \$50 fine for "having no peaceful occupation". This man claimed to be a grocer who only rented two cabins to some women for \$250 a month and boarded them at \$5 per day. One of the women, however, testified that she was engaged in prostitution under his management and that she had travelled with the accused from Seattle to Juneau and to Dawson for that purpose.²⁴ This case, and the ensuing police crackdown, convinced other "macques" to move outside the district and to find gainful employment. Some took positions managing hotels and other small businesses, while others became barmen and waiters. Those who refused to work often found themselves with heavy fines and long sentences at hard labour.²⁵

Under the command of Sam Steele, the police managed to control prostitution in Dawson. When Steele left the Yukon in September 1899, the new commander, Supt. A. Bowen Perry, continued his strict policies. Soon after his arrival in Dawson, Perry requested a detailed report on the district east of Fourth avenue. He learned that most of the women



Prostitutes and their "hutches" (Public Archives of Canada)

located there were "French" and that they were a "very untidy outfit". Some were married women who had left their husbands and all but one had "macques". Most had come from the American West Coast, though there were others from as far away as France, South Africa and Australia. The constable who prepared the report listed 43 by name, and noted that the majority had arrived in the spring and summer of 1898. He also noted that three cigar stores on Second Avenue were probably houses of ill-fame, but their inmates offered no affront to respectable people. He concluded that the system of segregation seemed to work well and that, on the whole, there was little cause for complaint.²⁶

Despite the acceptance of the system in Dawson, Perry's tenure as police commissioner coincided with the first reform efforts directed from outside. Perry himself was indirectly responsible for them. In private correspondence with the minister of the interior, Perry had declared that prostitution was "rampant" in Dawson and he outlined the procedure by which the women received their health certificates.²⁷ Sifton had had no prior knowledge of this practice, and he realized that it could be construed as an official licence to engage in prostitution. He already faced allegations of corruption in his administration of the Yukon, and he was especially concerned that "immorality" in Dawson not become an issue in the forthcoming federal election. Upon receipt of Perry's letter, he immediately telegraphed the Yukon commissioner to order the police surgeon to cease issuing certificates of health to "harlots".²⁸ Ogilvie protested that it had been "a wise thing to do in the public interest", but he acknowledged the pressure on the minister from "extreme moralists and religious cranks" and ordered the practice to be discontinued.²⁹

In his letter to Sifton, Perry had revealed his intention "to purge the town" of its rougher elements when the river opened in the spring of 1900. Yet when the time came, the

police had less to do than he had expected. The news of the discovery of gold at Nome precipitated a small stampede out of Dawson. A large number of prostitutes were among the first to pack up and set off down river. This exodus removed "many of the worst characters" from the town, and prostitution became even less a problem than it had been previously.³⁰ Paradoxically, the agitation in southern Canada reached greater heights. Representatives of the Women's Christian Temperance Union charged that the town was full of dens of iniquity and overrun by women of ill repute.³¹ Ogilvie replied that the Yukon Council had given serious consideration to the question of immorality, "very often with the simple result that the impracticality of putting it down had been noticed very strongly."³² Yet the agitation continued and focused on the evils associated with the dance halls.

There were two dance halls in Dawson in the summer of 1900, and 42 dance hall women. Most of them lived in small apartments over saloons or in cabins in different portions of the town.³³ These women were not, by definition, prostitutes, although many undoubtedly engaged in that pursuit. It was charged that some enticed their dancing partners to retire to their quarters upstairs for a different kind of entertainment.³⁴ The dance halls remained open, Ogilvie related, only because "the ease with which witnesses committed perjury" made it difficult to convict the women.³⁵ After several complaints of "a private nature", Sifton wrote Ogilvie that he thought "a considerable increase in stringency" was required. He directed the commissioner and the police to crack down on the dance halls, which he understood to be nothing more than bar-rooms attended by women of ill repute. He concluded that, up to then, he had thought the men on the spot would have done what was necessary, but that did not seem to be the case.³⁶

Ogilvie's reply betrayed his resentment at this imputation. The Yukon Council, he asserted, had given the matter careful

consideration and thought it best to allow the dance halls to continue. The consensus was that vice would be much worse if practiced secretly and for that reason it was not stopped. It was true, he went on, that dance halls were an evil, but under certain conditions some evils were absolutely necessary. Closing the dance halls would throw a lot of women "into a more vicious life", as they would become "leeches on the general mining public." At the same time, it would be unfair to deprive those men who had invested capital in the buildings of the opportunity to withdraw it without serious loss.³⁷

These arguments made no impression on Sifton. His deputy, James A. Smart, retorted that men involved in illicit businesses had no claim whatever to notice or compensation, and that the country would not share Ogilvie's concern for the fate of the dance hall women. He stated categorically that the minister's wishes were definite and he expected them to be enforced.³⁸

Ogilvie again declined to act. To the deputy, he explained that he understood Sifton's position, but he added: "the situation to us appears to be more serious than it possibly can to those not conversant with the facts." It was in part a question of the administration's good faith. His predecessor, Major Walsh, had assured the keepers of dance halls and gambling houses that there would be no interference in their businesses without due notice. On that basis the men had invested large sums, which they now stood to lose.³⁹

Smart's response was that "the Minister still adheres to the view that there is no reason why the evil complained of should be allowed to continue", and that he looked to the officials of the government at Dawson to carry out his instructions.⁴⁰

Although the commissioner had appeared reluctant to follow those orders, he had directed the new police commander, Major Z.T. Wood, to draw up the necessary regulations. Wood, too, resisted the order to close the dance halls. He informed

Sifton that their elimination in the middle of winter would throw 200 people out of work and would have a detrimental effect on "substantial businesses" which were owed large sums of money. Moreover, the leading men of commerce in Dawson, "bankers, lawyers and others", had petitioned against the order. He trusted that the ordinance he had prepared would be an acceptable compromise, since it would remove dance hall women and prostitutes from rooms over theatres, bar all women from licensed premises, and get rid of the private boxes in theatres and dance halls.⁴¹

These measures failed to satisfy Sifton. Finally, in February 1901, Ogilvie and Wood decided to close "all places of illegal resort" on 15 March. That date gave their proprietors enough time to prepare for their removal.⁴² On 11 March, however, Smart telegraphed Ogilvie that, "in view of representations", it had been decided to extend the deadline until 1 June.⁴³ Unfortunately, the wire did not reach Dawson until 18 March, two days after the establishments had been shut down.⁴⁴ Its arrival incensed many people, and members of the clergy particularly condemned the postponement.⁴⁵ Their reaction prompted Sifton to order the new commissioner, James H. Ross, to enforce the original closure. Like his predecessor, however, Ross acceded to pressure from the business community in Dawson, and he declined to put the order into effect.

Ogilvie's intransigence on the morality question undoubtedly hastened his departure from the office of Yukon commissioner. The tension between the commissioner and the minister was the result of their different perspectives. Ogilvie resented the imposition of the alleged moral standards of southern Canada by people who had no understanding of Dawson nor of the mining frontier. For Sifton, questions of morality were larger political concerns. Ogilvie tried to avoid widespread resentment in Dawson; Sifton attempted to placate public opinion in the rest of Canada. The two were

on a collision course. When Ogilvie resisted the minister's imperatives, his job was made as unbearable as possible. He resigned in February 1901, citing health and other reasons, "some of which are personal dislike of many things in connection with my position."⁴⁷ Sifton's most recent biographer described the handling of Ogilvie as "certainly undiplomatic".⁴⁸ The minister's attitude toward Dawson was hardly any better.

When the dance hall agitation was at its peak, the police in Dawson began to receive complaints about the prostitutes on Fourth and Fifth avenues. The decision to build a public school on Third avenue led several citizens to campaign for the relocation of the "disreputable element" in a more isolated area. The commissioner and the police found themselves in a difficult position, as the two streets in question had been set aside for prostitutes. At first, Wood issued orders that "all music and singing and noise" must cease at midnight. He also forbade the women to appear at windows or on the street while improperly dressed and directed them not to attract the attention of passing pedestrians. Apart from that there was little he could do.⁴⁹ When the complaints continued, the Yukon Council considered the matter and, on 25 November 1900, the Nugget reported that the "demi-monde" were to be forced to vacate Fourth avenue "as soon as climactic [sic] conditions warrant."⁵⁰ Where they were to go was not mentioned. The authorities were forced to solve this problem when the police arrested several prostitutes in south Dawson. They were charged, fined and released, but they had nowhere to go because there were no vacant buildings in the segregated area.⁵¹ Eventually, it was decided to remove all prostitutes from Dawson, and Major Wood informed his men that, after, 1 May 1901, all prostitutes found inside the city limits would be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.⁵²

The decision to banish prostitutes from Dawson left the women with three alternatives. They could move across the Klondike and live in Klondike City or they could settle in West Dawson on the opposite bank of the Yukon. Neither of those places was incorporated as part of Dawson; they were simply sparsely inhabited areas separated from the town by the rivers but easily accessible by bridge or ferry. Their third alternative was to leave the region altogether. By the time that Major Wood announced the deadline, rumour had it that the syndicate which owned the lots on Fourth avenue had purchased options on all the lots available in Klondike City and West Dawson.⁵³ The residents of those two areas objected to the women being planted in their midst. When they petitioned the Yukon Council to disallow the move, they were told that prostitution was an evil which could not be extinguished, and their protests were ignored.⁵⁴

As the deadline approached, the Nugget reported that 70 prostitutes had gone over to Klondike City and almost 30 had crossed the Yukon to West Dawson.⁵⁵ The Sun added that travellers to those places now had to run the gauntlet "of 'goo-goo eyes', the big jolly and the 'big mitt.'"⁵⁶ Yet, these new locations apparently reduced the prostitutes' clientele. Prospective customers could not reach their destinations without making themselves conspicuous on a long bridge or on the Yukon ferry. Many prostitutes gave up and left for the outside. In October, the Nugget disclosed that there were just 25 left in Klondike City and only four or five in West Dawson.⁵⁷

The effort to drive prostitution out of Dawson was not entirely successful. In November 1901, several Klondike City women complained that, while they had obeyed the letter of the law, several of their number had remained in Dawson operating under the guise of cigar stores and laundries.⁵⁸ When only a few were prosecuted, some of the "law-abiding" ones moved



NO BEE AT WHITE TABLE DAWSON

Denizens of Klondike City (Yukon Archives)

back into Dawson. By the spring of 1902, there were so many scattered about the town that they had become a "nuisance".⁵⁹ The police were reluctant to crack down because the new city council had not decided what was to be done. But in mid April the police began rounding them up and in three days 22 were fined \$50 and costs for being "inmates of houses of ill-fame".⁶⁰

The gaol records of these women provide a composite portrait of Dawson's prostitutes. They ranged in age from 20 to 37, but most were between the ages of 26 and 34. The majority were American and several had migrated from city to city across the continent. The most striking thing about the gaol records is that they suggest that for some prostitution was a seasonal occupation. According to the records, a few of the women engaged in prostitution in Dawson from April to September each year and spent the other six months outside. The other feature which the records reveal is that "coloured" prostitutes received a month at hard labour in addition to their fines.⁶¹

In April 1902, the city council realized that it had to do something to satisfy ratepayers who objected to prostitutes in their neighbourhoods. Mayor Macaulay emphasized that the city council would not allow residential sections to become infested, but he doubted whether the city council could tell the women where to practise their "nefarious calling".⁶² Over the next few months, the mayor and aldermen heard a series of petitions either objecting to proposed segregated areas or waiving objections to the relocation of the demi-monde. They heard several suggestions but it was almost impossible to find an area where there would be no complaint.⁶³ While they searched for a solution, the prostitutes slowly congregated and settled along both sides of Dugas Street in south Dawson.

The appearance of a colony of prostitutes on Dugas St. aroused considerable public indignation. Judge Dugas asked that the city either remove the women from the street, or

change its name.⁶⁴ Other residents complained that the "female element" had brought "noisy tramping people who seek these places and fill the air with disgusting talk."⁶⁵ When the city police committee met with a ratepayers delegation, its members learned that property along Dugas had decreased in value, that drunks pounded on doors at all hours of the day and night, and that women and children were exposed to sights "not intended for their eyes". During the discussion, it was revealed that an "unscrupulous real estate agent" had induced the prostitutes to leave Klondike City and settle on Dugas. This unnamed agent had told the women that he had fixed matters with the police and that if they paid a fine every two months they would not be disturbed.⁶⁶ At a second meeting, the chairman declared that his committee had no desire to drive the women into other sections of the city and that he had turned the matter over to Sergeant Smith, the town's police chief.⁶⁷ Two weeks later, the Nugget reported that the police had issued explicit instructions for the prostitutes to be out of south Dawson by the end of November. They were not ordered to go to any particular place, but simply told to move beyond the city limits.⁶⁸ In December, those who refused to leave were hauled into court, and it was not long before Dugas street was "respectable" again.⁶⁹

A few prostitutes took up residence in other parts of Dawson. The Bartlett House, a rooming house on Third avenue, became a notorious resort of ill repute. The police carried out a careful surveillance over several months and put together enough evidence to prove a case which would test the prostitution regulations. In May 1903, the police raided the establishment, charged four women with "conducting a house for immoral purposes", and arrested two men for living off the avails. When their cases came to trial, the women pleaded guilty and each received two months at hard labour. The police did not introduce their evidence which supposedly showed

"moral depravity seldom heard of in the very lowest ranks of slum life" and which was "of such character as to preclude its publication". After evidence of the "most revolting" matter, the men received fines of \$50 and sentences of six months in the penitentiary.⁷⁰ This case, and two other minor ones, demonstrated that the police were indeed serious, and the "macques" and prostitutes quickly went across to Klondike City.

With prostitution under control again, the police turned their attention to the dance halls. In June 1903, Major Wood informed the commissioner of several cases where drunks had been robbed in dance halls and he suggested that the licence fee ought to be raised high enough to put it beyond the reach of the "dissolute class" who ran them.⁷¹ When the Yukon Council met in the following month, Wood introduced amendments which raised the dance hall licence to \$1500 and outlawed any connexion between dance halls and saloons. In its report of the sitting, the News described this legislation as "another blow at the commercial interests of the town". The newspaper contended that the dance halls were the only social clubs which accepted common working men and that it was wrong to tax them out of existence.⁷² When it came to a vote, the councillors postponed consideration of the matter until the next session.⁷³ At that session, because of questions of jurisdiction and because of the absence of public support, they resolved to shelve Wood's bill indefinitely.⁷⁴

The dance hall questions did not arise again until late in 1904. In December, the minister of the interior ordered the police at Dawson to close all "disorderly houses" and requested a report on police activity in that regard.⁷⁵ In a long letter, Wood replied that there were no disorderly houses in Dawson, and that the only ones in the district were segregated in Klondike City where "they afford no cause of complaint and are not in any way a menace to the morals of the

community." There were, however, prostitutes in the city who operated under the legal calling of dance hall women. These women openly paraded the streets, "dressed in silks and reeking of perfume", and their appearance gave the impression that vice flourished in Dawson. He asserted that the police had no power to interfere with them because dance halls were licensed businesses, because the proprietors refused to concede that their premises were ever used for immoral purposes, and because complainants seldom went so far as to press charges. The territorial licence inspector, moreover, was responsible for the enforcement of regulations, and the police could not take action until he requested them to do so. The situation, he concluded, was not a happy one, but the police had done all they could to improve it.⁷⁶

From the police point of view, the problem grew worse in the summer of 1906. When the river opened, a number of new dance hall women stopped in Dawson on their way to Fairbanks.⁷⁷ The three Protestant clergymen in the city became alarmed at the growth of this unsavoury element and they petitioned the Yukon Council to suppress the dance halls, but without result.⁷⁸ At the same time, the police wished to proceed against the individual women on information they had obtained. The acting police magistrate, Judge Dugas, preferred that they raid the licensed dance halls to attack the evil at its source. Yet the Yukon commissioner, W.W.B. McInnes, vetoed all proposed raids on the places. The police then found themselves unable to enforce their orders and all efforts to clean up Dawson were ineffective.⁷⁹

When McInnes resigned early in 1907, the acting commissioner authorized the police to investigate the dance halls. Major Wood reported that many of the women were prostitutes and that rooms above the 'M & N' and 'Floradora' were used for immoral purposes. He also affirmed that the Seattle police had advised him that there were "some very bad characters"

among the "artists" who had recently arrived.⁸⁰ When a police crackdown appeared imminent several influential citizens of Dawson petitioned the minister of the interior against this action. They contended that the institutions were places "of recreation and amusement for a large number" and had "no harmful influence upon any portion of the community." They also denied that they were resorts for improper conduct. The proprietors of the dance halls protested that they had invested over \$100,000 and that they had done their best to prevent prostitution on their premises. The owners also claimed that their establishments were the only ones open to those who were "beyond the pale" of social recognition.⁸²

The argument had no impact on the police. In May, Major Wood officially notified the licence inspector that the dance halls were frequented by prostitutes and that if he did not prosecute them, the police certainly would.⁸³ When the cases went to court, however, the judge dismissed them. Wood concluded that the police could do nothing as long as the dance halls were allowed to exist by law.⁸⁴

The new commissioner, Alexander Henderson, was determined to change this state of affairs. Soon after his arrival in Dawson, Henderson persuaded Judge Dugas to prepare an ordinance to prohibit dance halls from serving alcohol and to remove all their connexions with licensed premises.⁸⁵ Dugas introduced his bill at the August session of the Yukon Council. At second reading, the judge commented that he had had no personal experience of the dance halls but he understood them to be houses of prostitution. Moreover, Ottawa had come to regard the Dawson officials "as anything but honorable" for having tolerated this situation for so long.⁸⁶ The councillors were not all in favour of the change. Registrar Girouard described the measure as arbitrary and unfair and Dr. Lachapelle added that it was far from popular. Dugas replied that on questions of morality it did not matter if 90 per cent

of the people were opposed.⁸⁷ John Grant objected to the imposition of the "narrow ideas of the effete East" and boasted that he had never been solicited in his visits to the dance halls. J.T. Lithgow added that he would not support a bill based on "some sudden spasm of morality".⁸⁸ After a long debate the bill passed third reading by a vote of six to three.⁸⁹ The following day the 'M & N' closed its doors. The 'Floradora' remained open as a temperance dance hall, but after four and a half months it too went out of business.⁹⁰

With the dance halls shut down, Major Wood announced that Dawson was "as free from immorality as any Eastern City, and much more so than any mining camp that has hitherto been known." Its people were law-abiding and the only trouble was caused by "toughs" on their way to or from Alaska.⁹¹ When a band of gamblers and prostitutes who had been driven out of Fairbanks set up a dance hall in Dawson, the police reacted swiftly. They collected evidence and pressed charges, and in short order its proprietors retreated from the district.⁹²

By the fall of 1907, Dawson was probably no worse than any comparable town in southern Canada. Indeed, it might have been much better. In that era, according to James H. Gray, the new cities and towns of the prairie west had dance halls, "boozeries" and segregated areas filled with brothels. In Winnipeg, Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Moose Jaw and Lethbridge prostitution flourished and became a major industry.⁹³ But in Dawson the dance halls had been closed and the prostitutes had moved to Klondike City.

Paradoxically, it was then that a supposedly reform-minded clergyman made public allegations about corruption and prostitution in the Yukon capital. The Rev. John Pringle had arrived in the Yukon in 1898 and had spent most of the years since then serving the Presbyterian congregation at Grand Forks. From the beginning, he had taken an interest in local politics and in 1902 began a personal crusade against the improprieties of

various territorial officials.⁹⁴ In a July 1907 letter to the prime minister, Pringle denounced the "drunkards and whore-mongers in high public office" and asserted that bawdy houses were a logical corollary of "the presence in our administrative life of unashamed male prostitutes." If the officials were not recalled at once, he threatened "to state the case in the plainest terms in the Eastern press..."⁹⁵ When the Yukon commissioner investigated Pringle's charges, the clergyman demanded the appointment of a royal commission with power to summon and protect witnesses. The new minister of the interior, Frank Oliver, refused to establish a formal investigation into charges of private misconduct, and he was satisfied when Henderson and the local board of trade assured him that Dawson was as moral a community as any in Canada.⁹⁷

When Pringle received the minister's reply he embarked on a campaign of malicious misrepresentation against the Yukon administration. In letters to southern newspapers, all Conservative organs, he alleged that in Dawson the laws against prostitution and gambling were not properly enforced. He also contended that conditions had not improved since 1904, when he had told the Presbyterian general assembly that Dawson was "an open and offensive moral sewer". He further charged that the police allowed "lewd women" to lure men into their rooms above the dance halls where they relieved them of their money, "their "manhood", and occasionally of their lives. And he explained that he fully expected his appeals through the press in the east, "where the vote is", to accomplish more than had his entreaties to the responsible ministers of the crown.⁹⁸

These letters aroused great hostility in Dawson. The newspapers roundly condemned Pringle for defaming the town. The World wondered why the cleric had never lodged a single complaint with the police, and the News decried the correspondence as nothing more than "a vulgar attempt to vent political spleen".⁹⁹ Prominent citizens also were offended. The

Anglican Bishop in Dawson, for example, wrote that he had "no desire to enter newspaper controversies but these false insinuations and allegations can't go on forever without some contradiction."¹⁰⁰ The official reaction was temperate but firm. Commissioner Henderson wrote that Pringle had been in error on many occasions and regretted his reluctance to cooperate with territorial officials in the suppression of vice. He went on to state that he did not require "the stimulus of a communication in a newspaper" to urge him to perform his duty.¹⁰¹

Pringle, however, refused to recant. In mid-February 1908 another letter appeared in the Montreal Witness. It specifically charged that prostitutes carried on their business unhindered and that dance halls were "as thick as thieves".¹⁰² This campaign eventually reached the floor of the House of Commons. In June, the Conservative opposition raised the complaints and arraigned the government for negligence in not correcting the abuses. The most effective reply came from a Liberal member who noted that the Yukon M.P., Dr. Thompson, who was not a supporter of the government, had never spoken on the matter during his four years in Ottawa. Thompson was absent from the House, and had no chance to state his position.¹⁰³

Pringle's behaviour was also a major issue when the Yukon Council reconvened in July. At its first meeting, a Conservative member, Dr. J.O. Lachappelle moved:

That this Council expresses in the strongest terms its regret that Mr. Pringle should have entered upon a deliberate campaign of exaggerated calumny and slander and should now be so industriously engaged in villifying those with whom he lately associated in pretended amity and esteem and from whom he has received for ten years past, support, maintenance and comfort; that this Council expresses...its belief that the Yukon Territory and Dawson will compare favourably with any part of America and with any town in the respect paid to law and order, the regard for morality and observance of all social, commercial, legal and religious conventions, decencies and amenities.¹⁰⁴

In seconding the motions, John Grant declared that he had been unable to find language strong enough to condemn the man "who said that it was but a step from Dawson into hell." Grant also introduced a sworn affidavit that the reverend clergyman had himself consorted with prostitutes. In the debate which followed, all members but one united to excoriate Pringle. Only George Black, the territory's most irascible Tory, opposed the motion in what the World described as hours of "puerile rot". After four days of heated discussion the motion passed with only one dissenting vote.¹⁰⁵

The Yukon Council's censure of Pringle did not put the issue to rest. Moral reform and ministerial associations in southern Canada continued to bombard the federal minister of justice with demands that he eradicate all vestiges of immorality in the Yukon.¹⁰⁶ The police commander in Dawson informed the minister that Pringle's charges had been based on "occurrences several years old", when the Klondike had been outside the bounds of "refined civilization", and that they did not at all refer to existing conditions.¹⁰⁷ In his year end report Major Wood flatly stated that the agitators would find more immorality in their own towns than they would in all the Yukon.¹⁰⁸ Finally, in January 1909, the town's five remaining clergymen wrote Laurier that the laws regarding immorality and vice had been well enforced and that "social and moral conditions in Dawson are today fully up to those of the average Canadian town."¹⁰⁹ In the face of all these confutations the reform agencies turned their attention elsewhere.

It is apparent that Pringle's intent in publicizing his complaints was not entirely altruistic. Most of his critics at the time argued that his motivation was political and that his agitation was designed to assist the Conservative party. Some believed that he had designs on the office of commissioner and only turned against the government when he was not appointed. Others suggested that he had acted out of revenge

after being denied part of his sessional indemnity because of absence during his tenure as Yukon Councillor for Klondike.¹¹⁰ D.R. Morrison, however, implied that Pringle's ambition lay within the Presbyterian Church of Canada. By 1908 Pringle had spent 10 years in the Yukon and he may have wanted a change. As a crusader against wickedness, he might attract the attention of churches in southern Canada. It may not have been coincidental that he left St. Andrew's Church in Dawson at the end of March and began a lecture tour of eastern Canada. In June, he reiterated his statements before the Presbyterian general assembly, which honoured him with a resolution commending his "fearless denunciation of vice". He then went on to a new Church in Sydney, Nova Scotia.¹¹¹

In the years following Pringle's departure, prostitution ceased to be an issue in Dawson. Occasionally local ministers would make complaints, but when they learned that the police required more than idle gossip in order to bring charges they usually withdrew.¹¹² The police refused to take action except on clear violations of the law. In the strictest sense, Dawson had no houses of ill fame because by law they had to have two or more inmates. The police suspected a few places conducted as cigar stores but, since each was occupied by a single woman, they could not be prosecuted under the criminal code.¹¹³ "Macques", however, could be arrested for living off the avails of prostitution, and the police did not hesitate to act against them. In August 1908, the police raided Klondike City and took several women into custody to deprive the men of further income. This crackdown was unsuccessful because the women refused to give evidence against the men.¹¹⁴ In later years, the police used provisions of the Immigration Act to deport undesirables, and in this manner the macques were soon driven from the district.¹¹⁵ But prostitutes received a kind of tacit approval to operate in Dawson as long as they behaved themselves and caused no complaints. If they disturbed

their neighbours the police were quick to respond. In one case in 1914, a woman received two months hard labour for keeping a common bawdy house. When she appealed, a territorial judge ruled that the punishment was deserved, as Dawson was a small community where such conduct was very noticeable, and that women of her character should not be permitted the "brazen effrontery" to flaunt themselves in the face of the law.¹¹⁶ This decision was a clear warning to all prostitutes in Dawson. The police noticed that many suspicious women had taken the hint and left for other parts. The few who remained knew the limits of their behaviour and they became as quiet and inoffensive as possible. By the end of 1914 prostitution was no longer a problem in Dawson.

The official attitude to prostitution in Dawson's early years reflected the character of the town, and that attitude changed as the town itself was transformed from a rough frontier camp to a permanent metropolitan centre. There were three distinct phases in the efforts to control the problem. When the gold rush was at its peak, and when men far outnumbered women, the administration's paramount concern was the prevention of an epidemic of venereal disease. The commissioner and the police believed that prostitution was unavoidable when the population was highly transient, and they allowed the women to operate openly.

After the departure of the early frontier element, the town became relatively stable and the second phase began. There was no attempt to eradicate prostitution altogether. The townspeople realized that Dawson was the metropolitan centre of an industrial region and there was an unspoken recognition that prostitutes provided a service for many of the men who came down from the creeks. The women could remain in the town but they had to be removed from prime commercial locations and

put in a separate and distinct district. The geographic limitations of the townsite meant that prostitutes were always on the edge of residential neighbourhoods. When the proportion of women and children rose, the authorities decided to increase the distance between the segregated areas and residential districts. Yet, there still was no serious attempt to outlaw prostitution. As Sam Steele noted, the community accepted prostitution as a necessary evil and it tolerated the women as long as they remained quiet and unobtrusive. The whole question does not indicate moral ambivalence in a frontier setting. There was virtually no conflict among the social, commercial and political leaders in Dawson and the consensus was that the prostitutes performed part of the town's metropolitan function.

Reform movements for the suppression of vice were almost entirely directed from southern Canada. These efforts were primarily the result of political concerns. Dawson was unlike other cities where local councils looked after local problems. Until the Yukon Council became wholly elective in 1909, the Dawson authorities were civil servants who took their orders from Ottawa. The federal government then was vulnerable on questions of morality in the Yukon. The minister of the interior directed his representatives to clean up the town to satisfy southern Canada at election time. The conflict between the minister and officials on the scene reflected two points of view, and each side faced a different set of political exigencies. The minister had to placate his electorate; the Yukon officials had to keep resentment of outside interference to a minimum. Paradoxically, the sensitivity of the government to charges of negligence led to a strict enforcement of the law in an isolated region. The police had to appear to be acting firmly in order to deflect criticism aimed at the federal government. In Dawson, the North West Mounted Police were more concerned and more vigilant than elsewhere, and they enforced a higher moral standard than the community desired.

Much of the significance of the prostitution issue is the result of the popular image of Dawson as the lawless and bawdy town of 1898. Most reform efforts were aimed at remedying that image, since the actual situation was quite different. After 1899, Dawson was probably no worse than any comparable city in Canada. But reformers continued to believe that it was overrun by women of ill repute and they campaigned for the improvement of a mythic town which had ceased to exist. Many reform agencies acted on information which dated back to 1898, and even John Pringle's charges were based on evidence that was five years out of date. His complaints were taken as far as the House of Commons because they coincided with the popular imagination. Prostitution was not as serious in Dawson as southern Canadian believed. The problem was that prostitution had become an integral part of Dawson's gold rush reputation.

X Hospitals and Public Health

Dawson's isolated location and inadequate sanitary arrangements made public health a matter of paramount concern for its authorities. In the period before 1898, the most serious diseases were those which resulted from the Klondike environment. In winter, miners suffered from pneumonia and rheumatism as well as frostbite and gangrene. Scurvy, scrofula, anaemia and other afflictions associated with malnutrition were almost inevitable in an isolated region where climatic conditions limited the growth of fruits and vegetables and where the usual diet consisted of a handful of preserved foods. The rapid influx of people brought new diseases to the region and at the height of the gold rush there was an epidemic of typhoid fever. In later years, new arrivals from outside brought smallpox, measles, diphtheria and other infectious diseases. Under these conditions, Dawson's two hospitals were often full and they provided a crucial service to the community.

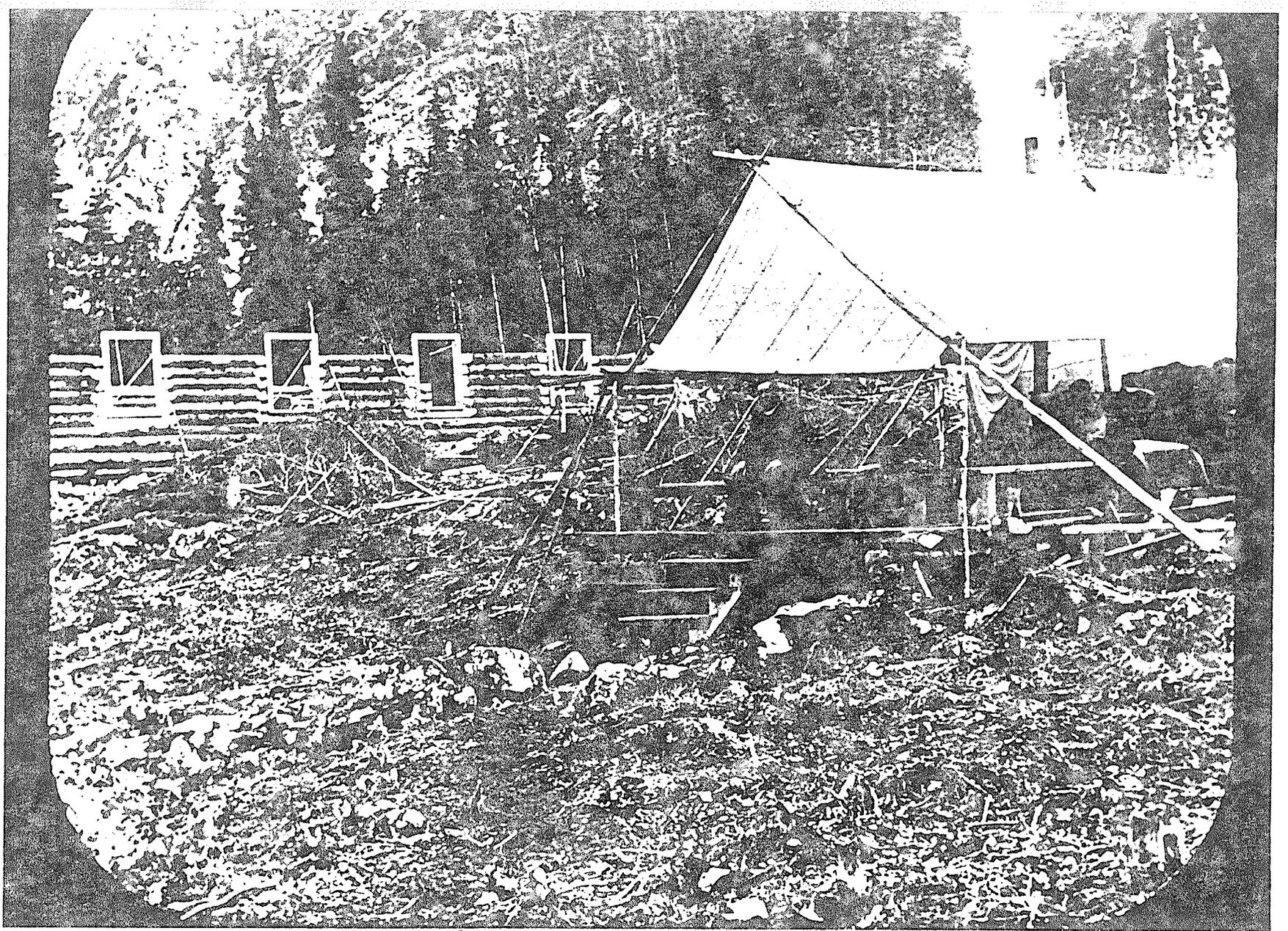
Much of the disease in Dawson's early years was the result of the location of the townsite. The flat at the confluence of the Klondike and the Yukon was low and wet and parts were little more than bogs. The first residents made few provisions for drainage or the removal of waste and the absence of those facilities posed a serious threat to public health. In the summer of 1897, the San Francisco Examiner correspondent in the Klondike reported that Dawson was a death-trap because of "this dripping moss, this putrid water, these dismal swamps, this rotting sawdust, this vileness as to sewage..." and especially because its inhabitants were not

well nourished.¹ In these conditions epidemics were unavoidable and hospitals were absolute necessities.

Dawson had its first hospital before the town was a year old. Soon after his arrival in March 1897, Father William Judge recognized the extreme health hazards of the town and made plans for a large hospital to be built on the three acres of high ground he had received in Dawson's north end. In the spring, he raised \$1400 by public subscription and an additional sum through the sale of a health insurance scheme and he began construction of St. Mary's Hospital early in June. He also requested that the Sisters of St. Ann, a nursing order stationed on the lower Yukon, be sent to take charge of it. While the log structure was being built, he offered shelter and medical care in a tent. In mid summer, there were more patients than the tent could hold and the demand grew so great that the hospital was opened before the roof was put in place.²

The hospital over which Judge presided was a two storey log building, about 50 feet by 20, and the care it offered was necessarily primitive. The priest's knowledge of medicine was very limited and the first doctors were handicapped by the lack of any kind of dispensary. There were no mattresses or sheets, and the beds were made of rough hewn lumber and sacks of sawdust. Despite these limitations, however, St. Mary's Hospital served a rudimentary, but necessary, function as it provided food and shelter to all who were sick and helpless.

Scurvy was the most common disease in winter and the only treatment available consisted of raw potatoes. In summer, Dawson was subject to outbreaks of typhoid. In his annual report for 1897, Gold Commissioner Fawcett wrote that "the place in its natural condition is such that typhoid fever would need little encouragement to make great progress." There had been a few deaths from typhoid in that year, he added, and unless steps were taken to prevent it there would

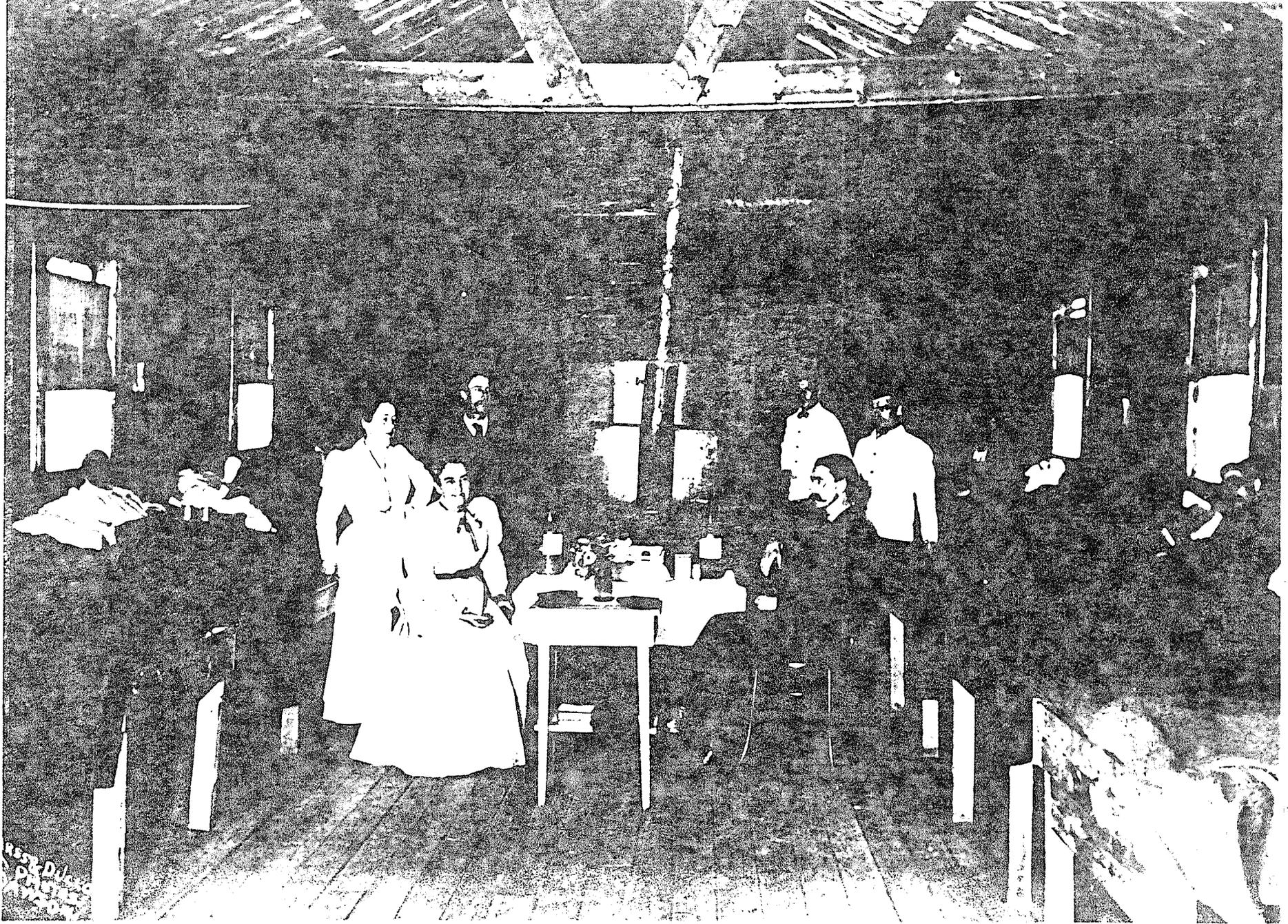


Father Judge and the foundation of St. Mary's Hospital
(Alaska State Museum)

be an epidemic in the coming summer.³ When the federal officials sent with Major Walsh arrived early in 1898, Fawcett advised them to do something to cleanse the town and Crown Prosecutor Wade issued notices which required the owners of property to disinfect their outbuildings. After the territorial court told the police that he had no authority in Dawson, Wade became convinced that "a terrible epidemic is probable if not certain."⁴ The situation grew worse when the Yukon thawed and flooded the townsite. In May, the first arrivals from upriver found Dawson under five feet of water and the ground remained wet and soggy after the river had receded.

The vast influx of people into a town which lacked the most elementary sanitary arrangements quickly rendered the place exceedingly unhealthy. As goldseekers swarmed into Dawson, the streets became littered with rubbish and the filth and stench which assailed pedestrians were "positively poisonous".⁵ There were no sewers and few ditches and the water supply became contaminated after refuse was dumped into the rivers on either side of the town.⁶ Early in July, typhoid broke out and by the end of the month had reached epidemic proportions. The American consul reported that the disease was so prevalent that anyone could expect to be taken down with it at any time, and many of the diaries and memoirs of Klondike stampedeers record the names of friends and associates who were stricken.⁷ In August and September, the disease spread rapidly, resulting in a number of deaths.⁸ The epidemic continued well into October and November and only abated when the ground froze solidly as winter took hold.

The typhoid epidemic severely taxed the resources of St. Mary's and prompted the Presbyterian missionary at Dawson to construct a second hospital. In mid August 1898, Good Samaritan Hospital opened its doors and its beds were soon taken up by typhoid patients. Unlike Father Judge, the Reverend Andrew S. Grant had had several years of medical



Good Samaritan Hospital c.1898 (Yukon Archives)

training but he too was hampered by a lack of resources.⁹ While the Sisters of St. Ann provided nursing services at St. Mary's, at Good Samaritan those duties were performed by two nurses of the Victorian Order who had accompanied the Yukon Field Force on its long trek overland. Nurse Georgina Powell became matron in charge of Good Samaritan and she described the conditions she found there to the patron of the Victorian Order, Lady Aberdeen. She had seen something of typhoid fever, she related, but nothing had prepared her for the severity of the disease at Dawson. The hospital was filled with men who were desperately ill and yet the institution had no disinfectants, no sheets, no gowns, no pillows, no materials for dressings, and the patients had to share the eating utensils and cutlery.¹⁰ A month after taking charge of Good Samaritan, Nurse Powell contracted typhoid herself and her place was taken by two other members of the VON who arrived from Fort Selkirk.

St. Mary's and Good Samaritan were Dawson's largest hospitals but there were a few smaller institutions in the town. The mounted police had their own infirmary, presided over by two commissioned officers, both of whom were qualified physicians. The gold rush had brought a number of American doctors and many of these men and women opened private hospitals in their tents and cabins. The largest was a two storey log structure established by Dr. Isadore Bourke.¹¹ When American physicians began to hang out their shingles, the Canadian doctors formed the Yukon Medical College. Early in 1898, this organization declared that only those doctors legally entitled to practise in the North West Territories could practice in Dawson and in the fall it persuaded the Yukon Council to recognize the College as the proper licensing authority for the medical profession in the territory. The College specifically excluded Americans and thus officially prevented their practising in Dawson.¹²

The police, however, declined to proceed against those who ran hospitals as long as typhoid continued to spread.

The epidemic quickly filled the hospitals in Dawson and on one occasion there were 200 men crammed into space designed for 70.¹³ As the number of patients surpassed their combined capacity, St. Mary's and Good Samaritan each made plans for expansion. Father Judge arranged for a three storey addition to St. Mary's while Grant put up a second storey for Good Samaritan and began work on a two storey administration building.¹⁴ These extensions and the high cost of supplies put the two hospitals heavily into debt. St. Mary's accumulated the larger debt because the majority of its patients were penniless newcomers. St. Mary's was also avowedly non-sectarian and the Nugget asserted that it had done "more work of genuine charity in one year than everything else of the kind in the entire North West."¹⁵ Good Samaritan, on the other hand, was clearly a Protestant hospital and it was administered by the board and session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church. Moreover, Grant and its directors were determined that it was not to be a "free hospital" and they had a marked reluctance to accept indigents.¹⁶ The typhoid epidemic, however, forced both hospitals to do a large amount of charitable work.

Financing the hospitals was always a difficult matter. At first, the only revenues of St. Mary's came from voluntary donations and from the sale of \$50 hospital tickets.¹⁷ When these sources failed to provide sufficient funds, prominent citizens organized benefit performances and other expedients. F.C. Wade, for example, raised \$870 by charging admission to hear an actor read a recent newspaper, and the raffle of a gold watch contributed an additional \$500.¹⁸ These were only stop-gap measures and the hospital's expenses continued to outrun its income. In July, Judge appealed to the government for assistance and Commissioner Walsh contributed \$5000 from the territorial revenues. In his explanation to the minister of

the interior, Walsh declared that conditions in Dawson required hospitals and that something had to be done to support them.¹⁹ Three weeks later, he authorized \$2500 for the construction of Good Samaritan Hospital.²⁰ Even these donations were inadequate. On the day that Good Samaritan opened, the Nugget reported that St. Mary's was \$25,000 in debt.²¹ Two months later that debt had risen to almost \$44,000 because 261 patients had been unable to pay their bills.²² Under those conditions, it became apparent that the hospitals could not function unless provisions were made for the payment of indigents' hospitalization.

At the height of the typhoid epidemic, the Yukon Council turned over an additional \$1000 to Good Samaritan Hospital and St. Mary's received \$2,000.²³ These grants were hardly enough and the members of the Council looked for other ways of providing funds. In September 1898, Commissioner Ogilvie and Supt. Steele resolved to levy fines against prostitutes and gamblers and to use the proceeds "for the amelioration of distress."²⁴ They collected \$10,000 in the first month and that sum was used to relieve the hospitals of part of their deficits.²⁵ Yet even with those revenues the hospitals could not meet their expenses. Both hospitals were filled during October when the financial crisis arrived.

In order to keep the hospitals in operation the Yukon Council passed an emergency appropriation of \$21,000 for the care of the indigent sick. In a series of letters to Sifton, Ogilvie justified this expenditure. The cost of hospitalization, he wrote, was \$5 per day and most typhoid patients were confined for a month. Few of them could afford \$150, and the hospitals had overtaxed their resources. When the board of Good Samaritan had threatened to refuse to accept the sick and destitute, the Yukon Council, "driven by human consideration", had agreed to take responsibility for their bills. The councillors made a similar arrangement

with St. Mary's.²⁶ Even then, the board of Good Samaritan considered closing up the hospital and it only remained open because of further grants totalling \$5,000.²⁷

In his official report Ogilvie explained the situation with greater clarity. The expenditure on the sick and destitute in Dawson represented 48 per cent of the territorial receipts, and he added:

the Council found it absolutely necessary to make this expenditure, as men were lying sick in Dawson and all over the mining districts and no one to take care of them [sic]. The great majority of the people seemed to be perfectly heartless in this matter. We, as a civilized Government could not allow these men to die like beasts, consequently we had to take care of them.²⁸

He concluded that those conditions would not have been tolerated for a moment in the early days when everyone knew everyone else and neighbours looked after each other. The great inrush of 1898 had destroyed that society and undermined its sense of community.

Financial arrangements for the care of indigents remained important when the number of typhoid cases declined in winter. In November, Ogilvie was alarmed by the incidence of scurvy and in December the mounted police doctor reported that there were more than 100 cases in the hospitals.²⁹ To limit the drain on local revenues the Yukon Council asked the two hospitals to submit tenders for the care of the destitute. Although Good Samaritan's bid was lower, the Council negotiated with both hospitals and it made arrangements with each. The councillors decided to reimburse St. Mary's at a daily rate of \$3.50 for each bed occupied by an indigent, and to pay Good Samaritan at a daily rate of \$3.00 for each destitute person treated, including out-patients.³⁰ At the same time, when it was apparent that the Yukon Council faced a shortage of funds, a private relief committee collected \$1800 from Dawson merchants and a benefit performance at the Monte Carlo theatre raised \$1500 more.³¹ This combination of public funding and

private charity enabled the two hospitals to remain open throughout the winter.

In the spring of 1899, public health improved in Dawson. Scurvy disappeared with the arrival of fresh food when the river opened and the departure of a large number of indigents relieved the pressure on the hospitals. When the ground thawed, the authorities took action to prevent another typhoid epidemic. In April, Ogilvie supervised the construction of a primitive drainage system which dried out the townsite and strict enforcement of the Yukon health ordinance prevented the accumulation of rubbish on the streets. The police magistrate levied heavy fines against people who were careless in the disposal of refuse and the health officer regularly examined the drinking water. Moreover, the organization of a system of waterworks provided a supply of uncontaminated water throughout the town.

Despite these precautions, typhoid again broke out. The first cases appeared in June but by August it was clear that there would not be an epidemic equal to the previous year.³² In mid September, there were only 78 typhoid patients in the two hospitals and in his monthly report the police commander declared that Dawson was as healthy as any town in Western Canada.³³ A month later, however, typhoid swept the police barracks and a medical inquiry found that the men had become ill from drinking unboiled water.³⁴ Once again, only the arrival of cold weather in November stopped the disease from spreading.

The matter of hospital finances arose again late in 1899. By the end of the year Good Samaritan was free of debt but St. Mary's owed \$35,000 to one of the commercial companies and had other debts of over \$5,000.³⁵ In late December, a group of concerned citizens rented the Palace Grand theatre for a week-long bazaar to raise money for the payment of those debts. There were amateur theatricals, formal balls, rummage

sales and a variety of community events. It was the social affair of the year and it contributed almost \$15,000 to the hospital's income.³⁶

The bulk of the revenues of both hospitals came from the appropriation for the indigent sick and each tried to get a larger share of the "government patients". St. Mary's was the bigger hospital and its directors sought to have indigents assigned in proportion to the number of beds available, regardless of the wishes of the patients or their relatives. The members of the board of Good Samaritan objected to that proposition because it would undermine the financial stability of their institution and they contended that the majority of people were Protestants who preferred the Presbyterian hospital. The Yukon Council decided that equal numbers should be admitted to each hospital and the medical health officer left the final decision to the patients themselves.³⁷

A second problem associated with the treatment of the indigent sick was the fact that the system was sometimes abused by persons determined to evade paying for their medical care. Ogilvie believed there was "a good deal of fraud" in that connection and he asked the mounted police to investigate.³⁸ The police had other responsibilities and they declined to carry out wholesale interrogations. In March 1900, the medical health officer reported that 33 of 36 patients at St. Mary's and 24 of 26 at Good Samaritan were "on the government account". He thought that those numbers were unusually high and suspected that some of the patients were guilty of "deceit", but he had no way of telling who had money and who did not.³⁹ The members of the Yukon Council had similar suspicions, especially when the comptroller revealed that the 1899 donations to the hospitals amounted to more than \$112,000.⁴⁰ At the spring session of the Council, the committee on public health drew up a list of declarations to be made by the indigent sick before entering the hospitals

which was designed to keep those with means from staying in hospital at public expense.⁴¹

In the spring of 1900, there was little sickness in Dawson and most hospital patients were men whom the police had brought in from the creeks. The Nugget, however, expected a recurrence of typhoid fever because many residents took water from holes chopped in the river ice near the mouth of the Klondike. It applauded the passage of an ordinance which made that practice illegal and in later months printed columns of advice on how to avoid typhoid.⁴² There were only a few cases of typhoid in 1900 and although the disease was not eliminated entirely, the greatest threat in the following decade concerned outbreaks of smallpox. After the appearance of two cases of smallpox in July, Ogilvie called a public meeting to discuss the issue and to organize a committee "to make strenuous endeavours to stamp it out." He also asked the NWMP to be vigilant at the summit of the White Pass and at other points of entry and to quarantine any suspected carrier.⁴³ By the end of the month, there were nine cases in Dawson and Good Samaritan Hospital was closed for 15 days as a precautionary measure.⁴⁴ Early in August, all patients had recovered and when a fortnight passed without any new cases the authorities believed that their prompt action had averted an epidemic.⁴⁵ They had no illusions, however, that the threat had disappeared completely and they often referred to the possibility of the disease being brought in by someone from outside. Thus, at its fall sitting, the Yukon Council passed an ordinance which made smallpox vaccinations compulsory and the commissioner ordered 13,000 vaccinating points from Toronto and Vancouver.⁴⁶ In the winter months, the medical health officer and his assistants made a concerted effort to vaccinate all residents of Dawson and most miners on the creeks. Ogilvie was so determined to prevent smallpox that he asked the mounted police to undertake a house to house canvass to ensure that everyone was vaccinated and to

arrest and fine all those who were not.⁴⁷

The vaccination campaign succeeded in limiting the spread of smallpox in the summer of 1901. When the first case appeared in the spring, Ogilvie ordered the health officer to vaccinate all new arrivals as they disembarked but this practice was not entirely successful. Although there were few cases in Dawson, by September there were several at various places on the creeks and Ogilvie had the patients isolated at nursing stations outside the town. Fortunately, the disease appeared to be a mild form which the local physicians believed was not particularly dangerous and it disappeared by the middle of October.⁴⁸

There were two other developments with regard to public health that year. Early in 1901, A.S. Grant returned after several months outside and found that Good Samaritan Hospital had run up debts of \$7,000. He immediately assumed responsibility for its finances and took over complete control of its daily administration. It soon became apparent that fiscal matters took priority over the treatment of the ill. Only days after taking charge Grant voiced his objections to Good Samaritan being used as a maternity hospital. He even refused to accept pregnant women at the indigent rate and charged them \$15 per day with several days payment required in advance. He did so on the pretence that post-natal treatment required "longer time" and he told his critics that they were free to take the "government business" elsewhere.⁴⁹ These comments made Grant's supervision of the hospital a matter of much public discussion and his determination to make it pay for itself provoked questions about its status as a public institution. The members of the board replied that the complainants were motivated by "professional jealousy and personal dislike" and the chairman asserted that the hospital was always open to investigation.⁵⁰ Although the Yukon Council launched no formal inquiry, it did review the matter of

public assistance to the hospitals and it modified the terms and daily rates. The Council resolved to subsidize both hospitals at a rate of 50¢ per day for each "private patient" and outpatient and \$2.50 per day for each indigent.⁵¹

The other development was an outbreak of rabies among the dogs which roamed the town. In the winter, the police killed several ferocious dogs and the general impression was that the animals had become crazed because of hunger and inability to withstand temperatures of 60 degrees below zero.⁵² In May, it was clear that rabies had broken out and Major Wood announced that his constables would shoot all dogs which were not tied up. After the police found "hundreds" of rabid dogs in Dawson, the Yukon Council required all dogs in town to be muzzled, tagged and leashed and it absolved the police from any claims for damages when they took action against animals running at large.⁵³ For a few weeks the situation was very tense, but although the dog population was significantly reduced there were no human deaths from rabies.

In 1902, Dawson was incorporated and the city council included health and sanitary regulations in its first by-laws. The sanitary regulations required all property owners to keep their premises clean and provided for fines of up to \$100 for violations which threatened the health of the community.⁵⁴ The council appointed a medical health officer at an annual salary of \$1000 and with wide ranging authority. The health officer could order the removal of all nuisances judged to be injurious to public health as well as impose quarantine, establish detention hospitals and destroy infected material.⁵⁵ It was not long before the first civic health officer had the opportunity to exercise those powers.

When Dr. McArthur undertook his standard examination of the passengers on the steamer White Horse on the completion of her first voyage of the season, he found one case of small-pox among her second class passengers. Using the authority vested in his position, he placed the whole ship with its

crew of 34 and 125 passengers in quarantine for at least two weeks.⁵⁶ This decision alarmed the merchants in Dawson and a "committee of citizens" asked the Yukon commissioner to have the Dominion telegraph service refuse to despatch news of the smallpox quarantine. The same people persuaded all reporters but one not to file the story.⁵⁷ They were unable to influence Casey Moran of the Yukon Sun. Moran visited the White Horse and relayed the passengers' complaints about the lack of pure water and clean linen. The health officer dismissed the complainants as "a bunch of kickers" and had Moran arrested for breaking the quarantine.⁵⁸ The police commander, Z.T. Wood, declined to take orders from McArthur and he released the reporter.⁵⁹ On 8 June, the Sun reported that the steamer had been quarantined only because the passengers refused to let McArthur inject them with vaccine which had expired and it denounced the doctor for assuring them that water from the Yukon was fit to drink. McArthur, it concluded, had been insolent and obstinate and the people on the White Horse had been made to suffer unnecessarily.⁶⁰ The Yukon Council, however, supported McArthur's decision and it paid the company which owned the steamer \$500 per day for its use and for boarding and lodging the passengers and crew.⁶¹ The city council, on the other hand, agreed with the Sun. McArthur's decision to protect the city from smallpox was successful but his tactless behaviour cost the health officer his position.⁶² At the end of June he was dismissed and replaced by another doctor.

There were no serious outbreaks of smallpox during the rest of the decade but other diseases sometimes swept the town. In 1904, the city health committee ordered the isolation of two children to prevent measles from spreading through the school.⁶³ That summer, the territorial health inspector advised the city to purchase a supply of antitoxin to prevent the spread of throat infections which resembled diphtheria and quarantined a house where a resident had contracted scarlet fever.⁶⁴ Generally public health was good throughout

1904 but in the following year there was a severe epidemic of dysentery. It affected children more than adults and there were three deaths from it in September. The Yukon commissioner ordered a thorough investigation of the water supply and more careful inspection of slaughter houses and bakeries. He also consulted the local physicians and they recommended that drinking water be boiled and that insecticide be used to control the flies which infested the town.⁶⁵

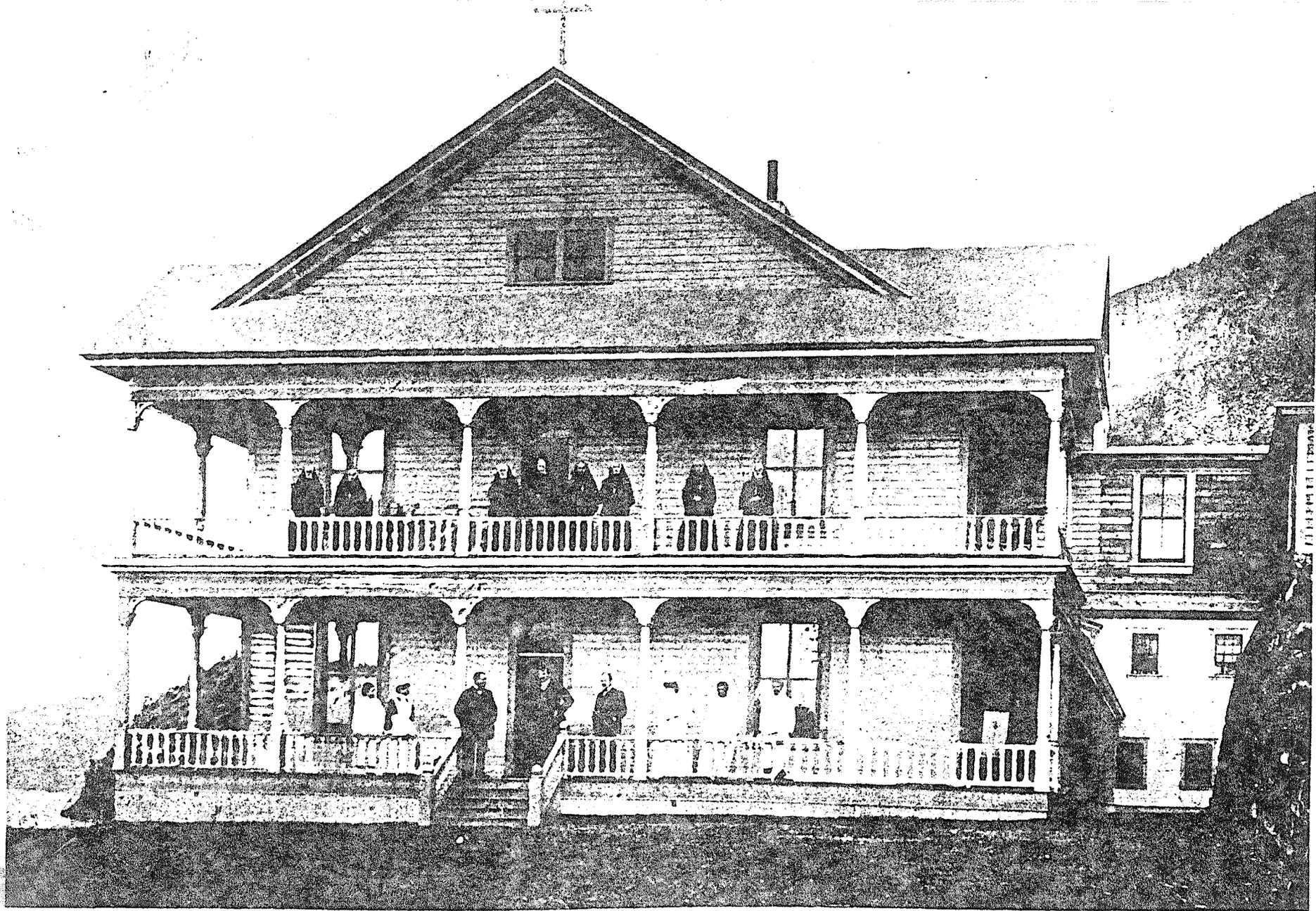
This experience prompted the Yukon Council to take additional measures to protect the health of children and in the spring of 1906 it began a compulsory vaccination program in the schools.⁶⁶ In the following year, the Council undertook a complete disinfection of all drains and cesspools in the town and, every year thereafter, the gutters were washed out with copperas, permanganate of potash and other chemicals.⁶⁷ In the winter of 1907, the authorities ordered a fresh supply of antitoxin after diphtheria broke out at the Moosehide reservation half a mile downriver, and they took prompt measures early in 1908 when measles reached epidemic proportions in Dawson. In April, the acting-commissioner closed the schools and issued orders to keep children from "mingling indiscriminately". The schools remained empty for three weeks as 70 of the pupils came down with the disease and the classrooms and infected houses were fumigated with sulphur. These precautions put the disease under control and in five weeks it had run its course.⁶⁸

During the same period, the two hospitals underwent several changes. Early in 1904, the board of Good Samaritan filed articles of incorporation with the Yukon Council and offered to let the institution become a civic general hospital in return for a grant from the city.⁶⁹ In March, the Yukon Council granted a charter under the Charities Act and the city authorized a subsidy of \$3,000. Before a month had passed, a local physician objected to the transaction and he asked the city councillors for an explanation as to why they had

chosen Good Samaritan over St. Mary's. He also questioned the city's grant in light of the fact that a Yukon ordinance already provided funds for the care of indigents and argued that the hospital was not eligible to receive public assistance because it was a sectarian institution.⁷⁰ In mid April, the aldermen decided that Good Samaritan was indeed a sectarian hospital since its board of control consisted primarily of members of the board of session of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church and they rescinded the \$3,000 appropriation.⁷¹ This setback was a blow to Grant's designs for the hospital but it did not frustrate his ambitions. He contributed some of his own resources and carried out a virtual rebuilding of the hospital which cost \$20,000. He saw that project through to its completion and then left Dawson for his new house in Toronto.⁷²

St. Mary's Hospital was also rebuilt. In the summer of 1905, its managers announced that a new building was necessary because the foundations of the existing structure had collapsed due to the annual shifting of the permafrost.⁷³ The following spring saw the construction of a modern hospital with two floors, a basement and a three-room annex, at a cost of \$40,000. This new structure was heated with hot water and lighted by electricity and a year later it received an X-ray machine and other advanced medical equipment.⁷⁴

Public assistance for the hospitals remained a thorny political issue. In 1907, the Yukon estimates included \$24,000 for the two hospitals in Dawson and Councillor Girouard declared that that sum was an extravagance which the territory could ill afford. He argued that the hospitals were actually self-sustaining and that they did not need their monthly subsidies of \$1,000. He also contended that their incomes from paying patients, private subscriptions, bazaars and other sources were equal to their needs and he secured the appointment of a committee to interview their managers.⁷⁵ The investigators learned that St. Mary's was only able to meet



St. Mary's Hospital

its expenses because of the \$12,000 grant and that Good Samaritan used its small surplus to retire its standing deficit. It was clear that they could not function without government assistance and the Yukon Council passed the appropriation without further debate.⁷⁶

The issue arose again at the spring session of 1910. On that occasion, a "taxpayers" representative charged that the hospitals required public assistance only because they were poorly managed. He alleged that the Reverend Mr. Grant had been lax in collecting payment from private patients and that his policy had been to turn them away in favour of indigents. Councillor Black agreed that the hospitals had the appearance of "poor houses" and he suggested that their supervisors demand security from paying patients.⁷⁷ In its editorial comment on the debate, the News conceded that the hospitals were not managed as well as they might be, but it added: "The almost unconscious sense of safety the hospitals have inspired in the people, inducing them to cast their lot here, is immeasurable and has been a factor in inducing permanent occupation."⁷⁸ When it came to a vote, the Yukon Council passed the annual hospital appropriation without dissent.

In the spring of 1911 the worst fears of the community were confirmed when smallpox broke out among the employees of the Yukon Gold Company on one of the creeks. It was traced to two men who had recently arrived from Seattle and the authorities responded promptly. The Commissioner rented a cabin near St. Mary's for an isolation ward and in the first week of June four patients were sent there.⁷⁹ A few days later, another case developed on the creeks and the first one appeared in the town. Dr. Alfred Thompson, the Yukon member of Parliament, fumigated the telegraph office and the residence of the infected person and he advised the commissioner to close the schools, library and churches.⁸⁰ Commissioner Henderson acted on that advice and he asked the theatres to suspend their

performances to prevent the assembly of large numbers of people. He also instructed the police to keep Indians out of town in order "to keep the natives from carrying the infection among themselves and elsewhere."⁸¹ Thompson resolved to stop the spread of the disease by means of isolation, quarantine, sanitation and vaccination.

The situation deteriorated as new cases appeared and on 18 June Thompson himself became ill.⁸² The commissioner then appointed the police surgeon, Dr. W.E. Thompson, to supervise the attempts to control the disease. As the number of patients rose, W.E. Thompson established a large quarantine camp at Jackson Gulch, two miles from Dawson, and there soon were 19 smallpox sufferers in residence there.⁸³ The acting health officer also persuaded the mining companies to shut down their operations and he gave orders to prevent steamboats from unloading passengers or freight.⁸⁴ When one of the sisters came down with smallpox, St. Mary's also went into quarantine and at the beginning of July both hospitals were closed.⁸⁵ Fortunately, all the patients had passed the danger point by then and there were no new cases reported. On 12 July, the health officer lifted the quarantine on Good Samaritan and three days later the commissioner allowed the theatres to reopen.⁸⁶

The smallpox epidemic was a costly experience for Dawson. The Yukon Council spent almost \$20,000 on hardware, water, medicines, building supplies and salaries for doctors and nurses.⁸⁷ More important, it caused a material curtailment in the general business of the town and shook public confidence in its future. The epidemic diverted traffic on the river to other points and the News estimated that the local businessmen had lost \$250,000 worth of business.⁸⁸ It also prevented tourists and potential investors from visiting and the money incidental to such arrivals also stayed away. Nonetheless, Dawson had survived a serious threat. The lifting of the quarantine restored the public confidence and the business community recovered after the first steamboats arrived.

Early in 1912, the commissioner and Council took stringent measures to prevent the outbreak of any contagious diseases, especially after the appearance of three cases of typhoid and several cases of measles and chickenpox. Commissioner Black ordered a large supply of formaldehyde, carbolic acid and other disinfectants and he directed the health officer to be especially vigilant in his examinations of incoming vessels.⁸⁹ The sanitary inspector issued his annual order for property owners to clean their premises and the police surgeon tested all sources of water.⁹⁰ Despite this concern with matters of public health, the hospital appropriation became an issue in the territorial election. Several candidates raised questions about the public expenditures for hospitals and when the new Yukon Council held its first session it set up a committee to ascertain how the grant might be reduced and the hospitals made self-supporting.⁹¹ The Council also decided to limit the hospital subsidies to \$10,000 each, as a majority of its members believed that both hospitals could take stronger steps to collect outstanding debts.⁹² To compensate for those losses, Good Samaritan and St. Mary's raised their prices for all patients by 50¢ per day and they made new arrangements to provide hospitalization for the mining companies.⁹³ The patrons of Good Samaritan also arranged a benefit ball and this annual affair contributed necessary revenue for the hospital's budget.

In the spring of 1913, the hospital committee was scheduled to present the report on its investigations but, when the Council met, the chairman declared that his committee had received no real authority to take evidence or summon witnesses and that it had therefore done nothing.⁹⁴ After a brief perusal of the financial reports from both hospitals, the Council reduced the grant for each to \$9,000.⁹⁵ The following year representatives from both hospitals appealed for the appropriation to be increased as they had incurred debts "of considerable size" in remaining open.⁹⁶ The Council rejected

these requests and the hospitals went further into debt. The hospitals appealed again in 1915 and the evidence of their dire financial straits persuaded the Council to vote \$12,000 for each. This sum was not sufficient for Good Samaritan and its directors offered to sell the hospital and its contents to the territory for \$15,000. A minority of the councillors favoured purchasing the institution but their colleagues overruled them and deferred the matter for further investigation.⁹⁷ The directors of Good Samaritan withdrew the offer as they were able to run the hospital with the \$12,000 subsidies provided in the next two years.⁹⁸

In 1918, the financial pressures on the territory brought the matter to a head. Wartime exigencies forced the Union Government at Ottawa to reduce the federal subsidy for the Yukon Territory and the Yukon Council had to resort to a policy of severe financial retrenchment. At its spring session, the Council limited the hospital grants to \$6,000.⁹⁹ For Good Samaritan this reduction was the last straw. The board of directors had been unable to stay clear of debt at double that amount and the chairman declared that the hospital could not remain in operation. He also offered to close Good Samaritan on condition that St. Mary's received the full \$12,000 grant and provided that the Catholic hospital allowed Protestants to sit on its board of managers and Protestant doctors and nurses to join its staff.¹⁰⁰ On 4 May, the board of Good Samaritan announced its decision to close the hospital and turn the building over to the gold commissioner. On 31 May, the last patient was discharged and a large portion of the staff prepared to leave for outside. From that day forward Dawson had one hospital and St. Mary's was a rather busy place.¹⁰¹

Public health became a matter of paramount concern in Dawson early in the gold rush era and it remained important during the twenty years which followed. The traumatic experience

of the typhoid epidemic in 1898 led the Yukon Council to regard the health of the community as a priority. The passage of strict sanitary regulations, the appointment of salaried health inspectors, and the subsidies for hospitals reflected the official determination to prevent the recurrence of conditions which bred disease. The precautions taken in 1899 precluded a second epidemic and they made Dawson as healthy as any place in southern Canada. At the same time, improvements in transportation affected the kinds of diseases which occurred. As fresh food became more readily available, the incidence of scurvy and other diseases associated with malnutrition was reduced. Yet the changes which made diets better also facilitated the arrival of large numbers of people and the introduction of new diseases. Typhoid was most severe at the height of the gold rush and in later years men from the Pacific coast brought smallpox and diphtheria.

Dawson's two hospitals were important factors in maintaining public health. Both began as private charities designed to meet extreme conditions but they were only able to function because of annual injections of public funds. The high proportion of transients and indigents in the town forced the Yukon Council to take responsibility for their care in order to prevent disease from spreading. The operating expenses of the hospitals were high because they were built to serve the inflated population of the gold rush years. Moreover, sectarian differences prevented St. Mary's and Good Samaritan from joining forces to provide more efficient service in the town's declining years. There were, however, occasions when one hospital would not have been enough, and for almost two decades the two hospitals were among Dawson's most important social institutions.

Conclusion

An examination of the history of the city of Dawson must assess the impact and the importance of the myth which surrounds the place. The myth portrays Dawson as the San Francisco of the north: a gaudy town whose golden streets were lined with saloons, dance halls and resorts of ill repute; where the lights were bright and the music never stopped. The myth was spawned by newspaper reporters and magazine writers who needed curiosities to sell their wares, and nurtured by the authors of potboilers and penny fiction. As the offspring of such doubtful parentage, Dawson could never equal its reputation nor attain respectability.

Dawson took shape as an unsophisticated mining camp built on a bog. It was not much different from other mining camps, as most of its original buildings had seen service at Forty Mile, Sixty Mile and other settlements along the Yukon. But for a year it played host to a horde of goldseekers, adventurers and ne'er do wells from around the world. In 1898, Dawson became the centre of the Klondike and its metropolitan functions and aspirations determined the shape it took in the years that followed. The next year the bubble burst and the boom was over. Dawson, however, remained the mercantile centre for an industrial region and the commercial and administrative headquarters of the Yukon. It also began its long masquerade as an oasis of urban civilization in an hostile environment.

The character of Dawson was in part dictated by the environment. At the confluence of the Yukon and the Klondike, it was situated on the axis of two transportation corridors. The Indians first used the alluvial flat as a summer camp where

the salmon caught on the Klondike and its tributaries were dried before being carried to permanent habitations up and down the Yukon. As a white settlement, the flat became a mining camp where gold replaced salmon, steamboats replaced canoes, and dredges eventually replaced fishing nets. The combination of geography and climate determined the physical development of the community and compounded the difficulties encountered in erecting the amenities of urban life. Dawson's buildings were made of low grade timber because that was all the surroundings offered; there were few brick or stone structures because they could not withstand the shifting of the permafrost; and the enormous cost of transportation rendered the use of imported materials especially expensive. Dawson assumed its peculiar form, then, not despite its environment but because of it.

Myth and environment also may have played important roles in determining the character of Dawson's citizenry. The city's isolation and the hardship in travel to it no doubt dissuaded many prospective Klondikers from venturing north. Only the most desperate or deluded trudged the trail of '98 and few found the rewards to make the effort worthwhile. The development of Dawson's population occurred in three phases. The first saw the congregation in Dawson of the career miners and adventurers of the Yukon basin after Carmack's strike in 1896. The next two years saw the influx of goldseekers and fortune hunters of various talents whose presence made Dawson the largest city north of Seattle and west of Winnipeg. That boom lasted less than a year. By the summer of 1899 it was over, as thousands gave up and went home.

Yet, if the boom was over, the migration northward still continued. Although Dawson slowly shrank in the ensuing 20 years, the population only fell because the number of departures exceeded the number of arrivals. The rate of turnover in population was extraordinarily high, often surpassing 85%. The correspondingly

low rate of persistence underlined the fact that Dawson had an unstable population with a consistently high number of transients. That demographic pattern accounts for the administrative, economic and social problems which the community experienced. Taxes were always high because the tax base was very small and the corporate citizens resented paying for the improvements enjoyed by all. The chronic shortage of public funds inhibited the development of proper fire protection, adequate municipal services and cost efficient water and electrical utilities.

Dawson's unstable population also aggravated the social problems associated with drinking, gambling and prostitution. There were plenty of saloons, gambling dens and resorts of ill repute because they provided the companionship and entertainment required by a young male population in unfamiliar territory. The community accepted those institutions, in part because they contributed to the local revenues, and there was no popular movement for their suppression. Instead of eliminating them, the authorities resolved to control the sale of alcohol and to make the prostitutes less visible. At the same time, however, transients were often reduced to destitution and indigent patients drained the hospitals of their resources.

Despite these problems, Dawson became and remained the metropolitan centre of the Yukon Territory. It grew at first because of its proximity to the gold bearing creeks and location on the major corridor of the region. Because the Klondike river was too shallow for steamboats, Dawson became a trans-shipment and break-of-bulk point for all goods destined for the goldfields. As a port, it developed the service industries required by the people who disembarked. The commercial companies made Dawson a distribution centre and the advent of banks and other corporations confirmed its mercantile function. The establishment of the territorial government enhanced the town's position, as it became the administrative and judicial centre of the region as well. The need to impose political control over the upper Yukon valley

expedited the development of roads and communications facilities which in turn strengthened Dawson's metropolitan stature.

Throughout its first two decades, however, Dawson did not conform to the usual metropolitan model. The first migration to the Klondike focused on the goldfields and Dawson was little more than Forty Mile transplanted to a new location. In a sense, its hinterland acquired a service centre rather than the centre a hinterland. Dawson never dominated its hinterland in the classic sense as geographical and climatic factors precluded it from directing the development of the mining frontier. Indeed, the activity and demands of the region had a greater impact on the growth and development of Dawson. Changes in methods of mining especially had serious repercussions. In the era of labour intensive mining, the town's primary function was mercantile as it supplied the goods and services required by the outlying population. The transition toward capital intensive mining removed the markets in the hinterland and undermined Dawson's mercantile function. By 1910, the town's transportation function had over-ridden its mercantile one, as the new mining companies imported their own supplies and materials and only used Dawson's docks. The clearest indication of this change appeared when the North American Transportation and Trading Company closed its Dawson stores on 1 July 1912.¹

Dawson also did not evolve within the usual metropolitan framework. While the community came to have financial institutions, they were not indigenous nor did they manage the mining economy. The Banks of Commerce and British North America were branches of central Canadian banks and were managed by men from central Canada. There was no mining exchange which controlled mineral production and the banks at first did little more than supply paper money and collect gold. While Dawson was clearly linked to other metropolises, it is difficult to establish which one was most important. The political connexion with Ottawa was especially apparent as the chief administrative officer of

the territory and sometime mayor was a federal appointee and the federal police force was the agency which enforced the law. Culturally, the town had ties with Seattle and other cities of the American west coast. Many of the early newspapermen came directly from the Puget Sound area, while American music hall performers often included Dawson in their Alaska circuit. The banks represented a business attachment to central Canada but they sent the gold to the US mint in San Francisco. The Alaska Commercial Company and the NAT&T Co. supplied personnel and trade goods from their headquarters in San Francisco and Chicago. Most public improvements were built with materials and by experts from Victoria and Vancouver. Moreover, by far the largest part of the investment which financed mining development came from the United Kingdom. And the population, although at first predominantly American, can best be described as polyglot and cosmopolitan.

While one commentator discerned elements of "the process of underdevelopment" in Dawson's failure to acquire the usual metropolitan attributes, environmental factors provide a much better explanation.² The long harsh winters placed severe constraints on agriculture. The hours of sunlight in the summer months could not compensate for the length of the winter when the ground was frozen and covered with snow, especially where the raising of cattle and the growth of forage crops were concerned. The nature of the growing season also militated against the development of truly diversified agriculture. While root vegetables and flowering plants flourished in the Yukon climate, grains and fruits did not. The Klondike region did not develop a strong agricultural base and Dawson and its hinterland never approached self-sufficiency in the way of food. The need to import provisions from outside the territory was a heavy drain on local capital and it reduced the amount available for investment in the community.

Geography and climate also curtailed industrial develop-

ment. The limited size of the Dawson townsite and the presence of permafrost at varying depths throughout were important factors. The alluvial flat on which the town was built had too little space for residential districts, government offices and industrial plants of any size. The only areas for expansion after 1898 were the south bank of the Klondike and the northern end of the townsite. In either case, geography precluded large scale expansion. The hills behind Klondike City inhibited southward growth, while the permafrost was closest to the surface in the city's north end. The technology required for the construction of heavy buildings, for foundries, machine shops and iron works on permafrost had not been developed, nor were there entrepreneurs of sufficient daring to attempt their construction.³ Expansion up the Klondike into the goldfields, on the other hand, was impossible because the land had been staked by miners. In addition, the costs of production and of heating in sub-zero temperatures, even where resources were available and fuel was inexpensive, lessened the viability of industrial enterprise. The paucity of resources also reduced the potential for a diversified economy. While there was plenty of gold, copper, zinc and lead, there was very little coal and iron, two essential elements of a modern industrial economy. There was hardly any iron available and the only coal mined in the region was soft and dirty and of insufficient quality. The coal, in fact, was so poor that the river steamboats reverted to the use of wood.⁴ Under these conditions, a truly diversified economy centred at Dawson was only a remote possibility.

Dawson's stature was undermined by still other factors. The demographic analysis has suggested that the number of transients in the community was a constant problem. The instability of the population and fluctuations in the labour

force by themselves might have precluded the development of an independent economy in the Yukon. Few governments, no matter how benign or dirigist, could have counteracted the powerful stimulus of the myth of Dawson or have persuaded the disappointed adventurers to become tradesmen in their new location. The myth of Dawson may explain the immigration to the Klondike as well as the emigration, and it kept the community in a state of constant turmoil.

Dawson was also hindered by the political framework in which it was established. The government of Canada was guilty of ignorance and neglect in the formation of its Yukon policies. Those policies evolved from the cabinet's understanding of the situation which was based upon the reports of interior department officials on the scene. The first federal officials included a few men of indifferent quality who took advantage of the unsettled situation for their own material benefit. From them Sifton received the impression that Dawson was just a placer camp whose fate would be like any other. An invasion of fortune seekers would dig the gold in its environs and when the deposits were exhausted the town would be abandoned. If that were the case, there would be no point in providing for permanent political and economic institutions. In the words of Sifton's biographer, an avowed supporter of the government, "the reasonable thing to do was to let things take this course, getting some revenue out of the field by imposing a royalty; and securing for Canadian business houses, the largest possible share of the resulting trade."⁵ After 1899, however, there was a marked change in the official attitude as administrative institutions were established for a permanent community. By that time, coincidentally, many of Sifton's original representatives had returned to Brandon to assist the minister in his campaign for re-election.

Improved transportation, moreover, had a heavy impact on Dawson's role as a metropolitan centre. In 1936, Harold Innis attempted "to trace the effects of free play in modern technology" and he concluded that "the peculiar economic development" of the Yukon Territory was a direct result.⁶ The White Pass company's railway and river steamships facilitated the importation of sophisticated machinery which hastened the transition from labour intensive to capital intensive mining and depopulated the goldfields. As their market in the hinterland disappeared, the Dawson merchants went out of business. At the same time, the trains and steamboats opened the region to the commercial and industrial pressures of central Canada. They brought in a variety of goods and they allowed the mail order houses of Toronto to undermine local enterprises in Dawson. Transportation improvements also made it possible for labourers to seek seasonal employment in the Klondike district and they took their wages with them when they left at the end of each summer. For the people of the Yukon, the costs of isolation might have been high but good communications brought them other problems.

While the attitude of government and changes in the gold fields had severe repercussions in Dawson, the community was also affected by external events. The outbreak of war in Europe had no immediate effect as immigration initially continued at levels similar to previous years. The departure in 1915 of J.W. Boyle's Yukon Machine Gun Battery was not a serious blow to the town because the bulk of its 50 members had come from the Canadian Klondike operation at Bear Creek.⁷ The organization of the Yukon Infantry Company in 1916, however, removed 275 young men and at one stroke reduced Dawson's population by over ten per cent.⁸ International exigencies also forced the mining companies to curtail their

activities and redundant employees usually left to find work elsewhere. The loss of all these consumers combined with the ravages of wartime inflation resulted in a severe economic stagnation in Dawson. In the spring of 1918, one citizen declared that the town "had depreciated something extraordinary during the last twelve months and displays little encouragement for the future."⁹ That fall, he added: "This place will be absolutely dead until the war is over."¹⁰ The commercial recession persuaded many of Dawson's long time residents to leave the territory, if not permanently, at least for the winter. According to the mounted police, the number of departures in 1918 was far higher than it had been for many years.¹¹

The injury this exodus inflicted upon Dawson was compounded by the north's worst maritime disaster. In a blinding snowstorm in the early hours of 24 October 1918, the Canadian Pacific steamship Princess Sophia, bound from Skagway for Prince Rupert and points south, struck the Vanderbilt reef in the Lynn Canal. High seas prevented the passengers being transferred to other ships and the captain preferred to wait out the gale. The following day all 343 on board perished when the vessel foundered and sank. Included in that number were 125 who had just left Dawson. Many of them had been Dawson's oldest residents; William J. O'Brien and his family, Sam Henry and his wife, John Zaccarelli, and Murray and Lulu Eades had lived in Dawson since 1897, and a large number of the others had been there for the better part of two decades. The loss decimated Dawson and cast a pall of gloom over the town that lingered for years.¹²

By the end of 1918, Dawson had shrunk into its core. Few of its old inhabitants remained and the town was only a shadow of what it once had been. Prohibitionists were closing the saloons and painted ladies had long since vanished from the streets. Only one newspaper continued publication, only one theatre offered entertainment, and only three churches still had congregations. The surviving hospital was full, not with patients but with indigent sourdoughs maintained there by the government. Houses stood empty and the back streets had begun to disappear under bush and weeds. Even the commissioner's residence was vacant and the courthouse had become a barracks for the mounted police. After George Black's departure with the Yukon Infantry, the gold commissioner administered the territory and the town, eventually with a Yukon Council reduced to just three members. Mining technology, the European conflict and the wreck of the Sophia had drained the community of its people and the war had put an end to immigration. There still was gold along the Klondike, and men and machines to mine it, but by the end of 1918 Dawson's day had passed.

Abbreviations Used in the Text and Notes

AA(T)	Anglican Church of Canada General Synod Archives
AC Co.	Alaska Commercial Company
BMA	Business Men's Association
CLB	Commissioner's Letterbooks
CMSA	Church Missionary Society Archives
<u>CSP</u>	Canada. <u>Sessional Papers</u>
DCW&P Co.	Dawson City Water and Power Company
<u>DDN</u>	<u>Dawson Daily News</u>
DEL&P Co.	Dawson Electric Light and Power Company
<u>DR</u>	<u>Dawson Record</u>
GAI	Glenbow-Alberta Institute
KMR	Klondike Mines Railway
<u>KN</u>	<u>Klondike Nugget</u>
LB	Letterbook
LVA	Licensed Victuallers Association
MHSA	Minnesota Historical Society Archives
NAT&T Co.	North American Transportation and Trading Company
NC Co.	Northern Commercial Company
NLP&C Co.	Northern Light, Power and Coal Company
n.p.	no place
n.P.	no publisher
NWMP	North West Mounted Police
PABC	Provincial Archives of British Columbia
PAC	Public Archives of Canada
PAM	Provincial Archives of Manitoba
PPM	People's Prohibition Movement
SPG	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
UCA	United Church Archives
UMDL	University of Manitoba, Dafoe Library
USPGA	United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel
UWA	University of Washington Archives
VCA	Vancouver City Archives
YA	Yukon Archives

YS Yukon Sun
Y.T. Yukon Territory
YTG Yukon Territorial Government
YTR Yukon Territorial Records
YW Yukon World

Notes

Preface

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See also Robert Stewart Robson, "Flin Flon: a Single Enterprise Community, 1929-1946". Unpublished thesis: University of Manitoba, 1980.

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- 18 PAC Constantine Papers, Letterbook, p. 192, Constantine to Ogilvie, 13 November 1896.
- 19 Ibid., p. 256, Constantine to deputy minister of the interior, 4 December 1896.
- 20 Ibid., p. 275, Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 30 December 1896. The Alaska Commercial Company was established in 1868 as the successor to the Russian-American Company after the American purchase of Alaska. Its headquarters were in San Francisco and in the early years it was concerned primarily with the seal fishery in the Pribiloff Islands. In the 1870s, the AC Co. began to send traders up the Yukon river and it employed "prospecting partners" to encourage the search for minerals further inland. McQuesten and Harper went to the Yukon as representatives of the AC Co. and although they became free traders they relied on the company for supplies. When the white population along the river rose in the following decades, the AC Co. monopolized trade in the region and began to use steamboats to carry its goods upriver. When the news of the first gold discoveries spread down the Pacific coast, early in the 1890s, a second company engaged in trade on the river.

The North American Transportation and Trading Co. was an Anglo-American concern with head offices in Chicago. The NAT&T Co. entered competition with the AC Co. in 1892 and erected a trading post near each rival store along the Yukon. While Forty Mile grew around the AC Co. post, the settlement of Cudahy took shape around the NAT & T Co. post on the opposite bank of the Forty Mile river. Constantine's preference for the NAT & T Co. perhaps derived from that company's willingness to cooperate with the NWMP and to pay Canadian customs duties on the goods it imported into the Yukon. See CSP, 1896, no. 13, Interior Department, annual report of deputy minister; and William R. Hunt. North of 53°, (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 6-9.

- 21 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to Burpee, 20 January 1897.
- 22 Ibid., William Ogilvie Papers, 1896 Diary, p. 67.
- 23 CSP, 1898, Interior Department, pt. 2, D.L.S., no. 18, Report of James Gibbon; and Barbara Gutsell, "Dawson City", Geographical Bulletin, no. 3, 1953, p. 26.
- 24 Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike, p. 356.
- 25 Sam C. Dunham, The Alaskan Goldfields and the Opportunities They Offer for Capital and Labour (Washington: Department of Labour, 1898), p. 330.
- 26 Berton, Klondike, p. 90.
- 27 Hayne, Pioneers of the Klondyke, p. 166.
- 28 PAC, R.J. Bowen Papers, typescript, "Incidents in the Life of the Reverend Richard J. Bowen", (1950), pp. 84, 169-170, 183. The new mission was known as Moosehide.
- 29 CMSA, North West Missions, 1897, #47, Bompas to Sec. CMS 18 November 1896.
- 30 Ibid., #64, Bompas to Sec. CMS, 18 January 1897: AA(T), H.A. Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Father and Mother", 13 April 1897, 31 May 1897.
- 31 PAC, Bowen Papers, typescript, p. 184.

- 32 See Walter Hamilton, The Yukon Story (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1964), p. 153; Rev. Charles Judge, An American Missionary (New York: Catholic Foreign Missionary Society, 1907), ch. 8; and James M. Sinclair, Mission Klondike (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1978), pp. 116-117.
- 33 PAC, Zachary T. Wood Papers, photocopy of typescript; Hayne, Pioneers, p. 141; PAC, RCMP Records, V.2285, Herchmer LB, p. 166, Herchmer to Constantine, 5 April 1897; and PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to "Mr. Archibald", 9 November 1897.
- 34 Dunham, Alaskan Goldfields, p. 330.
- 35 See Samuel P. Johnston, Alaska Commercial Company (San Francisco: privately published, 1940), pp. 44-46; L.D. Kitchener, Flag Over the North (Seattle: Superior Publishing Co.) pp. 206, 214; and CSP 1898, no. 13, Interior Dept., pt. 2, DLS, no. 17, report of Thomas Fawcett.
- 36 For a fine discussion of the Yukon trade in provisions and general merchandise see Margaret Archibald, "Grubstake to Grocery Store: The Klondike Emporium 1897-1907". Manuscript Report No. 178, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1973.
- 37 Johnston, Alaska Commercial Company, p. 45.
- 38 University of Washington Archives [hereafter UWA], Seattle, W.D. Johns Papers, typescript, p. 178.
- 39 CSP, 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, DLS, no. 18, report of James Gibbon, 14 December 1897.
- 40 AA(T), Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Mother", 21 May 1897.
- 41 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 314, Constantine to "Mr. White", 16 June 1897.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Ibid., Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 24 September 1897.

- 44 CSP, 1898, no. 15, NWMP, appendix LL, annual report of Supt. Constantine.
- 45 Ibid., no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, DLS, no. 17, extracts from reports of Thomas Fawcett.
- 46 CMSA, North West Missions 1897, #135, Bompas to Sec. CMS, 24 May 1897.
- 47 Ibid., Bompas to Sec. CMS, 18 January 1897.
- 48 AA(T), Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Mother", 31 May 1897.
- 49 CSP 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, DLS, no. 17, extracts from reports of Thomas Fawcett.
- 50 Berton, Klondike, pp. 175-176.
- 51 AA(T), Naylor Papers, letter dated 27 September 1897; Yukon Archives, Manuscript Collection, Diary of R.B. Craig, f. 1897-1898, entry dated 8 September 1897.
- 52 AA(T), Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Mother", 31 May 1897.
- 53 CSP 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, DLS, no. 17, extracts from reports of Thomas Fawcett.
- 54 AA(T), W.C. Bompas Collection, R.J. Bowen to Bompas, 29 September 1897. Bowen was unable to purchase provisions for two new missionaries and he could not afford to pay \$75 for a sack of flour. See also PAC, Constantine Papers, v.1, memorandum to Commissioner Walsh, 17 March 1898; and Yukon Archives [hereafter YA], Diary of R.B. Craig, entries dated 25 September 1897, 27 September 1897.
- 55 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 347, Constantine to Messrs. Mizner, McPhee and Hansen, undated.
- 56 AA(T), Naylor Papers, letter dated 2 October 1897. See also YA, Craig diary, entry dated 24 September 1897.
- 57 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 24 September 1897.
- 58 CSP, 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, DLS, no. 17, extracts from reports of Thomas Fawcett.

- 59 AA(T), Bompas Collection, Bowen to Bompas, 29 September 1897.
- 60 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 363; Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 15 December 1897; and YA, Craig diary, entry dated 1 October 1897.
- 61 See Richard Friesen, "The Chilkoot Pass and the Great Gold Rush of 1898". Manuscript Report no. 236, Ottawa, Parks Canada, 1978, pp. 129-130. Friesen pointed out that the order came from Major Walsh rather than from Supt. Steele, to whom it has often been attributed.
- 62 San Francisco Examiner, 6 October 1897, p. 3, "Life Span in...".
- 63 Harold Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1936), p. 183.
- 64 University of Manitoba, Dafoe Library [hereafter UMDL], Sir Clifford Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37507, Wade to Sifton, 20 March 1898, p. 37510, Wade to Sifton, 30 March 1898 and p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 65 Ibid.; and Vancouver City Archives, F.C. Wade Papers, v.1, f.1, Wade to Edith Wade, 20 April 1898. Wade conducted a private legal practice despite his position as crown prosecutor. He accepted retainers of \$10,000 or more to provide legal services for the NAT & T Co. and other prominent corporations. On one occasion he reportedly represented both sides in a case before the court. See David R. Morrison, The Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), p. 23.
- 66 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 67 Ibid., and p. 37551, Wade to Sifton, 25 April 1898.
- 68 PAC, Constantine Papers, v.1; 1897 [sic] diary, entries dated 21 May 1898, 29 May 1898; and Berton, Klondike, pp. 289-290.

- 69 Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 13.
- 70 See for example, UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 71 Minnesota Historical Society Archives [hereafter MHSA], Robert Williams Family Papers, Box 3, correspondence 1897-1898, Robert Williams to "Mother", 23 June 1898.
- 72 See for example PAC, Nevill Armstrong Papers, 1898 diary, entry dated 27 July; and Julius Price, From Euston to Klondike (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., 1898), pp. 162-163.
- 73 E. Tappan Adney, The Klondike Stampede of 1898 (Fairfield: Ye Galleon Press, 1968), p. 365.
- 74 United States National Archives, U.S. Consulate Dawson: Reports and Correspondence [hereafter U.S. Consular Reports: Dawson], V.1, McCook to Moore, undated.
- 75 The Times, 19 September 1898, p. 8, "Letters from Canada", San Francisco Chronicle, 2 August 1898, p. 4, "Miners' View...".
- 76 See George Gartrell, "The Work of the Churches in the Yukon During the Era of the Klondike Gold Rush". unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1970, pp. 61-63, 93-104.
- 77 Ibid., pp. 48-49, 120. See also Guildhall Library (London), Records of the Colonial and Continental Church Society, Annual Report, 1899-1900, pp. 102-106.
- 78 See Thora Mills, The Contribution of the Presbyterian Church to the Yukon During the Gold Rush, 1897-1910 (Toronto: United Church Publishing House, 1977), pp. 44-45
- 79 United Church Archives (Toronto), [hereafter UCA], Albert Carman Papers, V.21, f. 141a, James Turner to Carman, 14 September 1898. See also Gartrell, "Work of the Churches", pp. 111-115.
- 80 See Gertrude Bloss, "Saga of the Klondike", ch. 6 and 7, The Canadian Home Leaguer, 1972. These articles were

based on the diary of Ensign Rebecca Ellery. Brigadier Bloss kindly supplied copies of the articles and typescripts of the pages she was unable to locate.

- 81 See Mills, Contribution of the Presbyterian Church, p. 42; Gartrell, "Work of the Churches", p.174; and UCA, Diary of Robert M. Dickey, 1897-1899, p. 67.
- 82 See Edward F. Bush, "Banking in the Klondike 1898-1968". Manuscript Report No. 118, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1973, pp. 1-32.
- 83 Ibid., p. 16.
- 84 See Russell Bankson, The Klondike Nugget (Caldwell: Caxton Printers, 1935), pp. 68-81; Berton, Klondike, pp. 282, 292; Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 27; and PAC, Henry J. Woodside Papers, v. 34, f. 6, subscription list of Yukon Printing Co.. See also Edward F. Bush, "The Dawson Daily News: Journalism on Canada's Last Frontier". Manuscript Report No. 48, Parks Canada, Ottawa, 1971.
- 85 See Woodside, "Dawson as It Is", p. 411; and Yukon Sun, 4 February 1901, p. 3.
- 86 KN, 30 July 1898, p. 4, "A Census...".
- 87 MESA, Williams Family Papers, box 3, correspondence 1897-1898, Robert Williams to "Mother", 23 June 1898. See also Berton, Klondike, pp. 291-292.
- 88 San Francisco Chronicle, 18 July 1898, p. 10, "Actual Conditions...", 13 September 1898, p. 4, "Prospectors Discouraged...".
- 89 Ibid.; CMSA, North West Missions, #133, Bompas to Sec. CMS, 5 July 1898; and United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Archives (London), Letters Received, v. 1, Canada USA, W.C. Bompas to Sec., Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, 6 July 1898, 1 August 1898, 23 September 1898.
- 90 The Daily Graphic, 19 October 1898, p. 4, "On the Way to the Yukon, XI, Last Stages to Dawson".
- 91 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 9 August 1898, p. 6, "Greatest Gold ...".

- 92 The Times, 19 September 1898, p. 8, "Letters from Canada".
- 93 Daily Graphic, 5 November 1898, p. 5, "In Dawson City".
- 94 The Times, 19 September 1898, p. 8, "Letters from Canada"; Arthur T. Walden, A Dog-Puncher on the Yukon (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1928), p. 145; and Mary Lee Davis, Sourdough Gold (Boston: W.A. Wilde, 1933), p. 106.
- 95 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 14 July 1898, p. 4, "Conditions in Dawson"; San Francisco Chronicle, 20 July 1898, p. 3, "Over Two..."; and PAC, Armstrong Papers, 1898 diary, entry dated 27 July.
- 96 Frederick Palmer, "Pilgrimage to the Klondyke and Its Outcome", Forum, v.26, September 1898, pp. 52-53; YA, Craig Diary, entry dated 23 August; and CSP, 1899, no. 15, NWMP, pt. 3, Y.T., report of S.B. Steele.
- 97 Klondike Nugget [hereafter KN], 28 June 1898, p. 4, "Official Notice".
- 98 PAC, Clifford Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Walsh (1898), Walsh to Sifton, 8 July 1898.
- 99 KN, 27 July 1898, p. 4, "Yukon Provisional District".
- 100 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 18-21.
- 101 CSP, 1900, no. 33u. Copy of the report of William Ogilvie; John E. Brown, "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory", in Municipal Government in Canada, ed. S. Morley Wickett (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1907), p. 10.
- 102 PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Walsh (1898) 3, Walsh to Sifton, 23 June 1898.
- 103 U.S. Consular Reports: Dawson, v.1, McCook to Moore, 2 August 1898, 24 August 1898.
- 104 AA(T), I.O. Stringer Collection, W.C. Bompas to "George", 1 December 1898; UCA, James Robertson Papers, A.S. Grant to Robertson, December 1898. See also Dawson Daily News, 23 September 1899, p. 1, "Assisted Out".
- 105 UCA, Robertson Papers, Grant to Robertson, 13 January 1899.

- 106 MHSa, Williams Family Papers, box 3, Robert Williams to "Mother", 27 February 1899, 4 March 1899.
- 107 PAC, Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Walsh (1898) 3, Walsh to Sifton, 14 June 1898.
- 108 Ibid., f. Ogilvie (1898) 2, Ogilvie to Sifton, 20 October 1898.
- 109 Ibid., f. Ogilvie (1898) 1, Ogilvie to Sifton, 22 September 1898.
- 110 Ibid., f. Ogilvie (1898) 2, Ogilvie to Sifton, 14 January 1899.
- 111 Ibid.; and UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C497, p. 55162, Wade to Sifton, 3 April 1899.
- 112 KN, 15 April 1899, p. 1, "Water Front..."; PAC, Minto Papers, v.24, F.X. Gosselin to Ogilvie, 10 January 1900; and YA, Yukon Territorial Government Records [hereafter YTG Records], v.74,f.82, Gosselin to Messrs. Clement, Pattullo and Ridley, 29 June 1899.
- 113 KN, 17 May 1899.
- 114 YA, YTG Records, v.74, f.82, telegram Sifton to Ogilvie, 30 October 1899. See also Ibid., v.73, f.39.
- 115 PAC, RCMP Records, v.1444, f.181, pt. 5, monthly reports of S.B. Steele.
- 116 British Columbia Provincial Archives (hereafter PABC), G.R. Pattullo Papers, J.B. Pattullo to G.R. Pattullo, 25 June 1899.
- 117 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C490, p. 48391, J.D.McGregor to Sifton, 14 July 1899; and AA(T), Naylor Papers, Naylor to "Father and Mother", 4 July 1899.
- 118 KN, 15 July 1899, p. 2, "Only Temporary".
- 119 See for example, MHSa, Williams Family Papers, box 3, Robert Williams to "Mother", 30 June 1898.
- 120 YA, Yukon Territorial Records, Commissioner's Letter-book hereafter [YTR, CLB], v. 79, p. 542, Ogilvie to Sifton, undated.

121 Ogilvie's optimism was not misplaced. Since the gold was in the form of dust and nuggets, it is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the quantity extracted from the region in the years after 1896. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics, however, suggested the following figures:

Year	Production (thousands of dollars)	Royalty Paid (thousands of dollars)
1894	125	...
1895	250	...
1896	300	...
1897	2,500	...
1898	3,072	273
1899	7,582	588
1900	9,809	730
1901	9,162	592
1902	9,566	331
1903	12,113	302
1904	10,790	272
1905	8,222	206
1906	6,540	163
1907	3,304	82
1908	2,820	70
1909	3,260	81
1910	3,594	89
1911	4,126	103
1912	4,024	100
1913	5,018	125
1914	5,301	132
1915	4,649	116
1916	4,458	111
1917	3,960	99
1918	3,266	81
1919	1,947	48
1920	1,660	41

See H.A. Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1936, p. 219. Other authorities found very different amounts in a variety of sources. Richard Stuart depicted the discrepancies in his "The Bank of British North America, Dawson, Yukon, 1898-1968: a Use and Structural History". Manuscript Report No. 324. Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1979, p. 84. The illustration on the following page appears with his permission.

III Transience and Persistence

- 1 Laura Beatrice Berton, I Married the Klondike (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1954), p. 119.
- 2 Pierre Berton, Klondike, p. 413.
- 3 KN, 30 July 1898, p. 4, "A Census...".
- 4 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C490, p. 48391, J.D. McGregor to Sifton, 14 July 1899.
- 5 YS, 8 May 1900, p. 4, "The Yukon Census".
- 6 Canada. Census of Canada, 1901, Table V, p. 22
- 7 Polk was not the first to produce a Dawson directory. In 1901 Maria L. Ferguson published the Dawson City, Yukon Territory and Alaska Directory and Gazetteer. The Ferguson directory is of only limited utility since it lists the residents of Dawson by name and occupation and does not distinguish clearly the residents of the town from the miners on the creeks.
- 8 A 1913-14 edition of Polk's directory was not available from any known repository.
- 9 See Anne Guest, "Dawson City: a study of transiency". Unpublished paper in urban Sociology, University of Manitoba, 1979. This study, prepared on the suggestion of the author, was an exploratory one and its findings suggested that the original hypothesis regarding transiency merited further investigation.
- 10 The sample was random to the extent that a systematic sample is random. Based on the number of names in the directory, every nth name was selected to result in a sample of the size desired. The first name was selected randomly using a random numbers table.
- 11 In 1911 Polk's Directory contained fewer than 1500 entries for Dawson. The Census of Canada declared that in 1911 Dawson's population was 3013.

- 12 DDN, 12 January 1906, p. 2, "Second Dawson".
- 13 See for example YW, 15 June 1906, p. 1, "Guggenheims Incorporated", 20 February 1907, p. 1, "Two More Dredges...".
- 14 See for example Yukon Territorial Sessional Papers, 1915, no. 1, Report of the Superintendent of Schools. The report announced that in 1914 the attendance at the public school in Dawson was higher than it had been for more than ten years.
- 15 KN, 6 May 1900, p. 6, "Dawson's Population".
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Census of Canada. 1901, v. 1, p. 5, Table I; p. 22, Table V.
- 19 Census of Canada. 1911, v. 1, p. 171, Table I.
- 20 See Peter R. Knights, "Population Turnover, Persistence and Residential Mobility in Boston, 1830-1860". in Stephan Thernstrom and Richard Sennett ed. Nineteenth Century Cities. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969, pp. 258-274. The term "persistence" is defined on p. 258.
- 21 See Michael B. Katz, "Occupational Classification in History". Journal of Interdisciplinary History, v. 3, 1972-1973, pp. 63-88.
- 22 Knights, "Population Turnover", p. 258.

IV Incorporation and Disincorporation

- 1 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 386, undated report.
- 2 CSP, 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. 2, D.L.S., no. 17, Extracts from Reports of Thomas Fawcett, pp. 87-88.
- 3 KN, 28 June 1898, p. 1, "Martial Law".
- 4 Ibid., 27 July 1898 p. 1, "For and Against...".
- 5 For a discussion of the Miners' Association, see Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 26-29.
- 6 For an account of the meeting, see KN, 3 September 1898, p. 3, "Steps to Incorporate...". The Meeting had been called by Thomas Chisholm, owner of the Aurora Saloon, Joe Cooper, owner of the Tivoli Theatre, and by a Mr. Chute who ran another saloon. D.W. Davis was the federal collector of customs at Dawson and Rutledge was a lawyer.
- 7 PAC, Clifford Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 22 September 1898.
- 8 KN, 21 September 1898, p. 3, "A Large Incorporation...".
- 9 Ibid., p. 2, "Incorporation the Issue".
- 10 Ibid., p. 3, "Special Meeting...", 28 September 1898, p. 3, "A Stormy Incorporation Meeting".
- 11 PAC, Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 20 October 1898.
- 12 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 27.
- 13 Dawson Daily News [hereafter DDN], 25 September 1898, "Hurry Incorporation".
- 14 Ibid., 17 October 1898, p. 2, "Incorporation".
- 15 Ibid., 20 October 1898, p. 4, "Very Spicy Session".
- 16 KN, 21 October, 1899, p. 5, "To Incorporate...".
- 17 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 29-30. The miners were Col. Donald McGregor, A.D. Williams, James Spurgeon and Alexander McDonald. T. McMullen was the banker and Joe Clarke the stenographer.

- 18 DDN, 4 April 1900, p. 4, "Committee Men's Opinion".
- 19 Ibid., 3 April 1900, p. 1, "Will Ask Them".
- 20 Ibid., p. 2, "What is Incorporation?"
- 21 Yukon Sun [hereafter YS], 3 April 1900, p. 2, "The Question of...".
- 22 DDN, 5 April 1900, p. 1, "Citizens Do Not..."; YS, 8 May 1900, p.1, "Citizens Mass Meeting".
- 23 KN, 15 July 1900, p. 3, "Time to Incorporate", 19 July 1900, p. 3, "Incorporation".
- 24 DDN, 24 July 1900, p. 2, "Taxation Is Illegal".
- 25 KN, 12 August 1900, p. 6, "Taxes Are Off".
- 26 CSP, 1900, no. 33u, Copy of the Report of William Ogilvie, 20 September 1899, p. 13.
- 27 Yukon Archives, [hereafter YA], Yukon Territorial Records, Commissioners Letterbooks [hereafter YTR, CLB], v. 79, p. 542, Ogilvie to Sifton, undated. The letter appears as the commissioner's annual report in CSP 1901, no. 25. The reference appears on p. 6. See also CLB, v. 79, p. 684, Ogilvie to A.W. Regner, 29 December 1900.
- 28 KN, 30 December 1900, p. 1, "Bills of the City"; YS, 5 January 1901, p. 2, "Incorporation".
- 29 KN, 30 December 1900, p. 1, "Solid Front", 6 January 1901, p. 3, "Dawson Has Spoken", p. 6, "Monster Petition", 10 January 1901, p. 2, "Have Spoken", and 23 August 1900, p. 6, "Taxes May Go". See also Whitehorse Star [hereafter WS], 9 January 1901, p. 4, "Late Dawson News".
- 30 KN, 10 January 1901, p. 6, "Brewery Wanted".
- 31 Ibid., 3 March 1901, p.2, "Meeting to be...", p. 4, "Not a Remedy". See also Henry J. Woodside, "Dawson As It Is", Canadian Magazine, v. 17, 1901, p. 408.
- 32 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C256, p. 88850, Ross to Sifton, 24 June 1901.
- 33 KN, 14 August 1901, p. 3, "Dawson to be...".
- 34 CSP, 1902, no. 25, Department of the Interior, pt, ix, Yukon Territory, Report of the Commissioner, pp. 3-5.

- 35 KN, 27 December 1901, p. 1, "Political Pot...", 7 December 1901, p. 8, "First Council Meeting".
- 36 YA, YTR (RG91), v. 17, f. 4054, pt. 4, Ordinance #45 of 1901, An Ordinance to Incorporate the City of Dawson.
- 37 See KN, 7 December 1901, p. 8, "Municipal Government", 11 December 1901, p. 1, "Incorporation Ordinance", and Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 41.
- 38 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 20-32, 40-42.
- 39 Morris Zaslow, The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971), p. 134.
- 40 Ibid., p. 133; and Morris Zaslow, "The Yukon: Northern Development in a Canadian-American Context". Regionalism in the Canadian Community, ed. Mason Wade (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), p. 192.
- 41 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 386, undated report; and Vancouver City Archives, F.C. Wade Papers, v.1, f. 1, Wade to Edith Wade, 20 April 1898.
- 42 CSP, 1902, no. 25, Interior Department, pt. ix, Yukon Territory, Report of the Commissioner, p. 5.
- 43 Canada. Census of Canada. 1901, v. 1, p. 142, Table XII, Nationalities. According to this census there were 14,100 Canadians and only 6,720 Americans.
- 44 See David J. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905". Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1973, pp. 233-241, 640-657, 696.
- 45 See John A. Bovey, "The Attitudes and Policies of the Federal Government Towards Canada's Northern Territories: 1870-1930". Unpublished MA thesis: University of British Columbia, 1967, pp. 89-90, 110. Bovey contended that the government's Yukon policy consisted of four basic elements: "the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty, the enforcement of civil order, attempts to make the District yield revenue sufficient to meet the expenses it was causing, and schemes to benefit the Canadian economy generally."

- 46 KN, 14 December 1901, p. 1, "Dawson Business Men", p. 2, "Must Unite", p. 5, "A Call to...".
- 47 Ibid., 21 December 1901, p. 2, "Consistency". Two days before the vote was polled the Nugget compared the taxes assessed the "kid" Committee and the "Taxpayers" Committee. The former were assessed a total of \$1641.62 and the latter \$34, 303. See KN, 7 January 1902, p. 1, "Kids Have Lost". In the end the vote was 383 for an elected council, 304 for appointed commission. See KN, 10 January 1902, p. 1, "Elective Council".
- 48 KN, 6 February 1902, p. 1, "Henry C. Macaulay". Macaulay was mayor and the Citizens alderman were Horace Norquay, George Murphy, James F. Macdonald and Peter Vachon. T.G. Wilson and Thomas Adair were the only "Kids".
- 49 KN, 4 March 1902, p. 1, "Dawson's First Council". Most of the Dawson city records were destroyed by fire and the surviving ones consist primarily of bills and invoices from the period after 1910. The territorial records contain few references to municipal affairs and none of the principal characters left a collection of papers. The newspapers are the best source for the incorporation era, but there are no complete files of any paper which cover the whole incorporation period.
- 50 Ibid., 2 April 1902, p. 1, "People Object..."; and 20 January 1902, p. 1, "Macaulay is Nominated". A rate-payers delegation succeeded in having the aldermanic stipend reduced to \$1500. See KN, 8 April 1902, p. 6, "Amendment Accepted".
- 51 DDN, 31 May 1902, p. 8, "Thousands for City...".
- 52 KN, 17 March 1902, p. 1, "Council Meeting".
- 53 Canada. Census of Canada. 1901, v. 1, Table V, p. 22. According to the census Dawson's population was 9,142.
- 54 KN, 16 April 1902, p. 2, "Licences Are Fixed".
- 55 Ibid, 6 June 1902, p. 2, "Municipal Fathers".

- 56 Ibid., 24 July 1902, p. 2, "Murphy's Resolution",
29 July 1902, p. 2, "Council Meeting", and 2 August 1902,
p. 2, "Will Not...".
- 57 Ibid., 14 October 1902, p. 1, "Assessible Property".
- 58 See KN, 25 October 1902, p. 2, "Now For The Tax". Their
reductions were: Northern Commercial Co. \$2,000,000 to
\$1,500,000, North American Transportation and Trading Co.
\$1,000,000 to \$750,000, British Yukon Navigation Co.
\$500,000 to \$225,000, Bank of British North America
\$400,000 to \$350,000, Adair Brothers \$160,000 to \$120,000
and Pacific Cold Storage Co. \$147,000 to \$125,000.
- 59 KN, 28 October 1902, p. 4, "Rate of Taxation".
- 60 Ibid., 13 December 1902, p. 1, "Review...", 16 December
1902, p. 1, "R.P. May...", 19 December 1902, p.1, "Waits
Upon...", 20 December 1902, p. 1, "R.P. McLennan".
McLennan was a partner in the McLennan and McFeely
Hardware Co. whose head office was in Victoria, B.C..
- 61 KN, 27 December 1902, p. 1, "Nominations".
- 62 Ibid., 3 January 1903, p. 1, "Rousing...".
- 63 Ibid., 6 January 1903, p. 1, "Grand March...". Expressed
as percentages, McLennan received 27.4% of the votes,
Davis 26.8%, Adair 24.2% and Jefferson A. Davison 21.6%.
- 64 Ibid. The new aldermen were Frank Johnson, Michael Ryan,
Abraham Lalande, and A.J. Edwards. Dr. Edwards and another
candidate, R.H.S. Cresswell, were tied at the sixth
position. The returning officer cast his ballot for
Edwards and a recount confirmed his decision.
- 65 Ibid., 6 January 1903, p. 2, "Yesterday's Election".
- 66 Ibid., 13 January 1903, p. 4, "Auditor's Report".
- 67 Ibid., 27 January 1903, p. 4, "Heads Fall".
- 68 Ibid., 10 March 1903, p. 4, "Salaries Are...".
- 69 Ibid., 10 February 1903, p. 1, "Large Loan...", 24
February 1903, p. 4, "Council Meeting".
- 70 Ibid., 12 February 1903, p. 4, "Radical Changes", 21
April 1903, p. 4, "Council Meetings".

- 71 DDN, 5 May 1903, p. 1, "Review of New...".
- 72 Ibid., 2 June 1903, p. 5, "Yukon Council...", 14 July 1903, p. 5, "Poll Tax", and 16 July 1903, p. 4, "Income Qualifications".
- 73 KN, 2 June 1903, p. 2, "Don't Like...".
- 74 Dawson Record [hereafter DR], 9 September 1903, p. 1, "Monkey Work...". The Nugget was sold to new owners in June and they changed its name to the Record.
- 75 See for example DDN, 1 December 1903, p. 4, "Tax Afvortism [sic]".
- 76 See DR, 21 October 1903, p. 1, "City Campaign"; and DDN, 21 November 1903, p. 8, "Prepare...".
- 77 DDN, 26 October 1903, p. 8, "McLennan...", 29 October 1903, p. 5, "Aldermen Gave", and 1 December 1903, p. 8, "City Fathers".
- 78 YS, 12 December 1903, p. 1.
- 79 Ibid., 24 December 1903, p. 7,
- 80 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C549, p. 111404, Congdon to Sifton, 29 December 1903.
- 81 This fact is born out by George Black's appearances for Davis. Black was the territory's best known Conservative.
- 82 DDN, 30 December 1903, p. 5, "Mr Davis' Platform".
- 83 YS, 31 December 1903, p. 4, "Last Night's...".
- 84 Macdonald received 227, Walsh 216 and Davis 195.
- 85 Abraham Lalande was the only incumbent re-elected. He and J.A. Gillis and T.D. Pattullo were the Liberals. William McKay was the only Conservative and J.L. Timmins and Isaac Lusk described themselves as independents.
- 86 YS, 16 January 1904, p. 4, "Salaries...".
- 87 Ibid., 26 January 1904, p. 4, "Finances...".
- 88 DDN, 19 April 1904, p. 5, "City Declares...".
- 89 Yukon World [hereafter YW], 19 April 1904, p. 4, "Proposed Changes", and 10 August 1904, p. 1, "Report Charter".
- 90 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 58-60.
- 91 DDN, 10 June 1904, p. 4, "Macdonald...".

- 92 Pattullo outlined the anti-Congdonite position in letters to the prime minister and also to the minister of the interior. See for example, PAC, Sir Wilfrid Laurier Papers, v. 812, p. 86330, Pattullo to Laurier, 1 June 1904; and UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C572, pp. 136884-136944, Pattullo to Sifton, various dates. For the replies from Laurier and Sifton see PABC, T.D. Pattullo Papers, v. 1.
- 93 DDN, 19 April 1904, p. 4, "Politics...".
- 94 Ibid., 16 May 1904, p. 4, "Macfarlane...".
- 95 Ibid., 17 May 1904, p. 2, "Mayor...".
- 96 See H.A. Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1936), p. 222. See also YW, 17 July 1904, p. 4, "Many Leaving...".
- 97 The principals behind the petition were D.A. Cameron of the Bank of Commerce, David Doig of the Bank of British North America, W.H. Fairbanks of the Northern Commercial Co., R.B. Snowdon of the NAT&T Co., C.E. Bryant of the Pacific Cold Storage Co., O.B. Marston of the Ames Mercantile Co., Raymond Brumbaugh of the Yukon Hardware Co., and E.F. Botsford of the Ladue Townsite Co.. The petition may be found in PAC, RG15, Department of the Interior Records, v. 949, f. 95960. See also DDN, 26 July 1904, p. 2, "To Surrender...", 4 August 1904, p. 4, "To Talk...", p. 4, "Charter Discussed"; and YW, 27 July 1904, p. 3, "Ask Council".
- 98 DDN, 26 July 1904, p. 2, "Want to Change".
- 99 Ibid., p. 2, "To Surrender".
- 100 Ibid., 5 August 1904, p. 4, "Charter Discussed".
- 101 Ibid., 18 August 1904, p. 4, "Question Up Again".
- 102 YW, 25 August 1904, p. 1, "Yukon Council".
- 103 See J.N.E. Brown, "The Evolution of Law and Government in the Yukon Territory", Municipal Law in Canada, ed. S. Morley Wickett (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1907), p. 17; Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 65-66;

- Zaslow, Opening of the Canadian North, pp. 143-144; and DDN, 7 September 1904, p. 4.
- 104 DDN, 8 September 1904, p. 1, "Mayor Attempts...", p. 2, "Strange Action", and 9 September 1904, p. 1, "Territory Seizes...".
- 105 Ibid., 10 September 1904, p. 6, "Territory Is...".
- 106 Ibid., 12 September 1904, p. 1, "Injunctions Being Heard".
- 107 Ibid., 13 September 1904, p. 1, "Judge Craig". The full text of the decision appeared in Ibid., 15 September 1904, p. 1, "Judge Craig's Decision".
- 108 Ibid., 14 September 1904, p. 2, "Yesterday's Election".
- 109 Ibid.
- 110 PAC Laurier Papers, v. 812, p. 86330, Pattullo to Laurier, 1 June 1904.
- 111 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C563, p. 126290, Congdon to Sifton, 26 September 1904.
- 112 PAC, RG15, Department of the Interior Records, v. 949, f. 95960. The file contains Congdon's report, copies of the petition and other relevant papers.
- 113 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C563, p. 126276, telegram Congdon to Sifton, 13 September 1904.
- 114 DDN, 10 March 1905, p. 4, "Where Are We...", 13 March 1905, p. 2, "Governor On City...".
- 115 YW, 12 January 1905, p. 4, "No More Advisory..."; and CSP, 1906, no. 25, Interior Department, pt. vii, Yukon Territory, no. 6, Report of the Comptroller.
- 116 DDN, 13 September 1905, p. 2, "By-Laws For...".
- 117 YW, 6 July 1906, p. 1, "Yukon Council".
- 118 DDN, 23 October 1909, p. 4, "To Assess Policemen".
- 119 Ibid., 10 October 1909, p. 4, "Against the Tax".
- 120 Ibid., 11 November 1909, p. 4, "Work Is Finished".
- 121 Ibid., 25 November 1910, p. 4, "Judge Craig".
- 122 CSP, 1913, no. 25, Interior Department, pt. 1, no. 25a, Report of the Commissioner.

- 123 The text of the decision appears in DDN, 20 July 1911, p. 1, "City Charter...", and 21 July 1911, p. 2, "Judge Craig...".
- 124 DDN, 22 July 1911, p.2, "Clear Up Situation".
- 125 CSP, 1913, no. 25, Interior Department, pt. 1, no. 25a, Report of the Commissioner.
- 126 DDN, 13 June 1912, pp. 1,2, "Yukon Council".
- 127 Ibid., 7 April 1913, p. 3, "Four New Bills".
- 128 Ibid., 19 February 1913, p. 4, "Commissioner Black...".
- 129 Ibid., 27 March 1914, p. 4, "New Bill...".
- 130 Ibid., 30 March 1914, p. 1, "Yukon Council...".
- 131 Ibid., 22 April 1914, p. 4, "Civic League...", 24 April 1914, p. 3, "Proposed City Charter...", and 4 May 1914, p. 1, "City Charter Is Discussed".
- 132 Ibid., 6 May 1914, p. 1, "City Charter Is Adopted...". The Actual vote was 229 in favour, 57 opposed.
- 133 Ibid., 7 July 1916, p. 4, "Norman Watt...", 9 October 1916, p. 4, "Captain Black...". The two councillors were Norman Watt and W.G. Radford who represented South Dawson.
- 134 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 95-97.
- 135 DDN, 12 April 1918, p. 1, "Yukon Council...", 17 April 1918, p. 4, "Message Sent...".
- 136 Ibid., 1 May 1918, p. 4, "Ottawa Will...", 4 May 1918, p. 4, "Yukon Council...".
- 137 Ibid., 23 January 1919, p. 1, "Change Made...", 14 May 1919, p. 4, "New Election...".

V Law Enforcement and the NWMP

- 1 See William R. Morrison, "The Mounted Police on Canada's Northern Frontier, 1895-1940," unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1973, pp. 43-49. Morrison is the most reliable authority on police activity in the Yukon in the gold rush era.
- 2 PAC, Constantine Papers, V.1, LB, entry dated 16 November 1896; and Ibid., Zachary T. Wood Papers, photocopy of typescript. See also M.H.E. Hayne and N. West Taylor, The Pioneers of the Klondike (London: Sampson Law, Marston and Co., 1897), p. 141.
- 3 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 314, Constantine to White, 16 July 1897.
- 4 Morrison, "Mounted Police", p. 59.
- 5 CSP, 1898, no. 15, NWMP, appendix LL, annual report of Supt. Constantine, 18 January 1898, pp. 307, 310.
- 6 Ibid., no. 13, Interior Dept., pt. II, D.L.S., no. 17, Report of Thomas Fawcett, p. 81.
- 7 Ibid., no. 15, NWMP, appendix LL, annual report of Supt. Constantine, 18 January 1898.
- 8 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 4 February 1898.
- 9 Ibid., memorandum, Constantine to Walsh, 17 March 1898. (memorandum on loose sheet inside front cover of 1897 diary).
- 10 Ibid., LB, p. 459, Constantine to Walsh, 29 March 1898.
- 11 See A.L. Disher, "The Long March of the Yukon Field Force," The Beaver, Autumn 1962, pp. 4-51; and Morrison, "Mounted Police", p. 68.
- 12 Morrison, "Mounted Police", p. 66. See also R.C. McLeod, The NWMP and Law Enforcement (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp. 57-58.
- 13 PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Walsh 1897, Walsh to Sifton, 10 December 1897.

- 14 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898. Wade wrote that Constantine became "impudent" and "particularly ugly" when he went over his head and issued notices to have hotels clean their outhouses.
- 15 MHSA, Edward S. Pattee Papers, "Ted" to "Dodi", 11 June 1899.
- 16 PAC, Laurier Papers, v.102, p. 30685, Steele to "Mr. Harwood", 22 February 1899.
- 17 PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 3 October 1898.
- 18 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3053, Yukon Orders, Dawson 1898, passim, v.3063, Daily Journal Dawson, 1898, passim.
- 19 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3053, entry dated 17 September 1898.
- 20 CSP, 1899, no. 15, pt. III, Yukon Territory, annual report of S.B. Steele, 10 January 1899. See also Pierre Berton, Klondike (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), p. 161.
- 21 CSP, 1899, no. 15, pt. III, Y.T. annual report of S.P. Steele, 10 January 1899. See also S.B. Steele, Forty Years in Canada (Toronto: McClelland, Goodchild and Stewart, 1914).
- 22 Steele, Forty Years, p. 329.
- 23 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3055, Yukon Orders, Dawson, entry dated 9 September 1898; and PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Ogilvie 1893 (2), Ogilvie to Sifton, 20 October 1898.
- 24 See Morrison, "Mounted Police", p. 73.
- 25 PAC, Laurier Papers, v.102, p. 30685, Steele to Harwood, 22 February 1899.
- 26 PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 30 October 1898.
- 27 Steele, Forty Years, p. 321. See also Harwood Steele, Policing the Arctic (London: Jarrolds, 1936), p. 55.
- 28 Steele, Forty Years, p. 323.

- 29 PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (2), Ogilvie to Sifton, 20 October 1898.
- 30 Steele, Forty Years, p. 320.
- 31 See for example, KN, 3 December 1898, p. 1, "Police Court Items".
- 32 PAC, RCMP Records, v.162, f. 127, Steele to Commissioner, Y.T., 19 April 1899.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Morrison, "Mounted Police", pp. 113, 126.
- 35 US National Archives, U.S. Consulate Dawson: Reports and Correspondence, v. 1, McCook to Hill, 16 April 1899. The letter from Steele was enclosed with this report.
- 36 Ibid., McCook to Hill, 4 May 1899. The report includes a letter, Steele to McCook, 26 April 1899.
- 37 Ibid., McCook to Hill, 4 May 1899, 25 May 1899.
- 38 Anglican Archives (Toronto), Bompas Collection, Bompas to H.A. Naylor, 26 December 1900.
- 39 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, p. 341, Constantine to Commissioner NWMP, 4 February 1899, pp. 434-438. Const. Dunn affidavit.
- 40 PAC, RCMP Records, v.162, f.118.
- 41 Ibid., v.174, f.548, Steele to Comptroller NWMP, 14 July 1899. The comptroller in reply asked Steele's permission to expunge his references to Harper's enjoyment of "the society of coarse women" and "liaison with a dance hall girl", in order to protect Harper's family in case the communication were ever discussed in Parliament. See Ibid., White to Steele, 1 August 1899. White also asked Steele "to have a good fatherly chat with him before he leaves Dawson, and advise him to brace up for the sake of his wife and children." His personal regard for Harper was apparent as he concluded, "from this end we will do all we can to help him in pulling up." See Ibid., White to Steele, 10 August 1899.

Harper's only defense was that he suffered from pain in the head, and that he lost all control of himself after a couple of drinks. The police surgeon confirmed that Harper had an abscessed ear, but in his opinion he had "somewhat lost control of himself and perhaps [was] yielding to the temptation of Dawson life..." See Ibid., W.E. Thompson to Officer Commanding B. Division, 20 June 1899, and Harper to Steele, 12 July 1899.

- 42 Ibid., Steele to Comptroller NWMP, 8 August 1899.
- 43 Ibid., Steele to Comptroller NWMP, 16 September 1899. See also PAC, Sifton Papers, v.295, f. Fred White 1900, Ogilvie to Sifton, 27 September 1899, 19 December 1899.
- 44 PAC, RCMP Records, v.199, f. 2.
- 45 KN, 18 November 1899, p. 1, "He Used...".
- 46 Ibid., 29 November 1899, p. 6, "Forrest and Cunningham".
- 47 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3052, p. 88, entry dated 27 October 1899, p. 90, entry dated 30 October 1899, and p. 93, entry dated 2 November 1899.
- 48 The Sunday Gleaner, 6 December 1899, p. 1, "An Open Letter...". The only surviving issues of the Gleaner may be found in the British Columbia Provincial Archives.
- 49 KN, 6 December 1899, p. 1, "For Contempt...".
- 50 PAC, Ogilvie Papers, f. 4.
- 51 KN, 20 December 1899, p. 1, "Semple Hits...".
- 52 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3030, LB, Perry to White, 21 December 1899.
- 53 KN, 8 March 1900, p. 1, "Forrest Convicted".
- 54 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3031, LB, p. 233, Wood to Ogilvie, 20 July 1900.
- 55 Ibid., v.3034, p. 241, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 7 April 1902.
- 56 Ibid., v.1444, f. 181, pt. 3, report for September 1899.
- 57 DDN, 11 September 1899, p. 2, "Col. S.B. Steele".

- 58 KN, 13 September 1899, p. 1, "Wrong Is...".
- 59 See for example, PAC, Henry J. Woodside Papers, v.23, f. 2, Woodside to Laurier, 26 September 1899.
- 60 Steele, Forty Years, p. 334.
- 61 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, p. 51290, Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.
- 62 CSP, 1900, no. 15, NWMP, pt. II, Y.T., Report of A.B. Perry, 30 November 1899.
- 63 Ibid., appendix B, report of Supt. Primrose, 30 November 1899.
- 64 Perry did leave an impression. When he arrived in Dawson he found that no two officers were dressed alike and he persuaded them all to order tunics of the same pattern from an English tailor.
- 65 Wood was the grandson of Zachary Taylor, twelfth president of the United States.
- 66 See Disher, "Yukon Field Force", p. 15; DDN, midsummer issue 1899, "Facts About Dawson". In August 1899 there were 118 men of the NWMP and 85 members of the YFF.
- 67 DDN, 11 May 1900, p. 2, "The Yukon Field Force".
- 68 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3031, p. 99, Wood to White, 19 June 1900.
- 69 CSP, 1901, no. 28a, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T., report of Z.T. Wood, 31 December 1900; PAC, RCMP Records, v.3052, p. 300, entry dated 17 August 1900; and KN, 14 June 1900, p. 1, "James Allmarch".
- 70 CSP, 1901, no. 28a, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T. Appendix B, report of Insp. Starnes, 1 December 1900. There were 807 convictions for gambling, 282 for drunkenness, and 48 for violations of the health ordinance.
- 71 Ibid.; and KN, 7 June 1900, p. 4, "Street Improvements", 28 June 1900, p. 4, "Extending Streets", and 13 September 1900, p. 1, "Street Work".

- 72 KN, 7 October 1900, p. 8, "Police Boys Canteen"; YA, YTG Records, v.69, f. 15, Customs, Smart to Officer Commanding NWMP, Dawson, 27 August 1900.
- 73 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3034, p. 575, Wood to Col. J.N. McIllree, 11 July 1902.
- 74 Ibid., v. 3035, p. 544, Wood to Thos. Eggert, Sidney Stewart, H.J. Wilkerson, etc., 24 January 1903.
- 75 See H.J. Guest, "Reluctant Politician: a biography of Sir Hugh John Macdonald". Unpublished thesis, University of Manitoba, 1973, ch. 10.
- 76 See Chapters VI and VII below.
- 77 KN, 25 September 1901, p. 4, "Abbreviated Police Court", 23 October 1901, p. 5, "May Look...". See also CSP, 1902, no. 28, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T., appendix A, report of Insp. Starnes, 1 December 1901.
- 78 KN, 16 November 1901, p. 1, "Two Full Hands...".
- 79 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3033, p. 704, Wood to Officer Commanding B Division, 16 November 1901; KN, 20 November 1901, p. 5, "Police Force".
- 80 Ibid., v.3034, p. 127, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 27 February 1902.
- 81 The relevant documents may be found in U.S. Consular Reports, Dawson, McCook to Hill, 21 June 1901. These were not the only complaints about Starnes and there is evidence to suggest that he had succumbed to the pressures and privations at Dawson. In May 1902, NWMP Comptroller Fred White wrote Sifton: "I think the only unsettled matter in connection with the Police about which there has been any misunderstanding or unpleasantness, is the case of Insp. Starnes...". In the following month J.H. Ross recommended that it was in Starnes' best interest as well as the interest of the force for him to be transferred outside. He continued: "The conditions of this country are such as to make it almost impossible for a man not to fall into loose habits and loose methods

of doing business." See UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C546, p. 108155, White to Sifton, 22 May 1902, reel C543, p. 104879, Ross to Sifton, 14 June 1902. It is impossible to unravel the whole story, especially since the newspapers announced that Starnes retired from the force in June 1901 in order to enter a real estate and brokerage agency. See KN, 12 June 1901, p. 6, "Now in Ranks...". The RCMP Records contain no complaints about his behaviour in Dawson. Starnes served as RNWMP Commissioner from 1922-1931.

- 82 The new magistrate was C.D. Macaulay who went to Dawson from his law practice in Belleville, Ontario. See KN, 5 June 1901, p. 3, "New Police Magistrate", and 28 September 1901, p. 7, "People We Meet".
- 83 See for example, KN, 3 August 1901, p. 1, "Suspended by His Wrists".
- 84 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3033, p. 761, Wood to C.D. Macaulay, 31 December 1901.
- 85 Ibid., p. 840, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 9 January 1902.
- 86 Ibid., p. 956, Wood to Manager, Bank of BNA, 28 January 1902; and v.3034, p. 9, Wood to White, 6 February 1902.
- 87 Ibid., v.3035, p. 642, Wood to White, 3 March 1903.
- 88 McLeod, NWMP and Law Enforcement, p. 46.
- 89 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3034, p. 742, Wood to Comptroller, NWMP, 25 August 1902.
- 90 Ibid., v.3035, p. 467, Wood to Officer Commanding B. Division, 27 December 1902.
- 91 CSP, 1903, no. 28, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T., report of Z.T. Wood, 1 December, and appendix B, report of Insp. Routledge, 1 December 1902.
- 92 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3035, p. 642, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 3 March 1902.
- 93 Ibid., v.3039, p. 971, Wood to Comptroller, 27 December 1906. When Wilson retired, the Nugget reported that he

- left with "upwards of \$10,000 the result of a sale of Hunker property." See KN, 11 July 1903, p. 6, "Ex-Sergeant J.J. Wilson".
- 94 KN, 25 March 1902, p. 6, "City Police Department".
- 95 YA, Dawson Records, invoices and vouchers, box 1, f. 1.
- 96 DDN, 17 June 1902, p. 3, "For City Police "; and KN, 24 June 1902, p. 6, "Action is Deferred".
- 97 Ibid., 28 June 1902, p. 8, "Will Be No...".
- 98 Ibid., 23 July 1902, p. 5, "Are Only Puppets", and 29 July 1902, p. 2, "Council Meeting".
- 99 Ibid., 5 September 1902, p. 6, "Police System".
- 100 Ibid., 2 December 1902, p. 2, "They Cop the Dough".
- 101 See Ibid., 30 December 1902, p. 1, "Begins It..."; 5 January 1903, p. 4, "Thos. Adair's Platform "; and YS, 4 January 1903, p. 6, "Platform of J.H. Davison".
- 102 CSP, 1906, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T. Report of Z.T. Wood, 1 December 1905; and PAC, RCMP Records, v.3039, p. 971, Wood to Comptroller, 27 December 1906.
- 103 DDN, 10 March 1905, p. 4, "Where are We..."; and 13 March 1905, p. 2, "Governor On...".
- 104 Ibid., 28 June 1905, p. 1, "By-Laws Are..."; YW, 29 June 1905, p. 3, "City By-Laws..." and 28 July 1905, p. 1, "Dawson Men...".
- 105 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C567, p. 126271, Congdon to Sifton, 17 August 1904.
- 106 See for example, Ibid., reel C559, p. 122409, Wood to A.P. Collier, telegram in cypher, 24 February 1903. This telegram referred to election accounts and urged the minister to see that they were liquidated before "his warmest friends" became alienated.
- 107 PAC, RCMP Records, v.3037, p. 986, Wood to Commissioner Y.T., 11 October 1904.
- 108 Ibid., v.3038, p. 9, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 13 October 1904, and p. 312, Wood to Sifton, 2 January 1905.

- 109 Ibid., v.424, f. 217-12. The file consists of letters requesting compensation after his dismissal and they illuminate his position.
- 110 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C562, p. 125849, S. Ross Cuthbert to Senator, T.A. Davis, 28 November 1904.
- 111 Ibid., reel C578, p. 142477, Wood to Wade, 28 November 1904, p. 143106, Wood memorandum, 22 December 1904.
- 112 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 424, f.217-12.
- 113 Over the next two years Congdon sent several disparaging letters to the press and the attacks only ended when the newspaper which had supported him was taken over by a group more friendly toward the mounted police. See PAC, Laurier Papers, v.417, p. 111395, W.W.B. McInnes to Laurier, 19 June 1906.
- 114 CSP, 1905, no. 28, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T., annual report of Z.T. Wood, 1 December 1904.
- 115 Ibid., appendix, report of Supt. Cuthbert, 30 November 1904.
- 116 CSP, 1906, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T., appendix A, report of Supt. Cuthbert.
- 117 YW, 9 September 1905, p. 1, "Woodpile No More".
- 118 PAC, RCMP Records, v.396, f. 567-10, Thos. Chisholm and Neil Murray to Laurier, 18 May 1906.
- 119 Ibid., Chisholm to Cuthbert, 26 March 1906.
- 120 Ibid., Smith to Officer Commanding B. Division, 22 May 1906.
- 121 Ibid., Cuthbert to Comptroller, NWMP, 22 May 1906, 25 May 1906.
- 122 Ibid., 26 May 1906, 30 May 1906.
- 123 YW, 4 July 1906, p. 4, "Detective Welsh...".
- 124 PAC, RCMP Records, v.325, fo. 20-07, Wood to Comptroller, NWMP, 4 July 1906.
- 125 Ibid., Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 18 July 1906.
- 126 YW, 21 July 1906, p. 4, "Has Chosen...".

- 127 Ibid., 1 September, p. 4, "Trial of Detective...".
- 128 Ibid., 2 September 1906, p. 1, "Remarkable Features...".
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Ibid., 7 September 1906, p. 1, "Mr. Justice Craig...".
italics in original. Although Welsh was absolved completely, his defense cost the NWMP more than \$2300. See PAC, RCMP Records, v.3039, p. 834, Wood to Comptroller RNWMP, 4 October 1906.
- 131 YW, 28 July 1906, p. 1, "Sergeant Smith...".
- 132 CSP, 1906-07, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T., appendix B., report of Insp. Wroughton, 3 October 1906.
- 133 Ibid., report of Z.T. Wood, 1 November 1906.
- 134 YW, 14 October 1906, p. 1, "Strong-Arm Men...".
- 135 CSP, 1906-07, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T. report of Z.T. Wood, 1 November 1906; and PAC, RCMP Records, v.3037, p. 906, Wood to Comptroller RNWMP, 9 November 1906.
- 136 YW, 7 November 1906, p. 4, "Come Back...".
- 137 CSP, 1907-08, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T. report of Z.T. Wood, 1 November 1907.
- 138 Ibid., appendix B, report of Insp. Wroughton, 31 October 1907.
- 139 CSP, 1909, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T. Report of Z.T. Wood, 1 November 1908. See also YW, 8 July 1908, p. 4, "Ned Elfors...". There had been no murders in Dawson, apart from a couple of murder-suicides in 1898 and 1899, and only a handful in all the Yukon during the whole decade.
- 140 YW, 16 September 1908, p. 4, "Police Making...".
- 141 DDN, 8 April 1910, p. 4, "Changes Will...".
- 142 PAC, RCMP Records, v.409, f. 203-11, Horrigan to Assistant commissioner RNWMP, November 1911.
- 143 DDN, 8 February 1911, p. 4, "Orderly In...".
- 144 CSP, 1912, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T., appendix A, report of Insp. Horrigan, 30 September 1911. In Dawson there were also 3 lawyers and 3 judges.

- 145 DDN, 13 February 1913, p. 4, "Limit of One...", 1 March 1913, p. 4, "No Patrol...".
- 146 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 461, f. 181-14, Moodie to Commissioner RNWMP, 5 August 1914.
- 147 Ibid.; and DDN, 14 July 1914, p. 4, "Several Are..."; 16 July 1914, p. 1, "Blue Tickets...".
- 148 See for example, CSP, 1917, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Y.T., appendix A, report of Supt. Knight, 30 September 1916.
- 149 Steele, Policing the Arctic, p. 56.

VI Politics, Finance and Fire Protection

- 1 See Pierre Berton, Klondike: the Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1958), p. 187.
- 2 See The Dawson City Fire Department: Its Early History, Personnel and Efficiency, compiled by E.J. Fitzpatrick, (Dawson: G.M. Hill, 1902), p. 1.
- 3 Glenbow-Alberta Institute [hereafter GAI], D. W. Davis Papers, f.3 "Commission re Dawson fire held May 11, 1899", pp. 4-7.
- 4 Dawson City Fire Department, p. 2.
- 5 KN, 8 September 1898, p. 3, "Steps to Incorporate".
- 6 Ibid., 10 September 1898, p. 3, "A Large...".
- 7 Ibid., and 28 September 1898, p. 3, "A Stormy...".
- 8 Ibid., 13 October 1898 [sic], p. 1, "Dawson on Fire".
- 9 Ibid. See also PAC, RCMP Records, v.3063, entry dated 14 October 1898; PAC, Benjamin Chapman Diary, p. 9; and Dawson City Fire Department, p. 3.
- 10 See GAI, Davis Papers, f.3, "Commission...", pp. 18-19; and KN, 13 October 1898 [sic], p. 4.
- 11 GAI, Davis Papers, f.3, pp. 56, 73.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 45-46. See also, KN, 22 October 1898, p. 1, "A City...", and 2 November 1898, p. 3, "Fire Department".
- 13 KN, 15 February 1899, p. 4, "Ruin Wrought...".
- 14 GAI, Davis Papers, f.3, pp. 24-25.
- 15 See for example KN, 14 March 1899, p. 1, "Fire Plays...". See also US Consular Reports, Dawson, v.1, J.C. McCook to David J. Hill, 21 March 1899.
- 16 KN, 27 April 1899, p. 1, "Extra Edition!" See also, PAC, Benjamin Coffey Diary, entry dated 26 April 1899; PAC, Henry J. Woodside Papers, v.26, diary entry 26 April 1899; University of Toronto, Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, J.B. Tyrrell Papers, v.11, "Joe" to "Dollie", 3 May 1899; U.S. Consular Reports, Dawson, McCook to Hill, 27 April 1899; and Jeremiah Lynch, Three

- Years in the Klondike (London: Edward Arnold, 1904), pp. 128-137. The U.S. Consulate was destroyed when the McDonald building burned down.
- 17 KN, 29 April 1899, p. 1, "Worst Is Known".
- 18 Ibid., 3 May 1899, p. 1, "Placing...", and 6 May 1899, p. 1, "Where the Great...".
- 19 See GAI, Davis Papers, f. 3, testimony of A.F. George, Charles Bush, and Frank Fletcher. See also YS, 15 November 1903, p. 3, "History of the Dawson Fire Department".
- 20 KN, 30 August 1899, p. 6.
- 21 YA, YTR, CLB, v. 77, p. 790, Ogilvie to agent, AC Co., 21 January 1900, and Ogilvie to W.M. Heron, 21 January 1900.
- 22 DDN, 9 September 1899, p. 1, "The New...".
- 23 KN, 12 July 1899, supplement, "Dawson Has...".
- 24 It might have been because of his Liberal background or because his father had been a career firefighter.
- 25 DDN, 20 October 1899, p. 2, "Paid Fire Department".
- 26 Ibid., 28 October 1899, p. 1, "Soldiers..."; and KN, 4 November 1899, p. 6, "At Last...".
- 27 DDN, 31 October 1899, p. 1, "Start Your Fire". See also PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3030, p. 90, A.B. Perry to Stewart, 31 October 1899. The Department consisted of Chief Stewart, engineers Charles Bush and Joseph Stingle, stokers Matt Probst and Alexander McGuire, foremen James Westbrook and Hugh Pettegrew, and firemen John Rea, E.M. Lepine, W.J. Vachon, Andrew Hart, Thomas Draper, Andrew Young, Cameron Brown, C.G. Kilpatrick, G.A. Dines, G.H.G. Hatch, Ben Bennett, R.T. Reagin, and G.S. Palmer.
- 28 DDN, 23 November 1899, p. 1, "A Very...".
- 29 Ibid., 21 December 1899, p. 2, "Too Many Fires".
- 30 Ibid., 15 December 1899, p. 1, "For Fire Protection".

- 31 See PAC, Coffey Diary, p. 155; UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C507, p. 66869, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 20 January 1900; KN, 10 January 1900, p. 1, "Destroyed Again", and DDN, 10 January 1900, p. 1, "Half Million Dollars".
- 32 DDN, 11 January 1900, p. 1, "Dawson's Annual Fire"; p. 2, "Yesterday's Fire".
- 33 YA, YTR, CLB, v.77, Ogilvie to Manager, Ronald Fire Engine Works, 20 January 1900.
- 34 DDN, 10 February 1900, p. 1, "Prevention of Fires".
- 35 KN, 5 April 1900, p. 6, "Decrease in...".
- 36 DDN, 13 April 1900, p. 1, "Proposed Fire Law".
- 37 Ibid., 14 July 1900, p. 1, "How It...".
- 38 Ibid., 17 July 1900, p. 1, "This Year's Budget". It also listed \$100 for horses, \$7,750 for feed, \$1000 for heat for the fire hall, \$3000 for fuel, and \$5000 for contingencies.
- 39 YA, YTR, CLB, v.78, Ogilvie to Waterous Engine Co., 27 August 1900.
- 40 Ibid., p. 808, Ogilvie to Fire Commissioner, 5 September 1900.
- 41 Ibid., v.79, Ogilvie to Waterous Engine Co., 28 December 1900.
- 42 Ibid., v.80, Ogilvie to Waterous Engine Works, 12 March 1901.
- 43 Ibid., v.81, J.N.E. Brown to Walter Mair, 25 April 1901, Brown to J.A. Smart, 25 April 1901.
- 44 Ibid., v.84, Brown to N.B. Gilmour, 22 July 1902, and Brown to Waterous Engine Co., 18 September 1902.
- 45 YS, 9 February 1901, p.2, "Immunity...".
- 46 Ibid., 16 February 1901, "Fighting Fire in Dawson".
- 47 See YA, YTR, CLB, v.77, Ogilvie to J.A. Dawson, 30 November 1899.
- 48 Ibid., v.81, Brown to E. Vachon, 16 July 1901.
- 49 Dawson City Fire Department, Daily Report, Engine House #2, v.1, 1901, entries dated 25 October 1901, 26 October

- 1901, and 28 November 1901.
- 50 KN, 30 October 1901, p. 4, "No Action Yet", 1 November 1901, p. 1, "No Compromises".
- 51 YA, YTR, CLB, v.82, Chairman, Fire Committee to Alexander Macfarlane, 11 December 1901.
- 52 Dawson City Fire Department, Daily Report, Engine House #2, v.1, 1901, entry dated 12 December 1901.
- 53 KN, 14 December 1901, p. 3, "Chief Stewart".
- 54 YA, YTR, CLB, c.83, Brown to Macfarlane, 2 January 1902.
- 55 KN, 10 March 1902, p. 6, "Threshing Old Straws".
- 56 Ibid., 18 March 1902, p. 2, "Stewart Resigns".
- 57 Ibid., p. 6, "City Fathers".
- 58 Ibid., 25 March 1902, p. 6, "Fire Chief Appointed", 26 March 1902, p. 6, "Position Declined", 27 March 1902, p. 5, "Special Session", and 2 April 1905, p. 5, "Lively and Interesting".
- 59 YA, YTR, CLB, v.82, Brown to J.A. Lester, 16 October 1901.
- 60 KN, 23 April 1902, p. 5, "Protection Extended".
- 61 Ibid., 29 April 1902, p. 2, "Of Little Interest".
- 62 Ibid., 6 May 1902, p. 5, "Council Meeting", and YS, 23 July 1902, p. 3, "Proceedings...".
- 63 See for example YS, 7 June 1902, p. 4, "Chief Lester's...".
- 64 KN, 12 June 1902, p. 1, "Informal Meeting".
- 65 Ibid., 1 July 1902, p. 5, "Action of Committee", 15 July 1902, p. 2, "Lengthy Session".
- 66 YS, 31 December 1902, p. 3, "Report of the Chief".
- 67 DDN, 4 December 1902, p. 1, "Very Nearly..."; and YS, 5 December 1902, p. 4, "Big Fire...".
- 68 KN, 31 December 1902, p. 1, "Biggest Fire...".
- 69 Ibid., 3 February 1903, p. 4, "Services Rewarded".
- 70 Ibid., 6 May 1903, p. 3, "Expenses Estimated".
- 71 Ibid., 11 June 1903, p. 1, "Warehouse Burned".
- 72 YS, 12 June 1903, p. 4, "Need New Fire Hall".

- 73 KN, 16 June 1903, p. 1, "Wager Called Off".
- 74 Ibid., 19 June 1903, p. 3, "Meeting Tomorrow"; and 30 June 1903, p. 6.
- 75 See for example Dawson City Fire Dept., Daily Report, Engine House #2, v.2, 1902, entry dated 6 December 1902.
- 76 KN, 14 July 1903, p. 6, "City Dads..."; and YS, 6 October 1903, p. 1, "City Not To Buy...".
- 77 Dawson City Fire Department, Daily Report, Engine House #2, v.3, 1903, entry dated 24 August 1903.
- 78 YS, 28 July 1903, p. 4, "Council Meeting"; 7 August 1903, p. 3, "May Remain Unchanged".
- 79 Ibid., 17 December 1903, p. 4, "Figures Regarding...".
- 80 Ibid., 30 December 1903, p. 4, "Last Night's Carnival".
- 81 DDN, 1 January 1904, p. 4, "Dawson Firemen".
- 82 Ibid., 5 January 1904, p. 3, "Fireman Explains".
- 83 See YA, YTR, Central Registry file 25238. The file contains all the relevant correspondence between the city and James Leslie and Co. See especially James Leslie and Co. to James F. Macdonald, 10 August 1903; Leslie and Co. to Fire, Light, and Water Committee, 10 January 1904; D. Donaghey to T.D. Pattullo, 22 January 1904; reports of fire committee, 25 January 1904, 11 July 1904; Leslie and Co. to mayor of Dawson, 27 June 1904; Alexander Henderson to J.A. Lester, 2 October 1908; Lester to Henderson, 5 October 1908; Henderson to E.W. Smith, 29 September 1908; and Smith to Henderson, 1 October 1908. In 1908 the company appealed to Commissioner Henderson who was de facto mayor of Dawson. The territorial legal advisor concluded that the company had acted in good faith and in all fairness deserved to be reimbursed. The Yukon Council so resolved and the company eventually received \$841.26.
- 84 YS, 21 January 1904, p. 1, "Ladue Stores...", 22 January 1904, p. 4, "Aftermath of the Fire "; DDN, 21 January 1904,

- p. 1, "Dawson's Biggest...", 22 January 1904, p. 2, "Fire Lesson".
- 85 YS, 24 January 1904, p. 1, "Hot Time..."; and DDN, 26 January 1904, p. 4, "Salaries Are Cut".
- 86 DDN, 28 January 1904, p. 2, "Dawson Fire Department".
- 87 Ibid., 1 February 1904, p. 4, "Resigns...", 2 February 1904, p. 4, "New Men...".
- 88 YW, 17 April 1904, p. 4, "Ascribe Political Plot".
- 89 DDN, 19 April 1904, p. 4, "Politics in Department".
- 90 YW, 19 April 1904, p. 4, "Liberals Not Wanted".
- 91 Ibid., 15 May 1904, p. 4, "High Testimonial". Macfarlane soon found employment as foreman on the territorial road gang.
- 92 Ibid., 17 May 1904, p. 4, "Tilt Enlivens..."; and DDN, 17 May 1904, p. 2, "Mayor is Attacked".
- 93 YS, 26 January 1904, p. 3, "Municipal Ownership".
- 94 Ibid., 18 February 1904, p. 4, "A Concession...".
- 95 DDN, 12 July 1904, p. 3, "Scheme Dropped".
- 96 YW, 26 July 1904, p. 4, "On Offer of Water", 3 August 1904, p. 1, "To Report Favourably".
- 97 Ibid., 24 September 1904, p. 1, "\$200,000 Morning Blaze", 25 September 1904, p. 1, "Details of Loss".
- 98 Ibid., 7 October 1904, p. 4, "Fire Commissioner".
- 99 Ibid., 22 October 1904, p. 3, "Report Is Submitted".
- 100 DDN, 14 February 1905, p. 2, "Fire Commission...".
- 101 Ibid.
- 102 YW, 30 May 1905, p. 3, "New Water Mains...".
- 103 Ibid., 7 June 1905, p. 4, "Reduced Brigade", 13 June 1905, p. 4, "A Fire Protection...", and 18 June 1905, p. 5, "The Fire Hydrant...".
- 104 YW, 24 December 1905, p. 2. See also DDN, 26 December 1905, p. 7, "Only For Bidders".
- 105 DDN, 25 January 1906, p. 4, "Bids are Open".
- 106 See for example, DDN, 31 December 1906, p. 4.

- 107 DDN, 30 January 1906, p. 3, "People Are Displeased...", p. 4, "For City Ownership".
- 108 The vote was 226 for the contract, 146 against. The commissioner had stipulated that the contract needed 60 per cent of the votes to pass, and it did—with 3 votes to spare. See DDN, 1 February 1906, p. 4, "Count for Matheson", 2 February 1906, p. 4, "Hydrant Contract...".
- 109 DDN, 8 March 1906, p. 4, "Big Fire...".
- 110 Dawson City Fire Department, Daily Report, 1905-1906, p. 32; YW, 15 May 1906, p. 1, "Alarm of Fire...", and 17 November 1907, p. 4, "Was Sent...".
- 111 See DDN, 10 August 1906, p. 4, "Big Pipes Are Here". For the material used and the exact specifications see Vancouver City Archives, Harry Patten Archibald Papers, v.17, f.7, "Dawson City Water and Power Co.". Archibald was a Vancouver consulting engineer who was involved with the installation of the hydrant system in Dawson.
- 112 DDN, 1 November 1906, p. 4, "Hydrants Accepted".
- 113 Ibid., 5 November 1906, p. 4, "Hydrant Clogged".
- 114 YW, 31 October 1906, p. 4, "Engine Might...".
- 115 Ibid., 5 December 1906, p. 1, "City Well Protected...".
- 116 Ibid., 24 January 1907, p. 4, "Electric Wiring...".
- 117 Ibid., 6 February 1907, p. 4, "One Fire Engine Enough".
- 118 DDN, 18 January 1908, p. 4, "Furnaces a Menace".

VII Civic Amenities and Urban Utilities

- 1 The Times, 23 September 1898, p. 10, "Letters from Canada". The special reporter was the newspaper's colonial correspondent, Flora Shaw.
- 2 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 3 PAC, Sifton Papers, V.295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (1), Ogilvie to Sifton, 22 September 1898.
- 4 KN, 29 March 1900, p. 1, "Sanitary Problems...". RCMP Records, v. 3030, LB, p. 200.
- 5 KN, 26 August 1902, p. 2, "Fearful Condition".
- 6 Ibid., 11 November 1902, p. 2, "Council's Hatchet".
- 7 Ibid., 15 April 1903, p. 1, "Opening of...".
- 8 YW, 9 May, 1906, p. 4, "Extend the...".
- 9 DDN, 28 May 1906, p. 4, "Sewers Choked".
- 10 KN, 7 June 1900, p. 4, "Street Improvements".
- 11 YA, YTG Records, V. 10, f. 2033, F.C. Wade to Ogilvie, 12 July 1900.
- 12 DDN, 3 August 1900, p. 2, "Those Garbage...".
- 13 KN, 23 May 1901, p. 5, "Seeing Is...".
- 14 Ibid., 29 May 1901, p. 3, "Garbage Question".
- 15 YS, 30 April 1902, p. 3, "Garbage Road...".
- 16 Ibid., 24 May 1902, p. 3, "For Dumping...".
- 17 KN, 30 August 1899, p.1, "Street Cars...".
- 18 Ibid., 9 December 1900, p. 2, "Dawson Electric...". The Nugget reported that the stockholders in the syndicate were almost all English.
- 19 DDN, 22 April 1902, p. 4, "Charters Given...". The application was filed by J.A. Williams, the manager and proprietor of the electric company.
- 20 YA, YTR, CLB, V.84, p. 272. Charter Incorporating Yukon Street Railway Co., 9 July 1902. The petition carried the signatures of Thomas O'Brien, William J. O'Brien, H.T. Wills and W.T. Barrett.

- 21 Ibid., p. 852, J.N.E. Brown to Wm. White, 13 September 1902.
- 22 KN, 14 October 1902, p. 2, "Franchise Desired", 10 December 1902, p. 4, "Railroad Franchise".
- 23 Ibid., 18 December 1902, p. 1, "Franchise...".
- 24 Ibid., 1 January 1903, p. 1, "Franchise Arguments".
- 25 Ibid., 29 January 1903, p. 1, "Railway Franchise".
- 26 Gordon Bennett, "Yukon Transportation: a History". Unpublished thesis: University of New Brunswick, 1970, pp. 127-129. The section on the KMR reappears in Bennett. Yukon Transportation: a History. Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, no. 19, Ottawa, 1978, pp. 78-79.
- 27 YW, 31 December 1904, p. 4, "Klondike Mines...". The company purchased three narrow gauge locomotives from the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway Co. along with a large quantity of 56 lb. rails. It also purchased 37,000 ties and 500 poles from J.W. Boyle. See DDN, 11 February 1905, p. 4.
- 28 KN, 29 January 1903, p. 1, "Railway Franchise"; YW, 21 January 1905, p. 1, "Klondike Railway..."; and DDN, 17 February 1905, p. 4, "Railway at...".
- 29 YW, 3 July 1906, p. 4, "Klondike Railway...".
- 30 Ibid., 27 November 1906, p. 4, "Through Road..."; and DDN, 6 July 1907, p. 4, "Work for...".
- 31 DDN, 22 July 1909, p. 4, "Railway Taxation". In the three years revenues had amounted to \$128,058 while expenses had been \$249,655. The deficit was paid by the English shareholders.
- 32 Bennet, "Yukon Transportation", pp. 130-131.
- 33 In 1907, the company reversed its schedule so that trains ran from Sulphur to Dawson in the morning and returned in the evening so that people on the creeks could go to Dawson for business or shopping and return home the same day.

- 34 YS, 8 October 1902, p. 4, "First Yukon...".
- 35 KN, 28 June 1898, p. 3, "Telephone Plant...". Pelletier was a mining speculator and sometime correspondent of the New York Times. The stockholders included Alexander McDonald, Bill McPhee and a Dr. LeBlanc.
- 36 Ibid., 2 July 1898, p. 3, "The Telephone...".
- 37 Ibid., 6 May 1899, p. 4, "A Meritorious...".
- 38 Ibid., 28 February 1900, p. 7, "Dawson's Greatest..."; DDN, 2 March 1900, p. 2, "Tried and ...".
- 39 See for example DDN, 20 February 1900, p. 4, "A Chance...".
- 40 DDN, 4 April 1900, p. 3, "Phones Reach..."; KN, 6 May 1900, p. 5, "You Cannot..."; and YS, 8 May 1900, p. 5, "Yukon Telephone...".
- 41 DDN, 4 October 1902, p. 8, "Changes Manager".
- 42 KN, 13 December 1900, p. 3, "Telephone Service".
- 43 See Morley S. Wickett, "Yukon Trade", Industrial Canada, October 1902, p. 66; and YS, 24 January 1904, p. 4, "Telephone in...".
- 44 KN, 1 November 1899, Anniversary Issue, p. 29. The board of directors included "Billy" Chappell and Alexander McDonald, mining entrepreneurs, Falcon Joslin, the representative of a Seattle brokerage firm, and David Doig, manager of the Bank of British North America.
- 45 Ibid., 4 October 1898, p. 3, "Electric Lights...".
- 46 DDN, 13 October 1899, p. 1, "Bright Light...".
- 47 KN, 1 November 1899, Anniversary Issue, p. 29.
- 48 YS, 30 January 1900, p. 1, "City Lights".
- 49 KN, 20 September 1900, p. 6, "Transmission of...".
- 50 Ibid., 28 August 1901, p. 1, "Bonds Issued".
- 51 Ibid., 13 March 1902, p. 4, "Electric Lighting".
- 52 Ibid., 9 September 1902, p. 2, "Lighting of...".
- 53 DDN, 17 May 1904, p. 3, "New Light".
- 54 Ibid., 21 June 1904, p. 2, "Electric Lights...". The DEL & P. Co. supplied power for 25¢ per kilowatt hour, while the rate in Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle and Tacoma was 3¢ per kwh.

- 55 YW, 24 May 1906, p. 2, "Dawson Electric...".
- 56 Ibid., 13 December 1905, p. 1, "Dr. Grant..."; and DDN, 5 February 1906, p. 4, "Grant Is...". Grant made over \$100,000 on his Toronto property and expected to make a similar amount in Vancouver. He also owned the Canadian Forty Mile Dredging Co. which operated on the largest concession in the territory.
- 57 DDN, 24 September 1906, p. 4, "Mammoth Scheme", p. 4, "Big Deal..."; YW, 10 October 1906, p. 4, "Local Capital...". The News also reported that Fuller owned the telephone system at Fairbanks, Alaska.
- 58 YW, 10 October 1906, p. 4, "Local Capital...".
- 59 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 60 KN, 19 April 1899, p. 4, "Water Works". See also DDN, 9 June 1900, p. 1, "Only One...".
- 61 DDN, 25 August 1899, p. 1, "Dawson's New..."; KN, 20 September 1899, p. 3, "Dawson's Water...".
- 62 KN, 21 October 1899, p. 1, "Water Houses...".
- 63 DDN, 14 December 1899, p. 1, "Wooden Water...", 20 December 1899, p. 4, "Water Shut...".
- 64 Ibid., 9 June 1900, p. 1, "Only One...".
- 65 Ibid., 26 June 1900, p. 2, "Splendid Water...".
- 66 KN, 4 October 1900, p. 8, "Water Pipes...".
- 67 Ibid., 25 October 1900, p. 6, "Dawson's Water...".
- 68 Ibid., 17 August 1901, p. 5, "May Reduce...".
- 69 Ibid., 14 September 1901, p. 6, "Heat and..."; 23 October 1901, p. 1, "Good Shape...".
- 70 Ibid., 12 June 1902, p. 1, "Informal Meeting...".
- 71 Ibid., 1 July 1902, p. 5, "Action of Committee", 2 August 1902, p. 6, "Contract Unsigned".
- 72 See Ibid., 17 December 1902, p. 1, "Political Situation".
- 73 YS, 26 January 1904, p. 3, "Municipal Ownership".
- 74 YW, 22 March 1904, p. 4, "Bids Now...", 3 August 1904, p. 1, "To Report...", 27 August 1904, p. 4, "Satisfied

With...".

- 75 Ibid., 30 May 1905, p. 3, "New Water...".
- 76 DDN, 13 June 1905, p. 3, "Council Names...", 15 June 1905, p. 1, "Council Works...".
- 77 Ibid., 25 January 1906, p. 4, "Bids are...".
- 78 Ibid., 30 January 1906, p. 2, "The Last...", 31 January 1906, p. 4.
- 79 Ibid., 1 February 1906, p. 2, "Won By..."; and YW, 3 February 1906, p. 4, "Contract Good...".
- 80 DDN, 2 July 1906, p. 4, "For Big...", 10 August 1906, p. 4, "Big Pipes...".
- 81 Ibid., 1 November 1906, p. 4, "Hydrants Accepted".
- 82 Ibid., 30 May 1907, p. 4, "Quits the...". The sale occurred in May and although the newspaper reports never referred to Fuller by name it is clear that he was the purchaser, as the water company came under the management of the Dawson Electric Light and Power Co.
- 83 The N.P & C Co's list of shareholders and articles of incorporation have disappeared from the files of the Board of Trade at the British Public Record Office.
- 84 DDN, 18 May 1909, p. 4, "Details of...".
- 85 Ibid., 15 July 1909, p. 4, "Fuller Is...", 23 August 1909, p. 1, "Immense Project...".
- 86 Alfred E. Lee, The Liard Trail to the Klondike, privately published by Katherine Lee Gilliland et al., Montreal, 1976, appendix 2, pp. 62-63. Lee was the field superintendent who supervised the construction of the Coal Creek power plant.
- 87 For details of construction of the North Fork power station and for a description of the financial intrigue which preceded its operation see Lewis Green, The Gold Seekers (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 167-174. There are some excellent photographs of the North Fork Plant in The Yukon Territory: Its History and

- Resources (Ottawa: Dept. of the Interior, 1916), p. 89.
- 88 See Green, Gold Seekers, pp. 172-174. J.W. Boyle had arrived in Dawson in 1897 as manager and sparring partner of Frank Slavin, one time heavyweight champion of the British Empire. Soon afterward, he apparently realized that the future of mining in the region lay not in the individual entrepreneur but in large scale mechanical operations. Over the next few years, he acquired concessions of land along gold-bearing creeks and rivers and then used dredges to extract the mineral wealth. By 1910 he had assembled and promoted the Canadian Klondyke Mining Company which employed British and American capital to exploit his resources of timber, gold, water and electric power. Boyle became a major figure in the territory but his career in the Yukon was overshadowed by his adventures in central Europe during the First World War. For a biography of Boyle see William Rodney, Joe Boyle: King of the Klondike (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1974).
- 89 See for example, DDN, 18 September 1911, p. 4, "Big Legal..."; and Green, Gold Seekers, pp. 191-194.
- 90 DDN, 16 October 1912, p. 4, "Will Take...".
- 91 See H.A. Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1936), p. 263.
- 92 DDN, 15 February 1913, p. 4, "Boyle Company...".
- 93 Ibid., 18 February 1913, p. 4, "New Rates...".
- 94 Ibid., 19 February 1913, p. 2, "Public Utilities".
- 95 Ibid., p. 4, "Commissioner Black...".
- 96 Ibid., 27 March 1913, p. 4, "Yukon Council...".
- 97 Ibid., 5 April 1913, p. 4, "Council Discusses...".
- 98 Ibid., 5 May 1913, p. 4, "Power House...". Alfred Lee suggested that the fire was not accidental and that Boyle "managed to get the Dawson Power Plant burned down," along with another which belonged to the NLP and C Co..

- See Lee, Liard Trail, appendix 2, p. 63.
- 99 DDN, 30 May 1913, p. 1, "Change to...". Boyle's biographer asserted that Boyle had realized that the distribution of water "was as inefficient as it was unprofitable," and that he proposed to extend the mains and build new hydrants before raising the price for service. See Rodney, Joe Boyle, p.95.
- 100 DDN, 29 August 1913, p. 4, "New Hydrant...".
- 101 Ibid., 4 September 1913, p. 4, "Meeting Held...", 9 September 1913, p. 1, "Water Question...".
- 102 Ibid., 30 September 1913, p. 4, "Meeting Votes...".
- 103 Ibid., 2 October 1913, p. 1, "Pipe Service...".
- 104 Ibid., 4 October 1913, p. 1, "Citizens Plan...".
- 105 Ibid., 9 October 1913, p. 4, "Ultimatum Exchanged...".
- 106 Ibid., There were 84 signatures on the petition, including those of representatives of the Pacific Cold Storage Co., Dawson Hardware Co., O'Brien Brewing Co. and KMR Co.
- 107 Ibid., 15 October 1913, p. 1, "Proposition to...".
- 108 Ibid., 18 October 1913, p. 4, "Still Talking...".
- 109 Ibid., 21 October 1913, p. 4, "New Offer...".
- 110 Ibid., 5 November 1913, p. 4, "Letters are...".
- 111 Ibid., 8 November 1913, p. 4, "Commissioner On...".
- 112 Ibid., 11 November 1913, p. 4, "Three Services...".
- 113 Ibid., 12 November 1913, p. 4, "Civic League...".
- 114 Ibid., 13 November 1913, p. 4, "Action Taken...". The details of the suit appear in DDN, 14 November 1913, p. 4, "Motion for...".
- 115 DDN, 11 March 1914, p. 1, "Council to...".
- 116 Ibid., 27 March 1914, p. 4, "New Bill...".
- 117 Ibid., 30 March 1914, p. 1, "Yukon Council...", 6 May 1914, p. 4, "City Charter...".
- 118 Ibid., 28 May 1914, p. 4, "Plan for...".
- 119 Ibid., 30 May 1914, p. 4, "Discussion Is...".

- 120 Ibid., 3 June 1914, p. 4, "Conference Is...".
- 121 Ibid., 1 July 1914, p. 1, "City By-law...".
- 122 Ibid., 8 July 1914, p. 4, "By-law Passed...", 10 July 1914, p. 4, "Bond Sale...".
- 123 Ibid., 29 July 1914, p. 4, "Judgement Given...".
- 124 Ibid., 6 August 1914, p. 4, "Negotiations on...".
- 125 Ibid., 12 August 1914, p. 4, "Civic Utilities...", 13 August 1913, p. 4, "Utilities To...".
- 126 Ibid., 1 September 1914, p. 4, "Deal Closed...", 2 September 1914, p. 4, "Details of...".
- 127 Ibid., 7 December 1914, p. 4, "No Change...".
- 128 Lee, Liard Trail, p. 63. The Coal Creek plant was dismantled in late 1917 and early 1918 and much of the equipment was shipped to Japan. See Green, Gold Seekers, p. 207.
- 129 Green, Gold Seekers, p. 212.
- 130 See Ibid.
- 131 YA, Watt Brothers Papers, box XV, J.W. Boyle to Mayor and Councillors, 1 February 1916.
- 132 Ibid., Norman A. Watt to Oscar Newhouse, 26 February 1916.
- 133 Green, Gold Seekers, p. 207.

VIII Saloons, Gambling Halls and the Traffic in Liguor

- 1 William Ogilvie, Early Days on the Yukon and the Story of Its Gold Finds (London: John Lane, 1913), p. 216.
- 2 Seattle Post-Intelligencer, 9 August 1898, p. 6, "The Greatest Gold Camp...".
- 3 U.S. National Archives, U.S. Consulate, Dawson: Reports and Correspondence, v. 1, J.C. McCook to "Mr. Moore", undated 1898.
- 4 Basil Austin, The Diary of a Ninety-Eighter (Mt. Pleasant: John Cumming, 1969), p. 185.
- 5 Scott Dial, "The Gold Rush Saloon", Alaska Journal, v. 5, 1975, p. 83.
- 6 Lynch, Three Years in the Klondike, p. 29.
- 7 Berton, Klondike, p. 374; and Martha Louise Black, My Ninety Years (Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Co., 1976), pp. 48-49.
- 8 Robert C. Kirk, Twelve Months in the Klondike (London: William Heinemann, 1899), p. 93.
- 9 Ella Lung Martinsen, Trail to North Star Gold (Portland: Metropolitan Press, 1969), p. 67.
- 10 See for example Ellis Lucia, Klondike Kate (New York: Hastings House, 1962), p. 62.
- 11 See Haskell, Two Years in the Klondike, p. 374; The Times (London), 27 August 1898, p. 4, "The Klondike Goldfields"; and KN, 15 July 1899, p. 4, "Police Raid...". Haskell alleged that one saloon made a clear profit of \$124,000 in the summer of 1897.
- 12 Luella Day, The Tragedy of the Klondike (New York: n.P., 1906), p. 72.
- 13 PAC, Nevill A.D. Armstrong Papers, diary entries 29 October 1898, 15 December 1898. Armstrong recorded in his diary the episode in which a friend was relieved of his fortune during an evening with Myrtle Brocee. He was much relieved when the lady committed suicide.

- 14 Ibid., Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to Officer Commanding NWMP, Regina, 20 November 1896, p. 232.
- 15 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 18-19.
- 16 PAC, Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Walsh 1898, Walsh to Sifton, 26 June 1898.
- 17 Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 19-20.
- 18 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, F.C. Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 19 KN, 17 December 1898, p. 1, "The Whiskey Ordinance".
- 20 PAC, Constantine Papers, LB, Constantine to "Mr. White", 16 June 1897.
- 21 PAC, Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Ogilvie 1898, Ogilvie to Sifton, 14 September 1898.
- 22 KN, 14 September 1898, p. 1, "\$8750 in Fines...", 17 September 1898, p. 1, "Police Court Items".
- 23 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, p. 51290, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.
- 24 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3063, entry dated 2 January 1899.
- 25 US Consular Reports, Dawson, McCook to Hill, 24 May 1899, 20 June 1900.
- 26 KN, 22 November 1899, p. 5, "Police Court Items".
- 27 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1445, f. 181, pt. 6, F.F. McPhail to Officer Commanding B Division, 18 October 1899, 19 October 1899, 20 October 1899, 21 October 1899, 23 October 1899, 24 October 1899, 25 October 1899, 26 October 1899, 27 October 1899, 28 October 1899, 30 October 1899, 2 November 1899, 6 November 1899, and 27 November 1899.
- 28 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, p. 51290, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.
- 29 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3031, LB, Z.T. Wood to Ogilvie, 21 July 1900.
- 30 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 352, Sifton to Ogilvie, 14 August 1900.

- 31 KN, 9 September 1900, p. 4, "Choose Partners".
- 32 YA, YTR, CLB, v. 78, p. 905, Ogilvie to Sifton, 12 September 1900.
- 33 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Smart to Ogilvie, 22 November 1900.
- 34 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3032, p. 256, Wood to Sifton, 30 November 1900; KN, 25 November 1900, p. 6, "The Effect on Theatres".
- 35 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Ogilvie to Smart, February 1901.
- 36 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C529, p. 90769, Wade to Sifton, 3 March 1901.
- 37 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Smart to Ogilvie, 11 March 1901.
- 38 Ibid., Ogilvie to Sifton, 19 March 1901.
- 39 See for example UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C530, H.J. Woodside to Sifton, 10 March 1901; and PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 190, p. 54469, A.S. Grant to Laurier, 19 March 1901.
- 40 KN, 23 May 1901, p. 5, "Another Order".
- 41 Ibid., 10 July 1901, p. 1, "Gambling Now Off", 13 July 1901, p. 4, "Went Up in Smoke".
- 42 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3033, p. 326, Wood to Officer Commanding B Division, 9 July 1901; and Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 40.
- 43 KN, 20 November 1901, p. 1, "All Gambling...".
- 44 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3033, p. 704, Wood to Officer Commanding B Division, 16 November 1901; KN, 20 November 1901, p. 4, "Police Force Increased". The Nugget reported that 280 "blue tickets" had been issued during the previous week.
- 45 KN, 24 March 1901, p. 2, "Many Ordinances", 31 March 1901, p. 1, "Step Up to the Bar".
- 46 YS, 28 April 1903, p. 4, "Point Raised".

- 47 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Wood to Legal Advisor, undated.
- 48 DDN, 13 July 1903, p. 8, "Women to be Kept...".
- 49 Ibid., 20 July 1903, p. 5, "Churches Fighting...".
- 50 Ibid., 15 August 1903, p. 5, "Council Committee", 16 October 1903, p. 1, "Are Not Passed"; YS, 16 August 1903, p. 8, "Council Committee"; DR, 16 August 1903, p. 5, "Against Lewd Women".
- 51 DDN, 16 October 1903, p. 1, "Are Not Passed".
- 52 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3038, p. 312, Wood to Sifton, 2 January 1905.
- 53 Ibid., Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 62-63; and DDN, 12 July 1904, p. 4, "Licence Issued", 15 July 1904, p. 4, "35 Saloons Are Closed".
- 54 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3038, p. 9, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 13 October 1904, p. 312, Wood to Sifton, 2 January 1905; and UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C578, p. 142477, Wood to F.C. Wade, 28 November 1904, p. 143106, Wood letter, 22 December 1904.
- 55 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3038, p. 9, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 13 October 1904.
- 56 YW, 7 January 1905, p. 4, "Sensation Last Night".
- 57 Ibid., 6 January 1905, p. 4, "Jos. Hutton's...", 17 October 1905, p. 4, "Gamblers Fined...".
- 58 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3039, p. 384, Wood to Commissioner Y.T., 16 October 1906, 13 November 1906.
- 59 DDN, 17 March 1908, p. 2, "Pringle Up Again". This article included the text of a letter from Pringle to the Montreal Witness which appeared on 22 February 1908.
- 60 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 355, f. 186-80, Wood to Comptroller NWMP, 14 February 1908, v. 396, f. 567-10, unsigned memorandum, 12 September 1908.
- 61 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 84.
- 62 YW, 16 July 1908, p. 4, "All Will Receive".
- 63 Ibid., 22 July 1908, p. 4, "Licence Inspector...".

- 64 DDN, 14 July 1908, p. 4, "Licences Refused", 16 July 1908, p. 4, "Change in the Plan".
- 65 See for example DDN, 1 August 1908, p. 3, "Lithgow Outlines". In the 1908 estimates the proportion of liquor licences to be spent on Dawson amounted to \$21,500 in a total revenue of \$67, 125.
- 66 DDN, 10 July 1913, p. 4, "Licences to be...".
- 67 Ibid., 25 March 1914, p. 1, "Work in the Council...".
- 68 Ibid., 14 April 1915, p. 4, "New Bill...".
- 69 Ibid., 4 May 1916, p. 4, "Drys Get Together". J.W. Boyle signed the roll and declared that "he had drunk everything in his day that contained any excitement, including Russian vodka, on which he once cleaned out the whole army and police force at Bombay, India, when he was a sailor, but that several years ago he quit drinking, and smoking as well."
- 70 DDN, 10 May 1916, p. 4, "To the Electors...".
- 71 Ibid., 12 May 1916.
- 72 See for example DDN, 15 May 1916, p. 4, and 17 May 1916, p. 4.
- 73 DDN, 27 May 1916, p. 1, "Large Attendance...".
- 74 Ibid., 14 June 1916, p. 1, "Yukon Council".
- 75 Ibid., 16 June 1916, p. 2, "Commissioner Black...".
- 76 Ibid., 17 June 1916, p. 1, "Drugs Appear".
- 77 Ibid., 20 June 1916, p. 1, "Wet Petition".
- 78 Ibid., 21 June 1916, p. 2, "Argument of Wets...".
- 79 Ibid., 24 June 1916, p. 4. The Yukon Council debated the issue on 21 June. The 22 June issue of the Dawson Daily News which reported on the session does not appear in the microfilm reproductions.
- 80 Ibid., 14 July 1916, p. 4, "Last Day...".
- 81 See DDN, 23 August 1916, p. 3, "Letter from Home". The president was a drygoods merchant, the vice president a barrister, the secretary a financial broker, and the

treasurer was a clerk for the electric light and power company. See also DDN, 28 September 1916, p. 3, "Thompson on Results...".

- 82 See for example DDN, 7 August 1916, p. 3, 24 August 1916, p. 2.
- 83 See for example DDN, 9 August 1916, p. 2, 26 August 1916, p.2.
- 84 DDN, 17 August 1916, p. 1, "Many At Free Concert".
- 85 Ibid., 29 August 1916, p. 1, "Drys Discuss...".
- 86 Ibid., 5 September 1916, p. 4, "Returns Get In...".
- 87 Ibid., 19 July 1918, p. 4, "Licences are Renewed...".
In 1918 only 14 hotels applied for renewals.
- 88 Ibid., 14 February 1919, p. 4, "Messages Sent...".
- 89 Ibid., 20 May 1919, p. 1, "Liquor Issue...", 24 May 1919, p. 4, "Explanation of Liquor Situation...".
- 90 Ibid., 26 February 1920, p. 4, "Results of the Vote...".
- 91 S.D. Clark, "The Gold Rush Society of British Columbia and the Yukon", in The Developing Canadian Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), pp.87-88.

IX "Langourous Lillies of Souless Love"

- 1 YS, 23 February 1901, p. 2.
- 2 See Labell Brooks-Vincent, The Scarlet Life of Dawson and the Roseate Dawn of Nome (Denver: privately published, 1900), p. 77; and KN, 14 September 1898, p. 1, "\$8750 in Fines...", and 17 September 1898, p. 1, "Police Court...".
- 3 Archives of the Synod of the Diocese of Montreal, Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Father and Mother", 8 July 1897.
- 4 Mary Lee Davis, Sourdough Gold: the Log of a Yukon Adventure (Boston: W.A. Wilde Co., 1933), p. 183.
- 5 Armstrong, Yukon Yesterdays, p. 52.
- 6 A.A. "Scotty" Allen, Gold, Men and Dogs (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), p. 84.
- 7 E.C. Trelawney-Ansell, I Followed Gold (New York: Lee Furman, 1939), p. 171.
- 8 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3063, 13 September 1898, 15 September 1898.
- 9 See Steele, Forty Years, p. 323.
- 10 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3055, 12 October 1898.
- 11 See YA, YTR, CLB, v. 77, p. 744, Ogilvie to F.C. Wade, undated.
- 12 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.
- 13 Angelo Heilprin, Alaska and the Klondike (London: C. Arthur Pearson, 1899), pp. 55-56.
- 14 KN, 29 October 1898, "Why Shouldn't...".
- 15 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1444, f. 181 pt. 3, report of S.B. Steele, May 1899.
- 16 KN, 12 April 1899, p. 3, "The Tenderloin...".
- 17 Ibid., 12 May 1899, p. 1, "The New Tenderloin...".
- 18 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1444, f. 181, pt. 3, report of S.B. Steele, May 1899.

- 19 See KN, 8 July 1899, p. 4, "Police Court Notes", and 9 August 1899, p. 5, "Doings Before...".
- 20 The evidence is not entirely conclusive. Much of it is rumour, but rumour that is repeated so often that it may have substance. See for example Armstrong, Yukon Yesterdays, p. 53. The police report on the area noted that Ed Lewin and Emil Stauf, two real estate agents, served as "trustees" who collected the rent for the owners. See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1445, f. 181, pt. 6, McPhail to Officer Commanding B Division [hereafter McPhail report], 10 November 1899.
- 21 Brooks-Vincent, Scarlet Life of Dawson, p. 77; and PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1445, f. 181, pt. 6, McPhail report.
- 22 Armstrong, Yukon Yesterdays, p. 53.
- 23 See UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, p. 51290, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899; and Black, My Ninety Years, p. 48.
- 24 KN, 12 April 1899, p. 4, "Raid Upon...".
- 25 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1445, f. 181, pt. 6, McPhail report; and KN, 4 November 1899, p. 5, "Stroller's Column".
- 26 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 1445, f. 181, pt. 6, McPhail report.
- 27 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, p. 51290, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.
- 28 YA, YTR, CLB, v. 77, p. 738, Ogilvie to Officer Commanding NWMP, 15 January 1900.
- 29 Ibid., p. 744, Ogilvie to F.C. Wade, undated.
- 30 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Ogilvie to Wm. Mulock, 25 May 1900. Mulock was secretary of the Dominion Temperance Alliance.
- 31 See for example Ibid., Mrs. Kate Heamon to Sifton, 27 June 1900
- 32 Ibid., Ogilvie to Mulock, 25 May 1900.
- 33 Ibid., Z.T. Wood to Ogilvie, 21 July 1900.
- 34 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C493, Perry to Sifton, 7 November 1899.

- 35 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Ogilvie to Mulock, 25 May 1900.
- 36 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C420, p. 352, Sifton to Ogilvie, 14 August 1900.
- 37 YA, YTR, CLB, v. 78, p. 905, Ogilvie to Sifton, 12 September 1900.
- 38 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Smart to Ogilvie, 22 November 1900.
- 39 Ibid., Ogilvie to Smart, 27 December 1900.
- 40 Ibid., Smart to Ogilvie, 26 January 1901.
- 41 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3032, p. 256, Wood to Sifton, 20 November 1900.
- 42 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Ogilvie to Smart, 27 February 1901.
- 43 Ibid., Smart to Ogilvie, 11 March 1901.
- 44 Ibid., Ogilvie to Sifton, 19 March 1901.
- 45 See for example PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 190, p. 54469, A.S. Grant, "pastor of St. Andrew's Church, A Citizen of the Empire", to Laurier, 19 March 1901.
- 46 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Smart to J.H. Ross, 20 March 1901.
- 47 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 37.
- 48 See David J. Hall, "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton, 1896-1905". Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Toronto, 1973, pp.642-643. Hall indicted Sifton for lamentable want of judgement and serious maladministration of the Yukon.
- 49 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3032, Wood to Ogilvie, 5 November 1900.
- 50 KN, 25 November 1900. p. 1, "Women Must Go".
- 51 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3032, p. 370, Wood to Commissioner Y.T., 10 January 1901.
- 52 Ibid., p. 522, Wood to Officer Commanding B Division, 18 February 1901; and YS, 23 February 1901, p. 2, "Langourous Lillies of Soulless Love".

- 53 Once again Emil Stauff was agent for the purchasers. See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3033, p. 22, Wood to Stauff, 19 April 1901. In a curious pair of letters to E.L. Newcombe, deputy minister of justice, former crown prosecutor F.C. Wade objected "to the institution of an organized Sodom in the teeth of the women and children" in West Dawson. The letters were filled with wild exaggerations and scurrilous accusations and most of his allegations could not be substantiated. He did, however, denounce "speculators in Dawson who do not hesitate to make fortunes out of this particular crime", and he named "Shauff and Tilley" as their agents. Shauff and Tilley do not appear in the directories. See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 219, f. 905, Wade to Newcombe, 13 November 1901 and undated.
- 54 KN, 14 April 1901, p. 3, "They All Object".
- 55 Ibid., 28 April 1901, p. 1, "Locating...".
- 56 YS, 1 May 1901, p. 3, "Dawson Purged".
- 57 KN, 16 October 1901, p. 4, "Exodus of Degradation".
- 58 PAC, RCMP records, v. 3033, p. 702, Wood to Officer Commanding B Division, 16 November 1901.
- 59 KN, 23 March 1902, p. 8, "Scarlet Women".
- 60 See Ibid., 15 April 1902, p. 1, "Cigar Stores Raided", 16 April 1902, p. 5, "Second Contingent", and 17 April 1902, p. 5, "Third Contingent".
- 61 See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3075, Police Gaol Record, 1899-1903, and v. 3076, Convict Register.
- 62 DDN, 17 April 1902, p. 1, "Position Explained".
- 63 See for example KN, 29 April 1902, p. 6, "Objection is Waived"; DDN, 10 May 1902, p. 8, "Balked Again"; and PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3034, Wood to Mayor of Dawson, 10 May 1902.
- 64 YA, YTR, CLB, v. 84, p. 784, Z.T. Wood to Ald. Macdonald, 3 September 1902.

- 65 KN, 6 October 1902, p. 4, "Petition Circulated".
- 66 Ibid., 21 October 1902, p. 4, "Time to Mush On".
- 67 Ibid., 29 October 1902, p. 4, "Corral Removed".
- 68 Ibid., 17 November 1902, p. 1, "Women Move".
- 69 Ibid., 3 December 1902, p. 4, "Protecting the Homes",
6 December 1902, p. p. 1, "Women in Court".
- 70 Ibid., 6 May 1903, p. 4, "Police Court...", 11 May 1903,
p. 4, "Cleared the Court", 12 May 1903, p. 4, "Six
Months...", 16 May 1903, p. 4, "Six Months...".
- 71 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3036, p. 114, Wood to Commissioner
Y.T., 25 June 1903.
- 72 DDN, 14 July 1903, p. 4, "Killing the Town".
- 73 YS, 16 July 1903, p. 1, "Knell of Bill Rung".
- 74 DDN, 16 October 1903, p. 1, "Are Not Passed".
- 75 See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3038, p. 289, Wood to Officer
Commanding B Division, 27 December 1904.
- 76 Ibid., p. 312, Wood to Sifton, 2 January 1905.
- 77 DDN, 18 June 1906, p. 4, "Some Must Go".
- 78 YW, 12 July 1906, p. 1, "Churches vs. Dance Halls".
The Catholic priest did not sign the petition.
- 79 See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 396, f. 567-10, Cuthbert to
Wood, 6 July 1906, and Wood to White, 26 March 1907.
- 80 YA, YTG Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Wood to acting commis-
sioner, 16 April 1907.
- 81 Ibid., petition dated 25 April 1907. The petition was
signed by almost every businessman in Dawson.
- 82 Ibid., J. McDonald, M. Nelson and Murray Eades to
minister of justice, undated
- 83 Ibid., Wood to Arthur Wilson, 23 May 1907.
- 84 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 375, f. 199-07, Wood to Comptroller
NWMP, 6 July 1907.
- 85 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 85.
- 86 YW, 15 August 1907, p. 4, "Grind of Routine...".
- 87 Ibid., 16 August 1907, p. 4, "New Bill...".
- 88 Ibid., 22 August 1907, p. 4, "Handled Without Gloves".

- 89 DDN, 30 August 1907, p. 4, "Bill at Last...".
- 90 Ibid., 18 January 1908, p. 4, "Doors are Closed...".
- 91 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 9, f. 1443, Wood to Commissioner NWMP, 7 December 1907; and CSP, 1907-1908, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Yukon Territory, Report of Z.T. Wood.
- 92 See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 396, f. 567, T.A. Wroughton to J.B. Pattullo, 5 May 1908, Pattullo to Wroughton, 6 May 1908, Wood to acting commissioner, 8 June 1908, and Wood to Comptroller RNWMP, 30 June 1908. See also YA, YTG Records, v. 71, f. 31, Wood to acting commissioner, 6 June 1908.
- 93 See James H. Gray, Red Lights on the Prairies (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1971), chapter 1, especially pp. 22-27.
- 94 See for example PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 488, p. 131781, Pringle to Laurier, 27 May 1902, p. 131791, Pringle to Laurier, 3 January 1905. In 1902 Sifton had asked the Reverend George Bryce to intercede on his behalf and to give Pringle "a few fatherly words of advice" and to admonish him for engaging in "futile agitations". See UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C427, p. 631, Sifton to Bryce, 26 June 1902. In a 1905 memorandum F.T. Congdon had declared that Pringle's "ignorance and lack of information in regard to any matter have never in the slightest degree affected the assurance with which he spoke." See PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 488, p. 131809, Congdon : memorandum, undated.
- 95 PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 470, p. 127203, Pringle to Laurier, 31 July 1907.
- 96 Ibid., v. 484, p. 130673, Pringle to Laurier, 18 October 1907, and p. 130675, Pringle to Henderson, undated.
- 97 See YW, 7 December 1907, p. 4, "Firmly Defends..."; and Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 85.
- 98 See DDN, 18 February 1908, p. 1, "Reverend John Pringle's Latest". The article referred to Pringle's letter to

- the Vancouver Province which appeared on 27 January 1908. Pringle also wrote letters to the Winnipeg Telegram, the Toronto News and the Montreal Witness.
- 99 YW, 29 February 1908, p. 2, "Yukon Slandered"; and DDN, 18 February 1908, p. 2, "What is Pringle Now?"
- 100 AA(T), H.A. Cody Papers, I.O.Stringer to Cody, 12 February 1908.
- 101 The correspondence between Pringle and Henderson appeared in DDN, 25 February 1908, p. 3, "Pringleism on the Rampage".
- 102 See DDN, 17 March 1908, p. 2, "Pringle Up Again".
- 103 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 86.
- 104 DDN, 22 July 1908, p. 3. The full text of the motion also appears in Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, p. 86.
- 105 See DDN, 22 July 1908, p. 3, "On Morals of Yukon", 23 July 1908, p. 4, "Hot Debate...", 24 July 1908, p. 1, "Debate...". 25 July 1908, p. 1, "McDonald Affidavit", 28 July 1908, p. 4, "Pringle Case Up", and 29 July 1908, p. 4, "Laid On..."; YW, 22 July 1908, p. 4, "Commends Action...", 23 July 1908, p. 4, "Second Day...", p. 4, "Morality Question...", 24 July 1908, p. 4, "Third Day...", 25 July 1908, p. 4, "Fourth Day...", 26 July 1908, p. 4, "Council Condemns Pringle", 29 July 1908, p. 4, "Pringle Incident is Closed".
- 106 See PAC, RCMP Records, v. 396, f. 567-10.
- 107 Ibid., unsigned memorandum, 12 September 1908.
- 108 CSP, 1909, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Yukon Territory, Report of Z.T. Wood.
- 109 PAC, Laurier Papers, v. 555, p. 150387, 12 January 1909. The letter was signed by the Catholic priest, the rector of the Anglican Cathedral, the Presbyterian and Methodist ministers, and by the representatives of the Salvation Army.
- 110 See YW, 7 March 1908, p. 2, "Pringle Turned Down", 27 June 1908, p. 2, "The Pringle Charges", 25 July 1908,

- p. 4, "Fourth Day...".
- 111 See Morrison, Politics of the Yukon, pp. 86-87; Thora Mills, Contribution of the Presbyterian Church, pp. 78-79; DDN, 25 February 1908, p. 7, "Pringleism on the Rampage"; YW, 16 September 1908, p. 1, "Extend Call..."; and Canadian Annual Review, 1908, p. 545.
- 112 See for example YA, YTG Records, Wroughton to Commissioner RNWMP, 13 October 1910.
- 113 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 396, f. 567-10, unsigned memo.
- 114 DDN, 3 August 1908, p. 4, "Are Taken Prisoner"; and CSP 1909, no. 28, RNWMP, pt. III, Yukon Territory, Report of Z.T. Wood, 1 November 1908.
- 115 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 461, f. 181-14, Moodie to Commissioner RNWMP, 5 August 1914.
- 116 DDN, 12 March 1914, p. 4, "Two Months...", 27 May 1914, p. 1, "Judgement...".
- 117 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 461, f. 181-14, Moodie to Commissioner RNWMP, report for May 1914.

X Hospitals and Public Health

- 1 San Francisco Examiner, 13 October 1897, "Are on...".
The report was datelined 29 August 1897.
- 2 See Walter Hamilton, The Yukon Story (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1964), p. 153; Wright, Prelude to Bonanza, pp. 297-298; and James M. Sinclair, Mission: Klondike (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1978), pp. 116-117. See also Berton, Klondike, pp. 392-383.
- 3 C.S.P., 1898, no. 13, Interior Department, pt. II, D.L.S. no. 17, Report of Thomas Fawcett, p. 88.
- 4 UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C480, p. 37523, F.C. Wade to Sifton, 10 April 1898.
- 5 T.C. Down, "Adventures at the Klondike", Fortnightly Review, 1898, p. 748.
- 6 University of Washington Archives (Seattle), W.D. Johns Papers, unpublished manuscript, p. 180.
- 7 U.S. National Archives, U.S. Consulate, Dawson: Reports and Correspondence, v. 1, McCook to Moore, 20 October 1898. See also PAC, Nevill Armstrong Papers, diary entry 24 September 1898; and Martha F. McKeown, The Trail Led North (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 183.
- 8 At the end of the year the territorial health officer reported that there had been 84 deaths from typhoid. See C.S.P. 1899, no. 15, NWMP, pt. III, Y.T., Report of Asst. Surgeon Thompson. Other estimates of the number of deaths range as low as one per day to as high as 120 per week at the height of the epidemic. See USPGA, Letters Received, v. 1, Canada USA, W.C. Bompas to Secretary SPG, 23 September 1898; and Nevill Armstrong, "Klondike Memories", The Beaver, June 1951, p. 44.
- 9 Grant had studied medicine for two years at McGill University before enrolling in the Montreal Presbyterian

- College. Although he attended third and fourth year lectures he never wrote the final medical examinations and thus was not a full fledged medical doctor. The Dawson newspapers, however, always referred to him as Dr. Grant. See Knox College Archives (Toronto), Andrew S. Grant Papers, v. 1, f. miscellaneous letters and clippings, 3 page autobiography.
- 10 See Thora Mills, Contribution of the Presbyterian Church, pp. 46-47.
 - 11 When the epidemic subsided, Dr. Bourke transformed his hospital into the Hotel Metropole.
 - 12 See YA, YTG Records, v. 67, f. 1, Ogilvie to Smart, 7 March 1899.
 - 13 USPGA, Letters Received, v. 1, Canada USA, Bompas to Sec. SPG, 23 September 1898. St. Mary's had room for 50 patients and Good Samaritan was built to hold 20.
 - 14 Rev. Charles J. Judge, An American Missionary (New York: Catholic Foreign Missionary Society, 1907), p. 237. See also KN, 3 September 1898, p.1, "A Meritorious...".
 - 15 KN, 13 August 1898, p. 1, "St. Mary's...".
 - 16 Ibid., p. 4, "Our Second..."; and Sinclair, Mission: Klondike, pp. 352-353.
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 - 20 YA, YTG Records, v. 73, f. 38, Statement of Donations to St. Mary's and Good Samaritan Hospitals.
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- 27 YA, YTG Records, v. 73, f. 38, undated memorandum.
- 28 C.S.P. 1900, no. 33u, Copy of the Report of William
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- 29 PAC, Sifton Papers, v. 295, f. Ogilvie 1898 (2),
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- 30 YA, YTG Records, v. 73, f. 38, undated memorandum.
- 31 US Consular Reports, McCook to Moore, 31 January 1899;
and YS, 17 January 1899, p. 1, "A Benefit...". See
also KN, 1 February 1899, p. 2, "For Sweet...".
- 32 US Consular Reports, McCook to Hill, 20 June 1899;
32 and Archives of the Synod of the Diocese of Montreal,
Naylor Papers, H.A. Naylor to "Father and Mother",
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- 33 KN, 16 September 1899, p. 3, "Patients In..."; and PAC,
RCMP Records, v. 1444, f. 181, pt. 3, Report of S.B.
Steele for September 1899.
- 34 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 3052, Yukon Orders, Dawson,
p. 82, entry dated 16 October 1899; C.S.P. 1900,
no. 15, NWMP, pt. II, Y.T., appendix E, Report of
Asst. Surgeon Thompson.
- 35 DDN, 2 September 1899, p.3, "Good Samaritan...";
and The Paystreak, 23 December 1899, p. 1, "St. Mary's..."

- 36 See the Paystreak, 23 December 1899, 26 December, 1899, 29 December, 1899. The Paystreak was the official journal of the bazaar. The only surviving issues may be found in the British Columbia Provincial Archives. See also KN, 3 January 1900, p. 1, "Total Receipts...".
- 37 See UMDL, Sifton Papers, reel C507, p. 66869, A.B. Perry to Sifton, 20 January 1900; and PAC, RCMP Records, V.3030, LB, Dr. Good to A.B. Perry, 8 February 1900.
- 38 YA, YTR, CLB, v.77, p. 88, Ogilvie to Officer Commanding NWMP, 18 October 1899.
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- 40 KN, 8 April 1900, p. 6, "Public Reports".
- 41 YS, 22 May 1900, p. 6, "Yukon Council...".
- 42 KN, 19 April 1900, p. 6, "Very Little..."; 8 July 1900, p. 5, "To Prevent...". See also C.S.P., 1900, no. 15, NWMP, pt. II, Y.T., appendix G, Report of Dr. Wood.
- 43 YA, YTG Records, v.67, f. 7, "Small Pox Epidemic", Ogilvie to Z.T. Wood, 6 July 1900.
- 44 US Consular Reports, McCook to Hill, 4 August 1900.
- 45 KN, 26 July 1900, p. 6, "Uncover Your...".
- 46 KN, 4 November 1900, p. 2, "Uncover Your...".
- 47 YA, YTG, Records, v. 67, f. 7, "Small Pox Epidemic", Ogilvie to Officer Commanding NWMP, 6 February 1901. Z. T. Wood replied that it was the duty of the vaccinators to see that the people were vaccinated and not the proper responsibility of the police.
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- 51 Ibid., 11 March 1902, p. 5, "Sanitary Condition".
- 52 Ibid., 17 January 1901, p. 2, "Mad Dogs...".

- 53 Ibid., 9 May 1901, p. 1, "Dogs Must...", 12 May 1901, p. 3, "Order in ...", 16 May 1901, p. 1, "Rigid Dog...".
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- 58 Ibid., 6 June 1902, p. 4, "Quarantined People...".
- 59 Ibid., 7 June 1902, p. 1, "To Use...".
- 60 Ibid., p. 2, editorial, 8 June 1902, p. 1, "Quarantined People...".
- 61 YA, YTG Records, v. 67, f. 7, "Small Pox Epidemic", J.T. Lithgow to J.L. McDougall, 24 March 1903,
- 62 YS, 1 July 1902, p. 4, "Dr. Sutherland...".
- 63 YW, 11 March 1904, p. 4, "Fears of...".
- 64 YA, YTG, Records, v. 67, f. 8, "Public Health Generally", pt. 1, J.N.E. Brown to Jas. F. Macdonald, 23 June 1904; and YW, 4 May 1904, p. 4, "Scarlet Fever...".
- 65 YW, 23 August 1905, p. 4, "Many Are...", 3 September 1905, p. 4, "Doctors to...", 6 September 1905, p. 1, "United Wisdom "; and DDN, 5 September 1905, p. 4, "Steps Taken...".
- 66 YA, YTG, Records, v. 67, f. 8, "Public Health Generally", pt. 1, Dr. Barrett to Yukon Commissioner, 2 April 1906, 13 June 1906 and E.B. Busby to Barrett, 14 June 1906.
- 67 YW, 28 May 1907, p. 1, "Going to...".
- 68 Y.T., Sessional Papers, 1908, no. 1, Report of Health Officer. See also DDN, 15 April 1908, p. 4, "To Clean...", 24 April 1908, p. 4, "Victims Increase...", 25 April 1908, p. 4, "To Close...", 11 May 1908, p. 4, "To Open...".
- 69 DDN, 4 March 1904, p. 4, "Hospital Changes...".
- 70 Ibid., 22 March 1904, p. 4, "Inquiry Into...".
- 71 Ibid., 19 April 1904, p. 3, "City Council..."; YW, 19 April 1904, p. 3, "City Hospital...".

- 72 DDN, 15 August 1910, p. 4, "Progress In...". Grant also used the profits from the sale of his mining ventures and real estate speculation to pay off the mortgage on the church and manse.
- 73 YW, 17 August 1905, p. 4, "Fine New...".
- 74 DDN, 2 May 1906, p. 3, "Fine New...", 17 July 1907, p. 4, "Machine Received...".
- 75 YW, 23 August 1907, p. 4, "Thought Grant...".
- 76 Ibid., 29 August 1907, p. 4, "Grant Is...".
- 77 DDN, 1 June 1910, p. 3, "Hospital Methods...".
- 78 Ibid., 2 June 1910, p. 2, "Yukon Hospitals...".
- 79 Ibid., 7 June 1911, p. 4, "Smallpox Cases...".
- 80 Ibid., 9 June 1911, p. 4, "Two More...".
- 81 Ibid., 10 June 1911, p. 4, "Guarding Against..."; and YA, YTG Records, v. 67, f. 8, "Public Health Generally", pt. 2, Alexander Henderson to T.A. Firth, 10 June 1911.
- 82 YA, YTG Records, v. 67, f. 8, pt. 2, W.E. Thompson to Arthur Wilson, 12 July 1911.
- 83 Ibid.; and DDN, 23 June 1911, p. 4, "Now In...".
- 84 DDN, 21 June 1911, p. 4, "New Step..."; and YA, White Pass and Yukon Route Records, series II, box 1, Superintendents Reports, f. 1911.
- 85 DDN, 23 June 1911, p. 4, "St. Mary's...".
- 86 Ibid., 12 July 1911, p. 4, "Quarantine To...".
- 87 Y.T. Sessional Papers, 1912, no. 8, "Expense in Connection with smallpox in the city of Dawson, 1911".
- 88 DDN, 17 July 1911, p. 2, "Follow It...".
- 89 Ibid., 3 April 1912, p. 4, "Health Officer...", 15 April 1912, p. 4, "Three Cases...".
- 90 Ibid., 16 April 1912, p. 4, "Now Is...", 17 April 1912, p. 4, "Various Sources...".
- 91 Ibid., 26 April 1912, p. 1, "Candidate Discuss...", 11 June 1912, p. 1, "Council Tackles...".
- 92 Ibid., 12 June 1912, p. 1, "Council Discusses...".

- 93 Ibid., 25 June 1912, p. 4, "Advance Made...".
- 94 Ibid., 11 April 1913, p. 1, "Hospitals Are...".
- 95 Ibid., 12 April 1913, p. 1, "Hospitals Are...".
- 96 Ibid., 14 March 1914, p. 2, "Statement of...". Good Samaritan, for example, had an operating deficit of \$1,022.21 and the deficit at St. Mary's was reportedly much greater. See Ibid., 18 March 1914, p. 2, "Annual Report...".
- 97 Ibid., 13 April 1915, p. 1, "Big Items...".
- 98 Ibid., 16 April 1916, p. 4, "Council Is...".
- 99 Ibid., 3 May 1918, p. 2, "Estimates Submitted...".
- 100 Ibid., p. 4, "Yukon Council...".
- 101 Ibid., 4 May 1918, p. 4, "Dawson to...", 1 June 1918, p. 1, "Good Samaritan...". In 1924 the Anglican Church purchased the Good Samaritan Hospital from the government and used the building as a hostel for transients.

XI Conclusion

- 1 DDN, 30 May 1912, p. 4, "Announcement". See also Margaret Archibald, "Grubstake to Grocery Store: the Klondike Emporium, 1897-1907". Manuscript Report No. 178, Ottawa, Parks Canada, 1972, pp. 169-172.
- 2 See Richard G. Stuart, "The Underdevelopment of Yukon 1840-1960: An Overview". Unpublished paper presented at the 59th Conference of the Canadian Historical Association, 5 June 1980. This provocative paper is the first application of the theory of underdevelopment to the history of northern Canada.
- 3 The information regarding construction on permafrost was supplied by Mr. Philip Reynolds, an architect with considerable experience in the design of the Hudson's Bay Company's northern stores. According to Mr. Reynolds, the necessary technology was not developed until the establishment of national research facilities in the 1940's.
- 4 Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier, p. 262.
- 5 John W. Dafoe, Clifford Sifton in Relation to His Times (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1931), p. 153.
- 6 Innis, Settlement and the Mining Frontier, pp. 268-269.
- 7 DDN, 4 November 1914, p. 4, "Names of the Boys...".
- 8 See Black, My Ninety Years, p. 107. See also DDN, 8 June 1916, p. 4, "Yukon Boys...". According to Polk's 1917 directory, Dawson's population was approximately 2500.
- 9 YA, Watt Brothers Papers, Box XVI, Garnett Watt to George M. Lindsay, 6 May 1918.
- 10 Ibid., Garnett Watt to George Howes, 17 September 1918.
- 11 PAC, RCMP Records, v. 549, f. 109-18, Insp. Knight to Commissioner, 16 October 1918.

- 12 See DDN, 26 October 1918, p. 1, "Steamer Sophia...", 28 October 1918, p. 1, "Many Bodies...", p. 2, "Keep Heart", 29 October 1918, p. 1, "Sophia Sank", and 7 November 1918, p. 1, "Northland's Greatest Disaster". See also Hamilton, Yukon Story, p. 234; and L. Berton, I Married the Klondike, pp. 145-149.

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