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CAPE NOME MINING REGION.

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Mr. CARTER presented the following

**REPORT ON THE CAPE NOME MINING REGION.**

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The Cape Nome mining region lies on the western coast of Alaska, just beyond the military reservation of St. Michael and about 120 miles south of the Arctic Circle. It can be reached by an ocean voyage of ten or twelve days from Seattle.

It has long been known that gold exists in the general vicinity of Cape Nome, and during the last five or six years a few adventurous miners have done more or less prospecting and claim staking throughout the district lying between Norton and Kotzebue sounds.

During the winter of 1898-99, a large number of miners entered the Kotzebue country, while others spent the season in the vicinity of Golovin Bay. On July 3, 1898, John Brynteson and John L. Hagelin arrived at St. Michael, whence they proceeded to Unalaklik and Golovin Bay. Here they did a little prospecting, and became associated with N. O. Hultberg, Henry Blake, Chris Kimber, and ——— Porter. As they were not satisfied with the results of their work in this district, and good reports reached them from the northwest, they determined to go to Sinrock River, which empties into Bering Sea about 45 miles above Cape Nome. On their way thither they encountered a storm, which drove them to seek shelter at the mouth of Snake River. Unable to put to sea the next day on account of continued rough weather, they decided to make the best of the delay by prospecting the creeks in the neighboring mountains. They followed up Snake River as far as the mouth of Lindblom Creek and found good prospects, especially near the mouth of Anvil Creek. They had neither time nor provisions enough to follow up any of the tributary streams for any distance from Snake River, and, as their food supply soon gave out, they were obliged to return to their camp on the beach, which they reached late at night in a hungry and exhausted condition.

The following day they continued their journey to Sinrock River, which they prospected for a distance of 40 miles from its mouth, finding a good many colors but no gold in paying quantities. Their provisions were entirely exhausted after a few days' work, and they were obliged to "borrow grub" with which to return to Golofnin Bay. When they arrived there the party was broken up. Brynteson and Hagelin went to Council City, where they joined E. O. Lindblom

and John Lindeberg. On September 6 Brynteson, Lindblom, and Lindeberg left Council City with tents and provisions for Snake River, and reached their destination on the 15th of the month, when they went to work energetically to prospect the river and its tributaries. They remained there two weeks and did a good deal of panning on Mountain, Anvil, Snow, Rock, Dry, Lindblom, and Boulder creeks. They found good prospects on Anvil and Snow creeks, and were also favorably impressed with Dry and Boulder creeks.

In the early part of October they left Snake River and returned to Golofnin Bay, where they remained eight days, fitting up a schooner, which they hired from the Swedish Mission and loaded with lumber and provisions. On this trip Brynteson, Lindblom, and Lindeberg took with them Dr. A. N. Kittleson, G. W. Price, J. L. Tornensis, and a native named Constantine. The party of seven men reached Snake River October 15. Between that date and the 18th a miners' meeting was held, the boundaries of a district 25 miles square were established, local mining regulations were formulated, and Dr. Kittleson was elected recorder for a term of two years.

After organizing the district natives were hired to do the necessary packing, and a camp was established on Anvil Creek. The prospecting outfits were quickly brought into service. In one afternoon \$76 was panned out on Snow Creek. Encouraged by this showing lumber was carried up from the schooner and two rockers were constructed. One of these was taken to Snow Creek, and the other was used on No. 8, Anvil Creek. In four or five days over \$1,800 was cleaned up with these two rockers. One of them was then moved down to No. 7, Anvil, and after some \$200 had been rocked out the weather turned cold and the water was frozen up. As it was impossible to do any more work with the rockers the party broke camp on the 3d of November and returned to the schooner, which they found frozen solid in 2 feet of ice. They then made their way in a small boat to an Indian village, near Cape Nome, where they obtained dogs and sleds, and a little farther on they were met by reindeer from the Swedish Mission, with which they returned to Golofnin Bay.

The lucky miners had agreed among themselves that their discovery should be held secret, but the news was too good to keep, and soon leaked out. A general stampede commenced at once and continued all winter. Every available dog and reindeer was pressed into the service, and they were soon racing with each other for the valuable claims which had been left unstaked in the vicinity of Anvil Creek.

As soon as that creek had been all taken up the stampede extended to the neighboring streams and gulches, and Glacier and Dexter creeks, as well as many others which have not proved equally valuable, were quickly staked and recorded. By the 25th of December a large party armed with numerous powers of attorney had entered the district, and as the local regulations allowed every man to stake on each creek one claim of the full legal dimensions (660 by 1,320 feet), it was not long until the whole district had been thoroughly covered, and nearly every stream had been staked with claims, which in some cases were "jumped" and the right of possession disputed.

The news of a rich strike at Nome worked its way up the Yukon River during the winter, and as soon as the ice broke in June a large crowd came down from Rampart City, followed by a larger crowd from Dawson. The "Yukoners," as these people were called, were

already disgusted with the hardships, disappointments, and Canadian misgovernment which they had met with on the upper river. Many of them were too discouraged to even investigate the story of a strike at Cape Nome, and hundreds if not thousands of them sold their outfits at St. Michael and made their way back to the States as best they could. Those to whom enough faith had been given to go over to Cape Nome were disgusted and angered to find that pretty much the whole district was already staked, and that the claims taken were two or three times as large as those commonly allowed on the upper river.

Another grievance was the great abuse of the power of attorney, by means of which an immense number of claims had been taken up, so that in many cases (according to common report) single individuals held or controlled from 50 to 100 claims apiece. It was also found that many claims were staked by men whose names were of Swedish or Norwegian origin, and that even Laplanders had been hired to set the stakes on claims, which they then transferred to their employers for a trifling consideration. The citizenship of all men whose names were Scandinavian was at once questioned, and their right to stake and hold claims was disputed. A miners' meeting was called by the newcomers to remedy their grievances. Resolutions were prepared, in which it was represented that the district had been illegally organized by men who were not citizens of the United States and who had not conformed with the law in properly defining the boundaries of the district with reference to natural objects, in enacting suitable and sufficient mining regulations, and in complying with any of the details of organization required by law. It was intended by the promoters of this meeting to reorganize the district in such a way as would enable them to share the benefits of the discovery of a new gold field with the men who had entered it the previous winter, and, as they expressed it, "gobbled up the whole country."

It is, of course, impossible to say what would have been the result if their attempt had not been interfered with. While it is not the province of an agent of the Department of the Interior to discuss the conduct of officers of the Army, the situation at Cape Nome can not be described or explained without taking notice of their action on this occasion. On the 28th of June Lieutenant Spaulding and a detachment of 10 men from the Third Artillery had been ordered to the vicinity of Snake River, and on the 7th of July their numbers were increased by the addition of 15 more. As soon as it was proposed to throw open for restaking a large amount of land already staked and recorded an appeal was made to the United States troops to prevent this action by prohibiting the intended meeting, which was called to assemble July 10. It was represented to them that if the newcomers should attempt, under the quasi-legal guise of a miners' meeting, to take forcible possession of lands already claimed by others, the inevitable consequence would be a reign of disorder and violence, with the possibility of considerable bloodshed. On the strength of this representation and appeal the army officers decided to prevent the adoption of the proposed resolutions. The miners were allowed to call their meeting to order, but as soon as the resolutions were read Lieutenant Spaulding requested that they be withdrawn. He allowed two minutes for compliance with his request, the alternative being that he would clear the hall.

The resolutions were not withdrawn, the troops were ordered to fix bayonets, and the hall was cleared quietly, without a conflict. Such meetings as were subsequently attempted were quickly broken up by virtue of the same authority. The light in which this action is regarded by the people at Nome depends, of course, upon the way in which their personal interests were affected. Those who were prevented from accomplishing their intentions can see nothing but official corruption in an "unwarranted interference with the American right of free speech." Those whose property rights were protected are emphatic in their commendation of the prompt and determined action by which lawlessness and violence were prevented. Many "Yukoners" and others at once left the country in disgust, and circulated the report that the discovery was a "fake." To use the current phrase, they did all in their power to "give the country a black eye." All the papers that reached Cape Nome for a month or more after this occurrence contained accounts of the failure of that district and the disappointment of the men who had been deceived into going there.

The great discontent which actually did exist at this time found sudden and unexpected relief in the discovery of the beach diggings. It had long been known that there was more or less gold on the seashore, and before the middle of July it was discovered that good wages could be taken out of the sand with a rocker. Even those who were on the ground could hardly believe the story at first, but its truth was quickly and easily demonstrated. Before the month was over a great army of the unemployed was engaged in throwing up irregular intrenchments along the edge of the sea, and those who had just been driven nearly to the point of desperation by the exhaustion of all their resources were soon contentedly rocking out from \$10 to \$50 each per day and even more than that. This discovery came like a godsend to many destitute men, and was a most fortunate development in the history of the camp.

Meantime the men who were in possession of claims on Anvil and Snow creeks were beginning to sluice their ground and getting good returns for their work, while others were actively making preparations to take out the gold which they knew they had discovered. More sluice boxes were constructed and put into operation as rapidly as possible. A town site was laid off at the mouth of Snake River, and on the 4th of July a post-office was established. The town which has sprung so suddenly into existence is called "Nome" by the Post-Office Department, but at a miners' meeting held February 28, it was decided to call it "Anvil City," and this is generally done by the residents of the district, as well as in all official records. At a meeting held in September, however, the name was again changed to "Nome."

According to the usual practice in mining camps, the residents of the town live principally in tents. On August 23 I made a rough count of the various edifices in Nome, from the tents of the North American Transportation and Trading Company on the east to the bend of Snake River on the west. There were at that time about 375 tents within the limits mentioned, which included all of the town except the sandspit across the river, on which there were 100 more. There were 17 frame buildings in town, and about a dozen scattered log cabins back on the tundra. Beyond the spit the line of tents was scattered along the beach for a distance of 10 miles. The town was growing rapidly and was a scene of great activity, which was principally

directed toward the erection of more substantial structures for the winter, as is proved by another count made September 12, which showed only a slight increase in the number of tents, while there were at that date nearly 200 frame buildings either already finished or in process of construction. An absolutely accurate count could hardly be made, on account of the irregular way in which tents and buildings are located.

On September 7, 8, and 9 I made a trip down the beach to a point at least 5 miles beyond the line of tents, which extended for about 15 miles. There were at that time 530 tents beyond those on the sandspit, while 780 men were in sight on the beach. The tents were not entered, and the number of men who were in them at the time was not ascertained. It is also possible that a few may have been so concealed in the sandpits as to escape observation. The total number of men on the beach at that time was probably as high as 1,000; two weeks previously, when the excitement was at its height, it may have reached 1,500.

At the election for city officers, held September 12, there were 266 votes cast in the First Ward and 330 in the Second. The count had not been completed for the Third Ward at the time I left the camp, but it was said to be in the neighborhood of 800 ballots. This election, however, throws little light on the size of the population, for voters were not registered, and repeating was easy. On the other hand, many men entitled to vote refrained from doing so, either from indifference or on account of the difficulty of casting an intelligent ballot under the existing local conditions.

During a trip made along the four principal creeks during the last few days in August I learned, by inquiry of the foremen on the various claims, that there were about 515 men on them, including all kinds of labor and superintendence. On the rest of the creeks in the district little more than prospecting is being done, and it is difficult to estimate how many prospectors may be scattered among the various streams and gulches that cover this mountainous mining region. According to my own observation, which is confirmed by the judgment of many others, the total population of the Nome mining district, including the town, does not exceed 3,000 men. Those who are inclined to boom the district will put the figures considerably higher.

It is even more difficult to estimate the value of the season's output than to estimate the size of the population. I give below the results of inquiries made upon the beach and along the creeks. It should be remembered that the tendency to misrepresentation on the beach is exactly opposite to that upon the creeks. On the latter the men in possession of claims have a reasonably secure title to the property, and are therefore disposed to boom its value by an exaggeration of the output. The beach, on the contrary, has been worked as common property, and very small patches of ground, sometimes not more than 10 feet square, have been held only by the strength of possession, with whatever moral right may accrue.

Those who were fortunate in their location were careful to conceal the fact, for fear of the encroachments of their neighbors, or even the loss of their ground. The ordinary reply to questions concerning the output is that the workers are "making wages." I obtained definite statements from more than 100 men, and after reducing them to equivalent terms I find that their earnings averaged \$18 a day. I

have reason to believe that the true average for the whole beach would be somewhat higher. When a man's confidence could be gained, he would often admit that he was making \$30, \$50, or even \$75 a day; and there is no doubt that in the richest places there were lucky individuals who, on occasional days, took out over \$200. There are many well-authenticated stories which prove the wonderful richness of the sand. Mr. N. B. Goodrich, manager for the North American Transportation and Trading Company, states that two men, who left the employment of the company to work on the beach, brought in \$1,250 at the end of three weeks. These men were seen by me a few weeks later, when leaving the country, and more than confirmed his statement. Two men showed me 190 ounces of amalgam (worth about \$10 an ounce), which they had taken out between July 15 and August 25. Authentic accounts of still larger earnings could be easily given.

On the other hand, there were some unfortunates, who, either from lack of skill or from poor luck in selecting their ground, were able to make hardly anything. The gold on the beach is very fine and easily lost. Copper plates, mercury, and the chemicals needed by an amalgamator, were scarce and difficult to obtain at any price. Boards covered with silver dollars were commonly used as a substitute for copper plates, and many rockers were constructed with nothing better than pieces of blankets or other rough cloth for catching the gold.

The gold is not evenly distributed throughout the sand, but lies in a thin, double layer, of a dark, red color, called "ruby sand," which constitutes the "pay streak." In some cases this crops out through the surface, but it is more commonly 4 or 5 feet below it; and a great deal of driftwood must often be removed, before the gold is uncovered. Even in the pay streak the distribution is very uneven, or, as the miners express it: "The beach is spotted." The part of the beach which has been worked this summer extends for about 15 miles west of Snake River. It has been prospected all the way to Cape Prince of Wales, and for a good many miles in the other direction. The reports are conflicting, but the general opinion seems to be that there is no gold in any such quantity on other parts of the coast.

The pay streak has been worked to the water's edge. How far it may extend under the sea no one can guess. It is also uncertain how far it runs back under the tundra. As to the origin of the deposit every man has his own theory. The Esquimaux Mining Company has installed a pump, has begun sluicing the tundra, and is taking out pay dirt for more than 100 feet from its edge. They state that with three men shoveling, at the end of their first day's run of ten hours, with incidental delays of about three hours, they cleaned up \$300. They expect to do much better when the plant is fairly in operation. Some of those who have prospected the tundra are doubtful whether gold will ever be successfully taken out of it; but, either through faith or excitement, it has been staked, as far back from the shore as the eye can see.

In addition to the rockers on the beach there were over half a dozen sluice boxes in operation in the early part of September, which were reported to be doing well. One of these has been cleaning up \$300 a day per man, according to a report which appears to be authentic.

Two steam dredges have been brought to the coast, one of which has been taken into the mouth of Nome River, while the other has begun

operations in Snake River. The results of their work have not been ascertained.

Men are already beginning to quit rocking on the beach, and complain that it is being worked out. This is no doubt partially true. Unless some other part of the shore of equal richness should be discovered next season it is not reasonable to anticipate nearly such good results from the rockers as have been obtained this year. On the other hand, the processes used have been crude, and they will be improved next summer by those who have sufficient capital to introduce machinery. Good results will undoubtedly be obtained.

A conservative estimate may be made by calculating that the output from the beach for this season will be equivalent to the production from the labor of 1,000 men working thirty days at an average profit of \$25 a day, or a total of \$750,000.

The four streams which are undoubtedly producing the most gold are Anvil, Snow, Glacier, and Dexter creeks. Anvil Creek, which is a tributary of Snake River, lies on the northwest side of Anvil Mountain, so named on account of the shape of a large rock which crowns its summit. There are thirty claims staked on the creek, besides fractions. As previously stated, all claims in this district are 1,320 feet long. The claims which are being worked lie between "No. 1 Below" and "No. 12 Above," inclusive. "Discovery" lies in the mouth of the valley, between Anvil Mountain and an unnamed hill just beyond the opposite side of the creek.

Below Discovery the stream makes its way across the tundra, where the flats afford very little fall for the water. The facilities for working most of the seventeen claims below Discovery are consequently poor, and, although they are said to show good prospects, almost no work has been done on them, except on No. 1, which lies in the mouth of the valley and is considered one of the banner claims in the district. On this claim a nugget worth \$490 was found September 12, beating the record of \$312 which had previously been held by a nugget found in the same vicinity. It is a peculiar feature of Anvil Creek that the coarser gold is found on the lower claims.

Discovery and No. 1 Below are worked by the Pioneer Mining Company, which employs about 55 men. The foreman, Dr. King, states that \$125,000 was taken out of two claims in one month. On another claim, which has the reputation of being equally rich, it was said that \$17,000 was taken out in forty-eight hours by 40 men at work. On one of the less valuable claims, where I was allowed to examine the books, a little less than \$10,000 had been cleaned up between July 26 and August 30. On one of the upper claims I witnessed a clean up of \$1,824, which was taken out of two 60-foot sluice boxes, and represented the work of six men for one day of ten hours.

Anvil Creek is producing more gold than any other creek in the district. About 300 men are employed in all, and most of the claims are worked night and day. There is generally water enough for the sluice boxes in use. In the neighborhood of Discovery the pay streak is 600 feet wide, and the owners estimate that it will take five years to work out their claims, using the full water capacity of the creek.

Next to Anvil, the largest producer is Snow Creek, a short tributary of Glacier Creek. Its length allows only three claims, operated

by the Pioneer Mining Company, on which 75 men are employed. In proportion to its length this creek is the best producer in the district. The foreman states that they usually clean up \$5,000 for each sluice box every twenty-four hours. One of the owners told me that No. 3 Above sometimes produced \$1,000 an hour. The total output up to date could not be ascertained, but it will undoubtedly be large, since the richness of the ground on this creek can not be disputed, although the statements made above may be exaggerated.

Glacier Creek is a tributary of Snake River. Work was begun on this creek much later than on either Snow or Anvil, and not nearly so much sluicing has been done, but from the results already obtained a large output is expected in the future. There are 7 claims below Discovery and 24 above, but nothing but assessment work has been done beyond 2 Below and 6 Above.

Between these numbers, inclusive, nearly every claim had a set of sluice boxes either at work or about ready to begin operations by the end of August. There is generally enough water, though the fall is slight in some places, and bed rock is generally deeper than on Anvil Creek.

Dexter Creek has some very rich ground, but it has not been worked extensively on account of the scarcity of water, of which there has been enough for only one day's sluicing since the 1st of July. The creek is a tributary of Nome River. It is intended to put in a pump and pipe line, which will afford a continuous supply of water from the river next year. The holders of claims are getting their sluice boxes and pay dirt ready for the spring freshets, and on some claims a number of rockers are being worked. About 60 men are employed on the 12 claims staked on this creek. No. 9 is considered the richest. For a time there was so much gold in sight that it could be picked out of the crevices in the rocks with a jackknife. In this way it is claimed that two men picked 33 ounces of gold in two hours. The owners also stated that they could take out over 40 ounces a day with a rocker.

These four creeks are the only ones that have actually produced much gold this year. On the other creeks more energy has been expended in staking claims than in serious mining; and, though some gold has been taken from other creeks, and good prospects are reported, it will take another year to determine whether the gold in the district is concentrated in the four creeks named, or whether equally good ground is yet lying unoperated.

A great many quartz claims have been staked, but almost nothing is really known about the value of the ledges. The enthusiasts predict great things for this district as a quartz mining region, but as most of the energy expended has been directed in another direction, the correctness of their expectations remains to be demonstrated.

A general description of the topography of the country will be of interest. The Cape Nome district is unattractive except for its mineral wealth. It must not be supposed that, because gold is found near the coast, it can be secured without hardship. The creeks among which gold has been found lie among low mountains which form the foothills of the coast range, and are from 5 to 15 miles from the sea.

The mountains among which the best creeks have been found are generally not more than 1,000 feet in height, though the peaks of the coast range tower to a much greater altitude in the distance. Snake River takes its rise among these mountains, at a point 30 miles distant

from its mouth, and, after winding down through the foothills, continues its course in a winding channel over the flats near the coast, emptying at last into Bering Sea, about 12 miles above Cape Nome. The principal tributaries of Snake River have already been named. Along the coast to the northwest Penny River, Cripple River, and Sinrock River empty into the sea in the order named. Sinrock River is about 30 miles distant from Snake River. None of these distances have been accurately measured. Between the cape and Snake River the only important stream is Nome River. Below Cape Nome, in the Bonanza district, there is a large lagoon called Safety Harbor, into which Eldorado, Bonanza, and Solomon rivers empty. These rivers, with their numerous tributaries, all seem to lie in the gold belt, and colors can be found on nearly every creek.

The low mountains near the coast show a schist formation, though it is said that at a greater distance from the shore there are belts of granite and limestone. The swampy tundra makes traveling in the summer time a matter of the greatest difficulty. In some places the tundra opens up in crevices, which show an underlying glacier. The ground is covered with a dense growth of moss, interspersed with grassy tussocks commonly called "niggerheads." It is always more or less under water, and in some places a man will sink to his knees in water and muck.

An uncertain footing can be obtained by stepping from tussock to tussock, but the "niggerheads" are small and slippery, and throw the feet in unexpected directions. Walking over the tundra is like traveling on an immense wet sponge. In spite of the difficulty, men who are accustomed to packing can carry out of the creeks loads of one hundred pounds and over, though the exertion required is so severe that it resembles punishment rather than labor. The proper time to equip a camp with supplies is in the winter, when the ground is frozen, and sledding is comparatively easy, except for the intense cold and the high winds.

Such records of the temperature as were kept at Cape Nome last winter show rather more than the ordinary disagreement among thermometers. According to one of the most reliable records, the coldest day in the district last year was November 29, when the temperature fell to 56° below. The majority of those who attempted to keep a record are of the opinion that the most extreme temperature was between 50° and 60°, though one observer states that he experienced weather as severe as 69°. The climate is very moist, and the effect of the low temperature is proportionately felt. In the summer months clothing and other articles become quickly molded unless frequently dried.

The sanitary condition of the camp at Cape Nome is very unfavorable. Nearly all the fresh water used comes from Snake River, which is more or less polluted by the camps on the creeks, even before it reaches the town. It is used as a convenient dumping place for slops and sewerage, as well as a source of water supply. When the tide is in the water is brackish. The creeks furnish good water, though the prevalence of malaria may be due to the vegetable growth through which all creek and river water filters. Dry Creek is hardly more than half a mile from the town; but, owing to the difficulty of packing water across the tundra, most people prefer to use the river water. A company has been organized to supply the town with pure water

next year. It will be brought through iron pipes from a spring 4 miles distant, at a pressure of 70 pounds to the inch. The promoters of this enterprise hope to begin work before winter sets in.

The drainage of the town is poor and no attempt has been made to improve it artificially. There are a number of private closets set back on the tundra and two public closets on the shore.

Most of the people are living in crowded tents, which are seldom in a cleanly condition. The best tents have board floors raised from the ground, but more frequently the flooring consists of a layer of boards or logs placed directly on the ground. In many there is no flooring whatever. The continuous rainfall keeps both clothing and bedding damp, and there is seldom sunshine enough to dry them out. This works the greatest hardship along the creeks, where willow twigs furnish the principal fuel, kerosene being used to some extent for cooking purposes.

At most of the camps there is never an opportunity to get really dry and warm, and the miners are more or less wet from one week's end to another. The men work in the bed of the creeks, exposed to the rain, and crawl into damp sleeping bags laid on the ground. At some of the camps things are more comfortable, but at all of them the conditions of living are rough and unhealthful. The food supplied is also unsuitable for the laborer. Fresh meat and vegetables are almost unknown.

In spite of the conditions, there had been no deaths from sickness up to the 1st of September, and not much serious illness. Besides a general tendency to malaria and rheumatism, the most prevalent disease has been an epidemic of diarrhea, from which nearly everyone has suffered more or less. Up to September 4 there were only 12 cases of typhoid fever, though 16 more developed during the following week.

The only hospital in August was located in tents erected on the sand of the beach, with a layer of boards for flooring. The Rev. Mr. Wirt, a Congregational missionary, has been given the custody of the hospital fund, and he has gone to "the States" to secure necessary supplies and assistance. It is expected that a hospital, to cost \$5,000, will be opened this fall. The military hospital in the new Government barracks has just been completed. It contains 12 beds, a dining room, dispensary, etc. The Government has furnished medicine and attendance to the destitute. Most of the previous statements are made on the authority of Dr. Miller, the surgeon attached to the United States troops stationed here, of whom there are 20 men, under the command of Lieut. Wallace M. Craigie.

The prices of all kinds of merchandise have been high all summer, and will probably be increased when winter sets in. The following table shows August quotations:

Canned fruits .....	3 for	\$1.00
Canned milk .....	3 for	1.00
Canned meats .....	\$0.50 to	.75
Fresh potatoes .....	..... pound..	.10
Onions .....	..... do.....	.10
Sugar .....	..... do.....	.20
Apples .....	..... dozen..	1.00
Oranges .....	..... do.....	1.00 to 2.00
Coffee .....	..... pound..	.50
Flour .....	..... sack..	3.00
Bread .....	..... loaf..	.20
Lumber .....	..... thousand..	125.00
Coal .....	..... ton..	40.00

The usual price of a cheap meal is \$1 when fresh meat is not ordered. There has been a limited supply of mutton, beef, and venison. The supply of clothing has been sufficient to meet the demand, with the exception of certain minor articles. Socks have been especially scarce. Furniture was almost unattainable. Common chairs sold for \$5, and the supply was secondhand. Rain coats and chamois skin bags have been hard to obtain.

The supply of copper plates has not equaled the demand. The fine beach gold is difficult to save without the use of copper plates and mercury. The price of mercury has varied from \$1.25 to \$2. The price of plain copper has been about \$5 a pound, and when heavily plated with silver the plates have sold for \$50 a square foot. Scarce sizes of lumber went up at times to \$200. It is questionable whether there is enough lumber in town to construct all the buildings which ought to be put up before winter sets in. The supply of provisions for the winter will be ample, but there is likely to be a scarcity of fuel and shelter. The supply of coal on hand is inadequate, and the principal fuel used is picked up on the beach, where an immense pile of driftwood has accumulated. Much of this wood is so rotten that it has hardly any heating value, and that which is fit to burn has already been used up near the town.

The legal status of the town of Nome and the numerous complex questions of proprietary right involved, present difficult problems for the consideration of the best judicial intellect. No town site has been established by the Government, and the town which has sprung up has not followed the outline drawn by the original pioneers. At a meeting held March 24, certain resolutions were adopted which provide that 40 acres should be reserved on each side of the mouth of Snake River for a town site. The "laws" passed at this meeting regulate the size of the blocks, the width of the streets and alleys, the dimensions of the town lots, etc. One block was reserved for a public square, and one lot on each block for a hospital fund. It was intended to reserve the land between the town site and the tide line. A resolution carried April 12 provides "that the water front in Anvil City east(?) of the lots already staked shall be reserved for a public wharf," and previous to the month of July the original pioneers succeeded in keeping this land clear of stakes. When the Yukon crowd came down in a body, they swarmed over the beach and staked down lots so rapidly that it was found impossible to stop them. The discovery of gold on the beach followed and stimulated the rapid growth of the town, of which the business portion was erected on the 60-foot strip just outside of the original town site. This ground has become very valuable, so that even small lots in line with the business houses can be sold for more than \$1,000. The title to the land, however, is obviously obscure. Not a foot of that which lies beyond the original town site has been or can be recorded, and the possessors thereof can not show a scrap of paper to make good their claims.

Under these conditions there are generally two or more claimants for every lot, and some lots have been restaked more than half a dozen times. In many cases this is no more than a species of blackmail, the lot being jumped with no other purpose than to extort "blood money." In other cases difficult questions will have to be decided in order to determine the best title to the property. The fashion of jumping other people's real estate has not been confined to town lots, but has extended to mining claims as well. These have been restaked, under

every possible pretext, until the whole country has become involved in impending litigation.

About the beginning of the fourth week in August, Judge Johnson, of the district court of Alaska, arrived in Anvil City and opened court on the 23d of the month. The session lasted a little more than one week. There was not sufficient time to prepare or hear many cases, and it was impossible for the court to render decisive opinions which would settle the numerous questions at issue. It is confidently expected that a new judicial district will be established for this part of Alaska during the coming winter, and for this and other reasons the court refused to grant injunctions or appoint receivers for property to which the title was in dispute. Judge Johnson appointed a United States commissioner and a United States marshal; and, at the personal suggestion of the court, a meeting was called to formulate a scheme of government for the coming winter. At this meeting a committee was named to formulate a plan of proceeding, in accordance with which an election was held September 12. A mayor, chief of police, aldermen, and other city officers were elected.

In conclusion, serious warning should be given to the multitude who will attempt to find wealth here, with the usual imperfect conception of the conditions which exist and of the requirements essential to success. Figures given for this district require interpretation, and must not be understood to have the values ordinarily attached to them. Moreover, the conditions vary so rapidly that what is true to-day may be utterly false to-morrow; the best calculations are not reliable, and business chances are highly speculative.

Those who think of engaging in mining must be reminded that the country is already staked, and that the chance of obtaining valuable claims without paying for them is very remote. Only men of strong constitution, tremendous endurance, untiring energy, and the most hopeful disposition, and who are willing to remain in the country for several years, are likely to succeed at gold mining in Alaska.

The country is already cursed with men who are not miners, and who depend on falling in with some lucky stampede which will give them the opportunity to stake and sell claims which they have no intention to thoroughly prospect. It is only by the rarest good luck that a man can return with a fortune in one year.

The possibility of working the beach next year is also complicated by the legal uncertainty as to the proprietary rights which will be allowed after a test case shall have been decided by the courts. The ground is staked by men who, if their claims are allowed, will prevent all others from working the beach in the way that has been done this year. A Government survey is needed to establish the location of the tide line, which is also in dispute.

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