

CAPE NOMA MINING

Methods Practiced in the New Gold Diggings.

REPORT BY GOVERNMENT EXPERTS

There is No Harbor, and Shipping Contracts Should Be Made With That Fact in View.

WASHINGTON, May 2.—The preliminary report of the Geological Survey on the Cape Nome gold fields contains much that is of general interest and much more that is of value to those contemplating a trip or prospecting tour into that section of Alaska. Among other things described in the report are the methods of mining in the Nome region.

On the creeks and gulches the process of mining consists of stripping, damming, ground sluicing and box sluicing. In some cases rockers are also used. The gold here is largely coarse, so that its separation from the associated black sand and heavy minerals is not a difficult task. Further separation is accomplished by first panning, then blowing and finally the employment of hand magnet, in case of the magnetic black sand. On some of the gulches where water is scarce it is proposed to raise water from neighboring creeks for sluicing purposes.

The Charles D. Lane Company is planning to work their rich prospects on Dexter and adjacent creeks in this way by building a long pipe to be placed on Nome River in that locality.

On the beach the principal method of mining during last season was by hand robbing, though a few points of sluice boxes were laid and the surf water was pumped to them by stationary engines. There was also a dredge or two in the field, but these were not extensively operated, so far as known to us. It is thought that much of the beach extending eastward from Nome to near Cape Nome, the most of which is reported to be auriferous, but hardly rich enough to pay for extraction by the ordinary method of robbing, can be worked with profit by the proper sort of dredging machinery.

In a few cases small boats were used, and waterwheels were employed near the mouth of Snake River in raising the river water to high sluice boxes, whence it was conducted across the point to the beach gulches.

"As already stated, the principal method of working the beach gravels during last season was by the hand rocker. Each man selected a few small boxes, and proceeded to sink a prospect hole to the clay bedrock usually reached at a depth of two or three feet. The exposed layers of gravel and sand passed through were carefully prospected by panning, to ascertain the presence and approximate amount of gold. Finding a good pay streak, the overlying gravels were stripped off and thrown aside, and the pay streak worked with the rocker. If water is found in the prospect hole, which is usually the case in a few places, the water is often when it does not, this water is utilized in rocking the pay dirt, the same water being used repeatedly. If no water is present in the prospect hole, the water is pumped or carried in boxes, cans, bags or wheelbarrows to the water's edge, where the surf water is used for rocking. Where small streams or rivers issue from the tundra across the beach there are of great service and much prized for both rocking and sluicing.

Gold Caught on Blankets.

"In rocking, most of the beach gold for some time was caught on blankets. Some, however, is so fine, being mere dust or flour gold, that quicksilver or mercury, commonly called 'quick' by the miners, is used to good advantage in catching the gold, with which it forms an amalgam. The appliances at first were very crude and the men inexperienced, and much of the gold was lost, but with the introduction of the copper plate and quicksilver better results were obtained. The mercury, or 'quick,' is painted or coated over the copper plate in the bottom of the rocker, where it seizes upon and amalgamates with the particles of gold as the pay dirt is washed over its surface. The amalgam is then caught on the copper plate, and the purity of the Nome beach gold renders it admirable for collection by the mercurial process, far more so than the normally 'rusty' or oxidized gold of the gulches. Last season the supply of copper plate at Nome was wholly inadequate to the demand. Where it could not be obtained, many miners, equal to the emergency, covered the bottom of their rockers with American silver coin as a substitute for the copper plate and applied the 'quick' to the coin, where it worked perfectly. One miner reported to have recovered the bottom of his rocker with \$4 United States silver dollars. Much of this substitute silver coin, still wearing gold plate of the amalgam collected in the rockers, has found its way back into circulation at Nome.

"The gold caught on the blanket is collected by removal of the blanket from the rocker and rinsing in tubs or buckets of water. The remaining fine gravel and coarse sand is then panned out, and much of the ruby and black sand eliminated with the bellows by blowing, and some of the still remaining black sand by means of the horseshoe magnet, when the gold is ready for the market, or the miners' sack, as a circulating medium. It is probable that where the magnet is placed, there is abundant a magnet excited or agitated by electricity can be used with great advantage in its separation from the gold.

"The method of collecting the gold caught on the copper plates, however, is quite different. Here the gold forms an amalgam with the quicksilver, from which it is separated by heating in almost any metallic vessel. The most frequently employed is the ordinary tin pan of the miner. The mercury, or 'quick,' being volatile, is driven off by volatilization, while the remaining gold is collected in the pan, usually in the form of a beautiful porous or honeycomb-like cake, or a rounded, bead mass, composed of the grains, flakes, and coalesced particles of pure gold. In this form it enters the commercial world of Alaska at least, as a medium of exchange. In fineness the Nome gold is reported to average between 91 and 92 per cent, being somewhat purer than the average gold of the Yukon district. The trading companies, however, so far as observed, allow but 91 per cent.

The Tundra Placers.

"The tundra placers, as elsewhere stated, have not yet been worked, and have been but little prospected at only a few points. They are not like the beach placers, which are predominantly 'poor-man diggings.' The tundra seems in many cases to offer excellent opportunities for hydraulic operations, but capital is necessary for development. For realization of the best results co-operation, or the working of the ground in large tracts, is essential, as that ground sluicing, stripping by horsepower, and other 'dead' work may be performed on a large scale, and extensive areas of the frozen ground be exposed to the thawing influence of the atmosphere and the sun. This method, in connection with ground sluicing and box sluicing, seems to be the most promising and the least expensive.

"A thoroughly energetic and enterprising American spirit pervades the business world. There are several printing presses and three newspapers—the Nome News, Nome Herald, and Nome Gold Digger. The Nugget, with printing press and equipment from Dawson, bound for Nome, went down in a gale on Norton Sound in September, and a similar Nome-bound outfit was wrecked on the Lauro, at St. Lawrence Island, in Behring Sea, a few weeks later. The leading large companies operating at Nome are the Alaska Commercial Company, the North American Transportation & Trading Company, and the Alaska Exploration Company. There are also innumerable smaller companies and firms engaged in various mercantile lines and various vocations. Early in the winter, on reconnoissance of Mr. G. N. Wright, postmaster at Nome, effort was made by the United States Post Office Department at Washington, D. C., to secure for the Nome people a monthly mail during the winter, and a contract was let for the transportation

of such mails by way of the Yukon country. With that success this has met has not yet been learned.

"There are at least 2500 people now wintering at Nome, and, by estimate, at least several thousands are on their way there by winter routes. Last season, as soon as the richness of the discoveries became realized, the larger trading companies built large warehouses and shipped the supplies possible from St. Michael to Nome, in addition to those brought from the States. Also, a considerable supply of fresh reindeer meat was imported from the Siberian coast by enterprising owners of schooners and other seagoing vessels. It is estimated that, with no accident, there will be sufficient to carry the population through the winter, but none to spare. During the fall, and especially at the close of the season, commodities and living were high. Coal was \$15 per ton; wood, gathered from the driftwood on the beach, was \$5 and up to \$10 per cord; and the cost of food, when it could be bought at all, was \$10 per pound, and other things almost proportional. Unskilled labor received \$12 per day.

Recommendations and Suggestions.

"In the coming Spring (1900) it is expected that the influx of population into the Nome and adjacent regions. A conservative estimate places the number at least 20,000 men. Several thousand miners and prospectors will winter at the various camps along the coast, and during the winter many will probably go down the Yukon on the ice. It is evident, therefore, that this region, compared with other parts of Alaska, will be densely populated, and it is not likely that the high rate of wages paid last year will be maintained. The newcomers in the Spring will find that many of the things which were so plentiful in the winter are now scarce. The region has been staked. If the beach strip continues to be withheld from private ownership it will undoubtedly offer good opportunities for many men. It must be remembered, however, that the various placers, like all others, are not inexhaustible, and that they do not, by any means, extend along the whole coast. "While the staking of new claims in the Nome region is probably nearly a thing of the past, yet those having capital to invest will undoubtedly find plenty of claims for sale. Those who lack knowledge of the beach, however, should invest their money very cautiously, for there is a vast array of speculators at Nome ready to 'unload' when the first steamerful of 'tenderfeet' arrives. It would be very unwise to purchase a beach claim, however, without the aid of a competent person to save money for the return passage.

"There will be good opportunities at Nome for experienced miners in working on shares for wages. Good mechanics will also be in demand. We would warn the public of the danger of typhoid fever and other epidemics in the crowded mining camps, a danger which was amply proved by the conditions at Nome last season.

"We believe that the Nome region has a great future, but would strongly advise men inexperienced in mining and prospecting to consider the matter carefully before joining in the mad rush which will undoubtedly take place in 1900."

BISHOP BOWMAN SPOKE.

Seventeenth Evangelical Association Conference Opens.

The seventeenth annual conference of the Evangelical Association was opened yesterday morning in the city of Nome. The big Bend Empire in mentioning a freight blockade at Wenatchee says: "There has been a railroad and river freight blockade at Wenatchee during the last couple of three weeks, owing partly to the usual Spring deliveries and principally to the rush orders of goods to the Northern Okanagan country to take advantage of the rise of water in the Okanagan. Added to the overcrowding of freight was the sinking of the steamer Selkirk by striking a rock in the Okanagan on Monday night, April 16. She was heavily loaded, and the services of the steamer were required to help her out. The boat was not floated and returned to Wenatchee till the next day, Tuesday. The steamer Nixon was repaired and made a trip up with a large load on Saturday. The steamer Camano has been put on the route for three trips a week, and this week the little Victoria began carrying the mail to Waterville Landing, and is on special lookout for all the Waterville freight."

The course of his remarks he said that many people are content with an intellectual religion without any experience of the heart, and that there is a tendency to go to the other extreme, by which men neglect the duties of all kinds, ignoring all law and order. "There may now seem to be a falling away," he said, "but the tide is coming when the truth will have a mighty victory. While others strive for popularity, we must strive to please God. The preachers of the Evangelical Association must be men who are sincere in earnest prayer and who will be willing to surmount many difficulties."

The bishop said that after putting hard work on the preparation of a sermon, he would not give a nickel to give another man to preach it. There must not only be hard work in going among the people, but there must be many hours each day spent in the study of the Bible and preparation of the mind. A preacher ought always to come before his people with a hopeful spirit, and not bring his troubles and anxieties to the people. He should be troubled enough of their own without being troubled with the troubles of others. The business part of the conference was then taken up. Ezra Warner was appointed secretary and in turn appointed A. E. Myers as his assistant. Rev. R. Pierce, J. E. Smith, S. C. Copley and George Hoff were received into the conference by credential. The Credentials were granted to R. D. Stetson, which closed the work for the morning.

The afternoon session was opened at 1:30 with singing and prayer, led by Presiding Elder Shupe, following which the bishop appointed the standing committees for the year. Rev. J. E. Smith, who has recently come from Indiana, was next elected a preacher. Many places were voted to George Kock and deacon orders to G. A. Seeburger, A. A. Powers and G. M. Stroup, after which the meeting adjourned.

At the devotional exercises held in the evening Bishop Bowman preached one of his trenchant sermons in the German language. A large congregation was present, and the bishop's earnest discourse was listened to with a great deal of interest.

Conference services are from 9 to 11:30 A. M., and 3 to 5 P. M., to which the public is cordially invited.

EIGHT BARLEY CARGOES

PORTLAND MAKES GOOD SHOWING IN NEW LINE.

Steamer Mischief Coming Back to the American Flag—Okanogan Steamboating—Marine Notes.

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Professions Well Represented.

"By calling the majority of the people were miners and prospectors, or hoped to become such. The professions of law, medicine and divinity are well represented, also the vocations of surveying, real estate, insurance and sundry mercantile branches of business. The saloon, hotel, and restaurant business is prominent and profitable. Along with the shifting population of the Yukon from Dawson and other camps came also many would-be explorers, adventurers, and especially gamblers, but good order prevails throughout. Drunkenness, disorderly conduct and theft are promptly tried before the Police Justice and punished by fine and imprisonment. Copies of the official rules and regulations are kept posted before the city hall and other conspicuous places as a warning to all. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Some of the well-known "toughs" and most undesirable characters are reported to have been rounded up by the authorities late in the fall and exported to the States. There is also a report that in comfortable barracks, a detachment of United States soldiers, under Lieutenant Craig, who in the early part of the season are reported to have done much toward the maintenance of order and the protection of individual rights and property.

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Rioters in Spain.

MADRID, May 11.—Yesterday passed peacefully practically everywhere throughout the Spanish dominion, despite the universal anti-taxation agitation. The only noteworthy disturbance took place at Valencia, where rioting occurred and barbers were arrested in the streets, from behind which a mob stoned the gendarmes. The latter, in endeavoring to disperse the rioters, were received with rifle and stone, and two persons were injured. The gendarmes replied with a fusillade before the mob fled.

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Professions Well Represented.

"By calling the majority of the people were miners and prospectors, or hoped to become such. The professions of law, medicine and divinity are well represented, also the vocations of surveying, real estate, insurance and sundry mercantile branches of business. The saloon, hotel, and restaurant business is prominent and profitable. Along with the shifting population of the Yukon from Dawson and other camps came also many would-be explorers, adventurers, and especially gamblers, but good order prevails throughout. Drunkenness, disorderly conduct and theft are promptly tried before the Police Justice and punished by fine and imprisonment. Copies of the official rules and regulations are kept posted before the city hall and other conspicuous places as a warning to all. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. Some of the well-known "toughs" and most undesirable characters are reported to have been rounded up by the authorities late in the fall and exported to the States. There is also a report that in comfortable barracks, a detachment of United States soldiers, under Lieutenant Craig, who in the early part of the season are reported to have done much toward the maintenance of order and the protection of individual rights and property.

Turkey's Latest Move.

CONSTANTINOPLE, Thursday, May 10.—The Porte has presented a new note to the Embassies announcing its intention to introduce a reform in Gallipoli. The object of this move, it is believed, is to establish a precedent for the subsequent imposition of like duties in other towns. It is expected the Embassies will again refuse to assent, as the measure is contrary to the treaty.

Rioters in Spain.

MADRID, May 11.—Yesterday passed peacefully practically everywhere throughout the Spanish dominion, despite the universal anti-taxation agitation. The only noteworthy disturbance took place at Valencia, where rioting occurred and barbers were arrested in the streets, from behind which a mob stoned the gendarmes. The latter, in endeavoring to disperse the rioters, were received with rifle and stone, and two persons were injured. The gendarmes replied with a fusillade before the mob fled.

EIGHT BARLEY CARGOES

PORTLAND MAKES GOOD SHOWING IN NEW LINE.

Steamer Mischief Coming Back to the American Flag—Okanogan Steamboating—Marine Notes.

The eighth cargo of barley to leave Portland for Europe since the opening of the present grain season was cleared yesterday by G. W. McNear in the British ship *John Cooke*.