THE DAWSON DAILY NEWS
JOURNALISM ON CANADA'S LAST FRONTIER

by
Edward F. Bush

July 1971

NATIONAL AND HISTORIC PARKS BRANCH
DEPARTMENT OF INDIAN AFFAIRS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT
The Dawson Daily News

Journalism on Canada's Last Frontier

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20 July 1971
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On the morning of 17 August 1896, a Californian prospector George Carmack, with two Indian companions, staked a claim on Rabbit Creek, a tributary of the Klondike. The full import of the rich gold strike reached the outside world with the docking of the steamer Excelsior at San Francisco on 15 July 1897, and of the Portland at Seattle three days later, as the first successful stampedeers staggered down the gangplanks lugging suitcases heavy with gold. Appropriately re-named Eldorado, the Rabbit Creek discovery within two years transformed the hamlet at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon rivers into a sprawling mining camp with an itinerant population estimated between 20 and 30 thousand. The news of the strike drew as a magnet adventurers, miners, gamblers, hustlers and camp followers from every quarter of the continent and indeed from the four corners of the earth.

Dawson, (named after a government geologist, George M. Dawson) a shanty town within 200 miles of the Arctic Circle, in those two frenetic summers of 1898 and 1899 boasted the largest population, and certainly the most colourful, of any Canadian community to the west of Winnipeg. Klondike legends were to inspire the talented bank clerk, Robert Service, to pen ballads which have won a worthy place in Canadian literature; legends truly, for by the time the young Englishman reached Dawson, "the days of '98" were already a memory, a decade in the past. In Service's day Dawson had evolved into a settled community, whose once booming economy already felt the pinch of
the lean years ahead.

But in that bright morning near the turn of the century, Dawson had all the unbounded confidence of youth. Restaurants, cafes, the exotic dance halls, hotels, bathhouses, theatres and brothels sprouted like dandelions, to serve the lusty and uninhibited appetites of the motley host lured by the lust for gold to this far corner of Her Majesty’s dominion. Among the sundry enterprises evoked by the stampede in June 1898 were two newspapers, printed on light hand presses, aptly named the Yukon Midnight Sun and the Klondike Nugget, which broke forth in self-confident print primarily to serve the sprawling mining camp, and hopefully, too, to provide a little news from “the outside,” as Klondikers referred to the rest of the world. A little over a year later, in July 1899, The Sun and The Nugget were joined by a third competitor, fated to outstrip them both, a paper which in news coverage, format, features and editorial style bore fair comparison with many of the large metropolitan dailies in the early years of the century. This, then, is the story of the Dawson Daily News, born at the apogee of the world’s last great gold-rush, a vigorous daily which later boasted that it had never really had any substantial competition, fated to end its career as a village weekly 55 years later. To the end, The News never lost faith in the Klondike, which for that brief season made the headlines throughout the world.

The first chapter will deal with the raw mining camp, boom-town period, 1896 to the turn of the century, when thousands of ill-conditioned stampeders braved the incredible hardships of the trail to launch themselves in home-made craft on the turbulent waters of the Yukon in quest of Eldorado, the city of gold. The
second will treat of the near ten-year period of political ferment, agitation for representative government and reform of the mining code, to which the Dawson newspapers committed themselves to the hilt. The final chapter surveys the long years witnessing Dawson’s decline from a still reasonably prosperous mining centre to a ghost town, yet still served by the indefatigible News, until with the transfer of the territorial capital to Whitehorse in the spring of 1953, the handwriting was indeed on the wall for the sometime Canadian Barbary Coast.

Pioneers Along the Yukon

The word Klondike, sometimes spelled Klondyke, almost a synonym for gold, is derived from the Indian “Throndiuck,” meaning “hammer water,” caused by the stakes driven across the shallows to secure salmon nets. The tributary creeks of the Klondike, whose gravel so caught the imagination of the world, were a part of the Yukon River system. The parent stream described a great arc more than 2,300 miles long, rising above Lake Lindeman within 25 miles of the Pacific, to empty into the waters of the same ocean at Norton Sound, having for a brief span looped within the Arctic Circle. Before the era of mechanical transport, it was the fast flowing waters of the Yukon which provided access to the mountain-locked interior.

The first white man to explore this remote region was Robert Campbell, in the service of the Hudson’s Bay Company, who went up the Liard River in 1838. In the 1850s the Company built Fort Yukon at the mouth of the Porcupine River on the Arctic Circle (Alaska), and Fort Selkirk at the confluence of the Pelly and the Yukon.
(Yukon Territory); the Klondike lay more or less at mid-point between these early H.B.C. posts. Robert Campbell found traces of gold at Fort Selkirk. William Ogilvie, the first Commissioner of the Yukon, in his *Early Days on the Yukon: The Story of Its Gold Finds*, tells us that Campbell knew there was gold on both the Pelly and Yukon rivers as early as 1853. Among the early prospectors was Arthur Harper, who first entered the territory via the lengthy and arduous Peace and Mackenzie river routes in 1873. Harper joined a trading partnership with Leroy Napoleon McQuesten and Al Mayo, for the outfitting of prospectors and miners. Through their efforts, a string of trading posts was established along the Yukon. The first gold to be dispatched to the outside world, via St. Michael, Alaska, in 1880, consisted of two small nuggets, sent by George Holt, in the employ of the Alaska Commercial Company. In the same year miners began entering the territory via the Chilkoot Pass, named after the Chilkat Indians. Its 3,500-foot summit provided entrance to the territory from the Alaskan port of Dyea to the south, and together with the neighbouring White Pass—named after Sir Thomas White and served by the port of Skagway—provided the principal if arduous routes for the future stampeder. Of the two, the White Pass, though crossing at a lower altitude, with its series of switchbacks was considered the more difficult route to the interior.

Pierre Berton, in his comprehensive and very readable *Klondike: The Life and Death of the Last Great Gold Rush*, credits the first important gold strike to two prospectors dispatched by Harper in the winter of 1886-87, on the Fortymile River—so named, along with
contiguous tributaries of the Yukon, because of its distance from the key trading post of Fort Reliance, some 15 miles downstream from Dawson. George Williams, a steamboat man, carried the message to the outside world, mushing out by dog team along the Yukon River and over the Chilkoot Pass to Dyea. The rigours of the mid-winter journey proved too much for the intrepid Williams, who was hauled on a toboggan on the final lap of his journey by an Indian companion, only to expire in Dyea with the delivery of his message. Williams was the first of many to perish on those icy passes marking the boundary between American and Canadian territory; and there were yet more in the swirling and icy waters of the Yukon, where many a tyro riverman met disaster.

Early Government

With the mounting interest evident in the far Yukon, the Canadian government wisely decided to waste no time in establishing Canadian jurisdiction in the territory. In the spring of 1895, William Ogilvie was commissioned in Ottawa to carry out all requisite surveys, including an all-important line across the Yukon River and Fortymile Creek on the 111st meridian, to serve as the international boundary pending future Canada-U.S. agreement. The Annual Report of the Department of the Interior for Year 1896 reported: "Very rich placer diggings are now being worked on the creeks flowing into Sixty Mile, part of which are supposed to be in Canada." And in June 1895 Inspector Constantine of the North-West Mounted Police, was despatched to the Yukon, with a detachment of 20 men, to maintain law and order in the teeth of an anticipated influx of unruly stampeders. The story of this incomparable
force is as well known as that of the gold-rush itself. The Klondike was unique in the annals of mining stampedes for the staunch maintenance of law and order in what would otherwise have been a typically Wild West no-man's land of anarchy and gun duels. There was to be little of that in the Klondike, though brawling and fisticuffs were an inevitable feature of its muddy and dusty thoroughfares.

Inspector Charles Constantine, of the North-West Mounted Police, first posted to Dawson, was to issue permits to the two principal trading companies—the Alaska Commercial Company, a San Francisco firm established in 1868, and a Chicago concern, the North American Transportation and Trading Company, founded in 1892. At this early date, Inspector Constantine had virtually to carry out all functions of government personally—magistrate, gold commissioner, land agent, collector of customs. In 1896 D.W. Davis took over as customs collector, and in 1897 Thomas Fawcett was appointed gold commissioner—an appointment pregnant with trouble in the near future. James M. Walsh, a native of Brockville, Ontario, who had served for some years with the police, was appointed the first commissioner in August 1897, with Justice McGuire of the Supreme Court of the North-West Territories as chief magistrate. By the summer of 1897, the population of Dawson had swelled to an estimated 5,000, most of whom were aliens—largely Americans. The initial influx arrived with the going out of the ice, 16 May 1897, landing by error at the approbriously named Lousetown on the opposite bank of the Klondike from Dawson.

In 1895 the Yukon had been declared a district of the North West Territories, but by proclamation dated 16 August 1897 all that region
to the west of the Liard River was designated the Yukon Territory, quite separate from the North West Territories, and of course from the province of British Columbia to the south of the 60th parallel.

On 4 July 1898 William Ogilvie was appointed commissioner to succeed James M. Walsh, and under Section 5 of the Yukon Territory Act, an appointive Yukon Council was instituted to assist the commissioner in the administration of the territory. By order in council 7 July 1898, the functions of the various executive officials were defined. With the precautionary dispatch of the Yukon Field Force to support the police, the Klondike, an outpost of empire, was now ready for the tidal influx.

Origins of the Gold-Rush

The Carmac strike on 17 August 1896, based on a tip from a fellow prospector, has been noted at the outset of this paper. By January of the following winter Ogilvie stated in his report to the Minister of the Interior that "it is beyond doubt that 3 pans on different claims on Eldorado creek turned out $204, $212 and $216... there are many running from $10 to $50." He calculated that with proper sluicing equipment, one man could handle as many as 1,000 pans per day. Nonetheless, the department accepted these reports with caution, for they were based on reports to the commissioner rather than his own observation. By this time Ogilvie observed that other regions were being forsaken for the Klondike. Already, he noted, miners were becoming close and reticent about their claims, in contrast to the traditional free and open exchange of information so characteristic of the "old timers." An open traffic in claims, in which they changed hands many times,
was another new feature of the mining camp, as the intimation of
unprecedentedly rich strikes began to dawn on the remote community.

The winter of 1897-8 was a hard one, under spartan conditions for
the hopeful few to brave a Klondike winter. Food was short and
relief delayed. The first steamer after the break-up, the May West,
arrived with limited supplies only on 8 June 1898. Eight or nine
steamers followed in rapid succession, bearing the vanguard of the
stampeders, those lucky enough to escape a fleecing in the dives of
Skagway, hardy enough to have packed the requisite thousand pounds of
supplies and equipment over the killing White and Chilkoot passes
(or well-heeled enough to pay Indian porters at rates in the order of
five cents a pound), and finally those who had made the treacherous
passage down the Yukon in often hastily built craft. Some managed on
rafts. The gold-rush was in full spate, though ironically most of the
valuable ground had been staked out the previous season.

Dawson in those 20-hour long, hot summer days, with a three-
to four-hour bright twilight between sun and sun, must have presented
an exhilarating and fascinating sight to the new arrivals—those not
too exhausted or penniless to appreciate the sight. They beheld
a sprawling shack and tent town, wide dusty main street, with frame
shops, cafes, hotels and mushrooming brokerage and insurance offices,
many with the false fronts so much a feature of the Hollywood film
set. With neither street names nor numbering, addresses could
only be designated vaguely; many new arrivals spent days searching
for lost partners. Dawson, despite the close and implacable
surveillance of the North-West Mounted Police, could nonetheless only
be described as a "wide-open" mining camp, in which the bars, gambling rooms and dance halls did a land-office business; though with the fantastic prices prevailing that summer, and in some measure through the summer of '99 as well, one would well wonder who could afford to patronize them. For of the thousands who set out, few arrived, and of those who arrived, few indeed found any gold, aptly illustrating the scriptural injunction, "for many are called, but few are chosen."

The newly-launched Klondike Nugget, in its first issue of 16 June 1898, under the heading "The North and the Unsuccessful Gold Digger," anticipating the influx to come, commented that if this gold-rush ran true to form, not one man in a hundred would strike it rich. In the future, however, other resources than gold would support the territory, in the course of which "no one may be expected to play a more important part than the man who came expecting to find gold and was disappointed." Alas! it was Klondike herself which was to suffer disappointment, but none could foresee this in that feverish summer of '98. A jeweller's advertisement reflects the spirit of that far off summer, on the 64th parallel.

Daylight all the time. The only thing that will save you from too much dissipation is Correct Time. Have your watches repaired by E. Merman.

With eggs at $18 a dozen, chickens $10 apiece, potatoes $1 per 8 pound, a porterhouse steak $8, apples and oranges a dollar each, a simple radish at $1, and a bowl of tinned oyster stew at $15, even the harrassed supermarket shopper of today would have been aghast at the prohibitive inflation of a frontier mining town. Cabins rented for from $75 to $100 per month, and one could have a shave and a
haircut for $1.50, quite reasonable by current standards nearly three-quarters of a century later. To hire a horse and waggon, on the other hand, cost $150 per day. Substantial fare was available, for those with the money to pay, as the following menu at the Regina Café, for Dominion Day, 1898, indicates:

Consomme, à la jardinière
Rockpoint oysters, raw
Gherkins
Lobster cutles, à la Newburg
Pickled English walnuts
Chicken Salad en Mayonaise
Broiled Moose chops à Champignons
Tongue, Roast Beef, Boiled Ham
Bengal Club Chutney
Saratoga Chips
Assorted Cakes & Jellies
Pears
Peaches
Edam Cheese
Café
Wines
Cigars

To which the Yukon Midnight Sun added the following for the comfort of its readers:

The eatables on the card we publish below and only add the remark that we hope the reading of the bill will cause no hard feelings among those who are eating beans and bacon and baking powder bread.

So high was the cost of labour that travellers reported that restaurants and roadhouses preferred to serve tinned berries than to pay pickers to harvest the crop at their doors; that tinned salmon appeared on the menus of river steamers while the waters they plied teemed with salmon. A turkey dinner in Dawson the summer of '98 cost $5.

Small wonder that the stampeders yet to strike it rich lived on beans and bacon.

Saloon keepers and gamblers were assured a lucrative living.
as were the dance hall girls who exploited to the full the prodigal and spendthrift ways of men just in from the creeks. Saloon keepers were considered a constructive element of society by The Sun; they employed considerable help, contributed generously to charities and local projects, and undoubtedly provided a commodity in high demand. The paper thought well to print a warning to card sharks in its issue of 4 July 1898:

It might be of interest to some to learn that according to the criminal code in vogue here, a punishment of three years in the penitentiary is the penalty for cheating in any game of chance.

Dawson's Pioneer Press

Clearly so thriving a community called for a newspaper and in June of 1898 not one, but two, publishing weekly, were forthcoming. The two argued subsequently which could rightfully claim to be Dawson's first newspaper. On the basis of the very first issue, according to Pierre Berton, the distinction belongs to the Klondike Nugget, whose enterprising proprietor and editor borrowed a typewriter to produce his first edition on 27 May 1898. This admittedly would hardly pass as a newspaper, even by small-town standards. The Midnight Sun came out with the first issue from a proper printing press on 11 June 1898, a diminutive quarter size, 8-page edition, whose editor and proprietor was G.B. Swinehart. The annual subscription was $15, "invariably in advance," and 50 cents per copy. Mining and local items formed the early fare of these pioneer newspapers, as might be expected, particularly before the days of the government telegraph line to "the outside". The first issue of The Sun did in fact include brief items on the Spanish-American War.
and an Anglo-French dispute in West Africa. The Sun's edition of 20 June retained the same quarter-size dimensions, but increased to a dozen pages; by 18 July the paper appeared in the size and format it was to retain—14 pages, (17\(\frac{3}{8}\) inches by 23 inches), 7 columns to the page. The opening editorial announced:

"It is with no small pleasure that with this issue of the Yukon Midnight Sun we see fulfilled our repeated promises to furnish the people of Dawson a weekly newspaper. . . . The Yukon Midnight Sun will be a clean, bright sheet, free from domination by any class, clique or organization. It will be conscientious in the effort to be reliable on all subjects at all times; reflect the social and business life of the city and be an intelligent exponent of the great mining and other valuable interests of the Yukon valley. . . ."

Very much to the point too, the editor in an issue a month later assured his readers that he would give them a paper offering value for the money, rather than charging what the traffic would bear in the inflated conditions of a gold-rush. This same issue, 18 July 1898, stated that their plant had been shipped from a west coast American port (probably Seattle) to St. Michael, at the mouth of the Yukon, a year ago, where it had had to be stored for the winter due to the lateness of the season. In the meantime, a light makeshift printing plant had been packed in over the passes and thence down the Yukon by steamer. The permanent plant had arrived on the steamer John J. Healey from St. Michael on 9 July 1898—probably accounting for the greatly enhanced appearance of the paper, expanded to its full size, by 18 July.

As a service to the miners, The Sun prepared a Guide to Dawson and the Yukon Mining District, to be available by 10 August and to include such useful information as mining regulations for both Yukon
and Alaska, dominion land and timber regulations, descriptions of mining districts, tables of weights for gold-dust, and a business directory. This was the first of a number of public service features produced by the newspapers of Dawson.

The Klondike Nugget, managed by Zachary Hickman and Eugene C. Allen with George M. Allen and A.F. George as editors, began its stormy career as a mere hand-written sheet posted on a bulletin board in May 1898; the first printed paper was issued on 16 June. It became a semi-weekly after publication of its third issue. The original plant, described as a "small army press (200 lb.)," left Seattle in February 1898, together with one ton of paper, reaching Dawson by scow from the head of navigation on 10 June 1898. Like its contemporary, with which it was shortly to fall to blows, The Nugget was a four page issue, of dimensions 11 by 17 inches. Its annual subscription was $16. Its opening editorial began:

Good Morning, Gentlemen
The outside world is anxious for authentic information concerning the Klondike gold districts. The miners and other residents of this region are equally desirous of learning what is going on outside as well as of home occurrences. Hence the publication the publication of the Klondike Nugget. We have no higher ambition than to satisfy our readers. Its rival, The Sun bade The Nugget welcome, expressing the perhaps facetious hope that "pleasant relations may always subsist among the fraternity in Dawson." It did not take long for both editors and readers to be disabused of so fond an illusion, for the Dawson press more than lived up to the outspoken, forthright journalism, frequently descending to scurrilous abuse, so characteristic of editorial combat in the last century. By contrast, the modern day press, particularly
the large metropolitan dailies, must please all—especially their advertisers; though often their editorials may be more thoughtful and analytical, they frequently provide a bland diet compared with the editorial fare of our great-grandparents, when editors not infrequently were contestants on the hustings themselves.

The *Nugget* early saw itself as the champion of an oppressed citizenry, 80 per cent of whom were American, against the exactions of a profiteering Canadian officialdom. To this end it adopted a scathing roughshod style, in which issues were seen in black-and-white terms. The *Sun*, on the other hand, though comparably ruthless in the penning of pugnacious leaders, evolved as the defender of the government while still pressing for reasonable reform. A wild free-for-all competition soon developed. Berton describes the 65-year old newsboy, "Uncle Andy" Young, tearing along the wooden duckboards which served Dawson as pavement, hawking the latest issue of *The Nugget*: "The Nugget! The Nugget! The dear little Nugget!" disposing of a thousand copies in the course of an evening.

The personal columns of the two papers reflected the colourful and seething activity of the frontier, in which individualism was given full scope, as well the gossip of the small town. From the *Yukon Midnight Sun* of 27 June 1898, the following items recall the frenzied influx of that summer:

Edward Marks of St. Paul, a recent arrival has a position behind the Monte Carlo bar.
Jas. Schneider of St. Louis and C.R. Houghton of Los Angeles came in Friday. They were among the few who made the trip successfully on a small raft.
Leon Brock, of Buffalo, N.Y., one of the fortunates who escaped death after burial in the Chilkoot avalanche, is a recent arrival.
He is a correspondent for the Buffalo Daily and Sunday Times. Ellis Lewis, half owner of No. 23 on Eldorado, an old Alaskan and successful miner, having been ten years at the business, left yesterday on the Bella, for California. He intends to take life easy and will probably be seen in this country only at cleanup time. It is hinted that he carried out about fifty thousand; Mr. Lewis is but one among many who, similarly fixed, left on the Bella, Weare and Hamilton. 20

The personal column of the rival Nugget offered yet more colourful fare.

Mose Warren, a Canadian who arrived some few months ago, has gone out into Sulphur with three horseloads of grub and two men. He has acquired interests on 25 and 31 above discovery and will work both claims.

Mr. Lueders, the clever violinist, is quite sick with the prevailing dysentery. On Sunday night he had great difficulty in conducting the concert, but brought it through successfully in spite of his weakness.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Cahill have departed for their home in Portland. The sweet voice of Mrs. Cahill has beautified many a church service and lent pleasure to many a social evening and it is with regret we see the pair depart... Among the passengers on the steamer Columbian were Messrs. W.H. Miller, David W. Jones, Wm. Neville and Jacob Edholm. The two first named brought with them a large shipment of liquors amounting to in all 3000 gallons. They have secured a cabin on First Avenue, and for the present leave their goods in storage. 21

The Nugget's edition of 24 September 1898 graphically describes the mire on Front Street, of such a depth and consistency that many wagons overturned in the efforts to extricate them, and often several teams could be seen struggling ineffectually in the morass simultaneously.

The Nugget got in a snide attack on the gold commissioner, a favourite target in its columns, observing that he had advertised for wood; it was to be hoped that the official would arrange to have it cut into stove lengths "so that the line of waiting men at his office door will not have to suffer in the bleak cold while the muscular gold commissioner cuts his own wood, as happened last winter. Not but what the gold commissioner is a much better wood chopper than official head of his own office."
Both papers through the summer and fall of '98 featured for the most part local and territorial news, with some items from neighbouring Alaska. But by early July the issue of nationalism became apparent. It has been observed already that Dawson during the gold-rush era, was predominantly American, with perhaps four in five of its populace hailing from the United States or Alaska. Located about 50 miles east of the international boundary on the 141st meridian, Dawson undoubtedly was in Canadian territory, although at this date the boundary had yet to be fixed definitively by joint survey and agreement. It is perhaps not surprising that many Americans "on the outside" were not aware that the Klondike was by no means part of Alaska; indeed, some Canadian newspapers fostered this misconception by referring to the Klondike product as "Alaskan gold." As time passed, the American and Canadian elements got along well together, joining in the celebration of Victoria, or Empire Day, and of the Fourth of July; until a considerably later period, Dominion Day, though a public holiday, took second place to the Fourth. The Sun was, on the other hand, early developing a Canadian orientation, a few years later to be brought to a peak which later proved an embarrassment to the owners, by the incomparable Henry J. Woodside, a native of Bruce County, Ontario, who had begun his career as a CPR telegrapher, gained journalistic experience in Portage la Prairie, served in the North West Rebellion with the Manitoba Grenadiers and finally arrived in the Klondike in March of 1898 as correspondent for the Manitoba Free Press and the Montreal Star. But already, in its 4 July 1898 edition, The Sun ignored the American holiday completely, while
devoting a page to the celebration of Dominion Day. The Nugget displayed its American sentiment in an editorial concerning the one-sided Spanish-American War, including a ridiculous generalization about the American Revolution, in an editorial of 5 July 1898:

The Americans have demonstrated one thing to a great certainty, i.e., that they are nothing if not fighters, and more than this, that they can always produce the man for the emergency. All their wars have shown this. The war of the rebellion was the hottest in history, because between two factions of the same people and race; but now 'ts the whole people against a foreign foe, and the result can be well guessed as being the complete and full humiliation of haughty Spain.

The above excerpt from the Nugget's editorial page was to prove typical of the chauvinism to be found in all the Dawson papers; the English-speaking peoples were held to be manifestly superior to all others in both the arts of war and of peace. But this was not peculiar to the Klondike during the opulent Edwardian period, the twilight years of the "white man's burden" and colonial empire.

The rival papers displayed a significant contrast in their attitudes toward the administration of justice, and specifically, the scaffold. Both agreed that hanging was the proper fate for the murderer, but The Nugget gloated over the mechanics and minutiae of execution, whereas The Sun reported the periodic hangings in a more restrained and less detailed fashion. The Sun contrasted the swift efficacy of British justice with the endless appeals and procrastination of the American system. In the case of four Indians sentenced to death in July 1898 for murder, The Sun favoured commutation of the sentence, in consideration of the fact that the Indians were illiterate aliens to the ways of civilized society.
Contrast this humane and enlightened attitude with the following from The Nugget:

The Treacherous Instincts of the Aborigines
Will Get Their Necks Stretched With Hemp
Probably in Dawson— Villainous Savages
in the Toils

One subject, in a remote community in which typhoid was rife, on which the rival editors could agree was the need for sanitation. Most Dawsonites drew their water close inshore from the Yukon River. By early October the first hard frosts had checked the contagion, but another summer was coming, when the population of the tent-and-shanty settlement would perhaps double. In the words of The Sun's editor:

As you were your own pilots coming down the Yukon, so now must everyone be his own health officer and board of sanitation. Therefore inspect and clean up your own locality like men, or supinely like sheep, fester and die in your tents.

By the summer and fall of '98 both papers had taken up their political stance; both sought representative government and reform of the mining regulations, but whereas The Sun made allowances for governmental shortcomings due to the remoteness of the region, The Nugget saw federal authority as the ruthless exploiter of the miner, on whom the whole economy of the region depended. Well might The Nugget's motto have been, in connection with the federal and territorial authorities: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"

The Yukon Council at this early period was wholly appointive. In part this was due to the high proportion of aliens in the population,
in part to the manifest fact that the government was dealing with a floating, itinerant population. The Nugget itself complained of the lack of community interest in Dawson since most of the men were there for a season or two, long enough to strike it rich, then head for the "outside." Since few of these stampederers were Canadian, pressure had been exerted on the Ottawa authorities to ensure that these aliens not be permitted to strip the territory of its wealth with no return to the dominion within whose broad borders the fabulous Klondike lay. Hence a royalty of 10 per cent had been levied on all gold mined in the Yukon. Unlike many countries, including the United States, Canada permitted aliens to dig for gold, subject to the royalty and reservation of a portion of the claims to the Crown.

Yet even the pro-government Sun found the royalty a burden, not in principle but in application:

The excessive burden of the royalty tax has been a lodestone on the mining industry. The small extent of mining ground sufficiently rich to meet this tax is only found on the richest claims of Eldorado. 26

The Nugget by contrast declared itself in its 5 July 1898 edition adamantly opposed to both the royalty and Crown reservations. These hobbling and unjust regulations were based on totally misleading reports on the richness of the gold field.

The Fawcett Issue

But the prime grievance that summer of '98, and an issue not resolved until the following spring, was the alleged malfeasance of Thomas Fawcett, gold commissioner, who was held by The Nugget to have favoured certain claimants and conducted his office with
utter incompetence. The unprecedented influx of that summer, which must have exceeded all expectations, simply inundated the gold commissioner's office in a torrent of business which the staff was utterly incapable of coping with; men queued up throughout the night in order to be admitted to file their claims the next day. On 27 August 1898 The Nugget accused Fawcett of illegalities in claims registration for the benefit of his friends. Fawcett resigned his office, but brought suit against The Nugget for libel. The commissioner, William Ogilvie, a man of irreproachable integrity, wrote to Sifton on 28 February 1899, making clear where The Nugget stood in his estimation.

You will probably see a copy of The Nugget of last Saturday which treats of the affair in a most inflammatory and seditious way. This sheet is run by Americans, with an Englishman (E.G. Allen) for editor. It appears these people have never had any newspaper experience heretofore and have not learned that many of the stories they hear are simply emanations of frenzied individuals who imagine they have lost a fortune because they cannot get the claim they wish or some similar idea. 27

Fawcett insisted, despite The Nugget's withdrawal of its charges, on the case taking its course, as a result of which he was completely exonerated. Ogilvie was appointed a Royal Commissioner under letters patent of 7 October 1898 to investigate fully the operations of the gold commissioner's office. It transpired that Fawcett had closed the claims on Dominion Creek in November 1897, not as charged by the Nugget editor for the benefit of his friends, but because conflicting claims made an investigation necessary. It does not appear from subsequent issues that The Nugget accepted the verdict in a chastened mood; but in any case, lawsuits were to be a common recourse in the
Klondike. The Nugget persisted with notions derived from American mining camps, in which camp meetings formed by elected miners served the function of legislature and court of justice combined. Since at this date the Yukon was not represented in Parliament, The Nugget's solution was the dispatch of a miners' delegation to the capital. This was never implemented, although Yukon had to wait until 1902 for parliamentary representation.

A third paper, which began publication probably in September 1898, a four page seven column journal, was known as the Klondike Miner and Yukon Advertiser, originally under the managership of W.V. Sommerville, with C.A. Walsh as editor. The earliest issue available to date is that of 16 December 1898. This paper, as its title indicates, catered to the mining community and devoted itself to local and territorial news. In contrast to its two longer-lived contemporaries, the Klondike Miner displayed considerable advertising matter on its front page, though not to the exclusion of news. Its issue of 30 December 1898 contains an editorial indicative of Dawson society of the time. A dance hall manager apparently had requested a visiting celebrity, a well-known actress, to leave the premises because of the disreputable character of the dance-hall girls employed. The visitor complied, but the editor held forth on the condition of society in the mining town, and indeed, what else should one expect? It was well known, he continued, that Dawson had its virtuous and respectable women, but it was conceded that they were few in number. He concluded in histrionic style on the inevitable depravity of such a society, with the statement: "Dawson society is
an odoriferous stench." The Miner may be considered more of a tradesman’s journal than the other two, though all three claimed the distinction of being the self-appointed champions of the miners.

As the year drew to its close, with a winter of some austerity ahead, The Sun and The Nugget in no wise gave any quarter. G.B. Swinehart, publisher of The Sun, drew the fire of the rival Nugget with the allegation that The Nugget was feeling the pinch. On 30 November, not scrupling to make game of the rival publisher’s name, The Nugget delivered the following riposte:

... We would have been pleased to allow Swinehart to sink into obscurity without attention being called to that fact. But Swinehart, and the name peculiarly fits the man, could not yield the ghost without endeavoring to vent the spleen which a defeated and routed opponent always feels towards a successful rival. The Nugget has succeeded where The Sun has failed; and long after the latter has set forever The Nugget will be in the field doing business at the old stand and championing the cause of the people against every enemy whether it be in the shape of a misfit official or a twopenny newspaper whose editorial columns are the beck and call of every man who responds to a request to open his purse strings. 30

It was The Sun however which displayed the greater staying power, albeit as a satellite of the redoubtable News.

Berton asserts in Klondike that paper became in such short supply in the hard winter of 1898-99 in Dawson that The Nugget was printed for a time on butcher’s wrapping paper. This may be so, but is not apparent from the microfilm copies available in Ottawa, nor was reference found to it in either paper.

Early in the new year, 1899, The Nugget boasted that its circulation had risen from an initial 350 to 1,992. Unfortunately research to date has not uncovered a corresponding statement for The Sun. Through February and March, issues of The Miner and The Nugget
gave evidence of printing a little more international news; the Klondike Miner's edition of 10 March 1899 included on its front page a despatch from the Philippines, and a description of the Omdurman engagement, as well as an article on the Queen's grandson, Prince Alfred. The same paper performed a signal service to the largely alien population on the creeks by printing a 3-column editorial explaining the basic principles of the Canadian constitution, concluding with a defence of the much maligned Fawcett. Certainly some measure of the discontent felt in the Yukon was based on ignorance of Canadian practice, or the assumption that it resembled American. On 19 May the Klondike Miner administered a well-merited rebuke to irresponsible journalists, with their continuous abuse of public officials:

The freedom of the press is a great blessing, the license of the press is a great curse to the community when it is under the knavish direction of self-seeking men. 32

The Nugget charged as early as 7 December 1898, that The Sun and The Miner had merged under one management. The Klondike Miner, alleged The Nugget, had based itself on defence of the common interest, whereas The Sun had become an unabashed government hack; the two interests were surely incompatible. One cannot carry water on both shoulders. In any case, The Miner went out of business in August 1899.

The Nugget and William Ogilvie

The Nugget had at first welcomed Ogilvie's appointment as Commissioner, hoping for reform at his hands. In September 1898 the Nugget editor wrote that his appointment had done much to reassure the miners, but that he could not be expected to correct overnight all the abuses perpetrated by his subordinates, there being only so many
hours in the day. But by the following March the paper had obviously
lost patience with the commissioner. In its 23 March 1899 edition,
it had published an open letter from the chief executive in which that
adamantly correct official, who eschewed all temptation to benefit
himself from the gold-rush, explained how he had disposed of personal
land holdings on being appointed commissioner. The following week,
the ill-disposed _Nugget_ editor, under the assinine heading "Mene
Mene Tekel Upharsin," alleging some small discrepancy in the dates
quoted by Ogilvie for the sale of his property, printed a mean-spirited,
insinuating attack on the commissioner's integrity, really doubling
back upon itself at one point: "The prevarication is really not of
serious moment except as showing which way the wind blows." In
July 1899, a year after his appointment, _The Nugget_ pronounced
Ogilvie's tenure a disappointment— "as he has done little but assist
in saddling exactions upon the country which Sifton had overlooked."

By contrast, the _Yukon Sun_, now under the editorship of Henry
Woodside, on 23 May 1899 stated its policy—criticism of government
when the facts warranted it, but the rejection of continuous fault
finding.

_The Sun's_ editions of 2 and 9 May diminished to the old quarter
size, with which it had begun, the plant having been destroyed in
one of Dawson's periodic conflagrations. But by 16 May it had resumed
its regular format.

**The Debut of the Dawson Daily News**

With the month of July 1899, at the very peak of the stampede,
both papers announced the debut in the near future of a competitor
which was to outlast both of them, and to hold the undisputed journalistic field in Dawson for nearly a half century. The *Dawson Daily News* which first came from the press on 31 July 1899, from the very outset outclassed its contemporaries. Initially numbering four pages of dimensions 20 x 2½ inches, the paper had a format and quality which put it in the class with the metropolitan dailies— which indeed it was. Like *The Nugget*, it was to be an opponent of the administration, but apparently the latter's owners did not foresee this, anticipating that *The News* would be a government supporter, like *The Sun*. In its leader of 1 July 1899, *The Nugget* bade the newcomer welcome:

*The Nugget* extends the glad hand of fellowship to these gentlemen, and wishes to assure them that there is a wide and almost unoccupied field in Dawson for their activity.

When the *Daily News* is installed and ready for business we hope to see the government's position supported and upheld with the energy and ability which the situation requires, and which we are aware the publishers of *The News* to be possessed.

Referring to its contemporary as the "yellow rag," *The Sun* commented that since the proprietors of the new paper were Americans, they could not be expected to know much about the Canadian scene; hence their support would not be of much use to the government. Ere two years had passed, the *News* was to own the *Sun*.

As the first, and for a time the only daily in the territory, *The News* took for its slogan "The News When it is News." The *News* came out every evening except Sunday, for 25 cents per copy, or $35 per annum. In addition, the *News* published a weekly edition, for an annual subscription of $10, directed at the mining population out on the creeks. Substantially the same news appeared in the weekly as
in the daily edition.

At time of writing, there is a dearth of information on the owners and editors of The Dawson Daily News. It appears that its backers were Seattle and Tacoma men, and more than once one of its later editors, W.A. Beddoe, an Englishman born and bred, was termed by a rival editor as "that Juneau blackguard." But these epithets were not to be taken too much to heart in frontier journalism at the turn of the century. Today one may readily understand why more than one editor in the horse-and-buggy era was publicly horsewhipped by an irate female victim. Richard Roediger and William McIntyre, both Americans, guided the destinies of The News through most of the active part of its career. The issue of Americanism was to become a sore one among all three Dawson papers, and The World took up the same cudgels later, in 1904. Certainly of the trio, undoubtedly The Sun best merits the designation Canadian, but there is little doubt which of the three was the best paper. In typography and plant, editorial writing, news coverage and features, The News held pride of place, though perhaps not quite a match for the vicious, close-in alley fighting in which The Nugget, and later The World, excelled.

The first copy available, though not the first printed of the Dawson Daily News, that of 5 August 1899, devoted one whole page to international news. From the outset, The News took a broader view than its contemporaries, although it is also pertinent to note that The News gave ample evidence of its proclivities, never more so than on Washington's birthday and on the Fourth of July. Outspoken as it
could be, in the fashion of the time, The News, because of its position in a predominantly American community within clearly designated Canadian territory, trod lightly on the still vexing issue of Anglo-American relations. In 1899 the Alaskan boundary was already a live issue, involving Canadian access to the coast on the Lynn Canal within the Alaskan panhandle. As The News saw it, the United States and Great Britain were adopting a diplomatic and mature attitude over this matter, refusing to be stampeded by Canadian hotheads, who talked glibly of war.

We are certain that the United States does not want a war with Great Britain; we are even more positive that the latter power does not wish to exchange blows with the United States. In the meantime, it would be well to shelve this talk of a resort to the "arbitrament of arms," which comes from Ottawa. While it is a nice, high-sounding phrase calculated to stir the blood, it cannot be taken seriously at the present time. In fact it is the veriest rhodomontage.

But more cosmopolitan though its outlook was, The News devoted its main editorial energies to the same issues as The Nugget and The Sun—the local ones in connexion with mining regulations, and representative government. By mid-August the new paper had definitely aligned itself with the critics of government in the Yukon. Its first target was the 10 per cent royalty, which had been defended by the Vancouver World, on the grounds that the Yukon cost Canada a great deal of money; The News contended, on the contrary, that the revenues derived from the territory matched the parliamentary appropriations. Mining license fees were too high. The federal government was mulcting the territory, when it should do everything to encourage the miners and hence to open the country up. In its issue of 11 Sept—
ember 1899, The News served warning on the government that the limit of endurance had been reached in the Klondike, that another year of neglect, excessive fees and restrictions would strangle the mining industry, driving the miners to fresh fields.

The Klondike, despite the feverish competition for gold, the indiscriminate mixing of every race under the sun in a remote region, was yet considered a model mining camp, in the sense that felonies were promptly punished. Brawling, drunkenness and wenching there was aplenty, this being inseparable from the mining camp and the frontier, but the authority of the law was never challenged, let alone set at naught, as had happened in Skagway and in some measure in most American mining camps. The exceptional quality of the North-West Mounted Police was acknowledged by all three papers. Yukon justice was speedy, but followed due process of law in the British tradition.

It is interesting to note that the Dawson Daily News had the temerity to express doubts about the efficacy of capital punishment when society not only condoned it, but justified its infliction as a just retribution for those who had willfully taken life. The News nonetheless cited quite contemporary arguments against the practice—life imprisonment (with no qualifications or possibility of parole) was surely a more fearful deterrent than the death penalty, and with capital punishment there was no opportunity to redress a miscarriage of justice. At the time this editorial was written, in the first week of August 1899, the hanging of one Robert Henderson and two Indian accomplices for murder was in train. In reply to The News,
The Sun on 15 August came out strongly for the continued employment of the hangman.

We have no sympathy with the mawkish sentimentality that speaks of an execution as "judicial murder"! If there are extenuating circumstances, the man slayer is seldom hanged. In Canada we do not cultivate that love for the "dear criminal," which makes a hero of a brute murderer like Jesse James or the Younger brothers. We simply hang them as high as Haman and have done with it. Therefore Canada is entirely free of that class of desperadoes. 37

At the execution of Henderson on 5 August, The Sun contented itself with a modest description of the proceedings:

Everything worked smoothly and most decently, without a hitch of any sort, but a glance at the scaffold and the drop gave evidence of a very careful arrangement and attention to the most minute details. 38

The Nugget, by contrast, devoted the whole of its front page to the execution, to the last grim detail, complete with a sketch of the final scene on the scaffold. It was Klondike’s first hanging, and The Nugget made the most of the occasion. Six weeks later, The Nugget outdid itself, justifying the lynching of negroes in the southern states accused of the rape or molestation of white womanhood. A man whose wife or daughter had been ravaged by a negro was unworthy the name who failed to avenge her.

Early in April 1899, an incident occurred involving the American consul, James McCook, which must have been an acute embarrassment to the American community, though affording many a laugh. It was the sort of drunken vaudeville occurring from time to time in mining camps, cow towns, and dusty hitching-post frontier settlements in various parts of the world. From the columns of The Nugget comes this gem.
Consul J.C. McCook, the American representative to the Yukon territory, constituting the buffoon of a dance hall crowd while in a state of intoxication, was a lamentable spectacle witnessed at the Phoenix on Thursday morning last...

Mr. McCook appeared at the Phoenix at a late hour in the morning, apparently under the influence of a heavy "jag". He was inclined to be merry and was evidently out for a good time; but above everything else was evidenced his dignity as the American consul. "Who isn't an American citizen?" was the form of his salutation, as he entered and gravitated gracefully toward the bar. A young man standing by assumed to believe that the inquiry required an answer, and he said he was not. "Then I'll make you one in two minutes," roared the consul, and he made a rush at the other. The two careened across the floor into a room occupied as a branch office by the Nugget Express, and were only saved from going through the window into the street by the timely exertions of Proprietor Pete McDonald. The men were separated and a treaty of peace was happily ratified over a round of drinks. The consul then endeavored to show that his heart was in the right place by ordering a fresh round every time anybody declared him or herself to be an American— for by that time the girls had been attracted from the dance hall and had gathered about the celebrator. He could not, however, overlook or forgive the temerity of his late adversary who had presumed to declare his allegiance to the queen, and the additional drinks taken had put the consul in a state of utter recklessness. So it was not long before he again turned his attention to the young Canadian who stoutly refused to forswear his country, and the two were soon mixed up again. Their manoeuvres finally landed them in the dance hall, where they fell to the floor, with Pete the night porter—who was not sober himself,—on top of them. A couple of interested spectators took hold of the squirming men by the heels and dragged them into the barroom, where they were disentangled and again the bloody chasm was bridged with the flowing bowl.

Mr. McDonald also attempted to restore order by suppressing the young man.

The consul then turned his attention to lighter things than upholding the dignity and greatness of his country and, with one of the seductive damsels at his side, was soon participating in the merry maze. He made himself a strong favorite with all the girls and they are not easy to please, either—and he became the centre of their group. To again show that his heart was in the right place—and that he knows a pretty girl when he sees one—the gallant colonel unfastened his gold watch from its chain and formally presented it to Nellie James. This special mark of favor made the other girls envious and disgruntled, and in order to placate the beauties he proceeded to distribute among them a choice collection of gold nuggets which he had about his person. His unexpected generosity seemed to grow with the giving, for he suddenly, threw up his hands and invited the girls to help themselves to anything they could find: "Take the whole works!" he exclaimed
encouragingly. The girls couldn't withstand such eloquent and manly persuasion and they soon had the pockets of his coat, vest and pants turned inside out. The utmost jollity prevailed, and the good humor of the consul being exceedingly infectious and one of the party contributed to the humor of the occasion by pinning a small symbol of the Stars & Stripes to the rear of the consul's pants. It may have been this which inspired the consul with a most original idea for contributing further to the amusement of the crowd. Taking hold of the bar railing, he bent forward until his coat-tails stuck out conspicuously, and then called "Kick me, Pete." This referred to the aforesaid night porter, who not wishing to disappoint the expectant throng, Pete several times planted the toe of his boot against the consul's posterior.

The effect was so extremely delightful to the colonel that he urged Pete to still greater exertions, and being willing to oblige to the extent of his power, the porter would start on the run from the other side of the room and almost send the consul over the bar with the force of the impact between shoe leather and tweed worsted. Though it was nearing the breakfast hour, the throng, which gathered to witness the granting of the consul's desire to be kicked was large and scornful, but nothing could detract from his own enjoyment of the scene. Each succeeding impact was greeted by roars of coarse laughter from the colonel at the fact that breath was getting knocked out of the porter while his own remained intact and strong.

Thus the time passed merrily until, exhausted with his own merriment, the jolly consul could stand no more, and he begged permission to retire. It was a difficult accomplishment alone, and two men— each holding an arm— accompanied him out the back door, past the row of bawdy houses down the alley to Second Street, where he was left to make his way as best he could to his room across the way. Genuine hardship here befell him, for he met with a chilly rebuke from a girl whose "cigar store," standing at the corner of the alley, he attempted to enter, lost his equilibrium and fell to earth. He made several vain but heroic attempts to arise, but being unable to do so, he finally resigned himself to his fate and crawled on his hands and knees across the muddy alley upon the sidewalk to the door leading to his office building, which he entered. A score of people, standing in a group at the corner, were witnesses of this spectacle, but only the consul and his Maker, possibly, knew how the final journey up two flights of steep stairs to his room was accomplished.

The Nugget, in the same issue carrying this account of McCook's drunken frolic, entreated the consul to resign, "before you further trail that glorious flag in the mire," but instead McCook weathered the storm, and sued The Nugget for libel. In court, however, witnesses verified The Nugget account, and McCook left shamefacedly
ere judgment was rendered against him. The Nugget pursued its victim, demanding his recall; predictably the harrassed consul found a defender in the rival Sun, which eagerly locked horns with the "yellow rag" in his interest. Though he lost his lawsuit McCook retained his post, his government less concerned by the consular indignity in remote Dawson than The Nugget.

Concluding Days of '99

The anti-Americanism latent in the Canadian breast flared forth in the editorial columns of The Klondike Miner in response to an anonymous and outrageous attack on Colonel Steele, officer commanding the North-West Mounted Police Yukon detachment, published in the Seattle Times. Steele had allegedly behaved in an arrogant manner with an American citizen. The Miner stoutly defended Steele, referring to the anonymous originator of the yarn as a "drunken scoundrel."

The Sun meanwhile took to task those who flew American flags, as if they were in Alaska.

A police ban on the carrying of firearms on the streets of Dawson was opposed by The Nugget but supported by The News and The Miner. The News, as late as early November 1899, observed that there were still a few roughs who packed a gun in the hip pocket, but thanks to police vigilance, armed violence in Dawson at the height of the stampede was a good deal less frequent than in many an American city of Dawson's size.

The resort to force, however, was no rare thing in the Klondike, as witness The News account of the reception accorded an unwelcome suitor, who called on the girl in order to apologize for a previous importunity.
She hardly waited for him to get through before she produced a "Malamute persuader" with a twisted cracker and wound the same with artistic accuracy about the deep-dyed villain's ears. Her honour having been thus vindicated the happy pair (her husband) went to Lousetown and from there went into temporary retirement at West Dawson to enjoy another honeymoon.

By November 1899 The News noted the passing of the crudities of the mining camp, gradually displaced by "the enervating luxuries of a gay metropolis." Tuxedos and beauty parlours had made their appearance to the disgust of many of the old sourdoughs. The fantastic prices of the previous summer were gradually declining: turkey now retailed for $1.25 a pound, whereas the previous summer it had been double that. A turkey dinner could be had in a Dawson restaurant for $1.50, compared with $5.00 the summer before. Fortunes changed hands with dramatic suddenness: a penniless indigent last winter had just gone "outside" having sold his claim for $7,500. The advertisement columns of The News in August included two bath houses, a palmist, and three dance halls. The Nugget disclaimed indignantly at the open and thriving trade done by prostitutes on 4th Avenue.

Rival Plants: News and Nugget

Late in July The Nugget boasted a new printing plant, described as a large cylinder press and Thorne typesetting machine. With its 5 August edition, The Nugget expanded from four to six pages. The editor proudly announced that a new type was to be used with the cylinder press, which would be much easier to read in poor light. The possibility of the paper launching out as a daily had been considered, but the decision deferred for the present. In its 12 August 1899 edition, The Nugget crowed over its formidable rival, The News, boasting that The Nugget had the first typesetting machine
in service in the territory, the bulky device having been brought in over the White or the Chilkoot Pass, and thence down river to Dawson. Taking this statement at its face value, the advantage enjoyed by The Nugget was not to last for long. Presumably, all four newspapers before this date were using hand-set type. Typesetting machines, whereby an operator could work with much greater facility from a keyboard like that of a typewriter, had been developed during the last two decades of the century, and had come into use on the large metropolitan dailies in the east. W.H. Kesterton, in his unique and fact-crammed A History of Journalism in Canada, states that this important printing device, the invention of Otto Mergenthaler, first saw service on the New York Tribune in 1886, and was introduced into Canada by the Ottawa Journal in the 1890s.

By 28 August 1899, The Nugget had expanded to eight pages, but rested content with publishing semi-weekly on the basis that there was not sufficient news to justify a daily.

Be that as it may, even before the advent of the government telegraph line, The Dawson Daily News had no doubts as to the need for a daily. Not to be outdone by its rival, The News boasted a cylinder press (probably steam driven), a Thorne typesetting machine, and job presses for printing contracts. In a leader of 10 November 1899, the editor announced:

Dawson has now a daily paper, the Dawson Daily News, which in typography and make up present a very creditable appearance for a publication emanating from a point so near Arctic circle. A perusal of these early issues confirms this claim. An engraving
plant was on order, expected over the ice the following winter, which would permit the reproduction of half-tone illustrations, but this had not been available for the Special Mining Edition issued in September 1899; over 15,000 copies had been circulated, many of which would be sent to leading newspapers in the United States and in Canada. The News might well be proud of the quality of this special issue. The Seattle Post-Intelligencer paid the Dawson Daily News the following tribute, late in 1899, which would lead one to assume that if the rival Nugget had a superior plant at this early date, the edge could not have been great.

One of the great enterprises of Dawson is its great printing house, established by the Dawson News Publishing Co. The plant is extensive and thoroughly up to date. It includes three power presses, typesetting machine, boiler and engine, paper, and card cutters, job and newspaper type, as well as over 100 different styles of large wood type, typewriters, safe and complete office fixtures...

Certainly The News, and to a somewhat lesser degree, The Sun and The Nugget, had taken on the format familiar to readers of the metropolitan dailies in the 1890s and 1900s—use of headlines; use of the "inverted pyramid" style of presentation, (headings in decreasing size descriptive of further detail), an anti-chronological style but one enabling the reader to scan the news quickly; greater variety of type and its use, with clear spaces interposed, to produce an attractive and inviting appearance to the eye in contrast to the solid and unrelieved columns of type characteristic of the papers of an earlier period. Advertisements were plentiful in the three papers, representing all phases of retail trade, professional and catering services, and steamship and railway companies; leading
American railways, such as the Great Northern, the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul, and the Santa Fe advertised in the Dawson papers.

At this early period, it is difficult to generalize further on any individualities displayed in the advertisements to be found in the three papers.

If there is one characteristic which stands out in Dawson journalism, extending from the days of 1898 for a full decade, it was the rancour and vituperation of its editorials. In this one would accord The Nugget and The Sun, and after 1904, The World, pride of place, but the editors of The News did not hesitate on occasion, stung by their contemporaries, to descend to personalities. Perhaps The Nugget set the pace for the future, in its 5 August 1899 edition:

"It's a bad beginning you've made, neighbor. Come right out in the open and hoist your flag. There is nothing we like so well in this country as plainness of statement. Don't try to carry water on both shoulders at once. . . . Such wishy-washy stuff as you have been handing out so far might do very well in Tacoma, but will scarcely pass muster in the Klondike.

Journalism in the Klondike was to be nothing, if not partisan. By 25 October The Nugget was referring to The Sun as "this harlot of journalism" for its defence of government officials against the unmeasured abuse of The Nugget, at the same time resenting its own sobriquet "the yellow rag." Both The News and The Nugget opposed the government, asserting that the mining regulations, the royalty on gold output and import duties, would strangle the territory on behalf of greedy officialdom, whereas The Sun made allowances for the extraordinary conditions in so remote a region, populated largely
by aliens and administered by a government necessarily ill-informed concerning the best interests of the territory.

Late in 1899 there appeared briefly a weekly, founded by a William Semple, known as The Gleaner, which has been described by a contemporary as "one of the hottest sheets ever published in Canada and I don't except The Calgary Eye-Opener." In December The Sun agreed to print The Gleaner, on condition that any articles verging on libel be first shown to The Sun's editor. Somehow the arrangement miscarried, for The Gleaner was sued and convicted of libel, and its editor hastily left the territory. The Sun in its Boxing Day issue, amply apologized to the Crown prosecutor, F.C. Wade, for The Gleaner's statements. The Sun pointed out that British practice did not permit newspapers to comment on a matter before the courts. The Gleaner's brief but colourful career has left little but its reputation to posterity.

Justice Dugas, in rendering judgement in a contempt case, found occasion to comment critically on the scurrilous character of the Dawson press, which had abused its privilege by unwarranted attacks on respectable individuals. No particular paper was cited, but The News apparently felt that the shoe pinched, alleging that it had followed the line of "clean, unobtrusive journalism." True, the proprietors and editors were aliens, but they had not lost sight of the fact that they were living on the soil of a friendly nation, where it was incumbent on visitors to observe "the reasonable laws of the country." The editor ended with the doubtful claim that both Canada and the United States "abound in clean, healthy newspapers."
Perhaps in this connection, and undoubtedly inasmuch as two of the newspapers were foreign-owned, the Yukon Council late in 1899 introduced a regulation requiring proprietors, editors and managers to file an affidavit with the clerk of the Territorial Court within a month, citing the names of each journalist, his nationality, and his place of residence and calling for 12 months prior to entry to the Yukon. Stiff fines ranging up to $500, were prescribed for non-compliance. The Dawson News objected to the declaration of nationality as an invasion of privacy and discrimination, "For that smacks too much of czarism, and Dawson is not Russia." The Nugget predictably objected to the ordinance, while The Sun found no alternative, for the two foreign-owned papers, it averred, had given the Klondike press a very bad name in Canadian journalism. Of course, the standards of Canadian journalism were much stricter than American standards. The Nugget maintained that the registration of newspapers was a violation of the freedom of the press, not to be tolerated in any democratic state.

With the completion of the government telegraph line in September, news from "the outside" fresh off the wires became available to the Dawson papers, each of which paid a fee for access to telegraphic despatches. The News on 28 September 1899 claimed to be the first to print telegraphic news. Access to the government telegraph line led to an unseemly, acrimonious and unresolved row between The News and The Sun, which continued into the New Year. By October of 1899 the South African War had broken out, with its series of British reverses in the early phases. On 23 November
The News criticized an unspecified contemporary for printing fabricated telegraphic reports from South Africa, when it was common knowledge that a news blackout had been imposed. The News asserted that it had an American Press agent in its employ, hence that News despatches could be credited with reliability. In the midst of the Christmas season, 27 December 1899, The News launched a sharp attack on The Sun for having printed telegraph despatches which were the property of The News, as its own copy. The Sun had been taken in by a ruse, printing a fake telegram which The News had devised as a plant; The Sun was a receiver of stolen goods. The following day the superintendent of the government telegraph service promised an investigation.

On 30 December The Sun answered the charges:

THE DAWSON DAILY NEWS IS A LIAR

Its Editors Responsible For Making Charges

Against the Yukon Sun Are Individually, Severally
And Collectively Liars

The Nugget at first favoured The Sun; ordinarily the editor disapproved of strong language in the editorial columns, but perhaps in the circumstances, its use was now justified. But on 3 January 1900 editor Woodside's intemperate harangue in The Sun caused The Nugget to entertain second thoughts. Woodside accused The News of bribing a government telegraph official to gain first access to the line, although as the official government paper, this perquisite properly belonged to The Sun.

On 1 February 1900 under the banner headline
WOODSIDE IS A PERJURER

If Superintendent Crean Is Speaking the Truth

The News countered with Crean's statement that the telegraphic despatch in question, describing the Jeffries-Sharkey fight, had been sent to both papers, the Skagway operator having admitted clearing the telegram for transmission to The Sun as well as The News.

The unresolved row continued for many months, with The Sun as late as November denying the charges of "the Boer organ."

In its edition of 22 May 1900, The Sun claimed to have proof that the Skagway agent was in the pay of both papers, but in The Sun's service under an assumed name. The issue, so far as has been determined, rests at that, the charges and refutations rumbling away into the distance like the aftermath of a summer storm.

So ended the gold-rush and frontier phase of Klondike journalism, which had set a standard for acrimony and editorial abuse that would be maintained in the next, more settled decade.
Chapter I : Endnotes


3 Canada: Sessional Papers, No. 13, 1897, Part II, p. 5, Dominion Lands Surveys.


5 Ibid., 1897, No. 13, Annual Report Department of the Interior for Year 1896.

6 Klondike Nugget, 16 June 1898, p. 2.

7 Yukon Midnight Sun, 20 June 1898, p. 9.

8 T.A. Rickard, Through the Yukon and Alaska, (San Francisco; Mining & Scientific Press, 1909), p. 198.


10 Yukon Midnight Sun, 4 July 1898, p. 5.

11 Ibid., p. 6.

12 Pierre Berton, op.cit., p. 292.

13 Yukon Midnight Sun, 11 June 1898.

14 Ibid., p. 4.

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16 Daily Klondike Nugget, 12 March 1900, p. 3.

17 Klondike Nugget, 16 June 1898, p. 2.
18 Yukon Midnight Sun, 20 June 1898, p. 4.
19 Pierre Berton, op. cit., p. 303.
20 Yukon Midnight Sun, 27 June 1898, p. 7.
22 Ibid., 24 September 1898, p. 4.
23 Ibid., 5 July 1898, p. 2.
24 Ibid., 27 July 1898, p. 1.
25 Yukon Midnight Sun, 22 August 1898, p. 2.
26 Yukon Sun, 27 December 1898, p. 2.
27 PAC, RG 15, El (a), Vol. 4, Records of Field Offices Yukon Territory, General Correspondence, file 1023, Ogilvie to Sifton, Dawson, 28 February 1899.
28 Ibid., Ogilvie to Sifton, 26 April 1899, transmitting evidence submitted to him as a Royal Commissioner, under letters patent 7 October 1898.
29 Klondike Miner and Yukon Advertiser, 30 December 1898, p. 2.
30 Klondike Nugget, 30 November 1898.
32 Klondike Miner and Yukon Advertiser, 19 May 1899, p. 2.
33 Klondike Nugget, 29 March 1898.
34 Ibid., 26 July 1899, editorial.
35 Ibid., 1 July 1899, editorial.
36 Dawson Daily News, 5 August 1899, editorial.
37 Yukon Sun, 15 August 1899, p. 2.
38 Ibid., 8 August 1899, p. 3.
40 Klondike Nugget, 12 April 1899, p. 4.
43 Dawson Daily News, 10 November 1899, editorial.
44 Ibid., 19 December 1899, quoting Seattle Post-Intelligencer.
45 Klondike Nugget, 5 August 1899, editorial.
46 Ibid., 25 October 1899, editorial.
49 PAC, RG 15, El(a), Records of Field Offices . . . Vol. 6, file 1501, An Ordinance Respecting Newspapers.
51 Yukon Sun, 30 December 1899.
52 Dawson Daily News, 1 February 1900, p. 4.
Chap. II Political Agitation and Journalistic Ferment, 1900-9.

Political agitation for representative government and a revised mining code dominated the first decade of the new century. The gold-rush was over, but the issues to which it gave rise were far from settled. Dawson's population in the spring of 1900 stood at a little over 5,000, a quarter or less that at the height of the feverish stampede; but still gold production rose, and the days of placer mining seemed unthreatened. The community at the confluence of the Klondike and Yukon, on the 64th parallel, already was assuming the shape and attributes of a settled, and it was to be hoped, permanent community—a trend which was to reduce the night life to a shade of its former self. Dawson had a notoriety to live down, and there were reformers to see that she did so with a vengeance.

In the intense journalistic competition which marked most of the period, The Dawson Daily News, was to witness the demise of both of its pioneer predecessors, as well as yet a third competitor, which entered the lists as the government organ in 1904. By the close of the period, The News had the field to itself, nor was it to be challenged again during its long twilit years. But the price of its survival until mid-century was decline from a highly presentable daily bearing comparison with all but the best metropolitan dailies on "the outside," to very much of a small town weekly, whose horizon generally did not extend far beyond the tree-denuded hills which surrounded the once roaring mining camp.
The News-Nugget Duel

The New Year was scarce a week old when the aggressive and aptly named Klondike Nugget issued its first daily, a three-page, four-column format. Henceforth the semi-weekly edition for distribution on the creeks was to be printed on Wednesdays and Saturdays, in order that the semi-weekly would include the principal news items and editorials of the daily. Advertisers who patronized the daily were to be given free space in the semi-weekly editions. It was contended that such an arrangement gave to advertisers a clientele unsurpassed by the other two papers combined. On the other hand, its fast-moving rival, The News, claimed a circulation little short of all other papers of the Yukon combined by the New Year, 1900. The eight-page Dawson Weekly News could truly be considered a compilation of the six preceeding daily editions, for which The News operated a carrier service as far afield as Eagle City, more than 75 miles downstream on the other side of the boundary. The Weekly News of 19 January was to be a twelve-page issue, the largest paper ever printed in the territory, carrying a wide coverage of news from the Dawson fire to an uprising in Manila and an action at Ladysmith.

The year 1900 witnessed a broadening out of The News to comprise a greater spectrum of Dawson's no doubt limited cultural activity. Although The News on 20 January in principle supported the closed Sunday (which had been rigidly enforced by the zealous severity of the North-West Mounted Police in the otherwise wide-open days of ninety-eight and nine), it pleaded at the same time for common sense;
the banning of a concert devoted to sacred music on Sunday was not warranted. On the other hand,

No honest man or woman questions the propriety of shutting down all saloons, theatres and every other business for that matter on Sunday, and practically enforcing it as a day of rest against the many who would otherwise desecrate it with debauches of many kinds... 1

Besides offering a lively review of a performance of Shaw's "A Hole in the Wall," the paper lauded the second concert given by the Dawson Philharmonic Orchestra Sunday evening, 21 January.

To anyone at all familiar with the condition of affairs here, say a year ago, the sight of a fashionable audience and an orchestra of talented musicians rendering classical selections with the precision of trained artists, seems like a transformation scene, hardly credible and not looked for in this far-off section of the "frozen north."

The concert last evening was just long enough—two hours—not to prove tiresome and the selections afforded a pleasing variety of style to suit all tastes... (Il Bacchio, Because I Love You, Schubert's Serenade, The Palms, The Holy City, and the Minstrel Boy.) 2

One suspects that the music critic on The News was easily pleased, and that the 'philharmonic orchestra' might not have made Carnegie Hall. None the less, for Dawson it was a start, where hitherto there must have been little in the way of musical entertainment other than the scraping of fiddles and the homely airs of the ubiquitous mouth-organ. The News started an art department at the end of January, in charge of Arthur V. Buel, late of the rival Nugget; a society column followed, under the heading "Social News and Literary Notes" in the 21 April issue. In May 1900 The News pleaded for the continuance of the Dawson Free Reading and Recreation Rooms, opened the previous fall and deplored the decision of the Yukon Council to discontinue the $37 per month needed to keep the institution open.
The closing of the library and recreation centre would encourage idle men, with time on their hands, to patronize once more the saloons and gambling houses. In broadening its scope, adding new features, The News, and to some extent be it said, its Dawson competitors, was following the trend of the large dailies of this century, which sought a public service function, that they might be all things to all men, sources of information and inspiration, rather than merely party organs or news sheets. The following November The Nugget introduced a society column, editor of which was a Mrs. Belle Dormer. But the "dear little Nugget" still retained the true frontier spirit, for on 2 October 1900, a gruesomely detailed account of a hanging, running through two columns, complete with sketches, was directly followed by a terse one-line ad:

Best Canadian rye at the Regina

The Boer War in the closing months of 1899 and throughout a good part of 1900 was a front-page item everywhere. British reverses at the outset of the conflict on the veldt provided a bone of contention between The Sun and The Nugget, ever spoiling for a fight. The redoubtable editor of The Sun, Major Woodside, a true blue loyalist through and through, charged The Nugget with pro-Boer proclivities. In an isolated community where by the spring of 1900 British subjects numbered less than one-third of the population, and were two of the town's newspapers were owned and run by Americans, Woodside's militancy on behalf of Queen and Empire is understandable. At first The Nugget had reported the
opening phases of the war objectively, generally based on despatches emanating from London. These issues of the paper were far from pro-Boer in sentiment, but to the redoubtable Woodside, it was a case of he that is not with me is against me. Then on 27 December 1899, in reporting the British defeat at the Tugela River, The Nugget gave Woodside his opportunity:

**DISASTROUS TO BRITISH**

**General Buller Meets Heavy Losses at Tugela River**
**Most Severe English Defeat Since the Indian Mutiny**
**Position of British Troops Grows Daily More**
**Perilous**

Three days later The Nugget quoted Lord Wolseley: "We have found that the enemy who had declared war against us are much more powerful and numerous than we had anticipated." Then on 3 January 1900, The Nugget reported Britain "panicked," calling for volunteers for the first time. To which on 9 January The Sun replied, "The yellow rag betrays a vindictive spirit toward the country in which it is published and where it enjoys protection." The most, however, that The Nugget could rightly be taxed with was an element of sensationalism in the reporting of an admittedly serious British defeat. The News on the other hand "played it cool" by copious factual reporting and catering to patriotic sentiment, calling for a full commitment at Britain's side. Commenting on the dispatch of a second Canadian contingent to South Africa, The News struck the right note. The reinforcement of the hard-pressed troops
speaks volumes for the general loyalty to the Empire of the people of England and Canada, and with such an unanimity of sentiment, coming from peer and peasant alike, there can be only one result, the annihilation of the Boers, and the union of the empire on a foundation as firm as the rock of Gibraltar. 6

The Toronto Empire or the Toronto Evening Telegram could scarcely have done better.

The Sun meanwhile fulminated against the Boers, vilifying their character, devoid of saving graces. On 13 February, evidently having taken quite a bit from The Sun's voluble and outspoken editor,

The Nugget snidely reminded him that there were still a few Boers left un killed in the Transvaal.

This South African War issue was indicative of latent anti-Americanism in the Yukon, when charges of "alien" were freely bandied about by the Canadian and British-born minority. Feelings were further exacerbated by a suggestion appearing in the "yellow press" that now perhaps was the time to withdraw the Yukon Field Force from the territory. To this Henry Woodside replied with a heavy broadside.

We freely believe that the government was right in sending it, notwithstanding the opinion of the yellow rag editor, and that force will be retained here until such time as it may be considered advisable to withdraw it, which will not be because of the formation of a militia company here. It served its purpose of stopping any more threats of hauling down the British flag; it prevented such as the yellow ragman and boys of his stamp, as well as unthinking men, from getting too saucy; it formed a backing to the N.W.M.P.; it prevented any attempt at raiding our banks (this is not a joke, as we can show by the history of the western states), and the government of Canada is not taking any advice from cheeky outsiders as to when it is proper to withdraw its force. 7

In a perhaps well-meaning attempt to straddle the issue,
The News on 19 February suggested that the proceeds of a public dinner in honour of George Washington's anniversary be donated to South African war widows and their dependents. On the appointed day, 23 February, The News pulled out all the stops with a banner headline across its front page:

UNCLE SAM'S DAY

Washington's Anniversary Celebrated

Palace Grand Blow-Out

Big Attendance With Many Happy Features

Pictures of Victoria and Washington on the Stage

House Draped with Stars & Stripes and British Flag

Tommy Atkins Serves as Usher

With this edition and that of the 4 July, the charge of pro-Americanism had some substance. It should be recalled too that the contentious Alaska Boundary issue was very much to the fore in the early years of the 20th century. It seemed at times as if The News was deliberately feeding the flames. Gradually the practice grew of a joint celebration of Victoria, or Empire Day on 24 May, and of the Fourth of July, with Dominion Day somewhat of a secondary festival. With such ardent imperialists and Canadian nationalists as Woodside editing one of the papers, it was obvious that the local press contained a highly-combustible mixture. The Yukon Sun charged its contemporaries with having not one British subject or native-born Canadian on their respective staffs. The Sun's quarrel was not so much with the native American, born and bred
south of the line, as with the "galvanized" American, offensive immigrants who vied with one another in militant jingoism. But why were Americans so thin-skinned? continued Woodside. American public life and the American press were no strangers to the anti-British tirade, catering to the Irish-American vote, whereas constructive criticism in Canada of the American scene was very much resented—a "what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" argument.

Alleging that rumour had it that the Yukon Sun was government-owned, Woodside in a leader of 20 February 1900 expressed his contempt for those who assumed that because a newspaper supported the government, it was therefore in its hire. On the contrary, the owner of The Sun, Thomas O'Brien, and the editor supported the government because both were Canadians, born and bred. Since two-thirds of the Klondike population was still foreign-born, The Sun interpreted the widespread discontent as alien-inspired. It availed nothing for the other two papers to point out, as they did on frequent occasion, that the native-born Canadians and British subjects in general were just as dissatisfied with the onerous mining regulations and the want of representative government as were the Americans.

The Indefatigable Woodside

By the Fourth of July 1900 Woodside quite obviously had relinquished his post, as editor of The Yukon Sun, in order to volunteer for South Africa. How otherwise could that journal have offered the following in its editorial columns on the great American national holiday?
We must continue to encourage American energy and enterprise as well as our own if we want to see our country grow prosperous and great, and we hope the day will never dawn when John and Jonathan will be separated. There is nothing "alien" here. Neither in language, in the love of liberty and fair play, nor in religion are they aliens to us, and we assure our American cousins that so long as they continue to sojourn with us their rights and their feelings will be respected by Canadians and Britshers, from every corner of the globe.  

The Sun, under the editorship of W.F. Thompson, had made a sharp and significant departure from the anti-American line pursued by the colourful Woodside. Indeed Woodside’s anti-Americanism, on his return to the paper, was to be his undoing as editor of The Sun. The change in editorial policy notwithstanding, the editor, in a leader of 28 November 1900, urged Canada to take a firm stand on her rights in the vexed Alaska Boundary dispute and press for a tidal outlet on the Lynn Canal. Nor should the Yukon be exploited for the benefit of neighbouring Alaska.

To return to the contentious Woodside, a Sun editorial from his pen early in April 1900 brought a libel action about his ears. The plaintiff was Joseph A. Clarke, a Canadian-born migrant to the Yukon, who had been briefly employed in the gold commissioner’s office, and who at this time was beginning his career as the stormy petrel of Yukon politics. Clarke was active on a Citizens’ Committee, seeking popular representation on the then wholly appointive Yukon Council. Rumour had it that Clarke had been dismissed from the gold commissioner’s office for accepting bribes, and that he had defrauded a group of citizens of his home town (Brockville, Ontario) of $1,200 to finance a joint undertaking in the gold fields. Woodside
did not mince his words.

If we had a record like Joseph Clarke we would want to keep very quiet indeed. With any faults that we may have we can say at least that we never were discharged from a position for taking bribes, and we never swindled Brockville friends out of two thousand dollars. We would welcome another cyclone if it would goad Mr. Clarke into acting like a sane person. 10

Clarke won a judgment against Woodside in January 1901. In commenting on the case the same month, Woodside observed that as the law then stood, it was easier for the defendant in a libel action to plead not guilty than to prove the truth of his statements.

To anticipate a little the chronology of events in the unrestricted and uninhibited editorial warfare in the Klondike, Woodside's leave of absence in the spring of 1900 in order to volunteer for service in South Africa lasted a little over six months, during which, as observed, The Sun adopted an understanding attitude toward Americans. Woodside arrived in South Africa too late to see action through a delay in sailing with his original contingent; writing to Clifford Sifton on 26 November 1900, he stated that O'Brien had reinstated him as editor of The Sun. Even then he had a foreboding that the job would not last, soliciting the minister therefore for a job in the assay office. By early February 1901, time had run out for the ebullient editor. "My crime is too much Canadxanism," wrote Woodside to a Regina correspondent. He had offended the manager of the Alaska Commercial Company who thereupon withdrew his patronage from The Sun. At this point the owner considered his editor too much of a liability, and on 9 February 1901, Woodside wrote his last editorial
in The Sun:

With this issue we terminate our connection with the Yukon Sun as editor. We have no apologies to offer or regrets to express for our course, which has to the best of our ability, been in the higher interests of Yukon and Canada. To our readers and friends we wish a goodly share of that prosperity which we predict for this young and growing territory and its ambitious capital, the most northerly city in the British empire.

Henry J. Woodside

The Sun maintained that the paper was well clear of Woodside, that it had languished during his editorship, and that circulation had picked up considerably since his departure. This no doubt was attributable to the blatantly anti-American line taken by Woodside, but The Sun was unjust in its leader of 30 March 1901, in which reference was made to the paper's emergence "from the military magazine class into the ranks of live newspaperdom." Woodside's editorials commenting upon the South African campaign were knowledgeable, and must have contributed to a subsidence of the civilian hysteria induced by early British reverses. Though not a professional soldier, Woodside's militia service had given him a broad understanding of the basics of the soldier's trade, which far exceeded that of his belittling critics. His military editorials made very interesting and informative reading against the backdrop of the campaign on the distant veldt. His removal from the editor's desk was understandable, but in a sense regrettable. There are broad character traits in Woodside's makeup reminiscent of his more prominent, and better known contemporary, Sam Hughes.

First Territorial Election

The first territorial election for the Yukon Council, held
on 17 October 1900, provided a stormy arena for the rival journals, in which the protagonists were *The News* and *The Nugget*. Both papers had favoured the introduction of the popular principle on the Yukon Council the previous winter. Hitherto the preponderance of aliens in the Klondike had been the reason for not introducing the popular principle earlier, but by April 1900 *The Nugget* contended that there were enough British subjects in the territory to justify the holding of elections. *The News* warmly supported *The Nugget*, quoting the latest census returns, indicating that there were no fewer than 1,712 British subjects resident in Dawson. *The News* was more scathingly critical of the arbitrary nature of Yukon government than was *The Nugget*: an editorial headed "Abuse of Public Trusts" on 16 April 1900 asserted that government of so arbitrary a nature as that of the Yukon had made the territory a byword throughout the rest of Canada. By contrast, *The Sun* recommended caution in the rush to the hustings to enable a wise selection to be made by the eligible voters for the two elective seats on the council.

Four candidates campaigned for the two seats—Arthur Wilson, (Liberal and former coal miner from Nanaimo), Alexander Prudhomme (Conservative from Quebec), Thomas O'Brien (trader in the Yukon since 1886, a Liberal, and owner of *The Sun*) and Auguste Noel (Liberal, a lawyer). *The Sun* supported O'Brien and Noel; *The Nugget* backed Prudhomme and Wilson initially. The chief feature of the heated campaign was *The News* charge that *The Nugget* had deserted its original choice because it had been bought by O'Brien and Noel. *The Nugget* indignantly denied the canard, stating that its
reason for dropping Prudhomme and Wilson was their attempt to buy the paper's support. On 16 October 1900, as the campaign ended, The Nugget published an affidavit, sworn out by Thomas O'Brien, in which the defeated candidate testified that he had been approached by The News, which offered to maintain a benevolent neutrality for a consideration, $2,500; The News had already been offered, the statement continued, $1,500 to support Wilson and Prudhomme. O'Brien alleged that he indignantly refused to have anything to do with The News, whereupon The Nugget hoisted its rival on its own petard, with the parting shot, "Let the galled jade wince." The ensuing vote returned Wilson and Prudhomme to the council. Since the defeated candidates had been the choice of the Liberal party as against the Citizens Committee, Commissioner Ogilvie found himself out of favour with his superiors and was shortly thereafter forced to resign for mishandling the situation. The News came out of the first election with the satisfaction of having backed the winning candidates, but with its own integrity jeopardized.

Three-Way Journalistic Rivalry

The year 1900 brought some reform in the mining regulations. With the assurance of the gold commissioner that the royalty would shortly be reduced to 2 or 3 per cent, and that appeals from the gold commissioner's office would shortly be handled by an appellate court rather than by the Department of the Interior, The Nugget crowed:

The Nugget congratulates the people of the Yukon territory
upon the success of the fight for right which they have won after three years of effort. Nearly everything asked for has been or will be granted shortly. The dawning of prosperity for the Yukon is just begun. 17

Little more than a month had passed since the presentation of a citizens' memorial, setting forth their grievances, to the Governor General on 16 August 1900.

The years 1901 and 1902 were witness to a continuing duel between The News and The Nugget, by the end of which the latter's decline was noticeable, and the first election campaign for a federal seat, in which The News backed a loser. Dawson was still a prosperous mining town, although the days of ninety-eight were obviously history.

The Yukon Sun had from the outset been a government supporter, although reserving the right of criticism on occasion. By an ordinance dated 25 April 1901, The Sun was created pro tem the Official Gazette for the territory; government announcements, ordinances and mining regulations were printed on The Sun's editorial page. Government patronage was a plum for which, the opposition papers were not above contending, but until dispossessed by The World on instructions from Commissioner Congdon, in 1904, The Sun retained the perquisite. By November of the following year, 1902, complaints were addressed by the acting commissioner to the proprietor of The Sun on the score of exorbitant rates—$3.50 per inch. The paper defended its rates, contending that they were lower than the commercial rate, and $2 to 25 per cent lower than those of its competitors in Dawson. The News did not accept this statement, but until the advent of The World, as shall be seen in a later context, The News
became the indirect recipient of government patronage in any case.

March 1901 saw a second acrimonious press telegraph row, this time between The News and The Nugget. The News accused its contemporary of faking a telegraph despatch on the seventh of the month concerning the inauguration of President McKinley. Under the blazing headlines

THE DAILY NEWS

IS JUST A PLAIN, COMMON, ORDINARY EVERYDAY LIAR

WITH THE ACCENT ON THE LIAR

in its 13 March issue, The Nugget published a letter received from the local manager of the Dominion Telegraph confirming the authenticity of the telegram in question, and giving particulars as to its length and charges. The following day The News acknowledged its error. It is perhaps too much to expect a gracious acknowledgment from The Nugget; with odious patronage, it proceeded to pour salt on the wounds of its rival:

We were once young in this business ourselves and we can readily understand how the enthusiasm of youth occasionally leads our contemporary into serious errors of judgment. . . . The News is somewhat akin to the man in the witness box who assured his Lordship: "Faith, yer honor, what I just said was a lie, but what I'm tellin' yer now is the truth." 20

The Nugget did much crowing that spring of 1901 over The News, but at the time of writing, the issues of the latter for this period are not available, and so there is no point in reproducing one side of what must have been a dialogue.

Beginning in June 1901, The Nugget gave top priority to the celebrated O'Brien murder trial and subsequent execution. The trial
proceedings were given front page coverage, with headlines, the accounts sometimes running two full columns. A perusal of any newspaper of 70 years ago, weather in the Klondike or elsewhere, strikes one with the change in popular attitudes on hanging. O'Brien was convicted of a triple killing a year and a half previously, the indefatigable efforts of the police having brought the culprit to justice. But referring to the tireless sleuthing with the rather pained sensibility which its editor sometimes evinced for the cruder aspects of life, The News described the achievement as "worthy of a better cause." The Nugget thereupon took umbrage: what better cause could there be than in bringing to justice a killer responsible for one of the most fiendish crimes in the territory's history!

The climax to the drama came with the final scaffold scene on 23 August 1901: The Nugget threw over the whole of its front page to a luridly detailed account of the hanging, including woodcuts of the scaffold, the mechanical details of the drop and actuating lever, concluding with histrionic reflections on the awful majesty of the law taking its inevitable course, in obedience to a code as old as man, and sanctioned by a Higher Power. The extra edition offered a further three pages, summarizing the case from the start. But five days later, under the heading "Simply Disgusting," The Nugget took strong issue with the rival News for its lack of good taste in printing an article featuring the hangman:

It is bad enough for a man to undertake such a job under any circumstances, but to parade the thing before the public in all its revolting details is positively indecent. O'Brien certainly
deserved his death, but we cannot say that we have much respect for the man who bid for the privilege of killing him. In that particular The News and the hangman are about on a par. 21

With its 25 April 1901 issue, the Semi-Weekly Nugget's 8-page issue increased from a 5- to a 6-column format. On 29 May a new feature, "Over the Divide," was introduced, devoted to news from the creeks exclusively. The Nugget's printing plant boasted two new monoline composing machines which first went into service on 23 September 1901; serving the same function as the linotype, the new device was more compact, operating on one-eighth the horse-power. Wilbur Stephen Scudder had first introduced the monoline at the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Although this issue offers a detailed and highly technical description of the new machine, there were no photographs; in this as in other technicalities, The News was ahead of its contemporaries.

On 15 October 1901 the Semi-Weekly Nugget increased from a six to an eight-column format. About the same time the subscription rate was reduced to $3.00 per month, thanks, the paper maintained, to lower costs through the introduction of a more modern plant. In November a society column and a children's feature made their appearance.

The Freight Rates Issue

Throughout 1901 The Nugget mounted a sustained campaign against the White Pass and Yukon freight rates, held to be inordinately high. The narrow-gauge railway had been completed from Skagway, on tidewater, over the White Pass, to railhead at Whitehorse by the summer of 1900.
From Whitehorse the company operated a fleet of stern-wheelers downstream to Dawson. Beginning in January 1901 The Nugget attacked the high freight rates maintained by the company, to the detriment of business in Dawson. The editor observed that construction costs had been high, and hence hitherto most of the profits had gone to absorb this backlog; now the shareholders expected a return on their investment. All this was understood, continued the paper, but in future the territory must have rates on which it could survive.

But it was on 8 July 1901 that The Nugget declared war, with an editorial headed "Monopoly's Iron Heel," accusing the White Pass and Yukon of charging whatever the traffic would bear. From this date until the government's ultimatum to the company to lower its rates or get out of business late in November, The Nugget pursued the company relentlessly, the cartoons often illustrating the sharpness of the assault which the pioneer Klondike paper mounted on the monopolists.

A perusal of the Semi-Weekly Nugget's issues for 20 and 24 July 1901 leads to the surmise that both the crusading Nugget and its rival, The News, had a financial interest in the outcome of the competition between two transportation companies—the Dawson and Whitehorse Navigation Company, which operated by the mouth of the Yukon, and the afore-mentioned White Pass & Yukon Railway. The Dawson Daily News appears to have been affiliated with the latter, and The Nugget with the Dawson and Whitehorse Company, operating on the roundabout St. Michael all-water route. On 20 July 1901, in what had probably developed as a war of nerves, the Semi-Weekly Nugget
denied a report in The News that three of the Dawson and Whitehorse barges had been wrecked near Kodiak, Alaska. The News retracted this statement a few days later. In the words of a Nugget editorial on 24 July 1901:

It looks significant that the weird reports of storms, wrecks, and disasters on the west coast should be published in our contemporary just at the time of the visit of the officials of the White Pass & Yukon Railway. Two and two make four and The News greatly under-estimates the intelligence of the people of Dawson when it attempts such rank perpetration. . . . As a sensationalist in behalf of the W.P. & Y.R. and at the expense of the people of Dawson The News got off on the wrong foot. Its work is too coarse for other than the natives.

Continuing the attack on 27 July, The Nugget under the heading "Pass the Crow," reported the convoy a few days below Dawson, under the command of one "Black" Sullivan; The News owed both him and the barges an apology. The 7 August edition reported the arrival at Dawson of the steamer Tyrrell towing one of the allegedly missing barges; the passage from Vancouver via St. Michael had been made without incident.

Whether with an interested motive or not, The Nugget took to itself full credit for the eventual defeat of the White Pass & Yukon, for both its contemporaries had hung back on the issue, The News because of its affiliation with the W.P. & Y.R., and The Sun allegedly because some of the Dawson merchants had preferential rates with the company and did not wish their competitors to enjoy the same advantage. The News suggestion in December, after the triumph over the company, that a rebate should not be demanded by the merchants from the W.P. & Y.R. indicated The News complicity, charged The Nugget. "The position of The News is that of one compound-ing a crime."
The Congdon Machine

In March 1901 a lawyer from Annapolis, Nova Scotia, who was to play a great, if controversial, role in Yukon politics, arrived in Dawson to take up a post as legal adviser to the commissioner. Frederick Tennyson Congdon was a Toronto graduate in law, and had been resident a year at the Inner Temple, London. He had made a name for himself in his profession by preparing the first Nova Scotia digest of legal cases in 1890. Congdon's term in Government House in 1903-04 gave rise to the most hotly contested political turmoil in Yukon's brief history. Congdon was accused by his opponents of establishing a political machine in order to run the territory in his own interest. His most stubborn and inveterate antagonist was none other than The Dawson Daily News. This, however, is to anticipate the story a little.

According to the inimitable Woodside, in a letter to Laurier in 1904, Congdon's first move on arrival in the Yukon was to buy up the Yukon Sun, installing a cousin, H.S. Congdon, as manager. This young man did not meet with the ex-editor's approval:

That useless individual apparently considered it his chief duty to form an extensive acquaintance with fast women, and strong whiskey. He was thus able in about a year's time to run The Sun into $10,000 of debt. This compelled Mr. Congdon to dispose of a 2/3 interest in The Sun, to his chief creditor, Mr. R. Roediger, owner of the opposition paper here, The Dawson Daily News. . . 26

In July 1901 The Sun launched itself as a daily, no doubt in order the more effectively to defend the government interest against The News. In November of the same year The Nugget, charged that The Sun, was now nothing more than a morning edition of The News,
under the same ownership and using the same plant. This was long
denied by The News, although in the end the latter did admit to a
part ownership in The Sun for a few months only. To The Nugget
its rival now supported the government in the morning, gaining the
benefit of government patronage, and in the evening reverted to
its ceaseless vendetta against that same administration. This surely
was dishonest. In a leader of 28 December 1901:

The arrangement is a most excellent one from the standpoint
of The News, for it enables that paper to draw on the government
coffers for the wherewithal to continue its attacks upon the
government.

Anyone who can run an opposition newspaper and make the
government foot the bills is a genius, and nothing short of it,
and whenever The Nugget meets with a real genius it is always
ready and willing to recognize it. 27

The News parried these charges for a time, but disposed of the
argument, at least to its own satisfaction, in an editorial appearing
on 2 September the following year, 1902. The arrangement was purely
a business one, the printing of The Sun simply another job-printing
contract, which in no way prejudiced the integrity of The News.

Rivalry and Early Dawson

As 1901 drew to its close, The News was not alone in its
optimism concerning the bright future of the Klondike. In his Report
for 1901 the commissioner saw "unmistakable signs of permanency." 28
Dawson had a new post office, court-house, administration building,
school-house and residence for the commissioner. Electric street lamps
lit its thoroughfares during the long winter nights. Dawson gave
promise of developing into a thriving, settled community.

The mainstay of the economy was still (as it was to remain) gold.
There were hopes withal for the diversification of the economy, but though this has materialized for the territory as a whole, Dawson was fated to remain a gold-mining town, declining as the gravel was worked out by ever more efficient means. In 1901, however, with gold production at $17,368,000, only 5 million dollars off the peak season of the year before, residents and the business community must have had few qualms about the future. Was not 1901's production higher than that of 1899, at $16,000,000, let alone of the first frenetic year of the rush, at $10,000,000? 

In 1902 the principal subjects of public interest in Dawson were the concession issue (extensive grants of mining land made to companies or individuals for long term development) and the second election for the federal seat. On the first issue all three newspapers were basically in agreement, in the interests of the individual placer miner, but the election brought on a fierce triangular fight.

By this date, The News mounted a considerable amount of righteous indignation against "the scarlet women," as it euphemistically referred to the town's still numerous and enterprising covey of prostitutes. On 19 April 1902 The News editor approvingly noted that three of the whores had been sentenced to a month in gaol, in addition to a 50 dollar fine. One of the defendants, going under the name of "Willie" Wallace, a coloured girl, denied virtuously that she was the woman identified by a witness, but a respectable married woman. "Her evidence," however, "was unconvincing, and she will eat porridge with the rest." Pimps came under heavy fire in several May issues of The News and by the twenty-eighth of the month the editor noted
a wholesale exodus of the parasitic tribe from the town. It was all a sign of the changing times: the press had been tolerant of prostitution in the days of the sprawling mining camp, but with the evolution of the community towards a more settled, residential character the puritanical mores of the industrious and respectable middle class gradually assumed dominance, until finally there was no place for dance halls, casinos or brothels. In this respect the newspapers of Dawson were following the 20th century trend, in catering to the changing standards and tastes of the public.

On 19 April 1902, The News began a letter column for readers under the heading "Tell It to the News." At about the same time, a fashion column, entitled "Fashion the World Over" made its appearance. A 2-column feature, "The Play and The Players," providing drama critique, was yet another feature. A series of articles on astronomy, reprinted from the New York World, appeared in The News in the spring of 1902; these consisted of a short series rather than a running feature. The month of June saw the addition of a women's page to the paper, a development taken up by a number of the large city dailies in the early years of the century. The first News sports page made its debut on 27 June 1902, again very much in the modern trend. A book review column was not neglected. The Dawson Daily News, as early as 1902, was providing its readers with most of the features to which the public was becoming accustomed in the larger Canadian and American cities on the outside. By comparison it must be admitted that The Nugget and Sun were less enterprising in this respect, although The Nugget enjoyed the services of a fairly talented
cartoonist at this time. The Nugget, too, boasted "The Stroller's" column, rather a home-spun Klondike version of George Bain in the current Toronto Globe & Mail. But a direct comparison of the three Dawson papers for any period can leave one in little doubt as to which of the trio led the other two in style, coverage and special features. To compare The News with its competitors is to compare a large metropolitan daily with a weekly or semi-weekly put out in a small city or town. At the turn of the century, however, newspapers followed a party line to a much greater degree than they do now, and for that reason a supporter of the Yukon administration or an ardent imperialist would prefer The Sun to The News. In a smashing leader of 5 September 1902, The News boasted of its manifest lead over the other two papers.

The public services performed by The News are the daily envy of its contemporaries. A long way behind in enterprise, with the faintest idea possible of the effect of government policy, with little or no conception of how to deal with public questions, The Sun and Nugget employ the only talent they respectively possess, attempted ridicule and derision. Although this jibe scarcely accorded the two papers due credit, there was a measure of truth in the concluding statement.

In July The Nugget harped back to its old theme: The News and Sun were evening and morning editions of the same paper, acting out a farce. The Nugget's editor attempted to clinch the charge with a bewildered biblical quotation: "God and Mammon cannot be successfully served at one and the same time." To this repeated charge The News had a rational answer; that the printing of The Sun was simply a job-printing contract, like any other, and that its own integrity as an opposition paper was in no whit jeopardized.
The foolish statement The News is fighting the government with government money is worthy of the paper which utters it. If money is paid The News for work, that money becomes the property of The News and can be devoted to any purpose whatsoever. The News does not sell its soul or sacrifice its independence because it has a job of printing, in this regard it differs from The Nugget.

On his return to Dawson in the fall of 1902, Woodside was urged by the party to start up a new newspaper in Dawson which would be Liberal and Canadian. But, he continued to his correspondent, Colonel Steele of the North-West Mounted Police, Congdon's interest in the Yukon Sun blocked his plans. The debts which Congdon's profligate cousin had run up during his tenure as manager of The Sun rendered its purchase impractical, for $20,000 would have been required for a plant and business worth some seven or eight thousand. The Nugget could have been bought for about $10,000, but Woodside did not consider it worth it. Hence he was forced to drop the project.

In another letter written to J.H. Ross on 10 November 1902 at a time when the latter was campaigning for the federal seat, Woodside put The Sun stock and plant at about $23,000, and The Nugget's at $12,000. The Liberals of the territory were chagrined at the spectacle of Richard Roediger, owner of the opposition News, holding a two-thirds interest in the government paper.

The News-Sun ownership wrangle continued through the summer and fall of 1902, until the public must have become indifferent to the issue. On 22 November, however, The Sun announced that R.H. Prichard had purchased the interests of Roediger and McIntyre in the paper; from this date, the editor went on proudly, all the shareholders in The Sun enterprise were British subjects. The paper's
office had been remodeled, and within a few days The Sun would be issuing from its own plant again. Then on 3 December 1902 The Sun made a clean breast of the mystery as to its ownership, so long a hobbyhorse of The Nugget's. In September last it had become necessary to sell a part-interest in the paper. The present owner, W.F. Thompson, appealed to his long time friend, Richard Roediger, of The News, with the result that the owners of the latter purchased a temporary one-third interest in The Sun until such time as another purchaser could be found. This had been accomplished in November, barely two months later, hence the owners of The News held no interest whatever in The Sun today. The News the following day took The Nugget to task for not admitting the facts. The controversy did not rest at this point, but rumbled on into 1903, by which time The Nugget had about six months to live.

The Concession Controversy

The concession controversy was one which was to muddy the political waters of the Yukon for over two years. Both The Nugget and The News were strongly committed against the practice, while The Sun took a more moderate line. The issue hinged upon the government practice of granting large tracts on long term leases to companies and syndicates for the working of the creek gravel by hydraulic process, requiring expensive equipment and abundant capital. The practice was held to be detrimental to the interests of the individual prospector and placer miner, the very life blood of the Klondike, without whom there had been no gold-rush and no Dawson.
The largest concession was issued to an Englishman, A.N.C. Treadgold, who obtained from the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, rights to the richest creeks—Bonanza, Eldorado, Bear and Hunker. Without going into the details of Treadgold's scheme, suffice it to say that it was at once seen as a monopoly, inimical to the interests of the individual miner. Before the lease was cancelled by Order in Council on 22 June 1904, at Treadgold's own request for want of the necessary capital, the press and the politicians of Dawson had plunged to their armpits in the melee.

The News was quite as militant as The Nugget on the subject; concessions for hydraulic operations on a large scale should only be granted when the ground was no longer rich enough for the placer miner. In a typical editorial of 19 April 1902, The News stated its case.

The object of keeping the ground idle is so that more claims will lapse and fall into the lease, and the condition will obtain until all the miners have deserted the district. If the intention is to give over the country to monopolists, well and good. The present methods will very effectually accomplish this; but if the country is to be developed by the individual miner compel the concession owners to get to work or take the ground away from them. 37

The Nugget referred to the Treadgold concession as "the greatest mining octopus that has ever fastened tentacles on Klondike." 38

The Sun, on the other hand, opined that the whole concession issue should be suffered to die a natural death, for the few still operative would lapse if their terms were not met. Agitation on the issue discouraged business, and particularly capital.

Leaving aside the concession controversy, which was to flare anew throughout 1903 and the first half of 1904, an editorial in
The Nugget dated 19 August 1902 was an ominous portent for the future.

Dawson is undeniably quiet. There is lacking the air of life and activity which in the past has been characteristic of the town, and to anyone unfamiliar with the substantial character of the resources of the district it might easily appear that Dawson is on the decline. Both The News and The Nugget agreed that the recession was temporary, induced by the restrictive measures imposed by the government.

The Election of 1902

The federal election of 1902, the second held in the Yukon for the parliamentary seat, featured the resignation of the commissioner, John Hamilton Ross, in order to run himself, and his subsequent victory at the polls. Both The Nugget and The Sun supported Ross, on the basis that one who had served as chief executive best knew the needs of the territory. To this The Nugget rashly added, in the heat of the campaign, (8 November 1902) that Ross was en route to Ottawa, there to be sworn in as Sifton's successor. This, averred The Nugget, made their candidate's victory a virtual certainty; certainly with such a man as Minister of the Interior, the Klondike's troubles would soon be over. The Sun supported the rumour, or ruse—which in any case was to backfire when no such appointment was forthcoming, and the unfortunate Ross was for a period too ill to carry out the simple duties of Member.

The News meanwhile, much to the scorn and obloquy of its rivals, supported Joseph Aé Clarke, despite his somewhat tarnished reputation and predilection for cheap demagoguery. The News opened its campaign 23 August 1902, with a wholesale denunciation of the government of
the Yukon to date—"if the history of the administration of the Yukon could be written it would stand forever as an example of incapacity, inefficiency and dishonesty." Whether a stronger opposition candidate could have been found than Clarke is a moot point; The News backed him as the champion of the miners' rights against the concessionaires, and represented itself, as always, the champion of the people against bureaucracy and privilege. Each paper accused the others of base motives; The News ridiculed The Sun for referring to a man who had been only a year in the territory as "the darling of the people."

In November during the mounting climax in the closing phases of the campaign, The News and Nugget locked horns over Ross's health and whereabouts. The News on 11 November asserted that the previous evening it had received word from the Toronto Mail & Empire that there was no truth whatever in the rumour that Ross was to be taken into the cabinet. In the same issue, The News printed a telegram received from the Los Angeles Times stating that Ross had been confined to the Hospital of the Good Samaritan for three weeks with rheumatism. With all due sympathy to Mr. Ross in his affliction, a stern sense of duty compelled The News to reveal the truth to the people. The following day The Nugget contradicted The News, stating that Ross had fully recovered, and was about to leave Los Angeles for Vancouver or Victoria momentarily. On 13 November The Nugget printed a telegram under Ross's signature from Los Angeles stating that he had not had a day's illness since leaving Whitehorse—a cruel rumour devised by his political foes. The News thereupon accused The Nugget of having printed a bogus telegram on 12 November, signed Hospital of the Good Shepherd, Los Angeles; The News contention was that there was no such hospital in Los Angeles,
proof of the fictitious character of The Nugget telegram. On 15 November The Sun came to the aid of The Nugget, printing a telegram purportedly from J.H. Ross, in which the convalescent refers to the Hospital of the Good Shepherd, whereupon The Sun in righteous indignation refers to "the dastardly attack on Mr. Ross, the most infamous The Sun has ever known. ... A more cruel and cold-blooded attempt at political assassination has never been made in Canada." The alleged telegrams agreed on one point—the identity of the patient, and the locality, but as to whether in the Good Shepherd or the Good Samaritan infirmary remains a mystery at time of writing. It is plain that one or other of the papers was lying. The News story gains a little more credence by inference inasmuch as Ross's health was poor after his election, to the extent that he was forced to neglect his duties in the House.

The News accepted Ross's victory (by about 900 votes) with a good grace, attributing it to the force of his personality. The "creek vote" came as a surprise to The News which had always championed the miner. But no doubt the miners believed that Ross could secure them the reforms they needed more effectively than his opponent. The News could not forbear a sharp crack at The Nugget.

As everybody knows filthy lucre is the pivot upon which everything turns with The Nugget, and when that is arranged the inexplicable jumble of truncated sentences follows in nauseating succession.

A letter from Congdon printed in The Sun on 6 December deprecated that paper's description of the election result as a Liberal victory; on the contrary, wrote Congdon, it should be considered a victory for the better man, in which Conservatives had thrown party loyalties
aside to vote for Ross."

The year 1902 closed with a Sun challenge flung down in the journalistic ring to its two competitors; in its Christmas Day issue, The Sun offered to pay a forfeit of $100 to the town's hospitals if its claim to a November circulation of 33,514 copies could be bettered by either of its contemporaries. The News does not appear to have taken up the challenge.

The Dawson Free Lance

In the increasingly competitive world of journalism in the early years of this century, many ventures fell by the wayside. Such a one was the Dawson Free Lance, a Saturday weekly, whose manager and editor was the droll E.J. (Stroller) White, mentioned in an earlier context in connection with his several columns of chit-chat, which were a feature of The Nugget. Described as the Family Paper of the Yukon, the 4-page, 6-column weekly devoted itself to local news. The reader might well doubt the title of the little sheet to be known as the family paper on reading its issue of 22 January 1903. On the front page, under the ghoulish heading "Inch Rope Reminiscences," the editor defends capital punishment hanging being a necessary deterrent, but then goes on to reminisce fondly on a long series of lynchings in the United States, where an outraged citizenry had on more than one occasion taken the law into its own hands. Clearly "The Stroller" held that in the absence of a legal execution then a lynching was certainly an acceptable and salutary alternative. In the same issue, the first, White commends his sheet to the residents of Dawson and the denizens of the creeks;
A daily paper is fresh for one day only, while a weekly paper is read for a week. The Free Lance contains spice enough to relieve the monotony of life and enough common sense to commend it to all sensible people.

While on the editorial page of this first issue is found this gem:

Any subscriber paying in cord wood will please bring it free from knots in order that a woman may be able to split it.

For all its drolleries and appeals to family sentiment, The Free Lance lasted for only a season.

The 1902 Election Aftermath

The backwash from the 1902 federal election rolled well into 1903, with the News roasting its two contemporaries on the J.H. Ross issue—-that he was to be taken into the cabinet, and that his health was sound as a bell. On 22 June The News called for the member's resignation; his health had been so poor that he could not attend to his duties in the House, and he had accomplished nothing since going to Ottawa.

It was a grave mistake to send Mr. Ross to Ottawa. The News contended throughout the election that his return would be regarded as an endorsement of Sifton, and that the poor health enjoyed by Mr. Ross would militate against his usefulness. . . . Yukoners are accused in the house of endorsing the government and finding fault at the same time. Mr. Ross neglects his duties because he is said to be too sick to attend the session.

By this date, The Nugget too was entertaining grave second thoughts on its espousal of Ross's interest. By 1 July 1903 The Nugget owned itself disappointed in the member's lack of performance. The Nugget had supported Ross because he gave assurance of being the better candidate, but the paper had not undertaken to endorse a repudiation of campaign promises. The Sun meanwhile had rounded on The Nugget for its abandonment of Ross. It was well known that Ross was not well at the time of the election, but his supporters had confidence
none the less that he would accomplish more for the territory than his opponent. This had been born out, continued The Sun—reduction of miners’ license fees and appointment of a commission to investigate concessions, maintained the import of mining machinery duty free, and a liberal appropriation in the budget for Yukon development. At least The News had been consistent in its opposition to Ross, but The Nugget was changing sides.

Concessions and Press Rivalry

The News reviewed its stand on the vexed issue of the Treadgold concession in a leader of 28 April 1903, claiming to have been the only one of the three papers to have opposed the enterprise from the outset. Early in May The News editor clarified the paper’s stand on the issue: the principle of hydraulic concessions was not wrong per se, but should only be resorted to when the ground no longer offered a return for placer mining. Obviously Klondike had not yet reached that stage, and yet large tracts were reserved in idleness for future development by concessionaires. This was strangling the economy of the district, and it was this to which The News was so adamantly opposed. Sifton was the snake in the grass. With his resignation, The News could not but rejoice, but the damage was done; on 22 July the editor gave vent to his sentiments regarding the maladministration under which the territory groaned.

The fact that Clifford Sifton will no longer be empowered to administer the affairs of the Yukon is a source of much congratulation, but “the evil that men do lives after them.”

The evil that Mr. Sifton has done in this country will be permanent, and the present condition of its mining industry, and commercial paralysis are monumental evidence to his narrow-minded views and limited administrative capacity.
On 14 August 1903 The News announced in banner headlines that the royal commission appointed to investigate the concession issue had arrived in the person of Byron Britton, K.C., and Benjamin T.E. Bell, an engineer. The latter sounded a knell-like warning the day of his arrival in Dawson.

> The people must come to realize that mining is not a gamble, but a business. It must be conducted along the lines of the utmost careful management and strictest economy. The people of the Yukon will do well to awaken to this fact. . . . [48]

On 26 August a mass meeting held in the Auditorium Theatre passed a resolution condemning The Sun for its equivocal policy in the government interest, paying but lip service to the interests of the miners. Then on 8 September the commissioners arbitrarily closed the hearings, in the course of a sharp exchange of words between Councilman Clarke and Judge Britton. The News saw nothing to be gained from the inquiry and charged Judge Britton with being a partisan. Predictably the Britton Report defended concessions, but this did not affect the outcome, for by June of the following year the remedy had been applied by Order in Council.

Undoubtedly The News displayed a more mature and broader outlook than the other two Dawson papers; its editorials are proof of this. Still, by current standards of today, its ready acceptance of violence as very much in the natural order of human affairs seems archaic. This, of course, is to judge The News by the standards of our own day, hardly an historical approach. Most newspapers of the period reflected the nationalistic and jingoistic sentiments of their time. It may not, however, be stretching the point to
consider The News attitude towards the prize ring, street brawls, and war—for which, of course, the English-speaking peoples had demonstrated a marked aptitude.

On 22 February 1904 The News took up the defence of prize-fighting against the strictures of the Dominion Ministerial Association, which had attacked the sport as brutal and degrading. The News contended that war and prize-fighting were close to the heart of the virile Anglo-Saxon; this might be descried, but it was a fact. Therefore a newspaper, to sell, must feature these items. On the whole, continued the editor, this fascination with the prize-ring was a good thing, for prize-fighting, the spirit it engendered, was closely associated with that of war. It would be a sorry day when the great Anglo-Saxon race lost its martial ardor. In its 26 March 1904 issue The News devoted fully half its front page to the Britit-Corbett fight, a practice by no means uncommon today, when the outcome of heavyweight combats cannot be confined where they belong, (if there) in the sports section. The News however, in a day when all red-blooded he-men accepted the manly art, felt it yet incumbent on itself to spring to the defence of a sport as yet assailed by few. In an editorial in the same edition reporting the Britit-Corbett fight, the editor branded the opponents of the prize-ring as weaklings and cowards. Every Briton and American worthy the name loved prize-fights, and only the hypocritical denied it. One feels that The News, for all its sophistication, was catering to the bloodlust of the mining camp, a sentiment by no means moribund in the Dawson of 1904.
This aspect comes out in a description of a one-sided street brawl, reported in the 2 September 1903 edition of The News. Robert Anderson, a concessionaire (and this factor may have coloured the account) and George T. Coffey, manager of the Anglo-Klondike Company, had been testifying before the two-man Royal Commission previously referred to, in the course of which Anderson had made some belittling remarks about Coffey, which stung the latter to the quick. On leaving the hearings, Coffey attacked Anderson in the street, where the issue was settled in approved frontier fashion. Coffey assailed his victim, driving him off the sidewalk into the gutter, thence across and down the muddy street, raining blows on him at will, while a crowd looked gleefully on. Poor Anderson, totally out-classed by his agile opponent, cried for help as he back-pedalled his way down the street, finally making a pitiful attempt to arm himself with a stick. With relish, The News continues:

When they reached the gutter on the other side of the street Anderson went down and fell in the mud. He seized a stick which was imbedded in the earth, probably intending to use it as a club but Coffey came down on top of him and the fight continued until a couple of policemen arrived and pulled Coffey off the concessionaire.

Anderson's face after the fight looked as if some one had tried to print the map of the Lynn canal on it.

But Coffey was punished for his violence; he was fined $5.00 in court, while the case against his badly mauled victim was dismissed.

The News' racism came out delightfully in an editorial of 16 November 1903, commenting on President Roosevelt's concern over the foreign influx into the United States.

The question which appeals to the observer today is whether a government, the genius of which is Anglo-Saxon, is altogether safe in the hands of Huns and Slavs... The change of racial
stock in America is so rapid, many now living will yet be alive when America's Anglo-Saxon ancestry will be but a memory as the Norman conquest is but a memory in England today. 50

Still, perhaps the editor's words of 1903 give food for thought, if not controversy, today.

The News on Higher Education

On the subject of university education The News displayed an almost rustic pragmatism, very dated today, when such a fetish is made of university degrees, of whatever sort and wherever obtained. Schools of journalism may well have been in their infancy in 1903; in any case, they had yet to gain the respect of The News. The only way to become a journalist was to learn the trade in the shop, to learn by doing. Lecture rooms and university courses might impart the rudiments of syntax, but a college graduate must start at the bottom in an editorial office. Doubtless a journalism graduate would not dispute this.

Be that as it may, the contempt the News editor affected for higher education runs through the editorial. The art was "not to be bestowed by a gowned professor, nor to be acquired in the lecture room." The News may well have had a point in its commentary on the plight of graduates with general degrees in the humanities, who were thereby fitted for no specific profession or calling. Citing an example of a young man of his acquaintance who had had an expensive education, the editor observed:

The man's education had fitted him for nothing and had unfitted him for everything, and the alleged mental training he had received at great cost to his parents finally left him stranded in a restaurant as a waiter-- and a very poor one at that. 52
But in taking issue with a Harvard professor who had ventured the opinion that culture, not earning power, should be the prime goal of the university, the editor of The News gave himself over to a spate of provincial, philistine abuse of a liberal education enough to relegate the Klondike on the spot to the backwater it was to become not so many years in the future. For coarse, ill-conceived pragmatism with the cheap eloquence of the demagogue, the following passage from the editorial columns of the Dawson Daily News of 7 January 1904 is hard to equal, let alone surpass:

To an observer at a distance the equipment of the college graduate would appear to be less literature than that possessed by an ordinary library attendant; less Greek than was known by the bathhouse attendants of ancient Greece; less Latin than was spoken by Caesar's cook; less practical mathematics than is known by a bank employee at $25 a week; less art than is in the possession of many art studio scrub attendants; less baseball than than the ordinary professional graduated from the highways and byways; less watercraft and oarsmanship than an ignorant fisherman out of St. John's; less theology than a Salvation Army convert; less powerful oratory than a sandlot demagogue; less practical knowledge of the world as it is than the bootblacks and newsboys on the streets. This is about the equipment of the ordinary collegeman as seen in the Klondike.

This gem was probably the work of W.A. Beddoe, an Englishman who at that time was a News editor, a man for whom Henry Woodside had so little respect that he cut him dead in the street consistently. In writing to Sir Sam Steele in September 1910, Woodside referred to Beddoe as a "spy, blackmailer, turncoat, blowhard, and a liar." Whatever Beddoe was, he was not a man of letters! The News maintained that the hallmark of a good editor lay in gauging aright public opinion, catering to popular taste. If the above editorial reflects in any wise the mentality of Dawsonites in 1903, then (economic factors
aside), Dawson was well along the road from mining camp to tank town. The Sun took a middle of the road approach to the value of higher education, but the attitude of both was strictly utilitarian.

The Demise of The Nugget

The Nugget early in 1903 refurbished its charges of a newspaper trust directed at The News. On 29 January The Nugget announced the lowering of its subscription rate, in order to stimulate circulation, to $2 per month. By early February The Nugget charged the owners of The News with plotting the destruction of The Nugget in order to secure a newspaper monopoly in Dawson. This was not in the public interest. By this period The Nugget news coverage was falling off noticeably, indicative of the paper's languishing state.

The Sun on 29 January 1903 announced a reduction in its subscription rate to $1.98 per month, under-cutting The Nugget by two cents. On 4 April The Sun proclaimed that its Sunday edition would total 16 pages by May, and that it was the only Dawson paper with an Ottawa correspondent. A 4-page colour art supplement was to be added to the Sunday Sun. With foresight, The News began feature illustrated articles on hydraulic dredge mining, which was to be the sole method of mining in the Klondike before many more years had passed. On 4 June The Sun announced the shipment of two Mergenthaler typesetting machines to replace its present monoline equipment. Coloured supplements and half-tone illustrations were in the offing.

On 1 July 1903 The Nugget made a special subscription offer in conjunction with the Toronto Globe. Arrangements had been made to
include a six month subscription of the *Weekly Globe*, along with an equivalent number of issues of the *Klondike Nugget* for only $12. This on the face of it is a curious development, in view of the fact that the pioneer Dawson paper was to go out of business by mid-month. For on 11 July 1903 George M. Allen informed his readers that both the *Daily Klondike Nugget* and the *Semi-Weekly Nugget*, together with plant, stock and fixtures, had been sold to the Record Publishing Company. The last issue of *The Nugget*, dated 14 July 1903, contained nothing in its six pages to intimate that the paper had appeared on the streets of Dawson for the last time. The two editorials in the final edition dealt with Alaskan self-government and the abuse of parliamentary privilege. There was neither farewell nor valedictory.

*The News* for its part bade farewell to its rugged antagonist in a leader on 15 July 1903. While acknowledging their differences, *The News* paid tribute to its rival's spirit: *The Nugget* had never backed away from a fight. George Allen, a formidable editorial opponent, had yet been a personal friend "outside the editorial sanctum."

Whatever the future may have in store for him he will leave Dawson with the assurance that among the friendships that will be cherished he must number among the most sincere, that of his friend, the enemy, and none wish him greater success in the sphere of usefulness in which he may find himself than *The News* and its staff.

*The Sun* was yet franker on its relations with *The Nugget*.

*The Sun* and *The Nugget* have had lots of trouble between themselves—hard, bitter, stern troubles— but between ourselves, gentle reader, most of that trouble never happened. Apparently we were the most bitter of enemies, at daggers drawn all the time, but (on the side) that never prevented our borrowing paper and ink of each other whenever the necessity arose— we never borrowed money of each other, because neither has ever had any more money
than was needed to keep going. 56
How seriously, one wonders, should this editorial warfare be taken? Was much of the journalistic rhodomontade written with tongue in cheek? In any case, The Nugget was not the last journalistic craft to founder in the wake of The News. The fight had been nothing, if not hot. Bankrupt on leaving Dawson, Allen returned to the United States, where he continued in the precarious trade of catering to public opinion.

With The Sun's absorption of The Dawson Record on 1 November 1903, the government organ and The News had the Dawson newspaper field to themselves. The Record, edited by an L.C. Branson and managed by V.H. Smith, had been a short-lived sheet, its first edition having dated only from 16 July of the previous summer. The 6-page, 6-column daily had been a morning paper catering to the creeks. It was strictly a news sheet, with no special features. Its editorial policy had been similar to that of The News: concessions were anathema, the woes of the territory were directly attributable to Clifford Sifton, but it was less implacably critical than The News. The Record had adhered to the basic Liberal principle that the Canadian economy was strictly tied in with the American, and in view of the discrepancies between the two countries in terms of power and wealth, the tail should not try to wag the dog. On Branson's retirement, The Sun at once took over The Record.

The Sun had not long swallowed its short-lived contemporary when misfortune struck in a form all too common in the days of early
Dawson. Shortly before four o'clock on the afternoon of 19 November a tin of benzine exploded in The Sun's basement. Fire partially destroyed the printing plant, covered by only $5,000 worth of insurance. The Sun thereupon moved in with The News, which placed stock and plant at its unfortunate neighbour's disposal. By 9 December The Sun had returned to its own premises. Enough of the plant had been salvaged to continue publication. Before taking leave of its host, The Sun acknowledged the timely and generous help received.

We are deeply grateful to The Dawson Daily News management and force for kindness shown us since the fire. All The News has in the way of equipment and paper stock (and it has about all there is in the Yukon) has been at our disposal without money and without price.

The News and the Congdon Machine

1904 was undoubtedly the stormiest year in the Yukon's brief but lively political history. With Commissioner F.T. Congdon's resignation in order to stand for Parliament, the stage was set for the roughest and most hotly contested political brawl yet witnessed in the territory. In the hard-fought contest with the Congdon machine, The News was in the forefront, contributing substantially to his defeat.

The New Year was few weeks old before The News and The Sun had fallen out again, with The News facetiously chiding The Sun for printing mistaken datelines on telegraphic despatches purloined from The News. It was an old story in Dawson. The News took pride in its telegraphic service, paying very much more for the facility than any other newspaper in Canada. The average city daily on the outside
was treble the size of *The News*, but the latter's 8 pages and 32 columns offered the reader his full money's worth in terms of national and international news coverage.

In seeking a tighter control over Yukon's political destinies, Congdon decided that *The Sun* was too blunt an instrument to his purposes. *The Sun*, bar the Treadgold issue, had supported the government faithfully. None the less Congdon instructed his henchman, Temple, to establish a new government organ, and to secure the services of W.A. Beddoe of *The News* as editor. This Temple proceeded to do, and the result was the appearance of *The Yukon World*, published daily except Monday, a 4-page, 7-column paper selling for $0.25 per copy, or $2.00 per month. It carried the twin slogans at its masthead—"Reliable and Newsy"; "Aggressive, Courteous". Although *The World* soon demonstrated its aggressiveness, courtesy was foreign to its editorial columns. The editor in the first issue, 29 February 1904, modestly stated the paper's policy.

*Today The Yukon World enters the field of Dawson journalism. In politics The World will be Liberal, supporting the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, but with a Yukon policy well defined and quite obvious. The World has an abiding faith in Yukon and its future, and also entertains the view that the government has done much and may be confidently expected to do more to encourage those who have made this remote portion of the Dominion famous.*

Throwing down the gage to its discredited predecessor, *The Sun*, in the government interest, *The World* spared not its feelings:

*It has had no comprehension of the importance of the functions it was expected to perform, and as a newspaper it may properly be described as a failure.*

*The World* entered the field because the field was not covered, that was not our fault, but our opportunity.
The News reacted coolly to the debut of its latest rival— "Papers may come and papers may go, but The News goes on forever."

The Sun fought back, still maintaining its position as the government organ and mouthpiece of the Liberal party in the Yukon. How could a paper claim such a role while employing as editor one who had served the principal opposition paper for years? Although The World relegated The Sun to spokesman of a mere splinter group within the Liberal party, The Sun insisted that there was no split in the party, and that it still was the one Liberal paper in Dawson. This was little more than whistling in the dark, however, for by the end of March it had been announced officially that after 2 April 1904, The Yukon Sun would no longer comprise the Yukon Official Gazette. The Sun had been deprived by the commissioner of government patronage, so long a bone of contention in the Dawson journalistic world, in line with his policy to replace it with a paper more to his liking.

It is surely no coincidence that on this same date, The Sun threw off the mask it had worn to put the best face on its discomfiture, and denounced Commissioner Congdon. A year previously a splendid opportunity lay before Congdon on becoming the chief executive of the territory. He had chosen, however, to surround himself with time-servers and party hacks, in the endeavour to dominate the territory in his own interest.

It is only right to state The Sun is distinctly and mightily embarrassed over having to come to this point. The Sun stands for the government of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and the Liberal party, believes in it and can conscientiously preach to all. . . . That Commissioner Congdon will be replaced, and soon, is as certain as that the Liberal government of Canada is right. . . . Commissioner Congdon, W.A. Beddoe and the commissioner's select coterie of paid supporters must travel together in future to
In the end, for The Sun must stay with the Liberal party which they are attempting to disrupt.

In effect, the faithful Sun was forced into opposition, in the end falling into the maw of The News.

The News and National Sentiment

In an editorial of 21 July 1904, The News discussed the principles of the British and American constitutions. Liberty was safeguarded in both. But whereas the American source of authority was the people, that of the British was the Crown. Although the British parliamentary system was basically as democratic as the American form of government, the dignities and titles with which officials were honoured under the British system proved a heady potion for vain or arbitrary individuals. Herein lay the need for a vigorous and critical opposition press, in order that officialdom not be carried away with a sense of its own importance. The News served this salutary purpose in the Yukon, a territory worse governed than any other part of Canada. Certainly until the appointment of McInnes as Commissioner, The News had been a forthright and consistent critic of government.

In the same edition, The News took issue with the treatment accorded to Americans in the Yukon, in contrast to the rest of Canada. In the Yukon Americans were referred to as aliens, and treated as such. Many of them had left the territory in bitterness. This regrettable state of affairs was directly attributable to the exactions and follies of the territorial government, and to the federal authority.

By April of 1904, a trend in the direction of a more imperial and
at the same time, Canadian sentiment (not incompatible at this period) was discernible in the editorial columns of The News. On the subject of imperial expansion, whether British or American, at the expense of lesser breeds, The News showed itself quite the creature of its times. American acquisition of the Philippines and British conquest of the Boer republics was in the natural order of things, whereby the weak are displaced by the strong. The only features to be regretted were the hypocritical rationalizations advanced by the powers.

The irascible Henry Woodside continued to assail the Americanism of the Dawson press. In writing to Colonel Steele, of the North-West Mounted Police in September 1904, Woodside observed that one of the curses of the Klondike from the start had been that the newspapers were controlled and edited by "Yankees who do not know the first thing about Canada." That spring Woodside had addressed a long letter to the editor of The News, taking him to task for giving ill-informed people a distorted and anti-British concept of the American Revolution. The News had in fact used the word "barbarous" to describe measures taken by the British authorities to dampen the revolutionary ardor of some of the agitators. Woodside considered it outrageous that a paper so mislead its readers in British territory, engendering a prejudice against the Crown through an historical fallacy. The News did Woodside the courtesy of publishing his letter in full on 21 May, while defending itself by means of a play on words. The News saw the revolution as very much of a family quarrel, in which the British authorities in the colonies, through a temporary aberration, violated the rights cherished by all Britons as a part of their heritage. It is noteworthy that The News accorded Woodside
a courteous hearing, rather in contrast to his former paper, The Sun, not to mention the now defunct Nugget.

News versus World

The summer and fall of 1904 saw rapidly deteriorating relations between The News and The World, in which Billingsgate was to become the order of the day. The duel between The News and its last rival was to prove the most acrimonious of all in the brief but tempestuous period since newspapers had been introduced to the Klondike. Woodside's allegation that Beddoe had been dismissed by The News for his attempt to blackmail J.B. Tyrrell, an explorer, gave rise to The News dubbing its contemporary "The Blackmailer's Gazette." The News observed editorially on 6 August that The World was to be found at every roadhouse and saloon on the creeks whose license had been renewed; Temple, Congdon's creature, had been appointed license commissioner. Hence, subscription to the Congdon organ had been made a condition of license renewal.

In the 5 October edition The News contrasted sharply its own plant and facilities with those of the "Blackmailer's Gazette." In storage, perhaps as standby plant, The News had two monoline type-setting machines of Canadian manufacture, as well as one American-made Thorne typesetter. This alone equalled The World's plant. The News had in service two Mergenthaler typesetters, each of which was of double the capacity of the older monoline equipment. The News was printed on a large-size Babcock cylinder press, whereas The World used a "country Campbell press." For a wager, The News would undertake to print its competitor's paper in less than a half hour. Apparently the challenge was not taken up by The World. To
sum up, The News plant was thrice the size of The World's, and its circulation six times greater. In its tedious but repeated attacks on "the ignorant News" The World alleged that The News had shipped the bulk of its plant to Tanana (Alaska), and that it was shortly to pull out of Dawson. On the contrary, replied The News, its Tanana plant was a quite separate venture, and furthermore the proprietors expected to enjoy the same success there as in Dawson.

In September 1904 a curious and rather messy format was introduced for a time by The News on its front page, in which multiple headlines were set down the length of each column, an unpleasing layout largely abandoned by the following year.

Defeat of the Congdon Machine: The 1904 Election

The 1904 election campaign for the federal seat was perhaps the most hotly contested in Yukon's history, a campaign in which the well organized Congdon machine went down to defeat. Both The News and The Sun supported Dr. Alfred Thompson, an Independent and former council member, nominated by a Liberal splinter group in opposition to the Congdon interest. The World of course supported Congdon, who had brought it into existence. Congdon secured the nomination of the so-called "Tab" clique of the Liberal party, so named because of Congdon's practice of issuing chits or receipts for services rendered in the campaign against future reward. Temple resigned his post as license commissioner in order to devote himself wholeheartedly to Congdon's campaign.

Although Congdon retained Laurier's confidence, Morrison, in his Politics of the Yukon Territory, 1898-1909, holds that there
is little doubt but that Congdon sought to dominate the administration and the politics of the territory for his own ends. The Sun vied with The News in attacking both Congdon and Temple. The former license commissioner had used his office to buy political support, refusing liquor licenses or their renewal to those not disposed to support Congdon. The News scouted The World's crude threat that civil servants who did not do Congdon's bidding would be dismissed.

The World had quoted the Yukon Act, which empowered the commissioner to suspend any official. This applied, however, The News pointed out, only to territorial officials, not federal; hence, the North-West Mounted Police (who incurred Congdon's animus at this time), the post office and the courts were not subject to the commissioner's fiat. Only the "underlings of the Administration building" could be so bullied; in any case, they formed the "Tab" wing of the Liberal party, who worked solely in Congdon's interest, regardless of party decisions to the contrary. Writing to Laurier in July 1904, while still commissioner, Congdon assured him that he had done nothing of which he need feel ashamed. In reply, Laurier reassured his Yukon chief executive:

The Government has absolute confidence in your zeal and judgment and hitherto, whilst we have received numerous complaints as you well know, we have taken no heed of the same and left the whole matter to your discretion.

By latter July the commissioner was referring to the "reptile American press," while The News labelled its former editor, now in the service of The World, as a "Juneau blackguard." The News editor contended that he himself was English-born and bred, that he could trace his ancestry through parish registers back to Tudor times, that he had lived in North America nearly a quarter century, but that this was the first
time that his nationality had been cast in his teeth. Since Congdon held it to be so vital that Canadians be in control of the Yukon press, why then, asked The News, had the commissioner offered to sell his interest in The Sun to The News on assuming office?

As the campaign quickened, The News served warning to its readers:

The News is confident that this is the last opportunity that will be given Yukon to break the galley chains which have been thrown about the territory. It is the last time it will be in the power of the people to throw off the Old Man of the Sea.

On 30 November The News sounded a final warning to the electorate: beware of false telegrams purporting to emanate from Ottawa, with promises likely to affect the vote in Congdon's interest.

This had been done before, during the campaign of 1902; then many of the public had been gulled into believing that Ross was to be taken into the cabinet.

Despite the machinations of his tight-run party machine, Congdon lost the election by about 600 votes. Dr. Thompson, represented by The News as a standard bearer in the fight against political jobbery, had won the seat. The World accepted the results with an ill grace, castigating Yukoners for having bitten the hand that fed them. "Yukon is a hotbed of disloyalty" raged the editor.

Having made their bed they must needs lie on it.

The people have spoken and told the government that what has been done in Yukon during the last few years is not appreciated, that big appropriations are not wanted, that government help is unnecessary, and that from this time on the people will ask the government for nothing but will fight the powers that be through the person of an Independent, a man who will stand alone in the house with not another to second his resolutions.
The News on 19 December, two days after the polls had closed, moralized on the folly of having the elective machinery in the hands of one of the candidates. Basic to the whole concept of British liberty was the opportunity afforded the people to work the popular will without bloodshed. The News, concluded the editor, had been in the forefront of the fight against Congdon from the start, and it had won.

The New Year, 1905, was not many days old when The News gleefully announced a sharp reduction in the territorial civil service, under the colloquial headline:

AND THEY GOT IT
WHERE THE CHICKEN GOT THE AXE!!!

This was not, however, to be taken as evidence of the spoils system. Thirty-three officials had received notice, some of whom were "our friends." The population of the Yukon had declined from 40,000 to about 10,000, whereas the ranks of the civil service had, on the contrary, increased to serve a population about one-quarter the size. The territory's interests now lay in rallying behind Dr. Thompson, confirmed in his seat by a 618-vote majority. Clarke's attack on Thompson in an effort to split the Conservative and Liberal ranks with the support of the discredited "Tab" was perhaps in his own interest, but not in that of the territory.

The Conspiracy Charges

Following the election, 17 men were charged with conspiracy in connection with election irregularities. The preliminary hearing lasted six weeks, as a result of which six of the accused were dismissed.
Mining Regulations, Congdon's Return

On 1 April 1905 The News broke into headlines heralding reform in the mining regulations secured by the new member. Three days later, however, The World published a letter written by Congdon to the secretary of the Dawson Board of Trade, in which the former commissioner referred directly to reforms in the regulations which he hoped soon to have introduced. Hence the credit, asserted The World, properly belonged to Congdon, and not the recently elected member. It was a valid point, but The News had not yet done with Congdon. Rumours were afoot, according to an editorial of 1 June 1905, that the defeated candidate was making desperate efforts "on the outside" to secure government office and return to the Yukon. The editor contended that there was no chance of such a manoeuvre, that Congdon was too heavily discredited to show his face in the Yukon again.

In this The News was wrong, for not only was the ex-commissioner to return to the Yukon sooner than expected, but he was yet to sit for the territory in the House. Indeed less than a week later, The News had to eat its words; as early as 3 June The World announced under banner headlines Congdon's imminent return as legal adviser to the government, the same office that had brought him to the Yukon in the first instance. On 6 June The News editor deplored the announcement, which indicated all too clearly that the "Tabs" were still active, that the battle against corruption was but half won. The day was to come when The News would be reconciled to its old enemy, but that was several years in the future, and under new management.

On one subject The World proved clearer sighted than The News.
Years of opposition to federal authority in the territory had led the "News" to favour union with British Columbia, as a possible solution to Yukon's ills. This province had the best mining regulations in the country, and retained a greater measure of control over its own resources than was the case with any other province. The "World", on the other hand, scouted the suggestion as utterly impractical. British Columbia already was the largest province; and furthermore, a vast wilderness, a veritable hinterland, much of it unexplored, lay between the southern boundary of the Yukon and the fringes of civilization in central B.C. Apart from recent overtures from the province, The World contention has been borne out.

McInnes Reform

The appointment of W.W. B. McInnes as Commissioner of the Yukon ushered in a new era for the territory. The new commissioner arrived in Dawson on 1* July 1905. With Frank Oliver replacing Sifton as Minister of the Interior, the Yukon could indeed look forward to better times. A native of Dresden, Ontario, McInnes was a Toronto law graduate who had sat both in the federal House and the B.C. legislature. The World welcomed the McInnes appointment in an editorial of 23 May, but The News was understandably reserved. The World's suggestion of a seemingly cessation of political agitation on the arrival of the new commissioner was rejected out of hand by The News. On the contrary, wrote the editor on 27 June, the new commissioner should be made amply aware of what had been going on in the territory, in order that he could never complain that he had not been warned.
But McInnes' promptly announced programme of widespread reform soon won over The News. Banner headlines on 8 July proclaimed the good news.

SWEEPING REFORMS ANNOUNCED FOR THE YUKON
NEW COMMISSIONER PROMISES TO REMEDY
THE GREAT EVILS THAT HAVE CURSED THE KLONDIKE

On visiting Dawson in August, the new minister spent three days listening to grievances. A reforming commissioner in conjunction with a sympathetic minister augured well for the future of the territory. Idle concessions were revoked and the mining code revised. In commenting facetiously about the mistake Ottawa had made in sending an honest man as commissioner, The News drew the heavy censure of The World, which was, like Queen Victoria, 'not amused'.

The cowardly contemptible vulture that would slur the character of the prime minister and of the men who are dearest to all Canadians and insinuate that their reason for sending Mr. McInnes here was because of their belief that he was a dishonest man—a mistake found too late—is about the rawest thing the territory has had yet to suffer. 76

The News retorted that of course the editorial in question had been written tongue in cheek, but that such subtleties were beyond the ken of The World. The News was sincere, however, in its support of McInnes.

In July 1905 The World revived the News-Sun ownership ploy, charging that Roediger and McIntyre, proprietors of The News, also owned The Sun—a favourite gambit of the erstwhile Nugget. The News scoffed at this clumsy attempt to evoke the bogie of a combine; the newspaper registration ordinance required all newspaper proprietors to file this information under oath at the court house. Of the
three papers currently publishing in Dawson, only The World evaded the naming of its individual owners. W.F. Thompson owned The Sun, Roediger and McIntyre The News, with Arnold F. George as editor. And George incidentally was an Englishman, not an American. It was readily seen, continued The News, why The World was secretive on the score of its ownership (cited as the World Publishing Company); the fact was that most of its stock was held by civil servants who had been forced by Congdon to invest in the enterprise. On 12 September 1905 The News returned to the ownership issue—originally Congdon, Thompson and Pritchard had been joint-owners of The Sun, Congdon subsequently selling out his interest on his appointment as commissioner. The Sun had been partially owned by The News for only two months, but now it was again quite independent.

Demise of The Sun and News-World Rivalry

Under the reforming administration of the new commissioner, 1906 witnessed a relaxation in political tension and agitation. The News and The World were now the journalistic protagonists in Dawson, with The Sun apparently below the horizon. At the time of writing research has not produced the last issue of the veteran Klondike paper, nor has reference to its demise been found in the pages of The News. The year opened with The News and World squabbling over the printing of mining notices, which were official descriptions of grants issued by the gold commissioner's office. The News antagonized The World, now the government organ, by printing these notices free of charge, at a savings to individual grantees of up to $50.
This assumption by The News of one of its perquisites galled The World, but the gold commissioner's office ruled that the notices retained their full legal validity regardless of where they appeared (including The Whitehorse Star). The News in a leader of 8 January 1906 charged its rival, The World, with charging exorbitant rates for this service. The News ridiculed The World's claims to a high creek circulation, maintaining that in many cases the papers had been literally given away. Not scrupling to attack its competitor's integrity, The News referred to The World as "the grafter's gazette." Perhaps in retaliation for these aspersions, The World charged The News editor, A.F. George, with extortion. Apparently having second thoughts on the validity of this charge, The World printed a full retraction in its issue of 19 June 1906.

It is often the case that a newspaper in the heat of controversy is led to attach the weight of fact to what is afterward found to have been unfounded suspicion.

The lapse of time enables The World to state fully and frankly that the serious charge against Mr. A.F. George of having attempted to extort money, or anything else from anyone, is absolutely foundationless and without basis in fact. The World makes this statement voluntarily and in barest justice to the gentleman injured. There has nothing transpired on which such a charge could be based and it is withdrawn and retracted without reservation whatsoever.

Whether the retraction came about through the threat of a libel suit, or whether The World thought it prudent to pull in its horns, is open to speculation, although the former is the more likely assumption. Libel actions were frequent in the early days of Dawson; it was not the place for the sensitive or thin-skinned.

As mentioned in a previous context, the North-West Mounted Police had incurred Congdon's enmity by refusing to toady to his
behests during the 1904 election campaign. At that time Major Zachary T. Wood, in command of the force, was acting as administrator following the resignation of Congdon to contest the seat. In March 1906 The News attacked The World for publishing letters of scurrilous abuse whose target was the redoubtable force, under the pseudonym "Dawson"—nor was a lady of social standing, presumably the commandant's wife, spared by the anonymous traducer. A Major A. Ross Cuthbert, writing to Woodside from Dawson on 28 March 1906, identified Congdon, the ex-commissioner and defeated candidate, as the source of the libel. Replying to Cuthbert from Ottawa on 27 August, Woodside wrote that he suspected that The World got a tip from Ottawa to stop that nonsense, for in the only copy seen by me for a long time, there was a very laudatory article on the police. You see the fool (presumably Beddoe, the editor) hardly seemed to be aware that he was striking at Sir Wilfrid's own department. 

Talk of this underhanded campaign of vilification reached the Prime Minister's ears. Laurier had always had confidence in Congdon, the many complaints of his machinations notwithstanding. On 31 May, however, in writing to Commissioner McInnes, he mentioned these scabrous anonymous letters, scarce believing that "our friend Congdon" could be capable of such action, particularly against a lady of standing. None the less, continued the Prime Minister, he had informed Major Wood that he was at liberty to direct the patronage of his office elsewhere than the columns of The World. McInnes replied in June that these attacks had been carried on throughout the winter, describing them as "unfair," "unjust" and "scurrilous." He attributed the animosity to social rivalries among certain leading families,
"and to many petty and ill-advised acts of administration, which were not calculated to cement our friends." It is perhaps difficult to understand how the ex-commissioner and future member could so lower himself as to attack a lady under the cowardly shelter of a nom-de-plume. But such apparently was the case, a rather shameful chapter in the life of this undoubtedly able, if overly ambitious, man.

The World lent itself to the discreditable proceedings, whereas predictably The News exposed "Dawson" perceiving aright that he was none other than its old antagonist, Congdon.

From a sampling of the two papers in September 1906, it is readily apparent that The News was the larger (6-pages, 8-columns) and more progressive looking daily of the two. The World putting out a 4-page, 7-column daily. The News was better illustrated and more cosmopolitan in outlook. The amount of advertising in The World had declined since the previous spring. The World, however, was not yet finished as a competitor.

Americanism as a bone of contention was noticeably on the wane. True, The News editor in commenting on recent American legislation providing penalties for those exploiting the American flag for use in advertising, revealed an American rather than British sentiment, in which the veneration accorded the flag in the United States was in Britain and her dependencies reserved for the Crown. But if The News was moderating its American sentiment, The World was forswearing the "Yankee Go Home" line which had been implicit in the past. The News issue of 4 July 1906 is the first which did not proclaim the American holiday with banner headlines and fulsome editorials,
for all the world as if the Klondike were American territory. Empire Day had been commemorated by The News with a large-scale photograph of the recently deceased queen. The day following "the glorious fourth", The News stressed the theme of Anglo-American concord. A few days earlier, The World had written editorially, laying to rest the anti-American bogey:

The World is a Canadian newspaper, first, last and all the time. But it believes in the wise saying of Earl Grey, that the closer Canada affiliates with the more powerful nation at the south of her, the better it must be for her continued prosperous growth. 82

Surely sound Liberal doctrine.

News Trends and Decline of The World

Although The News had expressed in its earlier years moral indignation over the "scarlet women" and their attendant pimps, it did not follow that the paper was straight-laced enough to accept a measure like the Sunday Observance Bill, which in any case was not applicable to the Yukon. The editor found this coercive degree of Sabbatarianism inconsistent with the growing cosmopolitan character of Canada, and particularly the Yukon. Immigration, on the contrary, would make for greater tolerance, rendering it more difficult for one group, sect or denomination to impose its will on others. As will be recalled from Chapter I, a strict Sunday observance had been enforced in Dawson even in the roaring, wide-open days of ninety-eight.

The News felt it fortuitous that the previsions of the bill called for its implementation in each province by the attorney general; the territory had no such official.

In the fall of 1906 The News took up a fad, which it pursued off and on for a number of months. A simplified phonetic style of
spelling had allegedly been adopted by the American government under presidential authority; it is, however, indeed questionable that the British government, as The News believed, was considering the new practice. The News, quoting The New York Globe, stated that of the 300 proposed revisions, only 67 need be considered radical. Some of the latter might never find their way into general use—such, for example, as:

- heapt for heaped
- washt for washed
- mixt for mixed
- altho for although
- molt for moult
- stript for stripped
- woful for woeful
- and trapt for trapped

In general, The News followed American usage, but it never, in its career of more than a half century, adopted such solecisms as the foregoing.

The period 1907-09 featured the culmination of the reform movement, launched in the early days of the mining camp, and requiring a decade for fulfilment. The News was to do battle with its old enemy, Congdon, once again, and to witness the demise of its last contemporary and rival.

A marked drop in News advertisement patronage is evident in the early issues of 1907, reflecting a gradual decline in Klondike prosperity. In an issue selected at random (3 January 1907), it is noteworthy that the paper retained the patronage of such American concerns as the Great Northern Railway, the Chicago Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway, and Harper Brothers, a New York publishing house. The Yukon World exhibited the same symptoms of mid-winter slump in Dawson retail trade.
The two papers retained their wonted size—8 pages for The News and 4 pages for The World. The season was a quiet one, the lull before the final storm. A curious feature in the pages of The News were Bovril advertisements in French in a paper otherwise wholly printed in English. The two editors devoted their columns to topics of general interest in the national and international scene, avoiding for the nonce items of local and controversial nature. By late 1907 (spot check on 7 December) News advertising had revived considerably, but the editorials filled little more than one column. The front page of this edition exhibited plenty of telegraphic news, mostly of North American origin, with one despatch from St. Petersburg, the czarist capital.

David R. Morrison, in the work already quoted, asserts that by 5 April 1907 The News had taken over the management of The World, the latter appearing from this time as the morning edition of The News. Editorial controversy between the two papers had declined at this date to the point that Morrison’s assertion is feasible, but no indication of this was found in either paper at the time.

In its issue of 30 November 1907, The World announced its reversion to weekly publication during the winter months, when advertising patronage was at a minimum. The Weekly Yukon World was to appear on Saturday mornings, and was to include The Official Gazette. On 1 May the following spring The World resumed daily publication. The weekly was of the same dimensions as the daily—4 pages, 7 columns, selling at the rate of one dollar per month. This move no doubt reflected the slimmer financial resources of The World as compared with The News, which was to continue daily
publication until the 1920s. Or again, assuming the accuracy of Morrison's statement, the reversion to weekly publication may be seen as an economy measure adopted by The News management to see them through the lean winter months. In either case, a decline in the Klondike's economy is clearly evident.

A significant shift in News editorial policy is clearly indicated in a leader of 10 September 1907. Commenting on the Borden platform, The News came forth solidly in support of the Laurier administration, indicative of a volte-face indeed from the pre-McInnes era.

Dr. Alfred Thompson, the Yukon's Member, reported to The News manager that former Klondikers now resident in Edmonton, Calgary or Victoria assured him that The News compared very favourably with the best dailies in these much larger centres. People who had never been to the Yukon continually expressed surprise that so remote a region should be served by a paper of such quality. The News in turn kept in touch with former residents and subscribers, who proudly showed the paper to their friends. At this date (1907) The News standards had not deteriorated; the Klondike economy, however, was by no means what it had been. By 1908 the Yukon population had declined to less than 10,000. The steady drop in gold production told the story.

In 1908 the Yukon Council was made fully elective, pending future elections. The commissioner was no longer to sit in council, but he was to retain the powers of reservation and disallowance. Hence, the territory won fully representative but not responsible government, no cabinet being instituted. In a leader on 20 July 1908 The News
welcomed the new constitution, it being sufficient that the long fight for representative government had been won, and that future legislation be in the hands of resident Yukoners rather than in those of remote bureaucrats in Ottawa. The News rested content with the division of powers between commissioner and council. The arrangement fell short of responsible government, as Morrison points out, but none the less the elective council would exercise a measure of control through the voting of supplies. In the words of a News editorial, "It will be a snug, round-the-table affair." The World seemingly offered little commentary on the legislation (Bill to amend the Yukon Act, 1908), contenting itself with a discussion of the parliamentary scene in Ottawa. With the adoption of a revised and improved mining code, the introduction of representative government, and the cleaning up of the concession issue, the years of heated political controversy were over.

As Dawson became respectable, residential, a town of predominantly year-round residents with families, a settled community after the Canadian pattern in which the non-conformist Methodist-oriented conscience predominated, an assault was mounted on the last colourful vestiges of the wide-open, brawling boom town of the so recent past. The dance halls, with their bars, gambling rooms, vaudeville, and above all, girls (not necessarily to be confused with whores) had already come under the fire of the moralists, who would have Dawson as quiet and utterly respectable as, for example, Palmerston, Ontario or Charlottetown. As early as 5 October 1906 The News was defending the dance hall against the strictures of a Nanaimo divine, who had not been in
Dawson at the time of the gold-rush, and hence had not been witness to the scenes he declaimed against from the pulpit and in the press. This latter-day Savonarola declared that the Dawson dance halls of the present were even worse than at the time of the gold-rush, that they were in fact low haunts of vice which had become a byword throughout the country. The News countered that Dawson, a town small enough that everyone knew everyone else, rigorously policed, was as law abiding as any other town of comparable size in Canada. But the inexorable tide of reform could not stomach the dance halls, the combination of frivolous sex and hard liquor being more than the moralists could tolerate. As Dawson took on more and more the air of a settled community, in which people raised their families and made their homes, increasing restrictions were imposed on the surviving dance halls. The Reverend John Pringle, a native of Charlottetown and Queen's University graduate, of the Presbyterian persuasion, had first arrived in the Klondike via the Stikine River-Teslin route in ninety-eight, a volunteer missionary to the mushrooming mining camp. By 1902 he had levelled his moralistic sights on the remaining dance halls in Dawson. Finally on 18 January 1908 the last of the exotic, colourful and plush pleasure palaces, synonymous with the gay nineties, the "Floradora" closed its doors; subsequently the order was rescinded until June, in order to give the proprietor time to wind up his affairs. It marked the end of an era in no uncertain terms. In the words of The Dawson Daily News of 20 January:
Millions in gold have flowed through the dance halls of Dawson, millions of men have trod their boards, and countless little dramas have been enacted. Millions have been spent in the upkeep, in the engagement of talent for the auxiliary shows, the elaborate orchestra and other accompanying amusements. In the eyes of some reformers, the dance halls were suspected of doubling as brothels, but a statement of Commissioner Alexander Henderson, dated 7 December 1907, in response to the furore raised by Pringle, cleared them of this charge. The commissioner stated that the worst feature of the dance halls was the inducement to heavy drinking and wild spending, brought about by the girls flattering but predatory attentions lavished on men fresh in from the creeks. Congdon supported Henderson's statement. But there was no help for it—the dance halls must go.

Both The News and The World mounted an attack on the puritanical Presbyterian pastor, whose strictures on the vice of Dawson had been given wide publicity in Canadian newspapers. On 29 February 1908 The World published a letter from the pen of the commissioner in which Pringle's allegations were demolished one by one. The World accused Pringle of exploiting Dawson's notoriety for political purposes. It was noteworthy that Pringle had laid no charges in Dawson before the relevant authorities at the time when these misdemeanours had allegedly taken place. For The News' part, once flagrant and open prostitution had been suppressed, there was no point in further attempts to emasculate the last vestiges of a lusty era.

News Change of Ownership

The July 1 issue of The News was the first to feature Dominion
Day; prior to 1908 the glorious Fourth shared with Empire Day the top place in The News calendar. Still more to the point, The News on the Fourth carried no commemoratory editorial, nor any front-page features of the "Let The Eagle Scream" variety. Although a continental orientation is evident in its editorial columns—The News frequently discussed the theories of the celebrated, if controversial, Goldwin Smith—a evolving Canadian outlook is obvious by this period. Perhaps it did not come, therefore, as a complete surprise to its readers when The Dawson Daily News announced a change of ownership on 31 October 1908. William McIntyre and Richard Roediger bade farewell to their readers, having sold out their interest in the paper.

It is hard to say goodbye to our many readers who have always proved such staunch friends. Many of them have been with us since we founded the establishment, July 26, 1899, and we trust we shall not be altogether forgotten. . . . We have fought the people's battles faithfully and honestly, never for an instant betraying our duty to the public which so generously supported us; never permitting an encroachment upon our editorial independence. . . .

For all this there is a deep sentiment attaching to our long connection with the newspaper we founded, and which we shall always read with a certain thrill of pleasure, and there must necessarily be some regrets. But these we cut short in order to ask our friends to continue their patronage to our successors. 87

On the following issue Monday, 2 November, the paper announced that it was now Canadian-owned but that there would be no change in editorial policy. The paper had originally been known to stand in the Conservative interest; it had come therefore as a surprise to many when The News had announced its support of Robert Lowe, a Liberal, in the forthcoming federal election. But in fact, continued the editorial, the paper had been advocating a non-party policy, first
in territorial politics (election to the Yukon Council), then in federal. The slogan

NOT FOR PARTY    NOT FOR SELF    BUT FOR YUKON

headed the editorial page.

Congdon's Return: The Election of 1908

The election of 1908-09 for the federal seat returned The News' redoubtable antagonist, Frederick Tennyson Congdon, to the fray. Both The News and The World supported Robert Lowe of Whitehorse, a Liberal. J.A. Clarke and George Black, a lawyer, also took to the stump. At first The World discounted Congdon as a candidate, on the grounds that his salary as a Member would hardly make up for the loss of his lucrative law practice. The editor observed that Congdon's clique had controlled the electoral apparatus at the last election, and yet he had been defeated. By the third week in December, however, The World had turned against its creator; he was much too much of an opportunist, for whom the end justifies the means. His attack on the North-West Mounted Police was a case in point; four years earlier he had lavished praise on the force, whereas now he boasted of having "succeeded in wresting from them the power that so long had been so shamefully abused." The man was unprincipled.

Although under new management, The News took a strong stand against Congdon. The candidate had evinced no regret for his past machinations; surely Sir Wilfrid would hesitate to support this man who had brought such discredit to the party as Commissioner of the Yukon. The News had adopted the principle that Yukon's Member should belong to the party in power. But that man was surely not Congdon.
Since both papers rejected him, though The News more emphatically than The World, Congdon launched a short-lived organ of his own, The Labour Advocate, edited by a "Jimmy Pickles." Referring to its first issue early in 1909, The World described the Congdon organ as a "journalistic abortion," and a "mimeograph special." Warming to his task, The World editor continued:

Editorially, it is hybrid as to character, idiotic as to composition and infamous as to assertions. Whether or not the sheet contributed to Congdon's victory is difficult to say; in any case, it does not seem to have survived for long, and at time of writing, it is not known whether there are any copies on file anywhere.

The campaign was hotly contested in the depths of a Yukon winter, fought over personalities rather than issues, for by this date there were few grievances, other than high freight rates, to agitate the long-troubled waters of the territory. The polls were opened on 19 January, and not for the first time did The News discover that it had backed a loser. The electorate chose Congdon, victorious in his second essay to represent Yukon in the Commons.

The News swallowed the bitter pill gracefully, calling on all to accept the verdict, and to lend every support to the new Member. For its own part, the paper had served its purpose in stimulating interest in the election and encouraging the voters to get out to the polls. The World was more enthusiastic over Congdon, taking comfort that the seat at least had gone to a Liberal. There was no doubt concerning Congdon's manifest ability. By June 1909 The News itself, Congdon's most inveterate opponent in the past, was moved to
congratulate him on completion of his first term in the House.

Demise of The World

By 1909 the transition from individual placer and slope mining to dredging, carried out by large well-financed companies, with costly equipment, was complete. The gravel was so worked out that complex processes were now required to make Klondike mining pay. The shadows were lengthening, and already Dawson had the air of recession, the seedy aspect of having known better days. In the words of a visitor, T.A. Rickard,

Northward are many untenanted buildings, and even the centre of the town bears a bedraggled appearance, indicative of shrunken commerce. During the boom days the population was 50,000; now it is 2,000. Dawson looks like a stout man who has grown very thin and yet wears the clothes made for him in his adipose days. Although it has been difficult for Dawson to accommodate itself to straightened circumstances, the adaptation has been effected heroically. The boom has gone, but business remains. 90

It is surprising that such a booster as The Dawson Daily News should have received Rickard's book, Through the Yukon and Alaska, from which the above quotation is taken, so favourably. Time was when such a doleful description would have drawn journalistic fire; but then, perhaps The News had learned to face the inevitable.

Both papers condemned the mail-order business, which diverted so much trade from local retailers. The News saw in this practice a major evil, and those who subscribed to it by placing orders with the large mail-order houses on the outside, as quite lacking in local spirit. These large department stores in Toronto, Vancouver and other cities contributed nothing to the Yukon economy, yet siphoned off the trade of those who did. In the words of The World,
"Will we buy the goods that send the dollar out of the country or the goods that keep it in?" But there was no saving potion for the ailing economy. On 27 March 1909 *The World* reported that government accounts kept in Ottawa showed that the federal treasury had expended two millions more on the territory than the revenue received from it.

As early as October 1908 *The News*, facing facts, admitted there was room for but one daily paper in Dawson. Less than a year later *The News* was to have the field to itself. Early in January 1909 *The World* was acquired by the Dawson News Publishing Company, the new owners' title first appearing on the editorial page on the ninth of the month. *The World* eked out a nominally independent existence for another seven months as a weekly. The last issue available here is that of 7 August 1909, in which no mention is made of this being the paper's final edition. *The World*, like *The Sun*, just petered out unobtrusively.

1909 marks the end of the politically volatile period. In June of that year the first election was held for a fully elective council, a long-sought goal pursued by *The News* and *The Nugget*. In 13 brief years Dawson had progressed from a general store and trading post to the brawling, sprawling shacktown which rendered Klondike a household word around the world, to a settled community seemingly with a viable future, and finally to a town of 2,000 already bearing the marks of economic decay. The rest of the story of the Klondike and its one surviving newspaper forms very much of an anti-climax by comparison with the bizarre and vibrant period which preceded it.
Chapter II: Endnotes

5 Yukon Sun, 9 Jan. 1900, p. 2.
6 Dawson Daily News, 8 Jan. 1900, editorial.
7 Yukon Sun, 6 Feb. 1900, p. 2.
9 Yukon Sun, 4 July 1900, p. 2.
14 Ibid., 30 March 1901, p. 4.
17 Ibid., 27 Sept. 1900, p. 2.
18 PAC, RG 15, El(a) Department of Interior Records, Records of Field Offices, Yukon Territory, Vol. 7, file 2286, territorial secretary to secretary, Interior Department, 26 April 1901.
19 Klondike Nugget, 13 March 1901, p. 1.
21 Daily Klondike Nugget, 28 August 1901, p. 2.
23 Ibid., 20 & 24 July 1901, p. 2 both issues.
26 Woodside Papers, Vol. 17, file Sir Wilfrid Laurier, 1899-1904,
Woodside to Laurier, 26 July 1901.
28 Canada: Sessional Papers, 1902, No. 25, Report of the Commissioner
Yukon Territory, 10 Oct. 1901, pp. 3-5.

29 Klondike Gold Production

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<td>1904</td>
<td>9,413,074</td>
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30 Ibid., 19 April 1902, p. 5.
31 Ibid., 5 Sept. 1902, editorial.
32 Daily Klondike Nugget, 5 July 1902, p. 2.
33 Dawson Daily News, 2 Sept. 1902, editorial.
34 Woodside Papers, Vol. 17, file Sir Sam Steele, Woodside to Steele,
14 Sept. 1901.
35 Ibid., Vol. 17, file Ministers & M.P.'s, Woodside to J.H. Ross,
10 Nov. 1902.
36 Yukon Sun, 3 Dec. 1902, p. 2.
37 Dawson Daily News, 19 April 1902, editorial.
39 Ibid., 19 Aug. 1902, p. 2.
41 Yukon Sun, 15 Nov. 1902, p. 3.
43 The Free Lance, (Dawson), 22 Jan. 1903.
44 Ibid., p. 2.
46 Yukon Sun, 24 June 1903, p. 2.
47 Dawson Daily News, 22 July 1903, editorial.
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49 Ibid., 2 Sept. 1903, p. 5.
50 Ibid., 16 Nov. 1903, editorial.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 1 Feb. 1904.
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54 Woodside Papers, file Sir Sam Steele, Woodside to Steele, 1 Sept. 1910.
56 Yukon Sun, 15 July 1903, p. 2.
57 Ibid., 20 Nov. 1903, p. 1.
58 Ibid., 8 Dec. 1903, p. 2.
60 Yukon World, 29 Feb. 1904, p. 2.
61 Ibid., 3 March 1904, p. 2.


63 Records of Field Offices, Yukon Territory, Vol. 7, file 2286,
Public Notices, Dawson, 31 March 1904.

64 Yukon Sun, 2 April 1904, editorial.


66 Woodside Papers, Vol. 17, Sir Sam Steele file, Woodside to
Steele, 14 Sept. 1904.


68 David R. Morrison, op. cit., p. 66.

69 Dawson Daily News, 13 July 1904, editorial.

70 PAC, MG 26, G, Laurier Papers, Vol. 328, pp. 88066-7, Congdon to
Laurier, 15 July 1904.

71 Dawson Daily News, 29 July 1904, editorial.

72 Ibid., 24 Oct. 1904, editorial.


75 Ibid., 8 July 1905, p. 1.


78 Yukon World, 19 June 1906, p. 2.

79 Woodside Papers, Vol. 17, A. Ross Cuthbert to Woodside, 28 March
1906; Woodside to Cuthbert, 27 Aug. 1906.


81 Ibid., pp. 111395-7, McIntosh to Laurier, 19 June 1906.

82 Yukon World, 28 June 1906, p. 2.

84 *Yukon World*, 30 Nov. 1907, p. 2.


86 Ibid., 20 Jan. 1908, p. 4.

87 Ibid., 31 Oct. 1908, editorial.


89 Ibid., 9 Jan. 1909.


91 *Yukon World*, 10 April 1909, p. 2.
Chapter III Ghost Town, 1910-54.

The vital part in the story of The Dawson Daily News has now been told. The last 40 years of the paper's existence followed the fortunes of the town from which the paper took its name. While the outside world lived through two world wars, and the intervening crisis of the Great Depression, the Klondike subsided into a staid middle age, with its vivid memories of the roistering days of its youth, so recent in time, so remote in recollection. The News in the process grew old with Dawson, the once so vigorous daily cutting back to tri-weekly publication in 1924, then to weekly in 1946. News coverage, with the notable exception of the war years, confined itself in greater measure to the local scene. The paper founded by Roediger and McIntyre in the incredible summer of ninety-nine, a daily on a par with many metropolitan dailies in the cities of the Pacific seaboard and the populous industrial centres of the east, declined to the dimensions of a typical small-town weekly, in line with the needs of the community that gave it birth.

As recently as a year earlier, New Year's Day 1909, The News proclaimed:

Yukon territory stands on the verge of its most successful era, with triumphs in material wealth at which to point with pride during an eleven years of active production which have passed, the country has a future which will pale into insignificance the output of the first decade. 1

Whether the editor believed that his confidence had been justified by events, the New Year's Day issue of The News a year later carried but seven columns on its four pages in contrast to the former eight.
The paper still presented the aspect, however, of a metropolitan daily, with vigorous editorials and divers features. Its lean years were still in the future. The 4 July issue no longer carried the "Let the Eagle Scream" style of headlines. The paper had retained its love of the ring, with the front page devoting two full columns to the Johnson-Jeffries fight, together with an outsize photograph of the defeated champion.

By July 1910 The News was suggesting divers gimmicks to publicize the once renowned Klondike. Perhaps an auto race could be organized across Alaska and the Yukon, or a race with a generous purse from Dawson down the Yukon to St. Michael, and thence to Vancouver or Seattle. It should be given the widest publicity that Chicago, for example, was only 10 days travelling time from Dawson, with good rail and steamer connections. Too many prospective investors thought of the territory as remote, difficult of access. Now that the stampede was a decade in the past, it was more than ever necessary to publicize the territory. On 20 October 1910, the editorial page of The News carried the following declaration of faith.

As long as water runs down the Yukon, Dawson will be Dawson. It was predicted years ago that when the individual workers had ceased operations on Bonanza, Eldorado and Hunker there would be no Dawson. The prospectors and the individual operators on those creeks have eagerly given way to the large concerns, and the same may be said respecting the other creeks. But the prospectors and operators have not by a long shot left Yukon. They are scurrying through the hills, overturning the rich gravels and getting the golden reward, and the change has proceeded far enough to prove Dawson always will be a live place. 2

The Yukon was a good place to live, to raise a family, continued the
paper editorially the following day. The territory provided a stimulating and healthy climate, unvisited by the disasters which befell so many other parts of the world.

Election of 1911

In September 1911 the Conservatives, led by Robert Borden, ended 15 years of Liberal rule. A month later the polls were opened in the Yukon territory to decide whether F.T. Congdon should continue to represent the Yukon in the Liberal interest, or the veteran Dr. Alfred Thompson in the Conservative. Now that The News was the sole paper in Dawson, the editor took a less partisan and more objective look at the candidates and issues. Of the latter there were but few by this date; the decision really lay between the personalities of the candidates. The News repeated the counsel it had offered in 1908, when it had passed to new ownership—i.e., that Yukon would be best served by returning as Member one belonging to the party in power, which now meant a Conservative. For this reason The News favoured Thompson to Congdon. In the sequel the latter lost his seat, but the treatment accorded him by The News was in sharp contrast with that of the old days. The paper intimated that had Sir Wilfrid retained power then The News would have supported Congdon. As it was, the defeated candidate merited the respect and gratitude of the territory, which he had served so well.

It must not be forgotten that although one candidate won, the man who lost had a large share of the people of Yukon back of him. But in deciding the best course for Yukon, the people chose the Conservative candidate. Mr. Congdon doubtless will find other lines in which to employ his talents to advantage, and his work on behalf of Yukon may not be counted ended. The territory had passed the politically contentious, faction-ridden
phase in its history, and future elections for most part were to
devolve upon the merits of rival candidates more than upon party
issues.

The First World War

Through the pre-war years The Dawson Daily News retained the
same size and format—4 pages, 7 columns, selling for $0.25 per
copy, or $2.00 per month. Editorial columns, rarely exceeding one and
one-half to two in number, were taken up with subjects of general
interest. With no rival paper and the ills of the Yukon largely
resolved, the editorial page was a comparatively bland offering
now compared with the gold-rush days and their aftermath.

The News covered Armageddon as effectively and thoroughly as
most of its outside contemporaries, with liberal use of banner
headlines and late telegraphic news from the front. Many of the
editorials dealt with war subjects—military, or economic and
industrial. The paper had its share of chauvinism of the time,
calling loudly after the Armistice for the blood of the Kaiser; he,
of course, must be held responsible for the holocaust. A few issues
taken at random through the war years indicate a decrease in
advertising matter.

But even with the final crisis of the war, with the German
onslaught across the plains of Flanders, an item of local news,
of heavy portent for the future, was given priority on the front
page. In the 23 March 1918 edition headlines announced a cut in the
Yukon estimates of no less than 40 per cent. On 6 April the editor
vigorously protested this cavalier treatment by Ottawa of a territory
which had sent 500 volunteers to the front, and produced in all
$200,000,000 worth of gold. "The Dominion is not justified in reducing the territory to a vassal state." Last year alone, commented the editor on 10 May, the Yukon had produced $4,700,000 in mineral wealth.

The Yukon is not done for, and never will be. As long as water runs down hill and as long as the sun shines, Yukon will be on the map. And it will be peopled and productive. The occupation of this realm is permanent. The evidence is here to those who will open half an optic.

Then on 4 May 1918 The News carried the still more foreboding headline YUKON COUNCIL TO BE ABOLISHED. The news had come in a telegram from Arthur Meighen to the gold commissioner. Again the editor invoked the gods that held Yukon's destiny, with the assurance that "Dawson will be here as long as there is a map and as long as the sun shines." Anxiety on this count was proven unfounded, for although the Yukon Council was reduced from eight to three members in 1921, it has never been abolished. Whether Dawson will survive as long as the sun shines is more problematical.

Early Post-War Years

In an editorial dated 24 February 1919, the paper put in a bid for a little favourable publicity by someone other than their own Member. The editor still assumed that the mineral wealth of the territory was virtually inexhaustible; this being so, what could account for the apathy towards Yukon displayed by the rest of the country? One wonders whether the editor's confidence was based on knowledge or wishful thinking.

The post-war issues featured the virulent influenza epidemic, disarmament, the peace conference, reparations, and rehabilitation, as did The News' contemporaries on the outside. By New Years Day 1920 the paper, with its 4-page issue carrying six rather than
seven columns, was in apparent decline. Editorials by now rarely filled more than a column, or a column and a half. Advertising had decreased and was principally that of local retail merchants in and about Dawson. The paper had become restricted in format and in character by comparison with the editions of a decade earlier.

The Yukon, along with all the provinces, with the exception of Quebec, had adopted temperance legislation as a war measure during those critical years in allied fortunes, 1916-17, with Quebec to follow suit in 1919, although obviously with another motive. In the crusading climate of the time, temperance appealed to many from a sense of dedication and self-sacrifice. It is curious to note, in a leader of 20 February 1920, that the paper which had defended dance halls against the meddlesome hands of the reformers a little more than ten years later, granted under new management, should preach temperance from its editorial column.

Intoxicating beverages have no place in a world where machinery occupies such a prominent place as it now does. The safety of too many others is involved when the unsteady hand is left in control of the steering wheel or the engine throttle. An argument no doubt with which today's traffic police would agree.

The editor continues with this ambiguous and questionable statement: "The greater our democracy, or our civilization, the more restricted become our liberties." In any case, the 'dry' period ended for the Yukon, as it did for British Columbia and one or two other provinces, in 1921.

The 1920 editorial pages offered another contrast to former days. Increasing use was made of re-prints from other papers on the outside, usually at this time with one leader from the pen of the editor. Increasingly through the decade of the thirties editorials
were to be dropped altogether other than copy from other papers. By 1923 the practice of using re-prints in preference to its own copy was a commonly resorted to device on the editorial page. From time to time matters of especial interest would revive the editors from their torpor. For example, on 21 December 1921, The News sounded the tocsin to summons the territory to face the future with buoyant confidence; there was no room for "croakers and knockers" who were a drag on any community. But apparently to no avail, for if the fortunes of The Dawson Daily News reflected those of the community at large, harsh economic facts dictated a curtailment in the activity of the once proud journal, which had so often boasted of having the finest plant north of Seattle. On 11 October 1924, The News ceased publication as a daily; henceforth the paper, a tri-weekly, was to appear on Tuesday, Thursdays and Saturdays. Until the issue of 15 November 1924, however, the paper clung to its original title, then became The Dawson News, more in consonance with its reduced circumstances. And so The News would continue for another 22 years, when forced back to weekly publication.

From the time of its change of ownership The News had carried at the head of its editorial page the simple designation Dawson News Publishing Company as owner. By March 1924 this security measure, if such it was, had been relaxed sufficiently to disclose the name of the editor, Arthur Hazelton Dever, described as an American citizen by birth. A trio, two of whom (Charles Reed Settlemier and Harold Malstrom) were American citizens by birth, and a third, Otto Frederick Kastner, surprisingly of British origin, managed the
The 6 December 1921 edition carried the banner headline, a portent of the future, YUKON RADIO SERVICE OFFICIALLY OPENED. Communication by wireless or radio, as distinct from landline, had been opened between Edmonton and Dawson. At this date transmission had been by Morse rather than voice, or radio telephony. It was as well for the fortunes of the little community that technology kept pace with the times in that region, for on 4 March of the following spring, 1925, the government telegraph service, established in 1899, discontinued service. On 7 May 1925 The News proudly printed the first press news from its Edmonton correspondent. Wireless press service, using Morse transmission at 25 words per minute was to be a major medium of news dissemination until supplanted by teletype following the Second World War. Ships on the high seas still copy press by Morse.

By August 1925, however, The News was encountering trouble with its news service, and had incurred criticism for inadequate coverage of outside events. Both the American Press and Canadian Press service had been cool to a News proposal for a radio transmitted news service, since anyone with a properly tuned receiver and competency in Morse would have access to the service for nothing. The News solution had been to engage its own correspondent in Edmonton, who transmitted selected news items culled from the Edmonton papers. This arrangement augured well for the future, until it was found that atmospherics and ionospheric blackouts
periodically interrupted radio communications for days, and sometimes for weeks, at a stretch. Then news of later vintage arrived by post. Although The News retained its enterprising spirit, its misfortune lay in being tied to a declining and isolated community, at a time when technology was transforming the newspaper world elsewhere. But for many a metropolitan daily on the outside, this was a mixed blessing: the new equipment was so expensive that many papers went to the wall in their effort to compete with better-heeled rivals. By the 1920s and 1930s newspaper enterprise centred on daily publication in the large cities had become very much big business. The News by contrast had no competition, but by 1930 was serving a community shrunk to village dimensions. By January 1925 advertisements in the 4-page News had dwindled to a half dozen placed by local retailers, the Canadian Pacific coastal steamship service, and a patent medicine. By the fall of 1925 the decline in advertising was still more pronounced. For Dawson the Depression got off to an early start.

The Great Depression

The hungry thirties, however, did not deal as harshly with the Klondike as with the country in general. Dawson's economy was tied to gold production, the price for which did not fluctuate. Hence, when gold production increased, the Klondike economy revived, despite the desperate straits to which parts of the country were reduced. The first pronounced rise in Klondike gold production occurred in 1931, again in 1933, reaching a pre-war peak in 1939 with an output of four to five times that of 1928. A revival in the local economy is in some measure discernible in the pages of The News.
Still the issues of the early 1930s make dull and parochial reading compared with the paper in the halcyon days of pre-1914. The early 1930s witnessed a l-aye, 6-column paper, largely patronized by local storekeepers, and the products they stocked—Blue Ribbon Coffee, Hippress Boots, Winchester Cigarettes, Cuticura Powder. The large headlines had disappeared, although they were to be revived later. Editorials had declined both in quantity and quality, with re-prints more often than not taking the place of original copy from The News' own editorial desk. An edition examined at random, that of 24 June 1930, on the other hand, carried somewhat more international news on its front page. Several December 1930 issues exhibited a smattering of short items from the international scene, most of the datelines being one or two days old.

Two years later, 30 December 1932, in the very nadir of the Great Depression on the outside, the front page of The Dawson News had revived its old format with banner headlines and a fair coverage of outside news. Although the paper maintained its former size, the editorial page still languished, with little in the way of original matter. Three years later, in January 1935, The Dawson News answered substantially the same description. It carried proudly the title "Canada's Farthest North Newspaper," with which there could be no dispute. This edition carried an editorial on American unemployment, (half column) certainly a timely item. Foreign news coverage was fair, generally consisting of short items from abroad; of course, this feature had by no means regained the standard set
by this paper in its heyday. Often editorials, the few that appeared, were on subjects of local and domestic concern; an example is a short leader of 25 July 1935, urging merchants and residents to re-paint and refurbish their premises in preparation for the tourist season. On 31 October, however, the editor emerged from his sanctum to discuss the use of sanctions in the Italo-Ethiopian crisis, one of the many abortive attempts of the League of Nations to maintain the peace through the new principle of collective security.

The Second World War

Even the stimulus of war, with the resumption of hostilities in 1939 broken off 21 years earlier, did little to revive editorial life in the paper. The few editorials appearing in the war years were generally on some aspect of the struggle. On 18 June 1940 The Dawson News carried in headlines on the front page the fearsome intelligence that France had fallen.

**FRANCE IS MAKING DESPERATE STRUGGLE**

**MARSHAL PETAIN IS NEW PREMIER OF FRANCE**

**ASKS ENEMY FOR THEIR TERMS IF FRANCE LAYS DOWN ITS ARMS**

Curiously enough, the one editorial on this fateful day discussed phlegmatically the subject of hydro-electric power development in Canada. On 22 June 1940 Churchill's eloquent rallying cry to the House of Commons and the free world was printed verbatim in The News. It must be said that The News gave quite good coverage to war news from the various theatres. It is notable too that in the first winter of the war advertisement patronage about doubled, with a few entries
from as far afield as Seattle.

In the crucial spring of 1944, as the Anglo-American Command perfected their invasion plans, The Dawson News faced a local crisis. On a Friday afternoon, 5 May, the Yukon River began rising ominously, and by that evening most of South Dawson was under water. Four days later, on 9 May, The News office on Third Avenue was flooded, with 18 inches of turgid water sloshing about in the main composing room. The main damage was to paper stock. The base of the linotype machine and the heating plant were both inundated. Several hours were taken drying the machine out, but not in time to set the type for the Thursday edition. On Saturday, however, The Dawson News was again on the streets, the paper having missed but one issue.

The VE Day edition, 8 May 1945, featured an editorial on the San Francisco Conference, birthplace of the United Nations, through which the powers were to make a second attempt to banish war. The News editor pleaded for the individual and collective practice of Christian ideals in order that the cost of war would not prove a second time vain. To the sophisticated and worldly-wise this must have seemed a naive appeal, one surely repeated from every pulpit in the land. But however idealistic, its sentiment was preferable to the chauvinistic crowing of a quarter century earlier.

The Uncertainties of the Post-war World

On 11 November 1945 it had been ten years since The Dawson News had adopted the slogan "British Empire's Farthest North Newspaper." With the conclusion of the war already three months in the past, The News faced the uncertainties and the vicissitudes of the
post-war world. This was a prosperous and expansive period for Canada as a whole, with a prostrate and devastated Europe for a market. But the burgeoning prosperity of those years did not extend to the Klondike, a land of memories. By the New Year, 1946, a definite falling off in international news coverage is noticeable, and already the paper as a whole was reverting to the standards of a small town sheet. On 2 May 1946 the Dawson News became a weekly, at a subscription rate of $0.50 per month, or $6.00 per annum. The 4-page, 6-column format was maintained to the end, for the News had the better part of a decade yet to run in its declining years. Thenceforth news coverage in the main was restricted to local and territorial items. No doubt air-mail service brought in newspapers little more than a day old from the outside. The once virile and progressive daily, which had boasted parity with many contemporaries in the larger centres on the outside, was now a village weekly. As early as 13 June 1946 the paper reported the rumoured transfer of the capital to Whitehorse.

Advertising patronage seemed to increase if anything in the course of the early post-war years, as the community close below the Arctic Circle withdrew within itself. The Canadian Pacific Railway and Canadian Pacific Air Lines and two of the large American insurance companies still found it worth their while to advertise in Dawson. Telegraphic despatches rarely appeared in its pages.

With the war years now well in the past, the editorial page lapsed to its former comatose condition, with the occasional re-prints
from other papers. On 7 April 1949 the paper which had 30 to 40
years earlier freely exchanged journalistic fire with Seattle and
Vancouver papers, was not too proud to re-print an editorial from
The Simcoe Reformer, a small town weekly from the tobacco belt
of southern Ontario, which may well at that time have had a higher
circulation than The Dawson Weekly News.

It must indeed have been obvious by the early 1950s that Dawson's
days as the territorial capital were limited. Whitehorse, a town
grown to 8,000 during the war years, with a decline to about 7,000
by the early 1950s, had become the centre of a copper-mining industry,
and a communications hub as the head of steel for the White Pass and
Yukon Railway, and particularly the completion of the Alaska Highway
during the war years. On 21 September 1950 The Dawson Weekly News
published a telegram from their member, J.A. Simmons, assuring his
constituents that he had protested to the Minister regarding the
proposed transfer before leaving Ottawa. In the words of The News,
calling a spade a spade: "It is generally agreed here that transfer
of the capital would mean a calamity for this district." The
transfer was finally effected in the spring of 1953, on which The News
lost the government patronage inherited from The World of now remote
memory.

On 12 October 1950 a letter from a former resident appeared on
the editorial page, encouraging Yukoners to maintain faith in the
territory's undoubted resources. Time magazine, among others, was
depicting the Yukon as a forlorn land without a future barring some
unexpected miracle. An article of an unnamed journalist roused
the oldtime fire from the editorial columns, with no doubt an accurate, if patronizing description of the ghost town at the confluence of Yukon and Klondike.

The capital of the Yukon is setting up a howl that echoes through the musty, empty saloons of the '99ers. ... But today the batwing doors of the haunts of Sam McGee and Dan McGrew swing idly back and forth on rusty hinges, patiently waiting for prospectors who never come.

This prosy description was too much for a regular contributor to The News editorial page, whose column was written under the initials A.A.G.

Batwing doors be damned. There's not a batwing door in any hotel today and the doors that are in our Dawson hotels today do not swing idly back and forth on rusty hinges.

In the first place Dawson's hotels are not known as saloons and what's more the beer parlours and the lobbies are not musty, nor are they empty.

Some of the high-grading re-write men who insist upon recreating a Dawson in the image of fifty years ago, should take time out and come up this way and see what a lot of rot they're talking about. 16'

The Dawson News, even in its comparative dotage, could yet rise in defence of the Klondike.

In March 1951 the editorial page introduced a new feature entitled "Weekly Report from Ottawa," a summary of House proceedings and government measures composed by the Member for the territory.

This in some measure compensated for the paper's narrowed horizon, which for several years had taken in little beyond the territory.

A revival of editorial writing was apparent in 1951 and 1952, and advertising patronage was well maintained. The editorial revival may have been in part due to the stimulus of the Korean War.

For example, a 2-column editorial appeared on 10 September 1953,
discussing Canada's role in this conflict.

With Dawson reduced to village dimensions, bereft of its function as territorial capital (the last sitting of the Yukon Council in Dawson had been in the fall of 1952), The News deprived of the government printing contracts, continuance of publication became difficult, even on a weekly basis. The end came on 25 March, when The Dawson Weekly News, after nearly fifty-five years publication, closed down.

This paper after serving the Dawson area and its many subscribers at outside points for the past fifty-five years, has through adverse conditions been forced to cease publication with this issue. . . .

We thank our advertisers, subscribers, contributors and all others who have so faithfully patronized us over the many years and leave with the hope the period of suspension will be short.

At this date, 17 years later at time of writing, short of a uranium or oil strike on the well-worked hills of the Klondike, The News suspension of publication may be considered permanent.

So passed from the scene one of Canada's pioneer newspapers, which served so well our last frontier. By the standards of the best of the dailies in the cities of the east, perhaps also of the Pacific coast, no doubt The Dawson Daily News in its prime yet left something to be desired. But to lonely uprooted adventurers, some of whom hailed from the far corners of the earth, this vigorous, progressive and varied paper introduced to a sprawling shanty town just below the Arctic Circle, must have been a godsend. The Dawson Daily News was not born with Dawson; it was several years too late for that. But it had its start during the height
of the world's last great gold-rush, when the duckboards along Dawson's muddy streets sounded to the tramp of many booted feet, and the garish saloons and dance halls did a land-office business throughout the midsummer nights that knew no darkness, as through the six-month winter when the sun was almost a stranger. It is not too much to say that the story of The Dawson Daily News is also the story of Dawson, hub of the Klondike.

Finis
Chapter III: Endnotes


2 Ibid., 20 Oct. 1910, editorial.

3 Ibid., 24 Oct. 1911, p. 2.

4 Ibid., 23 March 1918.

5 Ibid., 10 May 1918, p. 2.

6 Ibid., 7 May 1918, p. 2.

7 Ibid., 20 Feb. 1920, p. 4.

8 Dawson News, 15 Nov. 1924.

9 PAC, RG 15, Interior Department Records, El(a), Vol. 6, Records of Field Offices, Yukon Territory, file 1501, affidavit or deposition, 19 March 1924.


11 Klondike Gold Production

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13 Ibid., 13 May 1944, p. 1.


17. Ibid., 25 March 1954.
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