REPORTS FROM THE MINES.

PROSPECTORS RETURNING WITH GOLD FROM ALASKA.

Many Report Disappointment in the Nome Field, but Will Try Again Next Year —The Season's Output Smaller Than Predicted—Copper Strikes Reported.

SEATTLE, Wash., Sept. 30.—The return tide having set in, 2,500 persons have come out from Dawson, Nome and other Alaska camps during the past week, bringing with them $2,500,000 in gold dust, $1,500,000 of which came from the mines of Nome and $1,000,000 from Dawson and other mining districts tributary to that place. The amount coming out in the shape of drafts is not known, but it is much larger than in any previous year and will probably aggregate several millions. The gold dust receipts at the Seattle Assay Office, for the year up to date from all Alaska and Klondike districts, amount to $25,000,000, and the total for the three years this Government institution has been in operation, $50,000,000 in round numbers.

While the mines of the Klondike have come up to the estimates made last spring of the probable output, Nome has been disappointing, although the yield up to date is in excess of $5,000,000, and will probably reach $6,000,000 by the time of the arrival of the last steamer in October. The estimates for Nome made last spring were $10,000,000, but by reason of the late and unfavorable season, causing the ground to remain frozen until July 10, the output was cut nearly one-half. Interviews with many well-known miners who have returned to spend the winter with friends confirm all the statements regarding the disadvantages and discouragements that have had to be overcome in nearly all the Nome districts and camps this season. While many are discouraged over their bad luck, the majority still have confidence in the country and will return and try their luck for another season.

On Anvil, below Discovery, the largest nugget ever seen in Alaska was discovered. It was worth $1,500, at $15 per ounce and was entirely free from quartz. Another worth about half that amount was taken out in the same district. The camps are abundantly supplied with provisions for the winter and several thousand men will test the mines as winter diggings, believing they will prove as successful as those of Dawson in the early history of that place.

The year has been a prosperous one for Dawson and the frontier mining camp has rapidly blossomed into a handsome capital city, with all the modern conveniences, handsome homes and well graded thoroughfares. Many men who have dug fortunes out of the earth are staying in the city and spending money in building it up. While the placers have proved rich and predictions have been made that they will hold good for ten years more with extensive hydraulic plants to operate them, additional attention has been given this season to quartz mining, and several hundred locations have been made in the Dawson district. These properties will be prospected and developed this winter, and the winter diggings that were neglected last season will also be made to contribute to the wealth of the country this winter. The first gold stamp mill ever built on the Yukon is now under construction near Dawson, and it will be in operation next month on ore that gives gold values of $20 a ton. There is everything, in fact, to encourage business men and miners in the Klondike region this year.

Miners who have been prospecting in the islands in the vicinity of Virgin Bay have had some strange experiences with silver-tip bears this season. They report these bears very numerous and quite aggressive. On one island in particular they were sole possessors—left literally monarchs of all they surveyed—after they had treed the prospectors, cleaned up the camp and played football with the molasses keg and painted the country white with flour. There were seven prospectors up as many trees while eight bears held sway in their camp, and they were compelled to remain in their uncomfortable positions until relieved by men from a passing boat.

MONTANA

HELENA, Oct. 1.—The Ophir mine, near Avon, is the scene of a rich copper strike. The mine is developed by a shaft 110 feet deep, 50 feet of levels and a crosscut which shows the width of the vein to be 57 feet. Of the entire mass two feet is solid ore and 20 feet conglomerates that will average from 3 to 4 per cent copper. Specimens of ore taken from both the surface and below the water level show rich red oxides and those below show sulphides and carbonates. Two of the latter show assays of from 16 to 18 per cent copper and some silver.

The vein on which the Ophir is situated has been opened up at various points a long distance and in each opening it is strong and well mineralized. Henry Bratnober, the Rothschild expert, and Patrick Clark, the Spokane millionaire, have made offers for the mine, which were rejected. About a mile and a half north of the Ophir assays from surface rock run $200 a ton in gold and silver.

The holes of the Ophir are pronounced to be true fissures and even in the conglomerates pieces of pure copper several inches long have been found.

Articles of incorporation of the Howard Copper Company have been filed with the Secretary of State. The incorporators are C. C. Howard, S. Gras, Herwitz and J. Frank Morrison of Baltimore, Md., and L. S. Winterstein and I. Jacobs of New York city. The capital stock is $1,500,000 and is composed principally of the ownership of the Tiger Eye and Iron lodes, near Philipsburg, Granite county. A branch office is to be maintained in New York city. Copper is said to have been recently discovered in paying quantities in Granite county.

The latest oil discoveries in Montana are reported from Ryans cabin, near Billings. Sheridan, of New York, has for analysis a sample of the shale, which is similar to that in Smallhorn cañon, contains oil of a first class grade. California and Pennsylvania experts have examined the field and pronounce the outlook encouraging. The oil belt covers an area of about thirty-six miles in length and varying from three to five miles in width, following the course of Beaverhead River. Several thousand acres in Ryans cañon have been located.

The Alice mine, Butte, a silver lead mine have been closed by the Lancaster of Helena, who recently secured possession of the property. The shutdown is not due to any profitable output, but has been found that the machinery in the mill is not adapted to the use intended of it. A other less than planed in the crushers and balls as well as shelves of armor plate hardness, which it is thought will overcome the difficulty and permit the reopening of the property.

Many mining men believe Butte would have a rival of importance provided a railroad were built to the Cooper district. The character of the ore as far as explored, is copper, silver and lead, with good paying gold rock near the surface. The Queen of the Hills Company is putting up a mill for the treatment of its ore. Archie McIntyre of Walkerville, who is heavily interested in the district, says that his company has thousands of tons of ore richer than the Butte product, but not rich enough to ship. The great distance from a railroad necessitates a wagon haul that destroys the profit.

James B. Gallagher, who has been managing the Daly estate property at Copperopolis, says the suspension of operations there is not permanent, but that nothing more will be done this year. When work is resumed it will be on a larger scale, as new and more powerful machinery is required. On account of the strike among the iron workers in the East, new machinery cannot be bought at present. Mr Gallagher expects to start anew in the spring however, by which time the affairs of the Daly estate will have been adjusted in the courts. Mrs. Daly is in favor of continuing operations, the Copperopolis having produced some very rich ore.

Operations have also been suspended at the Watseka mine in Madison county because of the inability to secure the proper machinery from Eastern manufacturers. The Watseka is said to be one of the richest gold mines in the State, but there are spots of quicksilver in it and the sand cuts the pump to pieces in short order. The owners of the mine have bought a pump of special design to remedy this trouble, but the strike has interfered with its delivery. As soon as it arrives work will be resumed.

The Colorado Mining and Developing Company, which recently secured control of the Hidden Treasure mine near Corbin, is installing modern machinery in the mine. Water has been encountered to such an extent that it drove the workmen out, but this difficulty, it is thought, will be overcome by the new machinery.

G. D. B. Turner has secured a lease and bond on the Pole Creek placer mines, Madison county, owned by A. M. Tanner, who recently found there a ruby of over five karats. The rubies are said to be of good quality. In Smallhorn cañon, contains oil of a first class grade. California and Pennsylvania experts have examined the field and pronounce the outlook encouraging. The oil belt covers an area of about thirty-six miles in length and varying from three to five miles in width, following the course of Beaverhead River. Several thousand acres in Ryan