

A general rate war between all the big lower river companies will be on in full blast at the opening of navigation, unless in the meantime their representatives should be impelled to meet and patch up their differences. "Heretofore all the companies have combined," said Mr. L. C. Branson, at the Fifth Avenue, "to keep up the rates," to a Skagway Alaskan reporter. "Both freight rates and provisions will therefore come down very low. The war will be strictly for traffic and commercial supremacy, and though it will affect the small concerns, it will not be directed against them. If the war comes on as anticipated, it will probably be a fight to a finish and leave one or the other of the companies nearly alone in the northern field. In the meantime vast tracts of gold bearing country that cannot now be operated on account of high prices of transportation and prices of provisions, will spring into activity and pay wonderfully for their development. Henderson, Eureka, Upper Stewart, all of Forty Mile, Sixty Mile, Big Salmon, Jack Wade and Glacier will swell the gold output as it has never swelled before. This rate and commercial war will be a great boon to the whole Yukon.

The Seattle News letter quotes the following story from Paddy Smith, of Skagway fame: "Me father wuz a great pigeon fancier," said Paddy Smith, "an' he 'ad some wuz burrd's out to try 'em. He 'ad them out once or twice before an' this time he took 'em out about 15 miles to let 'em fly 'ome. Wen we got back all th' burrd's wuz 'ome except one black an' white fellow. Th' old man wondered w'at 'ad come of 'em t'ought a hawk 'ad eat 'im. Wen Sunday, about 10 days afterwards, we wuz sittin' on th' back stoop smokin' an' thinkin' w'en th' old man says: 'Paddy, there's that bloom in, burrd! Get th' ladder an' w'en th' pigeon sees me comin' he runs into th' cote. I reaches in an' pulls 'im out an' gives 'im to th' old man; 'e ketches th' burrd by th' back an' begins feelin' of 'is feet. Then I says: 'What ye doin' dad?' An' th' old man, widout smilin' says, 'Paddy, 'is feet be not sore, but 'e must ha'e walked it!'"

Jerry Monroe, at one time a Skagwayan, says the News, writes from Chenoa, river in the Tanana district, and gives an encouraging report of the prospects there. Excerpts from the letter are as follows: "We have prospected some creeks on the Saltjacket river, which is a tributary of the Tanana and situated between Good Pasture river and Chenoa, and we found some good prospects. We ran a drain six feet to bedrock, going through two feet of muck and four feet of gravel that would average 20 cents to the pan. The best pan we got in this cut was \$12. On bedrock we got lots of four and five dollar pans. This may sound big but it is true. There is plenty of grub but fish Brothers, the Alaskan mail contractors, will experiment in wheat and barley growing in Alaska next season. They have decided to make several experimental plants along the line of the Valdez-Eagle mail route for the purpose of feeding the horses employed in carrying the mails. From many experiments with agriculture in this part of Alaska, it has been shown that grain can be easily grown. They have decided to give the plan a practical trial, and, if it proves successful, will undoubtedly enter the industry on a larger scale. They were persuaded to try grain cultivation along the route because of the high freight rates. It cost on an average 40 cents a pound, or about \$800 a ton for feed. It will not be so expensive to raise feed."

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