OUR NEW GOLD FIELDS.

Senator Wilson Talks of the Recent Discoveries in Washington, Idaho and Southeastern Alaska

The Latest Reports from the Klondike—What Congress Should Do for the Starting New Gold Fields in Alaska—A Spokane Man Discovers a Mine Which Assays $100,000 to the Ton—Prospects in the Northwest—How Washington Has Gotten $25,000,000 Out of the Soil This Year—Her Immense Crops of Wheat, Oats, Hops and Lumber.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 16, 1897.—Senator Wilson of Washington has just returned from Puget Sound, bringing with him wonderful tales of the prosperity of the Pacific northwest. He says the good crops and the Klondike have entirely changed the condition of the states of Washington and Oregon. Said he to me last night:

"If you will imagine a man going to bed expecting the sheriff to set him out next morning and awaking to find his pockets full of money and to enjoy a good breakfast, you will have the condition of a large number of our people. A year ago the times were hard. Now there is so much money that the people hardly know what to do with it. Our people in Washington this year have brought in $25,000,000 in something like 12,000,000. This means more than $10 for every man, woman and child in the state. On the average it amounts to more than $50 a family. Think of a state where every family has an average bank account of $250, and you get some idea of Washington today. In some of our counties the average is even higher than this. In Whitman county it is estimated that the crops have brought in a sum equal to $750 for every man, woman and child there. This would be $2,750 per family. There are about 25,000 people in that county, so you see what an enormous amount it is."

FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS FROM THE SOIL.

"Where does all the money come from, senator?"

"The amount I have been speaking of is from the soil alone. A great deal of it came from wheat. I know one man who got $9,000 for his wheat crop. That man last year was thinking of selling his farm to pay off mortgages on it. He did not expect it to bring much more than his indebtedness. It has now paid all that he owes and has money in the bank. In the county of Sherman, Oregon, there are only seven hundred voters, and that county produced over 2,000,000 bushels of wheat this year. We have one part of the Pacific northwest which we call the Palouse empire. This comprises a part of Oregon, a part of Washington and one or two counties in Idaho. That region alone produced more than 12,000,000 bushels of wheat this summer, and it has all been sold at good prices.

"How about the other crops, senator?"

"Everything has done well, said Senator Wilson. We have had a crop of hardy oats and barley, and have gotten high prices for everything. Washington is, you know, one of the greatest hop-raising countries of the world. The vines have been loaded and the crop has brought big money.

LUMBER IN THE NORTHWEST.

"How about the lumber market?"

"The lumber mills are making money all over the West. We have in Oregon and Washington the bulk of the best timber of the country. We are now exporting millions of dollars' worth of it every year. The lumber is shipped by ship to South America, Asia and Europe and around the Horn of the United States. Our shingle trade has never been so good. We sent 224,000,000 shingles east last September, enough to give every man, woman and child in the United States a shingle. In the last nine months we have exported 500,000,000 more shingles. As a result of the crop and lumber developments the railroads have had more than they could do. There is no lack of work in Washington now. I am told that $10,000,000 will be paid in wages to lumber men and wood workers this year."

A TRUE FIRE STORY.

"How about fire?"

"The annual crop this year has been exceptionally large. We have paid out $1,500,000 out of the state treasury. We have also done an enormous business of the same kind. There are some counties in all the river valleys of Puget Sound and on the Columbia river. There are no such values in any part of the United States as that they use fish wheels to catch them. These wheels are something like the water wheels of a gold mill, so that they have a wire basket into attached to the outer rim of the wheel, so that the stroke the water and, going down, swap up to the salmon which are running up the river. As the wheel turns it throws the fish into a chute which carries them off into a box. Sometimes tons of fish are caught in this way, and I heard of one instance of a man which was attached to such a fish wheel and he got up in the morning to find that so many salmon had been caught in the night that it was found that so many fish had been run into the wheel through the night that the weight had sink the scow."

"How about your crops and other sources of wealth in Idaho?"

"I think they will begin to grow more now. The weather bureau has been moving rather slowly in Idaho during the hard times. I have in Washington. We put up new buildings then the last years, ranging in price from $1,000 down."

FRESH NEWS FROM THE KLONDIKE.

"How about Seattle and Tacoma?"

"They are both in good, healthy condition. The discovery of gold in the Klondike has put new life into them. Three-fourths of all the men who go to Alaska are fitted out in those two cities. Every steamship for which goes there, has its headquarters on Puget Sound. Seattle is the place where people are outfitted there for the gold mines. Everything is there for the gold miners. Everything is there of a character that will last for two years, and all that will be used with gold and taken up to Alaska. Great preparations are going on now for sending out these men who are having a prosperity such as they have never had before.

"Are there many people in Seattle who have not been able to leave for Alaska?"

"I think most of those who wanted to go have been able to get away. I know of one man who has been employed all his life in the coaling of vessels in Alaska. He has a number of boats plying on Puget Sound next year. The Company for which he works is going to Alaska to take a load of coal to Nome. This man is going with the boat, including his family, and he will operate the coaling station for the company. Another man is going from Seattle about four in and over the ice after the Klondike gold fields, having engaged in that trade."

ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND GOLD SEEKERS.

"How do you think the rush will be to Alaska in the Klondike next year?"

"Of course no one can tell. It will be to a large extent gold work. And those who are not at Puget Sound can come some time. I think there is no doubt but that thousands will go. I think that the Klondike and adjacent mines will be from Colorado alone. All of the western states will furnish a large number. There will be thousands from New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio. A company has been organized in all parts of the United States, from Maine to the extreme of the Dart, which is to be formed on Puget Sound. We expect to have a large number from Chicago with the Washington, and of the gold miners who return we hope to get a good share. In addition to the Klondike gold fields there are other valuable gold fields in Alaska, and this will be a good thing for us.

THE GOLD MINES OF WASHINGTON.

"How about the gold mines of your own state, senator? There are some recently been in bloom?"

"New discoveries are being made right along all over the West. The various mining districts are being worked more and more intensively. I visited the old mining camp of Pioneer, Idaho, last year. This is not far from the Washington or Washington. The gold there was found in a basin surrounded by mountains. The basin was about a mile in diameter. The gold was in the shape of nuggets and dust, and some of the nuggets that have been found in 1897 more than fifty million dollars' worth of metal was washed out of the great mine. The mine was then given up. Gold is now being found much further down. It may exist for a hundred feet below the surface and if so a vast amount of free gold will be discovered. In the Coeur d'Alene country, the northern Washington, we have valuable mines of lead and silver. The Bunker and mine there is turning out $2,000 a month in dividends. The Le Roy gold mine, in which Senator Turner is interested, is now paying a dividend of $50,000 a month, and they are valuable mines on the Colville reservation. There is considerable gold in Idaho. I am not up on the subject of this myself on the Salmon river in Idaho. We have taken a little more than the dirt from which we are washing to the river to get out the gold. We find about 10 weeks' work in the year, and we can clean up from ten to fifteen thousand dollars a year. This is not a great deal, but it pay the laborer, who works little, and it gives us a big percentage on the investment."

OUR GREAT EMPIRE OF ALASKA.

"I suppose you have good facilities on Puget sound for getting information concerning Alaska, senator?"

"Yes," replied Senator Wilson, "our people call little else than gold now. I have been asked to go to Alaska and get returned from Alaska, and a number who have prospected in other parts of the territory have asked me to go. There is no doubt about the enormous amount of gold on the Klondike river. I believe that there will be more gold in Alaska than in British Columbia, old prospectors tell me, and I have seen a man who walked with from an Alaskan stream which has not chosen to disclose the exact place of its location, and he showed me a vial of gold from the Alaskan streams have got mixed with their sand. On the big island of Kadiak there are men who are always washing the sand to get out the gold, and they make a good profit. The Yeadock mine, which is owned by Senator Turner, is now producing more than $50,000 a month. The great Treadwell mine, which is reported to be turning out more than half a million dollars' worth of gold every month, is the most noticeably good properties of gold about Juneau. There is gold in the Yukon river, in the Tanana, and you have heard of the recent new discoveries in the Nimrod region, so far from the Klondike.

A SPOKANE MAN'S RICH FIND.

"It is a question whether southeastern Alaska will not prove to be a bigger gold field than the Klondike. There is a man who was in Spokane a few years ago of Spokane who has had some back sending a big lot of free gold into Spokane. He has gone back to the Pelican river, near Fort Wrangel, and he says he has discovered gold which assays as high as $100 to the ton. The gold is free gold. You can see it in the specimen. The gold is in quartz and is all over the chunks of ore. He says it has in a five-foot ledge between walls of slate and slate, and that the anticipations can be traced a distance of 300 feet. The ledge crops out on a steep hill, and he estimates that it is 1,000 feet above the sea. It is on Salmon creek, about thirty miles northeast of Fort Wrangel.

"Is that a hard place to reach, senator?"

"No, I think not," replied Senator Wilson. "Fort Wrangel is on the main Alaska route of the steamers and has been made easy and juneau. It could be easily reached by those travelers or prospectors who wished to go to the south from could about drive to the gold regions in a canoe, or at least, a wagon would be able to go. It is said that the Salmon river has good places ground. All the way up to the ledge, he has found gold, and he has not had to work down to get at the metal. He thinks the discovery is a very rich one. He has already been at work there, so he stated to me, and has come back to wait until spring to work them.

THE MUSKOX COUNTRY.

"You were speaking of the Muskox country, senator, in your letter."

"Oh that I know much of it. From what he has told me I think it is from a number of Washington people visiting there, and among others Governor Wolcott, of Colorado, and Senator Teller. Those river, below Fort Yukon, the steamer Bertha, which arrived at Seattle the first of last month, brought in gold from Minook. All sorts of claims are made about the Tanana, one claim having the value of a million dollars. I believe that there is a great deal of gold in the Tanana. There are two, I believe, in the Tanana country. Big companies are now forming to work the placers on the Tanana and the city promises to be the largest mining camp of the Tanana country.

HOCKING REPORTS FROM HAWKOM.

"There are heard accounts now of good discoveries in the Hawkom country. Some of the miners have recently made. There was one found the middle of last November by a man named Hawkom, who, with a companion, was coming from Dawson to the Klondike on a sled. The dogs ran off the trail and the sled upset, and the men had to get up and go after the dogs. In the dark they found a piece of quartz which was worth $40 a pan. The place where the dogs had run was marked and they went back to it and found a rich gold mine. Hawkom was killed by the Indians in the spring of 1896 while he was prospecting in the district of the Yukon. He was a mountaineer. He had been in the Klondike country for years and was well known to the Indians. He was a man of great courage and had a reputation for the district of the Yukon. He was killed while he was prospecting in the district of the Yukon. This was the case with the Cripple Creek of Colorado. Cripple Creek was found by a man who was crippled and who was hunting for a lost horse. Thousands of miners went there after hearing of the find. Men from the Dominion had discovered the Dominion and the whole country was found to be a great gold field. It is now the home of many millions of dollars' worth of gold every year. The Mexican and Indian mines were found by a party of a dozen men, who had been driven out of Mexico by the late General Sheridan. Mexican Pete and the rest of the party were Mexicans and came up to south mexico. They are now rich men and millionaires. You can't tell anything about the Klondike. It may be the richest gold field in the world, and the richest gold is quite as successful as the old prospectors.

"Do you think there will be an increase in the number of miners going to Alaska this year?"

"Yes, I think so," said Senator Wilson. "I have been told that only about one in ten who have gone to Alaska found the old spot. This is the condition about Dawson City, so they say, and it is true of the other parts of the country. We all remember that there are enormous amounts of gold in California yet."

STARVATION IN ALASKA.

"What can Congress do to get food to Alaska this winter?"

"I don't know," replied Senator Wilson. "I suppose the question will come up in the form of a proposition that shall be made to the Dart, which is to be formed on Puget Sound. We expect to have a large number from Chicago with the Washington, and of the gold miners who return we hope to get a good share. In addition to the Klondike there are other valuable gold fields in Alaska, and this will be a good thing for us.

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