

## ICE BLINK: NAVIGATING NORTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY Edited by Stephen Böcking and Brad Martin

ISBN 978-1-55238-855-6

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PART 1

*Forming Northern Colonial Environments*



## 2

# Moving through the Margins: The “All-Canadian” Route to the Klondike and the Strange Experience of the Teslin Trail

*Jonathan Peyton*

*This is the grave the poor man fills,  
After he died from fever and chills,  
Caught while tramping the Stikine Hills,  
Leaving his wife to pay the bills.*

—Pierre Berton<sup>1</sup>

*And of all the mad, senseless, unreasoning, and hopeless rushes I doubt if the world has ever seen the equal. Day after day crowds of men of all classes and conditions, hauling their sleighs, struggling, cursing, and sweating, thrashing their horses mules and dogs, all filled with the mad hopeless idea that if they could get as far as Telegraph Creek they would be in good shape for the Klondike. ... Some gave up on the river, sold their outfits and went back. Thousands arrived at Glenora and*

*Telegraph Creek and started over the Teslin Trail but by this time it was April or May, and the snow was beginning to go off the trail leaving pools of water and swamps through which it was almost impossible to transport their outfits. ... Hundreds stopped at Glenora until the river steamers started to run in the spring, and they went home poorer and wiser.*

—George Kirkendale<sup>2</sup>

The history of the Klondike Gold Rush is well documented. In August 1896, placer gold was discovered on Rabbit Creek (later renamed Bonanza) in the Yukon River Valley. By midsummer of the following year, gold fever was in full bloom in the United States, and, to a lesser extent, in Canada. This fever was exacerbated by a series of financial crises in the United States related to anxieties about the gold-centric monetary policy.<sup>3</sup> The winter of 1897–98 saw an estimated forty thousand miners en route to the area around Dawson, the booming new town at the centre of the mining activity. Wealthy participants took the all-water route via steamship around Alaska and south to Dawson along the Yukon River. Most, however, took steamships north to Dyea or Skagway, where they embarked on the harrowing trek over the Chilkoot and White passes, before sailing across Bennett Lake and up the Yukon River. The treacherous conditions of the trails and unrelenting force of the environment have become the stuff of legend. There were other, less publicized, less popular routes: the Edmonton route with its long portages, the Dalton route with plenty of grazing land in summer, the Taku River route, the ultimately impassable Copper River route, and the Stikine route.<sup>4</sup> Information on all routes was sketchy and largely compromised by the self-interest of promoters. Facilities were haphazard, and, at the outset at least, travellers were forced to rely on their own ingenuity to survive and succeed. Many abandoned the effort before reaching Dawson, many died while trying, and many returned home hopeless and bankrupt. But because a few did succeed, people of all backgrounds kept venturing north.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter deals with the motivations and effects of a particular historical episode: the attempt by the federal Liberal government, contracted construction firms, and a state-sanctioned network of engineers and bureaucrats to construct an “all-Canadian” railway from the Stikine

River to Teslin Lake during the Klondike Gold Rush in the late nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> The first section details the political economy of several conflicting attempts to build the railway, as well as the material accounting of the natural environment that accompanied these commercial adventures. The second section tracks the men who followed in the wake of these railway schemes, who engaged directly with animals and nature in the Stikine, and, in the process, formulated a new understanding of the Stikine environment, both locally and in metropolitan centres. This was not development as “project of rule,” but rather as an incremental practice that could inculcate new ways of knowing nature in a peripheral landscape.<sup>7</sup> In this instance, it involves casting our historiographical gaze both north and south. This chapter builds on literature that places territorial and provincial norths within the historiography of the Canadian north.<sup>8</sup> Many recent advances in northern scholarship have built upon the methodological and analytical impetus provided by this “provincial norths” literature.<sup>9</sup> More recently, an emerging group of scholars has examined the industrialization of the north and the exploitation of northern mineral and energy resources more generally.<sup>10</sup> Northern scholars are increasingly attuned to the vagaries of development and the place of technology in its mobilization.<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this collection includes several contributions that build on this northern resource development literature.<sup>12</sup> My view is that by emphasizing connections to a broader scale of northern development, but also to the intimacies and particularities of uniquely northern environmental encounters, northern historians can unpack the relational narratives that characterize encounters like the attempts to traverse the Teslin Trail.

Construction of the railway and accompanying wagon road began, but was quickly undercut by a combination of politics, bureaucratic failure, and engineering success on competing routes. The project—and the feasibility of the Teslin Trail route to the Klondike—ultimately failed, and the events of the railway failure provide context for the environmental changes set in motion in the Stikine. While the railway scheme remained unrealized, it was an important catalyst for new valuations and understandings of nature on the plateaus north of Glenora and Telegraph Creek. This inquiry into a fledgling transportation network, along with changing human-nature relations, therefore illuminates the complex politics of





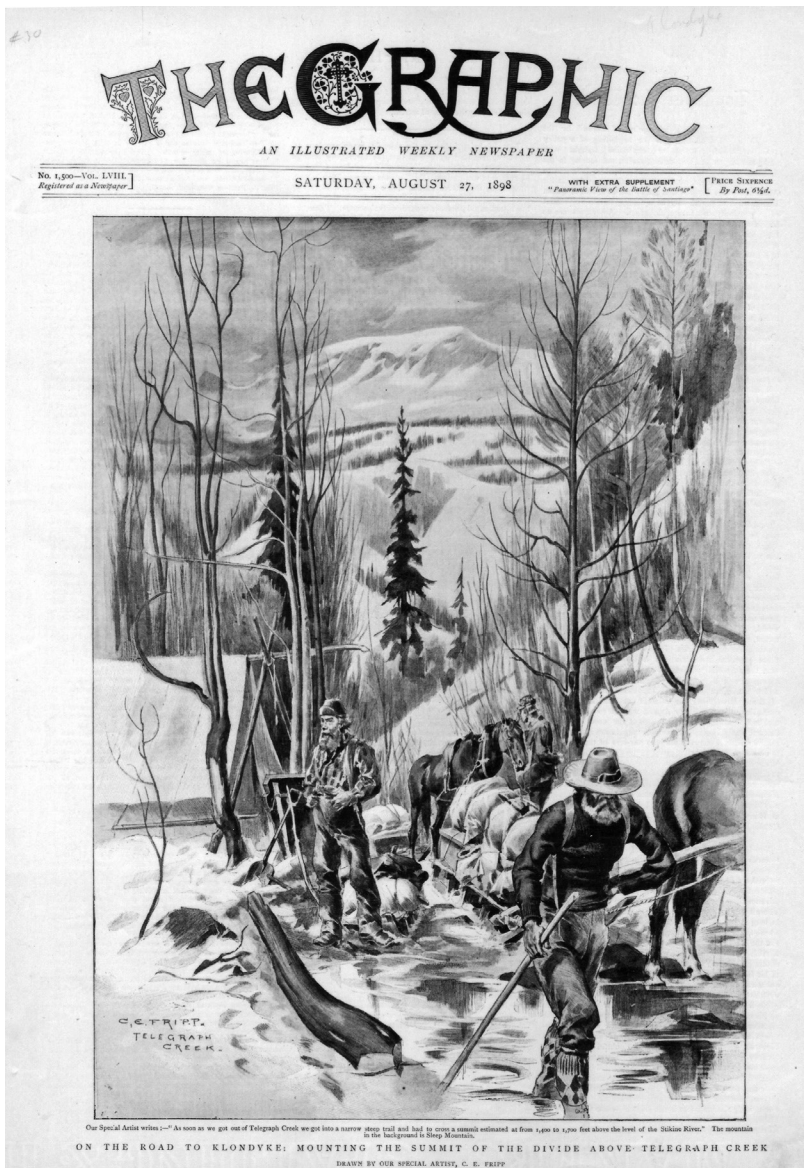


FIG. 2.2: "On the Road to Klondyke: Mounting the Summit of the Divide above Telegraph Creek," illustration by C. E. Fripp. Yukon Archives, *The Graphic*, 27 August 1898, vol. 58, no. 1500, front page.



dwindled when the ice froze in winter. The only real option then was to haul goods and grub on the ice and snow approximately 300 kilometres to Glenora and Telegraph Creek. Still others, perhaps even worse off, eschewed the river completely, preferring the overland route over the derelict Ashcroft Trail, cut thirty years earlier during an abandoned attempt to construct a telegraph cable across the Bering Strait. From Glenora and Telegraph Creek, aspiring miners and their animals packed their loads directly north to Teslin Lake, two hundred kilometres distant, where they met the Hootalinqua River and the Yukon River system. Fiercely cold and exposed in winter, and a soupy mess in summer, the Teslin Trail was given many other names: Telegraph Trail, the Bughouse Trail, the Devil's Trail, the Cold March...

The need to order this new northern landscape encouraged state institutions to press their imprint on land that had formerly been managed by the Tahltan and other Indigenous peoples of the area.<sup>13</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police arrived to manage the transient population and to collect duty on goods crossing the international border, missionaries came to minister to wayward souls, a Gold Commissioner organized the traffic in minerals, and a small army of merchants supplied the material needs of miners. Through their initiatives, southern agencies established a more concrete and pervasive presence in the Stikine. This was an ideological as much as an institutional change. Land and nature were reordered within new conceptions promoted by state enterprises, their agents and technologies, and the movements of capital they enabled.<sup>14</sup>

The massive increase in population numbers and the formalization of state conceptions of land in the Stikine had an immediate impact on human relations with the natural world. Increased exploitation resulting from demographic pressures is one element of this tension, but this chapter is equally concerned with how itinerant miners and locals experienced nature differently in the wake of the rush. Interactions between uses and perceptions of nature informed and altered natural-cultural interrelationships during and after the rushers had swept through the Stikine. In her work on the commodification of nature during the Klondike Gold Rush, Kathryn Morse claims that the proper way to interrogate the complex natural and social history of the Klondike is by looking at how participants came to know nature and how they forged connections to others through labour and experience. Morse sees gold as an abstraction which

allowed the commodification of “knowledge, experience, and connections to nature” of the rushers and the area’s Indigenous peoples.<sup>15</sup> The imposition of an international commodity market linked to cities and markets elsewhere encouraged nature and wildlife to be consumed in different ways. Valuable for more than subsistence, animals and their habitat were consumed not only on dinner tables, but as art on walls, through gun sights, in photographs, and as fodder for the great narratives of hunting and “frontier” travel.<sup>16</sup> In the wake of the Gold Rush, northern nature became a space to consume as much as a place to sustain. This, in turn, altered Indigenous peoples’ relationships to the environment and animals alike: “The gold rush affected how, where, and why Native peoples hunted, fished, and marketed their catch, but it also changed the Indians’ own connection to nature through the foods they themselves consumed.”<sup>17</sup>

Morse has little to say about the Stikine, as her work focuses on American events; however, her more general comments about the nature of the gold rush are instructive.<sup>18</sup> Like Morse, I see resources as cultural concepts, imbued with meaning by miners and others moving into the north.<sup>19</sup> I also draw from a growing body of research in environmental history and geography that interrogates the commodification of nature by framing resources as social relations, understood as much in terms of their changing materialities as by their biophysical realities.<sup>20</sup> In this instance, the focus is less on gold and its extraction than on the narratives, mobilities, and relationships enabled by the rush itself. The Gold Rush was part of a much wider political economy of resource development in the Canadian north that was largely formed later in the twentieth century.<sup>21</sup> The rush of miners through the Stikine was the major material catalyst for these new expressions of value and meaning. As one scholar recently put it, the narrative experiences of the Klondike were (and continue to be) frequently engaged as “technologies in the making of this environment.”<sup>22</sup> I suggest that both narrative and the materialities of socio-natural experience were fundamental to understanding and knowledge of the Teslin Trail and the erstwhile all-Canadian route.

## The Failure of the Railway and the Stikine Route to the Klondike

The Stikine route was advertised with a certain nationalist bombast as the beginning of an “all-Canadian route” to the Klondike. It was promoted as a simpler route, longer but far less taxing. Promoters in Vancouver and Victoria (and throughout the Empire) exaggerated the emerging transportation infrastructure: they wrote of an armada of steamboats to transport people and increasingly precious goods up the Stikine River from Wrangell, Alaska; or, in winter, dog-teams to haul brand-new outfits to the boom towns of Glenora and Telegraph Creek. From the north banks of the Stikine, promoters claimed it was a quick 150-mile overland journey on a good trail to Teslin Lake and the headwaters of the Yukon River system.<sup>23</sup>

But the Stikine route depended on a development initiative conceived by the federal government and its potential commercial partners. The federal Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, seeking to appease both coastal merchants eager for trade and a public concerned about lost revenue and territorial influence, toured the Stikine and Taku river deltas in October 1897 with a view to establishing a route to the Klondike through Canadian territory. Impressed with the possibilities he saw in the Stikine, Sifton eventually signed an untendered bid with the engineering firm of Mackenzie and Mann in January of the following year to build a wagon road and short-gauge railway between Glenora and Teslin Lake. The contract stipulated that the road would be finished in six weeks, while the railway would be operational by September. William Mackenzie and Donald Mann, experienced railway entrepreneurs, enjoyed a favoured business relationship with Sifton, having already constructed several railways in the Prairie Provinces (which together would become the Canadian Northern Railway).<sup>24</sup>

This simple explanation obscures the complicated politicking by multiple interests, particularly within British Columbia, that preceded the announcement of the Mackenzie and Mann contract. Several groups sought the contract directly through the provincial government. In December 1896, prominent Victoria journalist Alexander Begg wrote to BC Premier John Herbert Turner on behalf of the “MERCHANTS and BUSINESS MEN” of Victoria, asking that a survey be undertaken in the Stikine with a view to having a “convenient and practicable route” constructed to win

back the Yukon trade from “UNITED STATES DEALERS.” The country had been neither surveyed nor explored, he assured Turner, although he claimed that he had been informed by “Dr. G. W. Dawson, Head of the Geological Survey of Canada, that a very favourable route, entirely within British territory, can ... be made available.”<sup>25</sup> In April, Begg, acting as president of a newly formed Stickeen and Teslin Railway Company, amended the petition to request an exclusive charter (and potential assistance) for the construction of a line between Glenora and Teslin Lake.<sup>26</sup> By May, Begg was anxious to begin work while the Railway Bill was being debated in the Legislative Assembly. Undoubtedly aware of competition and the fleeting nature of the opportunity, he pressed Turner to grant the charter because he was “very anxious to proceed to Ottawa, to deal with the Dominion Government as to further aid for the Construction of the Railway.”<sup>27</sup> Begg’s company won the charter from the province and later from the federal government, but his Stickeen and Teslin Railway never began construction, suffering a series of financial and organizational difficulties before sputtering to a halt.<sup>28</sup> As often happened in an age of railway speculation, Begg’s charter was eventually purchased by Mackenzie and Mann for \$50,000, forming the legal basis for their construction plans.<sup>29</sup>

Other groups filled the competitive void when Begg’s efforts lagged. The Victoria Board of Trade began to lobby, insisting on information and access that Turner was holding close to his vest.<sup>30</sup> In spite of his economic and political interest in the railway scheme, Turner was careful not to overextend provincial interest and jurisdiction. Sifton and Turner maintained contact after Sifton’s tour of the Stikine, and by mid-November Turner was pressing for a firm commitment from the Minister of the Interior: “Very numerous and earnest representations are being made from all quarters ... [but] it would be manifestly a waste of energy for the Dominion and Provincial Governments to proceed on independent lines of action to secure what is really a common object, and therefore it is highly desirable that there should be unison and co-operation of effort.”<sup>31</sup>

Three other groups emerged with serious intentions in the lead-up to the announcement of the Mackenzie and Mann contract. J. T. Bethune, a local real estate agent in Victoria, wrote to Turner in November on behalf of “a strong London Company” to announce the group’s intention to build a “sleigh road” between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake, and to inquire about the possibility of public outlay in that enterprise. Turner’s reply was

apparently unsatisfactory for Bethune's backers: the government intended to build the road itself anyway, but would consider supplying one-third of the cost to a maximum of \$3,000 if the company would guarantee that the finished route would be made public upon completion.<sup>32</sup> A body of correspondence between Turner and the H. Maitland Kersey Syndicate, also of London, detailed the attempt by the group to secure funding and/or permission to build on the still-theoretical Teslin Lake route. Represented alternately by Lord Charles Montague, R. T. Elliott, and F. M. Yorke, the syndicate had more substantial financial backing than the Bethune group. The syndicate's proposal ultimately failed because of commitments that both levels of government had made to Mackenzie and Mann and because it had not demonstrated sufficient financial means.<sup>33</sup> It is unclear how much overlap existed between Mackenzie and Mann's separate negotiations with the federal and provincial governments. The firm had secured significant enticements from Turner's government by the signing of the contract with Sifton in late January 1898, including a subsidy of \$2,250 per mile of railway constructed and a grant of free lands required for the right of way and terminal facilities.<sup>34</sup>

But the provincial concessions were minor compared to those granted by the federal government. In Clifford Sifton's northern vision, the railway would lead to Canadian control of the Klondike and was therefore necessary at any cost.<sup>35</sup> In exchange for construction of the Yukon-Canadian Railway, as the line came to be known, which was estimated to cost \$22,000 per mile of track, Mackenzie and Mann received lucrative concessions: a limited monopoly over further railway construction (possibly south to the Portland Canal at Stewart, on the central coast of BC, north to Dawson, and east to Edmonton), a land grant of 3,750,000 acres (based on 25,000 per mile of track), with all mineral rights tax-free for five years. Gold produced from any of this land would be taxed at one percent, while the toll on the railway would be fixed by the government for seven years.<sup>36</sup> These allowances would prove too generous for Sifton's political opponents, especially Sir Charles Tupper, leader of the opposition Conservatives, who opposed the terms of the railway contract.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, Warburton Pike led a secondary railway scheme in the Stikine. Pike was a well known itinerant writer, sportsman, and entrepreneur whose wilderness acumen had furnished the basis for two popular accounts of northern adventuring exploits, but who would later become

known for a series of business failures in the Stikine and elsewhere.<sup>38</sup> Curiously, Pike was not keen to build north, but rather to head northeast from Glenora to somewhere near the head of Dease Lake. He eschewed the gold of the Klondike, preferring to focus on what he felt were longer-term prospects of mineral wealth in the remote Cassiar district. Pike operated as a kind of lobbyist/contractor for his Cassiar Central Railway Company, both in the provincial capital, Victoria, and in Ottawa. Pike's efforts did not conflict with the operations of Mackenzie and Mann, as they were intent on building in different directions with different purposes. Indeed, there may have been some professional overlap: there is some evidence that Pike was also involved in Mackenzie and Mann's planning and promoting operations.

Once the Cassiar Central Railway construction contract was secured with the provincial government, Pike organized the transport of railway building materials and workers from Victoria and Vancouver to the Stikine. He secured the cooperation of the provincial government through his connections to Premier Turner.<sup>39</sup> Pike's letters and requests foregrounded the potential of "opening up the Cassiar [Stikine] District" for capital investment, exploration, and settlement (and its accompanying revenue) through infrastructure initiatives, because, in his words, "that part of the country is at present a deserted waste."<sup>40</sup> He needed no formal monetary outlay from the government, but would be willing to conduct all business through BC merchants and suppliers, use local construction materials where they could, and hire only BC labour.

Pike won the charter in May of 1897, but he sold it days later to a consortium of British financiers associated with the Transvaal Goldfields Company. They quickly formed a subsidiary, the Africa British Columbia Company, which hired Pike to oversee operations in the Stikine. Large warehouses were built at Glenora, surveys were conducted, mining lots were chosen along the corridor, and animals, equipment, and supply materials were brought north. Construction for the Railway would start at both ends, Glenora and Dease Lake. Employing two thousand men, Pike planned to have the line finished in a year, and had already begun surveying and planning for a proposed wagon road between Dease and Teslin lakes. But construction suffered a series of setbacks, including the sinking of a tractor and a shipment of rails after the transport scows ran aground on a sandbar. Pike and his associates persevered until late spring of 1899,



but were forced to give up the project after the Boer War weakened the financial capabilities and interest of the parent company.<sup>41</sup>

The railway dreams were built on surveys completed in the years before the Gold Rush by the Geological Survey of Canada (GSC).<sup>42</sup> William Ogilvie had been sent briefly to survey the area during the winter of 1894–95 as part of his duties as Yukon Commissioner. Writing in November 1897 (though his findings were not published until 1898), Ogilvie claimed that with suitable infrastructure investment, the northern portion of the Stikine plateau could develop into “the richest gold field the world has ever seen.”<sup>43</sup> Ogilvie had originally accompanied George M. Dawson on his northern survey in 1887, an endeavour that included a reconnaissance of the Stikine watershed and which first pointed to the region’s mining potential.<sup>44</sup> Another party led by GSC civil engineer William Tyndale Jennings was in the plateau north of the river when gold fever hit. Jennings, along with assistant surveyors A. S. Ross, Arthur St. Cyr, Edmund J. Duchesnay, and Morley Ogilvie, were already looking for the most practicable route for the railway. Failing that, they sought the best route for a “highway,” an ambitious term for the wagon road. Jennings’ report, released in February 1897, was positive about construction prospects. His ideal route began at Little Canyon, some fifty miles downstream from Glenora, for an estimated cost of almost \$4 million dollars, slightly higher than the estimate eventually provided by Mackenzie and Mann.<sup>45</sup>

More importantly, Jennings and company began to construct an inventory of the landscape with construction hazards and natural assets in mind. St. Cyr and Ogilvie reported more specifically on the possible rail and road route north to Teslin Lake, mapping out potential avenues and proposing construction methods to overcome the perceived climatic and geologic obstructions. These state-based surveys began a process of institutional data creation that would have far-reaching consequences for the way residents and newcomers related to the Stikine environment.<sup>46</sup> Jennings and company mapped the watershed topographically, but he also commented directly on the “resources” that could be useful in railway construction (i.e., timber, rock, animals).<sup>47</sup> The simple act of data creation presaged a new valuation of nature. Members of Jennings’ party also commented directly on anticipated costs. Edmund Duchesnay, a junior member of the party, believed the railway could be constructed for \$1,575,925, while Jennings estimated the cost at \$2,850,000, warning

that construction would be difficult through terrain that was “covered in moss and occasionally mire and unpleasant to travel over in unseasonal weather.”<sup>48</sup> Even building the wagon road would be expensive and would require unconventional construction methods. The moss would have to be cut out and the tree canopy removed and the soil underneath left to dry. Ditches would have to be dug the whole length of the road, and coarse gravel would have to be laid to protect the intractably mushy ground. This would take two months and cost between 100 and 250 dollars per mile. He recognized that there was little forage for pack animals and recommended government caches to lessen the hardship of the many anticipated travelers. His recommendations were not taken up; little was done to improve the trail, and Jennings’ comments on forage proved true.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of political will, economic rationale, and geological incentives, only ten kilometres of track and thirty kilometres of wagon road were built before party politics scuppered the Stikine route. Railway construction was abandoned when the Conservative Party-controlled Senate balked at the terms and abruptly voted down the contract just as the large second wave of miners poured into Glenora. Aside from the usual partisan bickering and self-interest that often accompanied massive government expenditure, the Tories were concerned about the lack of competition in the award of a possible trade, land, and transport monopoly for Mackenzie and Mann, and possible taxation difficulties at the transshipment point at Wrangel.<sup>50</sup>

In the end, none of the grand railway plans materialized. In their stead, a “wagon road” was cut. At least, that was the official position. In actuality, some corduroy was laid north of Telegraph Creek, but miners were largely left to fend for themselves on a sodden, muddy, poorly marked trail to Teslin. The promises of easy access to the gold fields rang hollow. An informal infrastructure of caches, grazing areas, campsites, and one Hudson’s Bay Company outpost provided some semblance of infrastructure, but in reality, miners went only as far as their own luck and perseverance took them. Many of the men who came through Glenora turned back without attempting the run to Dawson; others (and many of their animals) died on the ice of the river or on the exposed plateau that bounded the Teslin Trail. The overwhelming experience of travel on the trail constituted a unique interaction with a new northern nature.

## The Experience of the Teslin Trail

Aspiring miners who made it up the river had little option but to follow the trail as envisioned by the GSC surveyors and railway speculators. But the actual Teslin Trail that they faced was an awful mess of muddy confusion and disorder. Accounts left by men on the trail demonstrate its tenuous nature and the alienating experience of travel upon it. As they battled against the trail, the Klondike seemed further and further away. Thomas Frederick Seldon offered increasingly vivid descriptions of the deteriorating trail in his diary, in a style emblematic of what other chroniclers also saw and represented. In the beginning of July, after a winter of waiting in Glenora and a profitable dip into the horse market, Seldon's group began the trek north where they encountered "a decent trail for some miles and then it was a terror. Horses were sinking down in mud between trees and roots of trees. It makes one shake expecting a broken leg every minute." The next days brought no respite: "the trail has been dreadful, swamps and fallen timber, had several [horses] down but no limbs broken—passed several dead horses. ... People have no idea what it is like & people who have spoken so highly of it ought to be made to pack a train of mules and then be hauled up for cruelty to animals."<sup>51</sup> Travel in winter was easier but posed its own set of problems. Diarist O. T. Switzer noted that, "the extreme cold has also caused us a lot of trouble in travelling along these creeks. The ice freezes so thick that it does not leave water way sufficient, and it forces the water out over the ice, along the edge of the stream and it overflows."<sup>52</sup> This was made even more slippery when an early thaw and subsequent freeze reformed ice on the creeks and the trail itself. After two months on the trail in winter, Hunter Fitzhugh told his sister in a letter, "I wish I could tell you all of my strange and ridiculous experiences, but it would take acres of paper, oceans of ink, and horse powers of work to do it up in style."<sup>53</sup> In general, the Teslin Trail was passable in winter, though most miners attempted it in spring and summer when it was essentially impassable even with healthy animals, an adequate outfit, and a sterling constitution. A particularly difficult section of the trail encountered during a second trip, in the summer, inspired Fitzhugh to complain, "The strain on our minds and bodies during the five days it took to get through that water was maddening. Our lives and possessions were both in the greatest danger, and the work was fearful, for we had to put one sled on top



FIG. 2.3: "Freighting by Wheelbarrow, Teslin Lake Trail," ca. 1898. BC Archives, D-02068.

of the other in order to keep our stuff dry."<sup>54</sup> Everybody who passed over the trail had similar tales of wetness and woe.

Travel on the river, either in a boat or in a sled over the ice, was equally dangerous and presented its own hardships. Steamboats and hired Tlingit canoes made the trip simply and without much difficulty, but self-constructed boats and sleds faced considerable natural obstacles. Scows and rafts built at Wrangel or on Cottonwood Island in the Stikine delta often sank because they were overloaded, poorly built, or overcome by the currents and migrating sandbars of the river. Sleds could travel quickly, but, at least for the leader of the impromptu convoys, they posed considerable risk from patchy ice. Dog teams often plunged through the ice, leaving the driver to scramble first for his own safety, then for the safety of his cargo, and then to rescue his freezing dogs. The everyday labour of sledding (packing the sleds correctly, righting tipped sleds, tending to dogs and equipment, lighting fires, and sleeping on top of snow and ice, keeping

relatively dry) provided routine but hardly reduced the risk encountered on the ice.

Glenora was the staging ground for the Teslin Trail. Five thousand miners wintered there in 1897–98, waiting for the opportunity to head north.<sup>55</sup> It was an ephemeral city of tents and improvised shacks, built hastily to house miners, working animals, and the goods and services required by a transient population. The town had a favourable reputation as a lawful and vice-averse place, probably a result of the presence of civil authority in the Gold Commissioner, postmaster, and police. New markets developed for meat, timber, knowledge, and assistance of various kinds. There were new opportunities for both Indigenous peoples and neophyte miners open or resigned to the possibility of trading or working in a trade. A solid trail of fourteen kilometres connected Glenora to Telegraph Creek, nominally the head of navigation on the river. Telegraph Creek was a smaller settlement with a larger permanent population and the site of a considerable Tahltan camp still located at the site. Many preferred “Telegraph” because its reputation for hospitality extended to nervous newcomers.

Miners who reached Glenora and Telegraph Creek had already passed through Wrangel, the Alaskan/Tlingit town in the Stikine delta. Wrangel was widely derided as an unscrupulous place full of potential hustles and the iniquity that often flourished in itinerant rush towns. Indeed, there was clearly a market for the kind of behaviour that made most chroniclers blush. Apart from the constant danger of swindles, Wrangel was the only transshipment point, posing many economic difficulties for British and Canadian miners intending to bring goods purchased elsewhere into the transboundary waters of the Stikine. For a time, American customs inspectors ignored the guarantee of free shipment and navigation established in the International Waters Act of 1871, charging duty on goods coming through town on steamers from the south. This provided Clifford Sifton with one of his main motivations for an “all-Canadian” route. In the middle of the delta was Cottonwood Island, which served the multiple functions of campsite, boatbuilding site, and staging ground for the assault on the river itself. Mackenzie and Mann used the island to establish a camp for workers and to assemble machinery and materials for their construction projects. The island proved to be a telling metaphor for the Stikine route to the Klondike. It was flooded and essentially disappeared during the spring break-up of 1898. The rising waters consumed miners’

camps, destroyed half-finished rafts, and drowned animals not evacuated by the residents of Wrangel.<sup>56</sup>

At the end of the Teslin Trail was Teslin Lake, an itinerant community adjacent to a First Nations settlement, and the lake itself, a long, narrow body and the beginning of the water-bound portion of the journey to Dawson. In the imaginations of many miners, Teslin became a focal point, the anticipated end of the difficult part of the journey. But by the summer of 1898, Teslin was no more than a transit stop for the few who made it over the trail: "Things are dead in Teslin. No railroad made it so some log huts partly built are stopped. Men clear out as soon as they build their boats."<sup>57</sup> O. T. Switzer arrived in Teslin in February 1898 and saw it change from a promising business outpost and supply centre to a place essentially devoid of economic activity in less than six months. It was an exceptionally expensive place to live, largely because of the exorbitant packing rates from Glenora, which reached \$800 per tonne by June.<sup>58</sup> By then, "living in Teslin Lake [was] an expensive luxury."<sup>59</sup>

The men who used the Teslin Trail were often confronted with the stark contrast between the rumour and the reality of travel on the trail itself. News of the railway's construction added to excitement about the Stikine route. Guy Lawrence and his father, who sailed to the Pacific from Blackpool, England, chose the Stikine route because they had been told by promoters in London that the Yukon-Canadian Railway was virtually ready.<sup>60</sup> Merchants and boards of trade in Vancouver and Victoria claimed the railway was as good as finished, and, with its "invaluable help" in transporting goods, the trip to the goldfields could be completed in six weeks. Promoters in eastern Canada promised a similarly easy, though invigorating, journey.<sup>61</sup> The rhetoric used by the "Dunsmores" [*sic*: read Dunsmuir] was typical: "The only easy way to the Klondike. Five hundred dollars from Victoria to Dawson, with 500 pounds of baggage; first-class steamer to Wrangel; newly-equipped handsomely furnished river steamer up the Stickeen to Telegraph Creek; there pack trains will be waiting to take you to Teslin lake over a fine grass country beautiful scenery, beautiful lakes and fine trout fishing; on arriving at [Teslin] lake the steamer Dunsmore, just finished at tremendous cost, will carry you down the lake to the Hootlinqua river; passengers can lead anywhere, take out a million or two and go home before wintering-down in the Yukon, on which river



there will be plenty of steamers.”<sup>62</sup> It was to be a lovely holiday with the added bonus of a pot of gold at the end.

Others came north to the Stikine via the Ashcroft Trail, which began in the Chilcotin country and followed an overgrown route originally and rapidly laid out by the Collins Overland Telegraph Expedition sponsored by Western Union, as they were rushing to construct a transpacific cable across the Bering Strait.<sup>63</sup> Rancher Norman Lee was actually impressed by the Ashcroft Trail for the first weeks of his journey. But that happiness quickly faded. Soon, he wrote, “we were in the thick of the misery—as regards mud and shortness of feed. . . . Every day one of our horses had to be left beside the trail, and not ours alone, as it was scarce possible to travel a hundred yards without finding dead or abandoned horses; I have seen in one place, two dead horses on each side of the trail.” The trail was littered with jettisoned goods, and eventually became “one succession of mud and swamps from one end to the other.”<sup>64</sup> The trail was even a disappointment from a literary point of view. American essayist Hamlin Garland, seeking the sublime landscape of wilderness adventure, was disappointed, “not because it was long and crossed mountains, but because it ran through a barren, monotonous, silent, gloomy, and rainy country. It ceased to interest me. It had almost no animal life, which I love to hear and see. Its lakes and rivers were for the most part cold and sullen, and its forests sombre and depressing.” It was a foolish route to the goldfields of the Yukon, Garland claimed, and unless mining was developed in the Stikine region, the Ashcroft Trail should be “given back to the Indians and their dogs.”<sup>65</sup>

The experience of nature in the Stikine was complicated by the vagaries of weather and climate. Rain, snow, and cold made the difficult experience of travel a profoundly visceral one.<sup>66</sup> But it was the capriciousness of climate that most affected the movements of miners, the distances they were able to cover, and the caloric and emotional energy that was required of them. An unseasonably mild winter in the Stikine in 1897–98 caused variations in the seasonality of the river, the surrounding plateau, and the new trail that transected it. The river froze and thawed quickly, often forcing dogsleds to travel through smaller creeks of slush and ice. The ice was unstable, forcing the first sled in the team, and its driver and animal engines, into dangerous positions. The Teslin Trail changed almost instantly from a passable, snow-covered route to a sloppy, sticky mess of thawed mud and snow. Storms and blizzards imperiled miners, particularly when

they were travelling. Hunter Fitzhugh recounted a story of a Japanese chemist and his group, who, “when about three miles from Wrangel ... were struck by a squall and to save their lives had to throw nearly everything over board.”<sup>67</sup> Pervasive rain and wetness compounded the difficulty of the journey, but it was the unexpected perils that yielded the more acute psychological implications.

In order to demonstrate the Stikine route’s viability, the Royal Canadian Dragoons were sent through the Stikine in May 1898 on their way to the Klondike. Over two hundred scarlet-clad soldiers came through Glenora with a hundred tonnes of stores, just as rumours surrounding the failure of the Yukon-Canadian Railway were reaching the town. This increased confusion and speculation. But the sudden appearance of the Yukon Field Force (YFF), as the unit was known, had a more immediate and tangible effect; it further reduced the already small supply of animals that could be hired for packing. Likely because of scarcity and value, their local contractor had failed to provide the agreed-upon number of animals. Lt.-Col. T. D. B. Evans, the YFF commanding officer, was forced to delay troop movement so that he could raise an adequate animal convoy to take supplies and food north on the Teslin Trail. The YFF eventually bought or commandeered the majority of serviceable horses in the area, over three hundred in total, including many employed on existing pack trains. This drove up packing rates—already exorbitant—and further demoralized camp residents.<sup>68</sup> The institutional presence of the state, exemplified by the army’s regimented conduct, was meant to reassure the populace of the mining camps. Instead, the army destabilized existing economies and transportation networks, raised the price of animals, and unwittingly fomented the anti-government feeling that was taking hold in camp and gaining traction through the failure of the railway scheme.

While journeying to the unexpected and unknown, miners were confronted with hardship and toil. The exertion forced a new reckoning with the nature around them. Many expressed profound ambivalence at the contrast between the modernity of the urban environment in metropolitan centres and the virility and immediacy of nature in the Stikine. The transportation of goods through the Stikine forced miners to contemplate the contradiction embedded in the consumption and production of a new nature that was at once familiar yet profoundly discomfiting. Henry Franklin wrote to his father in New York about the absurdity of taking

“20 tons of machinery and 36 horses [in an] outfit that weighs about 100 tons,” all for the purpose of acquiring some “yellow dust.” He could not believe he was about to “climb over 4 ft of snow for 300 miles then build boats and steam for another 1000 miles even the hay and oats for the horses we have to carry with us it is a tough proposition.”<sup>69</sup> Miners often expressed an uneasy perception of the unreality of the Klondike experience. For many, the practice and toil of trudging tonnes of grub and supplies through an ostensibly barren landscape was akin to dreaming. It was otherworldly. Not only were they confronted with an entirely new nature, but they were also faced with the intimate changes that their involvement with nature produced.

This was the first major incursion of modernity into the Stikine; an unprecedented influx of people and money passed through the Stikine and a new state authority was established.<sup>70</sup> Inevitably, vestiges were left behind and incorporated by locals through the many new interactions that took place after the Klondike Gold Rush. The arrival of miners, their capital, goods, and ideas affected interactions with nature. They burned wood, used it for construction purposes, managed the river as a transportation conduit, and dug into the earth in search of mineral wealth. Above all, they consumed animals and fish to sustain the physical exertions required to propel themselves northward. The relations between humans and their environment were also affected by the attempt to build a railroad between the Stikine River and Teslin Lake to facilitate the movement of goods and people. The perception of the Stikine in the metropolis had been that it was economic and perhaps socially peripheral and certainly geographically remote. The activities around the Gold Rush changed that.

This story of railroad construction schemes and their ecological impacts is relevant to more general discussions regarding the side effects of unsuccessful developments, and notions of marginality and scale in environmental histories of remote regions.<sup>71</sup> Several scholars have used the work of James Scott to great effect to explore the unintended and often pernicious consequences of development in Canada.<sup>72</sup> Scott’s insistence on the ordering, simplification, enumeration and ultimate control of nature as a tool of statecraft is particularly revealing in this chapter. The railway schemes were, on the face of it, failures. But embodied in those failures was an inchoate awareness of the Stikine’s physical features, which in turn became the hard evidence that the Stikine could and should be

developed. As miners, tradesmen, surveyors, engineers, government officials, and shopkeepers moved into and through the Stikine, it became, as Scott would have it, “legible.”<sup>73</sup> This performed the dual function of making the Stikine less “marginal” and less “remote” to the state and to others captivated by the emerging possibility of development. Places like the Stikine watershed, so long at the margins, now began to be connected to other places through expanding markets and enterprises, as state actors and development dreamers began to enact new visions and uses of nature and resources.

A new ordering of nature emerged out of the Gold Rush and the failed railway. The interactions between miners and nature in the Stikine commodified bodies and brought about ambitious plans to move people and goods across the watershed. The Stikine watershed would remain largely undeveloped in the coming decades, but these early efforts were fundamental because they created the prospect of improvement and allowed the Stikine to be considered as a place where progress could be achieved. The failed railway initiatives fostered political debate and necessitated lobbying and negotiation of economic concessions that turned elements of the Stikine environment into new commodities. The rail schemes and the construction of the Teslin Trail also required collection of geological and natural data that described landscape characteristics in ways designed to facilitate profit and progress. Furthermore, prospective miners, as they fought against the strange experience of the trail, helped to bring the Stikine into the wider cultural fabric, as they wrote home about their exertions and frustrations. The promise of the railway and easy passage to the Klondike goldfields enabled the embodied experiences of the miners and forced state actors to reckon with nature and resources that had to be deciphered and ultimately controlled. Together, railway schemes and miners’ experiences show how the conditions of possibility for development were created in the Stikine, as it was slowly moved to within the reach of the state and of metropolitan entrepreneurship, becoming a place that could be improved. The railway projects—the first major development projects brought to the Stikine—and the experiences they made possible are historically important because they changed perceptions of the Stikine as a place where development could happen. This shift stemmed from the identification and cataloguing of the region’s characteristics and resources undertaken to attempt to prove the feasibility of the railways and wagon

roads. In the coming decades, a number of relatively small economies and projects would emerge in the region: a flourishing big-game hunting and guiding industry, the construction of the Yukon Telegraph, placer mining operations throughout the Stikine watershed, and large-scale exploration and surveying programs, largely under the auspices of the Geological Survey of Canada. These received their major impetus in the waning years of the nineteenth century as the Stikine entered into the vernacular as a place of opportunity.

## Notes

- 1 Cited in Pierre Berton, *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush, 1886–1899* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2001), 226.
- 2 City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter cited as CVA), PAM 1943–46, George Kirkendale, *The Stikine Trail, 1898: A Narrative of Glenora, Telegraph Creek, Cassiar Central Railway, Teslin and Dease Lakes*, 1943.
- 3 Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold: An Environmental History of the Klondike Gold Rush* (Vancouver and Seattle: UBC Press and University of Washington Press, 2003). See ch. 1, “The Culture of Gold,” 16–39.
- 4 *The Klondike News* (Dawson City), 1 April 1898 (vol. 1, no. 1).
- 5 For a general, popular discussion, see Pierre Berton, *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush, 1886–1899* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2001). For more nuanced, scholarly analyses, see Julie Cruikshank, *Reading Voices: Oral and Written Interpretations of Yukon’s Past* (Vancouver and Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1991); Morse, *The Nature of Gold*; Colin M. Coates and Ken Coates, eds., “The Klondike Gold Rush in International Perspective,” *Northern Review* 19 (Winter 1998); Charlene Porsild, *Gamblers and Dreamers: Women, Men, and Community in the Klondike* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).
- 6 There was a competing “All-Canadian” route heading northwest from Edmonton, which received significant institutional and legislative support from the local MP, Frank Oliver, though the term was primarily a promotional designation appealing to patriotic and/or imperial sensibilities.
- 7 The phrase is borrowed from Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). See also, Ian McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (2000), 617–45. On the immanence of northern development in Canada more generally, see the chapter by Loo in this volume.
- 8 For an outline, see Ken Coates and William Morrison, *The Forgotten North: A History of Canada’s Provincial Norths* (Toronto: James Lorimer, 1992).

- 9 Some prominent recent examples include Hans Carlson, *Home is the Hunter: The James Bay Cree and Their Land* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008); Caroline Desbiens, *Power from the North: Territory, Identity, and the Culture of Hydroelectricity in Quebec* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013); Arn Keeling, "Born in an Atomic Test Tube: Landscapes of Cyclonic Development at Uranium City, Saskatchewan," *Canadian Geographer* 54, no. 2 (2010): 228–42; Frank Tough, "As Their Resources Fail": *Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870–1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996); Donald G. Wetherell and Irene R. A. Kmet, *Alberta's North: A History, 1890–1950* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press).
- 10 Liza Piper, "Subterranean Bodies: Mining the Large Lakes of North-west Canada, 1921–1960," *Environment and History* 13 (2007): 155–86; Liza Piper, *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009); John Sandlos and Arn Keeling, "Claiming the New North: Development and Colonialism at the Pine Point Mine, Northwest Territories, Canada," *Environment and History* 18, no. 1 (2012): 5–34.
- 11 See, in particular, Dolly Jorgenson and Sverker Sorlin, *Northscapes: History, Technology and the Making of Northern Environments* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013). See also the chapters by Cronin, Farish and Lackenbauer, and Piper in this volume.
- 12 See the chapters by Farish and Lackenbauer, Loo, and Keeling and Sandlos in this volume.
- 13 Information on Tahltan resource management practices is found primarily in the ethnographic literature: Thomas McIlwraith, "We Are Still *Didene*": *Stories of Hunting and History From Northern British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012); Sylvia L. Albright, *Tahltan Ethnoarchaeology* (Burnaby: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University, 1984); Judy Thompson, *Recording Their Story: James Teit and the Tahltan* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2007); G. T. Emmons, *The Tahltan Indians* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1911); Janice Sheppard, *The History and Values of a Northern Athapaskan Indian Village* (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1983); Canadian Museum of Civilization, box 121, folder 3, 1210.4b, VI-O-8M, 1912–15, James A. Teit, "Report on Tahltan Fieldwork Among the Tahltan, Kaska, and Bear Lake Indians," 1912–15.
- 14 For an elaboration on these encounters in colonial British Columbia, see Cole Harris, "How Did Colonialism Dispossession? Comments from an Edge of Empire," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 94, no. 1 (March 2004): 165–82.
- 15 Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold*, 68. See also William Cronon, "Kennecott Journey: The Paths Out of Town," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, ed. William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: W. W. Norton, 1992), and Gunther Peck, "The Nature of Labor: Fault Lines and Common Ground in Environmental and Labor History," *Environmental History* 11, no. 2 (2006): 212–38.



- 16 Finis Dunaway, *Natural Visions: The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920–45* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006); Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire, Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840–1870* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Gregg Mitman, *Reel Nature: America's Romance with Wildlife on Film* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).
- 17 Morse, *The Nature of Gold*, 162; for the Yukon, see Ken Coates, *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840–1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984); see also Robert G. McCandless, *Yukon Wildlife: A Social History* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1985). For an environmental history of the Caribou Gold Rush, see Megan Prins, “Seasons of Gold: An Environmental History of the Caribou Gold Rush” (master’s thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2007).
- 18 Graeme Wynn, review of Kathryn Morse, *The Nature of Gold: An Environmental History of the Klondike Gold Rush, Agricultural History* 79, no. 2 (Spring 2005): 243–46.
- 19 Although contemporary in nature, the most prominent Yukon-based work in this vein comes from Paul Nadasdy. See in particular *Hunters and Bureaucrats: Power, Knowledge, and Aboriginal-State Relations in the Southwest Yukon* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003); “The Politics of TEK: Power and the ‘Integration’ of Knowledge,” *Arctic Anthropology* 36, nos. 1–2 (1999): 1–18; and “Wildlife as Renewable Resource: Competing Conceptions of Wildlife, Time, and Management in the Yukon,” in *Timely Assets: The Politics of Resources and their Temporalities*, ed. E. Ferry and M. Limbert (Santa Fe, NM: School of Advanced Research Press, 2008): 75–106. See also Nadasdy’s chapter in this volume.
- 20 For an overview, see Karen Bakker and Gavin Bridge, “Material Worlds? Resource Geographies and the ‘Matter of Nature,’” *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 1 (February 2006): 5–27.
- 21 Liza Piper, *The Industrial Transformation of Subarctic Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010); Arn Keeling, “Born in an Atomic Test Tube.”
- 22 Lisa Cooke, “North Takes Place in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada,” in *Northscapes: History, Technology, and the Making of Northern Environments*, ed. Dolly Jorgenson and Sverker Sorlin (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013): 223–46. See also Emilie Cameron, “Copper Stories: Imaginative Geographies and Material Orderings of the Central Canadian Arctic,” in *Rethinking the Great White North*, ed. Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, and Audrey Kobayashi (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).
- 23 Dianne Newell MacDougall, “Canada’s Share of the Klondyke: The Character of Gold Rush Publicity, 1897–98” (master’s thesis, Carleton University, 1974).
- 24 H. V. Nelles and Christopher Armstrong, *Monopoly’s Moment: The Organization and Regulations of Canadian Utilities, 1880–1930* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Duncan McDowall, *The Light: Brazilian Traction, Light*

- and Power Company, 1899–1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); R. B. Fleming, *The Railway King of Canada: Sir William MacKenzie, 1849–1923* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991).
- 25 Provincial Archives of British Columbia (hereafter cited as PABC), GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 1, Alexander Begg, *Memorial To the Honourable the Executive Council of the Province of British Columbia*, Victoria, December, 1896. Begg claimed that Vancouver and Nanaimo merchants had submitted similar memorials.
  - 26 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5 file 1, Alexander Begg to J. H. Turner, 10 April 1897.
  - 27 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 1, Begg to Turner, 4 May 1897.
  - 28 PABC, GR 0444, British Columbia, Executive Council Records, Alexander Begg to The Honourable the Executive of British Columbia, July 28, 1897.
  - 29 Peter Murray, *Home From the Hill: Three Gentlemen Adventurers* (Victoria: Horsdal and Schubart, 1994), 37.
  - 30 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, F. Elworthy to J. H. Turner, 18 November 1897.
  - 31 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, J. H. Turner to Clifford Sifton, 20 November 1897.
  - 32 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, J. T. Bethune to J. H. Turner, 12 November 1897; PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, Bethune and Charles Lugin to Turner, 26 November 1897; PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, Turner to Bethune, 30 November 1897.
  - 33 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 7, file 3, J. H. Turner to R. L. Elliott, 7 January 1898.
  - 34 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 7, file 5, Mackenzie, Mann & Co. to J. H. Turner, 28 December 1897; PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 7, file 5, J. H. Turner to Donald Mann, 30 December 1897.
  - 35 Library and Archives Canada (hereafter cited as LAC), Clifford Sifton Papers, vol. 224, Clifford Sifton to William Van Horne, 11 January 1898.
  - 36 D. J. Hall, *Clifford Sifton, Volume One: The Young Napoleon, 1861–1900* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1981), 179–80.
  - 37 The debate about the Yukon-Canadian occupied Parliament between 22 February and 17 March 1898, with Sifton and Tupper each playing prominent roles. See Canada, "Official report of the debates of the House of Commons of the Dominion of Canada: third session, eighth Parliament ... comprising the period from the third day of February to the twenty-first day of April inclusive" (Ottawa: S. E. Dawson, 1898).
  - 38 Warburton Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest: Down the Yukon by Canoe in 1887* (New York: E. Arnold, 1896); Warburton Pike, *The Barren Grounds of Northern Canada* (London: MacMillan, 1892).
  - 39 PABC, GR 0441 Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, 1883–1933, Warburton Pike to J. H. Turner, 13 January 1897; PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, Pike to Turner, 5 April 1897. The term "Cassiar" is often synonymous with "Stikine," though it often applies to the

- larger section of northwest British Columbia.
- 40 PABC, GR 0441, Premier's Records, box 5, file 3, Pike to Turner, 5 April 1897.
- 41 Murray, *Home From the Hill*, 31–42.
- 42 Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks: The Story of the Geological Survey of Canada, 1842–1972* (Toronto: Mac-Millan, and Ottawa: Department of Energy, Mines and Resources and Information Canada, 1975).
- 43 William Ogilvie, "Extracts From the Report of an Exploration Made in 1896–1897," in *The Yukon Territory* (London: Downer, 1898), 383–423. Ogilvie suggested that there was great mining potential in the Teslin-Hootalinqua area. He estimated the prospects for the northern part of the Stikine plateau as even greater: "from Telegraph Creek northward to the boundary line we have in the Dominion and in this province an area of 550 to 600 miles in length, and from 100 to 150 miles in width, over the whole of which rich prospects have been found. We must have from 90,000 to 100,000 square miles, which, with proper care, judicious handling, and better facilities for the transportation of food and utensils, will be the largest, as it is the richest, goldfield the world has ever seen" (p. 417).
- 44 George Mercer Dawson, *Report on an Exploration made in the Yukon District, N.W.T. and Adjacent Portion of British Columbia, 1887* (Ottawa: Geological Survey of Canada, 1898). A useful account of a previous surveying trip Dawson made to British Columbia can be found in Jason Grek-Martin, "Vanishing the Haida: George Dawson's Ethnographic Vision and the Making of Settler Space on the Queen Charlotte Islands in the Late Nineteenth Century," *Canadian Geographer* 51, no. 2 (Fall 2007): 373–98.
- 45 William Jennings, "Report on Routes to the Yukon" (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1898).
- 46 For more general discussions of this point, see Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North, 1870–1914* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971); Alan Cooke and Clive Holland, *The Exploration of Northern Canada 500–1920: A Chronology* (Toronto: Arctic History Press, 1976); Marionne Cronin, "Northern Visions: Aerial Surveying and the Canadian Mining Industry, 1919–1928," *Technology and Culture* 48, no. 2 (2007): 303–30.
- 47 Jennings, "Report on Routes to the Yukon."
- 48 Jennings, "Report on Routes to the Yukon"; PABC, MS-0051, Edmund Duchesnay, "Field Notes of E. J. Duchesnay on survey trip to Telegraph Creek, Stikine River, Sept. 1897."
- 49 Jennings, "Report on Routes to the Yukon."
- 50 Hall, *Clifford Sifton, Volume One: The Young Napoleon, 1861–1900*, 177–82.
- 51 Yukon Archives (hereafter cited as YA), MSS361 (2006/163), Thomas Frederick Seldon fonds, 1898–99.
- 52 YA, MSS207 (90/48), O. T. Switzer fonds, 1897–1900, 20 February 1898. Switzer's diary and letters home to his parents were published serially in the *Philipsburg Ledger*. It appears this arrangement was made before Switzer came north.

- 53 YA, MSS169 (81/101), Robert Hunter Fitzhugh fonds, 1897–99, Fitzhugh to his sister, December 1897. For more on Fitzhugh, see Joanne Hook, “He Never Returned: Robert Hunter Fitzhugh in Alaska,” *Alaska Journal* 15 (Spring 1985): 33–38.
- 54 YA, MSS169 (81/101), Robert Hunter Fitzhugh fonds, 1897–99, Fitzhugh to his sister, 5 May 1898.
- 55 Estimates vary from five thousand to over ten thousand people, which is likely too large. The plateau at Glenora is small, and miners’ shacks and tents were squeezed into a very confined space. Diarists describe seeing tents and shacks along the banks of the river for several miles each way from Glenora.
- 56 Larry Pynn, *The Forgotten Trail: One Man’s Adventures on the Canadian Route to the Klondike* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1996).
- 57 YA, MSS361 (2006/163), Thomas Frederick Seldon.
- 58 YA, MSS207 (90/48), O. T. Switzer Diary, 23 June 1898.
- 59 YA, MSS207 (90/48), O. T. Switzer Diary, 16 July 1898.
- 60 Guy Lawrence, *Forty Years on the Yukon Telegraph* (Quesnel, BC: Caryall Books, 1965). The line was also sometimes referred to as the Yukon-Teslin.
- 61 Dianne Newell, “The Importance of Information and Misinformation in the Making of the Klondike Gold Rush,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1986–87): 95–111.
- 62 YA, MSS207 (90/48), O. T. Switzer Diary, 6 April 1898.
- 63 The Collins Overland Telegraph was an ambitious scheme to connect San Francisco to Moscow by telegraph. The route came directly north through Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, then skirted west through the Yukon Territory and Alaska. Another party from the company was working in Siberia. The line and trail were abandoned in 1867 (with \$3 million already spent) after a competing company successfully laid an underground cable between Newfoundland and Ireland. It was also known as the Russian-American Telegraph and the Western Union Overland Telegraph. See John Dwyer, *To Wire the World: Perry M. Collins and the North Pacific Telegraph Expedition* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001); Rosemary Neering, *Continental Dash: The Russian-American Telegraph* (Ganges, BC: Horsdal and Schubart, 2000).
- 64 Norman Lee, *Klondike Cattle Drive: The Journal of Norman Lee* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1960), 20.
- 65 Hamlin Garland, *On the Trail of the Goldseekers: A Record of Travel in Verse and in Prose* (New York: Macmillan, 1906), 180–81; Keith Newlin, “Prospecting For Health: Hamlin Garland’s Klondike Adventures,” *American Literary Realism* 35, no. 1 (Fall 2002): 72–92.
- 66 See Ken S. Coates and William R. Morrison, “Winter and the Shaping of Northern History: Reflections from the Canadian North,” in *Northern Visions: Perspectives on the North in Canadian History*, ed. Kerry Abel and Ken S. Coates (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2001): 23–36.

- 67 YA, MSS169 (81/101), Hunter Fitzhugh to his mother, 7 November 1897.
- 68 Arthur L. Disher, "The Long March of the Yukon Field Force," *The Beaver* (August 1962): 4–15.
- 69 YA, MSS169 (81/145), Henry W. Franklin to his father, n.d.
- 70 For an argument that suggests that European modernity and the life-ways of northern Indigenous peoples were not mutually exclusive, see Cruikshank, *Do Glaciers Listen? Local Knowledge, Colonial Encounters, and Social Imagination* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005), in particular ch. 2, "Constructing Life Stories: Glaciers as Social Spaces."
- 71 James C. Scott, *Seeing Like A State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999). See also Tania Murray Li, *The Will to Improve: Governmentality, Development and the Practice of Politics* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2007); and Anna Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). See also the chapter by Cameron in this volume.
- 72 Tina Loo, "People in the Way: Modernity, Environment, and Society on the Arrow Lakes," *BC Studies* 142, no. 33 (2004): 161–96; Tina Loo and Meg Stanley, "An Environmental History of Progress: Damming the Peace and Columbia Rivers," *Canadian Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (2011): 399–427; Philip Van Huizen, "Building a Green Dam: Environmental Modernism and the Canadian-American Libby Dam Project," *Pacific Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (2010): 418–53.
- 73 Scott describes this "as a central problem of statecraft." Scott, *Seeing Like A State*, 2.