One advantage she enjoyed was that he provided his family with financial security. Otherwise, life would have been truly intolerable.

There is no question that she was devoted to him and he to her. Just how much he valued her is indicated by unobtrusive yet frequent evidence scattered throughout his papers. One is a clipping which, while reflecting another missionary's feelings, expressed his own: "I can not tell how many times I have come in from missionary itineracy among the destitute on my field, so sad and weary that I was ready to say, 'I can not go out again from my pleasant home to encounter such toils, privations and hardships,' when her cheerful counsel, her peculiar way of turning 'the bright side' toward me, has re-kindled the missionary spirit, and again toils and privations have been a pleasure. . . . How much do the churches owe to missionary wives. . . ."

What the Church owes to Jackson it owes also to his wife.

CHAPTER 9

STARVATION ON THE YUKON

In August 1896, George Washington Carmack stumbled across rich gold deposits along Bonanza Creek in the Klondike area of Canada. His find produced a chain reaction that resulted in the "rediscovery" of Alaska and sent Sheldon Jackson part-way around the world to organize an expedition to relieve prospectors who had become stranded along the upper waters of the Yukon. The Klondike was a poorly defined region in Canada stretching from below the Klondike River to north of the Indian River just east of the international boundary. The rich, gold-bearing gravel lay in an area eight hundred miles square between the two rivers. Most of the really big claims were located along the streams that flowed into the Klondike and Indian Rivers.

The real significance of Carmack's discovery did not reach the outside world until the summer of 1897 when Jackson was back in Alaska. The Secretary of Agriculture had commissioned him to travel to the upper valley of the Yukon River to survey the agricultural possibilities. He also wanted to see whether moss grew there in sufficient quantities to support reindeer in the event that they should be used to establish routes into the interior. Kjelmann, of the Teller reindeer station, went with him on the Yukon River inspection.

The two men went to St. Michael on Norton Sound to

board the flat-bottomed steamer *Portus B. Weare* for the trip up the Yukon River. When the *Weare* came downriver to St. Michael, it was carrying a half-million-dollar gold cargo, and when the gold reached Oregon aboard the steamer *Portland,* the news of the Klondike strike spread across the nation and the big rush was on to the gold fields.

When the *Weare* started back up the Yukon a few days later, Jackson and Kjelmann were on board. It took twenty days to cover the sixteen hundred miles from the mouth of the river to the headwaters. At some places the river banks were so far apart that neither shore could be seen from the deck of the ship; at other points the river narrowed until it seemed as if one could touch either bank, then spread out again into wide, shallow channels. When Jackson reached Dawson on the Canadian side of the boundary late in July, he found himself in the midst of the turmoil that followed Carmack's original discovery. He remained there a day, then started down river with his notes and specimens of Yukon valley plant life, unaware that the flow of prospectors into the Dawson area would swell to tremendous proportions.

When Jackson returned to St. Michael in August, there was a United States Army officer, Captain P. H. Ray of the Eighth Infantry, waiting in the settlement for upriver transportation to Circle City. Jackson and Ray were not acquainted and neither knew of the other's presence in St. Michael, but the two men were to play major roles in the drama of suffering that was beginning to develop out of the Klondike gold rush. Ray was under orders from the Secretary of War to make a careful and accurate check of reports that miners were starving along the Yukon. Many who headed for the Klondike were unprepared physically, mentally, and emotionally to cope with the climate and the kind of life they had to lead. Many had entered Alaska without sufficient provisions and had become

frightened by the lack of supplies in the interior. The letters they wrote to friends and relatives back home were filled with fears that magnified the situation far beyond its actual proportions. In their panic Congress was moved to act at once to relieve the miners. The Chamber of Commerce of Portland, Oregon, informed Washington that the situation in Alaska and the Klondike was desperate, but it had not tried to deter hundreds of Oregonians from setting out for the gold fields. A Citizen's Committee of Tacoma, Washington, organized for the purpose of getting federal assistance, demanded immediate action on behalf of Washingtonians seeking their fortunes in the Klondike. The War Department informed the Senate that information from other sources indicated the existence of a "very serious" food shortage in and around Dawson and asked for authority to get sufficient supplies and clothing into the Klondike to avoid "extreme privation and probably [the] starvation of a great many people. . . ."

But there were those who did not believe that the situation was as bad as it was being depicted. Hugh Wallace, president of the recently organized Chilcoot Railroad and Transportation Company in southeast Alaska, telegraphed the War Department that the reports from Dawson were exaggerated. His company was in the process of constructing a railroad up Dyea Canyon to connect with an aerial tramway over Chilcoot Pass. The line was scheduled for completion by the middle of January 1898. Wallace argued that there would still be plenty of time in January to freight supplies from the tramway terminus to Dawson either by dog sled or reindeer team and that there was no need for any emergency relief. No one in Washington, however, wanted to take responsibility for postponing action because of the clamor being raised across the nation. The Senate took note of the reports of conditions in the Klondike in a resolution passed early in December 1897. Both Houses of

Congresses voted later in the same month to authorize the Secretary of War to purchase supplies and materials to relieve the miners, leaving the Secretary to decide how the provisions should be transported.

The first prospectors to reach the Klondike from the Alaska side came from the Circle City area and the headwaters of Fortymile River in the fall of 1896. When news of the strike reached Juneau and Douglas, other miners went north in the fall and in the spring of 1897. The men who were at St. Michael when the *Weare* came downriver with its gold cargo in 1897 headed up the Yukon for the Klondike. Ray reported from the interior of Alaska in October 1897 that "from what I have learned from mine owners and prospectors, I am fully satisfied that the greater part of the gold lies in our territory, along the ranges known as the Upper Ramparts; that along the Tanana, Manook Creek, Birch Creek, and the head of Forty Mile there are diggings that will pay from ten dollars to twenty dollars per day per man now lying idle. . . . I am satisfied that with adequate means of transportation and cheaper food this will develop into one of the greatest gold producing regions in the world." The Manook Creek "discovery" is dated 1898 while that on the Tanana came in 1902.

Men from the States, who comprised the greater number, entered the Klondike through southeast Alaska. Many went through Skagway at the head of Lynn Canal, climbing dangerous White Pass, crossing the long stretch of frozen lake country beyond the pass which became a swamp in spring and summer, and then proceeding by boat and many portages to Dawson City. Others took the equally difficult route through Dyea, five miles from Skagway, over treacherous Chilcoot Pass, across a wide expanse of glacial ice to Lake Lindeman, and on to Whitehorse. The trail over White Pass was a little

shorter, but there was little to choose between the hazards of the one route and those of the other.

From the distance, snow-covered Chilcoot waited, beautifully garbed in a virgin whiteness that hid its treacherous slopes. Those attempting this route stretched in an endless line from Sheep Camp over fifteen miles to Dyea, across a gorge-lined river to the foot of Chilcoot slope, and up over the pass. From below, one could see the dark ascending line of prospectors, at some points scaling the vertical face of the mountain, their feet toed into the hundreds of steps cut into ice and snow by those who had gone before. They would stop and look up at the blinding path they had to climb, measure the grim steps, stare out over the wilderness of mountains and ice extending in all directions, glance below into the glare of the zigzag trail over which they had already traveled, then thrust their shoulders into packs weighing one to two hundred pounds and move painfully up toward the pass.

Jackson had completed his annual inspection of Alaskan missions and schools and was back in Washington by the time Congress directed the War Department to take action. The Secretary of War asked that the agent for education be relieved of his normal duties and assigned to the War Department for the purpose of carrying out the mission ordered by Congress. The Secretary had decided that the only way to get relief to the Yukon area was to organize a reindeer expedition. Since there were not enough animals in Alaska broken to harness for an expedition of the size required, Jackson was instructed to go to Lapland and buy five hundred trained reindeer, sleds, and other necessary equipment, hire the services of fifty drivers, and arrange for the transportation of the animals, sleds, and men to the United States.

It was then four months since Captain Ray had reached

St. Michael en route to the area where starvation conditions had been reported. He found the situation to be somewhat as reported in Washington. Of the eight hundred and forty-eight men who had landed at St. Michael, several hundred were stranded along the Yukon River. About forty had reached the gold fields; others had returned to the States. Although he himself went on to Circle City, Ray stationed his aide, Lieutenant W. P. Richardson, at Fort Yukon to protect the food stored there in warehouses belonging to the river companies. Ray reported to Washington that the companies had not shipped sufficient food to the interior. Less than two thousand tons had been delivered to points above Fort Yukon. Five hundred tons of provisions and liquor had been left at the Fort when low water prevented the steamers from moving upriver.

Shortly after Ray arrived in Circle City, he found a group of miners unloading the cargo from one of the steamers moored there. When he asked the leader of the group how he expected to get away with taking supplies by force, the man pointed to a miner on the deck with a rifle cradled in his arm. It took a lot of persuasion to convince them that they were committing robbery; they believed that they were taking what they needed and would pay for it when they got money. The men argued that they were hungry and that the transportation companies had refused to sell them provisions on credit. When Ray pointed out that there was food at Circle City, they laughed and told him that only thirty tons had been landed by the boat which brought him to Circle City.

Ray took the miners' complaints to the transportation agents with the warning that there would be violence if the companies did not sell food to the miners on credit. In a report to the War Department, he described the background to the food shortage:

"At the present time, neither of the transportation companies will transport a pound of freight for other traders or private parties, forcing all people coming into the Territory to be wholly dependent upon their stores for supplies at their prices. A large majority of the people here now are peaceable and law-abiding, but in the absence of any person in authority to appeal to for the settlement of the many differences that are constantly arising, they are compelled to act outside the law, and when influenced by passion, prejudice, or liquor will commit acts that jeopardize great financial interests and from which there can be no appeal.

"While I consider the situation critical, I do not believe there will be any great loss of life beyond that incident to a climate as rigorous as this. That there will be suffering along the river and the trail owing to the rashness and ignorance of the people, no well-informed person will deny, but there is nothing that should cause undue anxiety or alarm."

The pressure for relief became so great in Circle City that Ray's concern over the possibility of outbreaks mounted each day. About two hundred miners decided that they would go downriver to Fort Yukon to get the provisions and asked the master of one of the steamers at Circle City to make the trip. He told them that the ship was frozen against the landing. When they offered to chop away the ice, he promised to leave as soon as the vessel was free.

One hundred men worked through the night and freed the vessel. But for some reason known only to himself, the master refused to sail. The miners, therefore, decided to seize the ship and make for Fort Yukon themselves. The company agents, when they discovered the plan, went to Ray for help. As soon as he saw the angry crowd at the landing, he knew that his worst fears were about to materialize if something were not done quickly. He told the agents that the only way to avert trouble was to provide the miners with small boats and enough

provisions to make the trip. He then called the miners to a meeting. Although he had no means of enforcing his authority, he warned that he would not tolerate any attempt to seize the steamer and that transportation and supplies would be given any man who wanted to leave. After a long and turbulent session, he was able to reassure them that his proposal was best, and by afternoon sixty men had started on the fifteen-hour trip downriver. Ray made arrangements for others to leave as rapidly as possible.

With a sense of apprehension he watched the first boats leave, for he knew that he had averted serious trouble at one place only to court it at another. Several miners had come to him before leaving Circle City with the blunt warning that they did not trust the transportation companies. They made it clear that if conditions at Fort Yukon were not what they were reported to be, they would take matters into their own hands. They would make no further compromises. Ray feared new trouble in the face of these threats because although the company agents claimed there were about one thousand tons of supplies downriver, he knew the amount was closer to three hundred tons.

Ray had mixed emotions about the miners' situation as a result of his observations. He was sharply critical of the fact that the commercial boats used on the Yukon River were not properly designed to do what was required of them. He had worked on the Upper Missouri and Colorado Rivers where low water conditions were frequent, and he told Washington that the Yukon required smaller draft vessels to navigate the shallow sections of river and equipment to get through the flats, particularly during the dry season. He also had doubts about the quality of the crews on these boats, for even if the vessels were capable of river travel, efficient men were needed to handle them.

There was another reason to fear trouble at Fort Yukon. The Canadian Northwest Mounted Police had moved into the Dawson City area when prospectors started flocking to the Klondike in large numbers, both to keep order and to prevent any influx of desperadoes from other areas. The lawless element had left when the Mounted Police arrived and crossed into Alaska where there were no police. None of these unsavory characters came to Circle City, apparently because they knew Ray was there. Instead, they circled around the settlement and headed for Fort Yukon. When Ray discovered where they were going, he knew that Richardson would need his help. Late that afternoon he left Circle City by boat with a small group of men, hoping to reach the Fort by morning.

About eight thirty at night, while the party was having difficulty getting through the thickening river ice, they were startled by a distant roar. An Indian who had joined them said that it was the sound of a great ice mass pushing its way through the river gorge a mile upstream. Soon huge slabs of ice were blocking every effort Ray made to get his boat to shore. They bounced and scraped against the boat, threatening to tumble men and provisions into the river. It was useless to try to steer. When the ice broke two oars, the men could only grip the sides of the boat and hope that the wild, careening ride would end safely. They had no knowledge where they were along the river or whether they were nearer to one shore or the other. About midnight, the boat was hurled out of the water onto an ice jam where it remained upright for a second and then rolled over, spilling men and packs.

Although they had no way of knowing their location, the men were thankful that they were no longer at the mercy of the ice and the river. They spent the remainder of the night crouched in the lee of the boat, shivering in the damp, sharp wind, listening to the passing of the ice. They discovered at

dawn that they were stranded on a floe in the middle of the river, with no way of reaching either bank. There was a small island about four hundred yards away; beyond that, it was a quarter of a mile through ice-clogged water to the shore. The other shore was about a half mile away with no possibility of reaching it.

When it got lighter and they were able to get a better look upriver, the party spotted several boats, abandoned along a three-quarter mile stretch of the river. But there were no signs of the miners who had left Circle City. Later in the day they saw a group of men on the right bank and shouted for help; but the roar of the water drowned out their cries, and the men disappeared into the timber, evidently on their way downstream. Disconsolately they stood around the boat, not knowing what to do. Then one of the party walked to the edge of the ice pack on which they were stranded and picked his way slowly and carefully across a narrow stretch of ice in the direction of the island. Ray shouted to him to come back, but the man waved his arm and went on. Halfway to the island he stopped and hurried back, slipping and sliding on the uneven surface to report that the ice might be firm enough for them to reach the island.

Ray questioned the man sharply, but he argued that despite the danger it was better to make the effort than to remain where they were. An unexpected warm spell would break up the ice pack on which they were stranded. Furthermore, the island would be a better vantage point from which to attract the attention of anyone on the shore.

They left all the gear that was not needed, preferring to lose it rather than their food, and started out single file, moving slowly and carefully over the rough surface. It was dangerously thin in spots; at one point they almost stopped and retraced their steps. But moving on turned out to be the wisest decision

in the end. When they were all across to the island, Ray went to its highest point and spotted a tiny wisp of smoke on shore. Then he saw what looked like another of the boats that had left Circle City earlier. Several of the men joined him, and together they shouted and waved for a half hour. Just when they were worn out and ready to give up, the men at the camp saw them. Even then, it was by no means certain that they would get help because of the danger of rowing out to the island. Those on shore did attempt the rescue, however, and just before dark the last of Ray's party reached land and crowded around the campfire to get warm. Their rescuers were part of the first group that had left Circle City. They had run their boat into shore when they became afraid of the ice in the river. They told Ray that some of the miners had started downstream on the opposite shore; many others were stranded up and down the river below the campsite, which was sixty-five miles above Fort Yukon and about twenty-five miles below Circle City. A check of the shore line the following day disclosed about one hundred and fifty miners, most of them without food or clothing. Only two were rescued from midstream before a warm spell broke up the ice and ended the possibility of further rescue work. All through the night there were cries for help from out on the river, but Ray and his men could do nothing but sit helplessly by, never knowing when some of those who were calling for help had drowned.

Ray sent an Indian and a white prospector down the river to Richardson with an urgent plea for relief supplies as quickly as possible. The white man came back to camp late at night in a state of exhaustion. The ice in the river had raised the water in the sloughs, forcing him and his companion to make long detours through the knee-deep snow in the forest. When the miner realized that he would never reach Fort Yukon, he turned back while he still had enough strength to reach the

camp. The Indian got to Richardson with Ray's message, but it took him three and a half days and he was half dead from exposure and lack of food. Richardson dispatched two dog teams loaded with supplies early the next morning in charge of two white men and another Indian. The white men reached Ray's camp five days later with only a part of the supplies, explaining to the captain that they had given half to hungry miners they met on the trail and left most of the remainder with the Indian to distribute to other stragglers on their way to Fort Yukon. It seemed doubtful that all of the miners would reach the settlement, but they did, many of them more dead than alive. One group appeared on the other side of the river from the Fort and were ferried across. Most of their gear had been abandoned at the outset because they were too weak to carry it. The little food they had been able to keep had been eaten the first two days of the trip. For the next two, they had lived on a mixture of cold water and flour. They had been without food the last two days.

A second group arrived at Fort Yukon that night, and several more prospectors reached the settlement during the following days. Some of them were in better physical shape than others, particularly the more experienced; but all had one thought in common: to destroy anything that belonged to the transportation companies. Their feeling was compounded of fear, anger, and defeat, for they believed that they had been left to the mercy of the country by those who should have helped them. Not one was willing to admit that he had any responsibility for his own condition or that he might have been totally unprepared for what he had to face.

Richardson's experience was the same as Ray's. It was impossible to reason with any of the prospectors. Most of them were without clothing, food, or the means of earning money to buy what they needed. Since there was not enough at Fort

Yukon, the rapidly approaching winter spelled new disaster. Richardson talked the company agents into issuing emergency rations and lending tents and stoves to provide temporary shelter for the miners.

Would-be prospectors who had been forced to stay at Fort Yukon because they had not been able to get transportation to Dawson City added their dissatisfaction to the ugly mood of those returning. Groups gathered every day to discuss their plight and give vent to their ire; there was open talk of attacking the warehouses so that the men could take what they wanted. Richardson's difficulty was that there was no one else in authority to whom he could turn for help. He doubted that anyone could have enforced law and order even if he had had the badge of his office. The only recourse, as he saw it, was to prod the company into making some kind of compromise with the prospectors. He succeeded in getting them to issue rations on a credit basis with the argument that most of the miners, however disgruntled, were reasonable and would respond to fair treatment. Worst of all, the able-bodied were without work. Richardson met that problem by working out an agreement whereby the companies provided a month's provisions and clothing to those who would go into the forest and cut cord wood on a contract basis. This maneuver succeeded in getting those out of the settlement who might have taken supplies by violence.

Meanwhile, Ray's situation was no better than when he had sent to Richardson for help. There were still about one hundred men scattered above and below the camp, all in desperate need. Several who had come better prepared contributed their supplies to a common larder and agreed to go out and bring stragglers to the camp. But the captain found himself facing an almost unresolvable problem. He had no way of knowing how many men were at Fort Yukon or how many supplies

Richardson could spare. His own meager stores were sufficient for no more than eight days if they were doled out carefully. Reports he had received of trail conditions from the first relief party convinced him that it would take at least a week for any of the men in his vicinity to reach the Fort. Each day brought the threat of new snow and a worsening of the dilemma. He finally decided to send a second message to Richardson asking him to dispatch another relief group while he started the miners downriver to meet the rescue party. There were about a hundred men stumbling through the forest by nightfall of October 14. As a result of Richardson's quick response to Ray's request, everyone made the trip safely. All were hungry, many were sick, but the strategy had paid off.

The day he reached Fort Yukon, Captain Ray made arrangements for feeding and housing the sick and indigent at government expense. An inventory of supplies on hand at settlement confirmed his doubts: it would take the most careful handling to make the provisions on hand last until more could be shipped in. Two days later, he received a warning that a gang who had fled from the Canadian authorities were collecting rifles and ammunition to attack the warehouses. Ray had no way to meet the emergency but by bluff. He served notice that he was taking over all stores in the name of the federal government and would shoot anyone who tried to pilfer the warehouses. Then he posted an armed guard where he could be seen by everyone but warned the man not to risk his life in trying to repel an attack.

Ray and Richardson spent an uneasy afternoon and night while they waited for the sound of rifle fire. By dawn they knew that the deception had worked and that the men from whom they had the most to fear had headed farther west.

By the end of October Ray reported to Washington that

he had several hundred men on his hands who would be thoroughly dependent upon the supplies at Fort Yukon for the next seven months. About half were at the settlement or in the immediate vicinity; the remainder were scattered at campsites along the river. By rationing food at three pounds a day, without tea or coffee, Ray thought there would be enough to feed nine hundred men until June 1. Under normal conditions this would have been enough, but it was hardly sufficient to sustain men in the interior of Alaska, particularly those who were doing any kind of work. Ray eventually had to take over the provisions and stores of both transportation companies in the name of the Government to avoid trouble and to maintain an effective rationing system.

His reports to his superiors are examples of amazing restraint, particularly important for what they have to say about conditions in general in the territory. They are an objective evaluation of the problems with which Jackson and others had to contend in their efforts to develop Alaska. Ray not only reported what he saw but documented his observations with interviews with those whom he called "permanent" settlers and miners. He concluded that people feared the inadequacy and, in some areas, complete lack of transportation facilities more than they feared starvation. This was one result of Washington's refusal to survey the territory and to provide the financial support needed by private groups for developing rail and road facilities. The chaotic state of the territorial government, the lack of good civil and criminal codes, laxity in opening the way to homesteading, the general uncertainties of life which impeded the development of new industries—all worked together to deter American capital from investing in transportation. Every Alaskan was aware of the fact that Canadian authorities were cognizant of the territory's business potential

and were willing to help British business interests in the organization of two-way rail traffic between the Alaskan interior and the outside world.

Ray reported from Circle City that "the people here are now afraid that the failure of the Yukon River route for freight will cause the construction of a railroad through British North America to the Yukon River above the boundary, and that the mining districts of Alaska will be dependent for supplies on a route through a foreign country with all that means in the way of discrimination in favor of British merchants."

When Congress passed a law in May 1898 which contained general provisions for railroad construction in Alaska, the British-owned White Pass and Yukon Railroad filed a right of way in Alaska. It eventually connected Skagway in southeast Alaska with Whitehorse in the Canadian Yukon, twenty miles of the line running through American territory and the remaining ninety-two in Canada. When Congress levied taxes on Alaskan business in 1899, the rate on railroads was one hundred dollars for every operating mile, "thus perpetuating the monopoly of the White Pass which was the only one that could afford to pay that amount," according to Nichols. Exactly how much of a monopoly may be a moot question. There was a wagon route from Haines to the Yukon which carried freight and there were river boats on the Yukon connecting the interior of Alaska with St. Michael, though they could not operate all year. Nichols says that after the completion of the White Pass in 1900 it was the only railroad for two decades that led to the interior of Alaska; Gruening makes it twenty-four years. The Copper River and Northwestern Railroad was completed in 1910, running from Cordova to Chitina to Kennecott, a distance of 196 miles, and several other short lines were either projected or under construction in the early 1900's. Apparently, Nichols and Gruening were

thinking in terms of a much longer American route to the interior, such as the government-owned Alaska Railroad, completed in June 1923, which ran 540 miles from Seward to Fairbanks.

Ray coupled his plea in October 1897 for "adequate means of transportation and cheaper food" by proposing that the government make a preliminary survey of a railroad route "from the head of Cook's Inlet or Prince William Sound to the mouth of the Tanannah [*sic*], from which point supplies could be delivered by light-draft steamers along all the navigable tributaries of the Yukon." This route, he believed, would "secure to our own people the commerce of this whole country. It would give a route to the open sea that could be operated all winter, and act as a check to the Canadian route." The Alaska Railroad followed approximately the route Ray proposed, except that it terminated at Fairbanks, farther to the east of the juncture of the Tanana and Yukon Rivers.

Ray also proposed the establishment of a military government in Alaska as a means of combating the lack of law enforcement until such time as an effective civil government could impose its authority, particularly in the remote areas of the territory. He placed the blame for many of Alaska's social and economic perplexities upon the absence of any clear-cut demonstration of United States authority, and he had absorbed enough of the pessimism of Alaskans to believe that it would be a long time before respect for the law could be achieved otherwise. Under such circumstances a military "big stick" would be preferable to government-by-vacuum. He was more than a little chagrined over the fact that while he had been trying to protect the food stocks at Fort Yukon, a transportation company warehouse there had been robbed of more than six thousand dollars in gold dust. The theft caused hardly a ripple, largely because of the total apathy toward authority.

The condition of the mail system was symptomatic of the general state of affairs in the territory. The regular mail contractor for the interior made delivery to Circle City only once during 1897. Not one sack of mail left the settlement in either direction throughout the same year nor were there plans for sending mail west to Circle City during the winter. Ray reported that he had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the Circle City postmaster except that he was somewhere in the States, his assistant having been removed from office because of drunkenness. It was almost beside the point that the Post Office Department had not provided stamps for the interior since mail sent east from St. Michael was on its own, with no one designated to see to its delivery. There were no route agents, and the transportation companies paid little or no attention to it.

Shortly after his return to Fort Yukon, he discovered that one hundred bags of mail had been dropped on the landing and left there. He induced the master of the *Weare* to take some, but the captain of the *Bella* refused to touch a single letter. Some time later, Ray was walking near the river's edge when he stumbled over a sack, half-buried by the snow, that contained several hundred letters addressed to persons in the Dawson area. He had no way of knowing how long it had been there. That was in October. When he included an account of this finding in his report, he added that he hoped to get the sack forwarded to its destination by the spring of the following year.

Ray suggested drastic measures to prevent a repetition of the Klondike troubles. He urged the federal government in November 1897 to ban anyone from entering the interior who could not support himself for at least two years because there would be no means of earning money to buy provisions. He underscored his remedy by pointing out that there had

not been a single discovery of a new placer district of any importance on either side of the boundary during the last six months of 1897. All Klondike claims of any value had been filed. Ray believed that fewer than seven per cent of all the men who had entered the interior in 1897 were earning their own living by the year's end. Hundreds were scattered along the Yukon, Klondike, and Indian Rivers and their tributaries —low on food, clothing, money and morale. He saw no likelihood of any change in their situation for at least a year. Approximately twelve hundred men were camped at various places along the Yukon River between the Tanana and the Canadian line. Fifty per cent were without either jobs or the means to work at what was available. A large percentage of those who had come to Fort Yukon for assistance had families in the States who were dependent on them for support while they themselves were stranded. Ray was fearful that even though the food situation was under control, the steady deterioration of the men's spirits, the lack of authority to protect life and property, and the ever-present resentment toward the transportation companies might lead to new disorders. The fact that most wrongdoers could escape punishment added to the temptation of many to take what they believed had been denied to them by a cruel and unjust fate.

The natives of the interior were also in a sorry predicament —not a little of it the direct result of the gold rush. Ray reported that bands of Indians were starving to death. Women and children died on the trail as the tribes tried to reach settlements. Ray himself rescued a group of about one hundred and forty men, women, and children in one area and another eighty elsewhere. All were physically wasted and unable to help themselves. One cause of their plight was that the caribou migration had by-passed the Indians' normal hunting grounds, and a bad fish catch the previous season had

added to the food shortage. To a large degree, however, Ray blamed the "gold craze" for their impoverished state. The trader at Fort Yukon who took care of most of the Indians in the region reported that he had been unable to have sufficient stores delivered during the summer of 1897 because "the mining interest assumed such magnitude as practically to obliterate the Indian trading interests, and no attention was paid to supplying the natives with arms, ammunition, blankets." Even where the companies did have supplies, Ray reported that prices were so high the Indians could not pay them.

In his report to Washington of January 13, 1898, he wrote that "up-to-date there is nothing in sight or reported to justify the great excitement the discoveries in Northwest Territory started, or to avert a collapse of the many schemes now being promoted in the States to float stock based on alleged mines in Alaska. The advertising given this country by the newspapers, the transportation companies, and mining companies has become criminal in view of the distress and suffering it has caused."

Ray left the interior by way of Dawson on February 13, 1898. On his way to Washington State he saw enough to convince him that there was no starvation along the Yukon or at Dawson nor any destitution that had not been relieved, but he judged there were about eight to ten thousand persons still on their way into the Klondike region by way of Skagway and Chilcoot Pass. In May 1898, Captain Ray reported that "the whole country in the Klondike district has been staked out and there has not been any new rich discovery made in the Northwest Territory since the Klondike strike, so that many good paying districts in Alaska that were abandoned when the Klondike rush occurred are now being relocated.

The most noted are Birch Creek, Seventy Mile, American Creek, and Mission Creek. . . . It is well known that there are extensive districts along the Tanana, Koyukuk, Porcupine, Juan de Leur (Chandelar) that will pay from twelve dollars to twenty dollars per day per man, but none are being worked as such claims can not be made to pay with the present price of food. . . ."

The conclusion to be drawn from Ray's reports is that the claims of imminent starvation among the miners were exaggerated, and that was the conclusion reached by those who read the reports at the time they were made. But his first dispatches left some uncertainty about the exact state of affairs. Since, too, there was considerable lapse of time beween the writing of the reports and their delivery in Washington, it is understandable that the Secretary of War should have proceeded with the plan to send Jackson to Lapland. Ray's final reports were on hand before Jackson returned, making it clear that there was no need for proceeding with the relief expedition. This was an unfortunate turn of events because the United States Commissioner of Education had asked Congress in 1897 to appropriate forty-five thousand dollars to buy additional animals and establish new reindeer stations in Alaska, a request which had provoked a new storm of newspaper criticism.

An incident which also took place in 1897 turned out to be one of the best answers ever given to critics of the reindeer program. Jackson had just returned to Washington from his annual inspection trip to Alaska when reports reached the capital that three hundred sailors were stranded in the Arctic after a fleet of whaling vessels had been crushed in the ice. The government refuge station at Point Barrow was all that stood between the survivors and death. But no one had ever

thought that so many men would descend on the station at one time, so there was neither enough food nor adequate facilities. Sanitary conditions became so bad that disease threatened to wipe out all three hundred even before starvation had its effect. The disaster caused such a furor that President McKinley called a cabinet meeting to discuss relief measures and invited Jackson to participate. Jackson pointed out that there was no hope of getting a rescue ship even as far as Cape Prince of Wales. He did believe that a revenue steamer could get as far north as Point Rodney, close enough to Cape Prince of Wales so that a rescue team could be put ashore for an overland trek to the reindeer station at the Cape. From that point Lopp, the manager of the station, could drive his herd to Barrow to provide fresh meat for the men marooned there.

Jackson suggested that three officers of the *Bear*, including the ship's surgeon, make the trip to Barrow. He had complete confidence in their knowledge of the Arctic region and in their personal courage. Nor was there any question in his mind about Lopp's ability to handle his part of the assignment, President McKinley, having no alternative to Jackson's plan, ordered it put into effect. The *Bear* cleared Port Townsend and, as was to be expected, ran into blinding snow. One storm after another pounded her as she steamed through the North Pacific into the Gulf of Alaska until it became evident that the vessel would never reach Point Rodney. She therefore waited off Cape Vancouver for the weather to clear sufficiently so that the three officers could land and start the eight-hundred-mile trip overland to the reindeer station, stopping at mission stations enroute for supplies and rest.

For one thousand miles from Cape Prince of Wales to Barrow, Lopp drove his herd of four hundred and thirty-five reindeer with the assistance of several native herdsmen. The route skirted Good Hope Bay at the southeastern end of

Kotzebue Bay, through a pass in the Waring Mountains, over the Baird Range, across the frozen tundra east of Point Hope, and up the coastal region past Icy Cape, Cape Collie, and Franklin Point. The expedition reached its objective on March 29, and not a day too soon.

More than half of the men were seriously ill. But within a week the sickest began to show improvement, and with the change in their diet and the correction of the sanitation trouble, the crisis came to an end. The *Bear* was not able to reach Barrow until the following summer, but the difference in morale that followed the arrival of the relief party made it possible for all of the men to survive. As a secondary result of the mission, a herd was established at Point Barrow to forestall any future large-scale emergency. This also helped to convert the Eskimo economy above the Arctic Circle as had already been done farther south.

President McKinley's statement on the success of the venture was full of praise for the three officers, but he failed to say anything about the contribution made by Lopp and his group. An even more glaring omission was his failure to recognize the part played by Jackson. It had been his foresight in the first place which had made the plan workable.

The year 1897 did, however, bring honor to Jackson. He was elected to the highest office the Presbyterian church could give him—that of moderator of the General Assembly. The speech that placed his name in nomination was probably one of the shortest of its kind. One of the seconding addresses supplied the rhetoric and the tributes to his achievements; another proclaimed him "the greatest missionary the world [has] ever seen since the Apostle Paul went far hence unto the Gentiles and died upon the scaffold. . . ." His opponents were men of considerable stature, including former President Benjamin Harrison and John Wanamaker, but the unclerical-

looking Jackson won on the first ballot. That was in May 1897, just after his birthday. Two weeks after his election, he was back at his desk in Washington. In another month he was on his way up the Yukon River Valley. Before the end of 1897 he was on his way to Lapland.

CHAPTER 10

LAPLAND TO ALASKA

Jackson left Washington for Lapland two days before Christmas 1897. As he waited in front of his office building for a cab to take him to the railroad station, the cold, damp wind chilled every bone in his body and made him wish that he was at home instead of starting on a journey that was certain to produce many hardships. At almost any other time in his life he would have plunged with relish into the assignment he had received, but of late he had felt more tired than usual. He pulled the muffler more tightly about his throat, picked up his bags, and walked toward the approaching cab with the steps of a man whose energies were beginning to wane. No sooner was he seated when a sharp pain flashed into his side. When it had subsided, he leaned back and wiped the sweat from his forehead. It was not the first attack that he had suffered; he hoped that, whatever it was that bothered him, it would not recur soon. Anyone seeing him walk briskly through the railroad station would not have guessed at the will power it took to keep him going. Twice he had to ask the ticket seller for the price of the fare to New York. The clerk leaned forward and almost spelled it out for him—three dollars and twenty-five cents for the first class seat and two dollars extra for the sleeping car berth.

The next morning he had an early breakfast on the train