Dec 11th 1898 Dawson

Wishing you may have a Merry Christmas and Bright New Year, with the same good wishes to all my friends. Yukon Canada

Dear father

I know you will be wondering what has become of me for I have not written [illegible] as there was no certainty of it getting through but there will be a batch of mail sent out on the 15th so I expect you will soon get this. We have had a very unsatisfactory mail service so far. I have only had one letter from you and none from our Jim, Will, Martha, Ann, Jim Shepherd and others, though I wrote to all. I did get one on Friday from Jim Tunstall of Bickerall, dated [illegible] I wish he would write and let [illegible] getting. I am going to write to him again by this mail. I thought I was going to have a lot of luck at one time and intended to send for him but I am down again. I have been trying every way to get on. I was in a fair way to establish a round as mail and express carrier on the various creeks, but had to

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abandon it on account of opposition from the officials. After that I went to work at the hospital, at $150 per month and board; I ought to have stayed with it, but I foolishly went into partnership with another man to start a restaurant business, and for various reasons chiefly by not having enough capital to get fairly start – we have failed to make anything [illegible] I will tell you [illegible] house in Dawson and now we have started a road house up the Klondike, on the trail to Bear, Hunker, Dominion, Sulphur, Quartz and other creeks up the famous river. We cannot tell how we shall fare here, yet. This is a poor country already, the officials who represent the Canadian government are a good deal to blame for the state of things, [illegible] thing in all. I don't say much [illegible] wretched officials and their doings just now. I suppose you will have seen account of them already. There are thousands of idle men in the district who no doubt would have been prospecting and finding more rich ground if they had received encouragement from the government

but the government seems to do all it can to deter them, reserving half the ground and taxing them for their work, besides a man is liable to be cheated out of the claim he has been to such pains hunting for. B.C. is a Paradise to this country. Because of the mining laws being so badly handled, people are scared to try mining, the consequence is there is too much [illegible]

We are in for a good long winter now, the days are very short indeed. We never see the sun unless we were to climb the mountains, but we can see his rays shooting up as he travels behind the mountains to south of us; he gives some splendid effects at rise and set. I went around the creeks looking for a job or an opening for business of some kind about 3 weeks out in returning by Bonanza we had to cross the Dome and travel along the ridge which divides the tributaries of Indian river from those of Klondike river. All the best known creeks head somewhere around the Dome mountain. I reached the base of it from Dominion creek just as it was getting dark and was advised to stay below for the night; but next morning I started before daylight and

got to the very summit just before old Sol appeared and watched him shoot up into a blood red and crimson sky, quickly changing to gold; but there were colors of every shade all round the sky just above the horizon; the intense cold and rare atmosphere seems to have some power in producing peculiar tints. It was the grandest sunrise I ever saw and [illegible] life, added to the sun pictures, the view of the country was just about as grand; being at such a height and the sky so clear the vastness and distinctness of the surrounding country was wonderful. The Rocky Mts. stretch across nearly one half the horizon, like a ragged wall, with a sea of lower mountains and hills between and all round, all dazzling white with snow; the valleys a gloom of forest, and [illegible] the course of streams marked by [illegible] wreaths of mist. It was rather too cold to linger with the picture, but as I had 6 miles to travel on the ridge, I had every chance to watch the changes. It must have been 60 below zero when I was on the summit, it was 3-4 below when I got down into Bonanza. This cold weather is terribly hard to bear.

There has been a good many frozen hand and feet, as well as ears, cheeks, and noses, I got the last named organs on my face frozen a little. Several deaths on the trail have occurred, two men in one day were frozen to death on the Dome ridge, one was setting upright on his sled having frozen while taking a rest. Another was found on his knees just in [illegible] of attempting to light after [illegible] of the cold he was not [illegible] place to live in as I expected, if I was only making a little of something I would be quite content, and there is no telling I may strike it rich yet. We had a big fire in Dawson a little while ago, it looked as if it would be disastrous at first, if the big supply warehouses had caught fire we would then have in a bad fix, with the [illegible] river. I wish you could just see this place, it would be a great novelty in your eyes, the streams are the highway, snow, everything is frozen up tight, all the carrying is done on sleds mostly hauled by dogs, generally in teams of 6 to 12 dogs, the native bred dogs are decidedly the best for the work and can stand the cold better, they are tough ones and

determined thieves, the people have to be very watchful of their bacon, and such like foods, they are a nuisance prowling around and howling like a pack of wolves, in fact they are half wolf! This is the place where you will see variety in dress both for men and women, some who can afford it are splendidly arrayed furs, most men wear mackinaws [illegible] [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]