Dec 18th/99

Dawson
Yukon
Canada

Dear father

What I am going to tell you now, will be another surprise to you, I think; (maybe not, for you know my failing) I have quite made up my mind to go on another stampede, this time to the new rich diggings at Cape Nome, 2.000 miles from here. I am afraid you will not approve of it, at first; but you must consider what I am going to tell you. Since last spring we have been having very good reports from Nome, from people who left Dawson for that place; they are well known here and are reliable. Up to about a week or two ago, I had no inclination or thought of going to Nome in spite of all the alluring stories of wealth gathered on the seashore. The main reason being that I wanted to make sure here of making enough to come and see you next summer, and for that reason too I made that wasted trip to Victoria for my fiddle; but I have been disappointed again, for I have not succeeded in getting an engagement yet, business has been dull all winter, the result of too mild weather, the water in the ground didn't freeze up enough to allow the men to go to work. Very little work has been done in the mines, so there is very little money in circulation, and the houses of entertainment suffer too. It is not so easy to get an engagement as I thought, because the musicians who are already engaged, stick together, and try to keep outsiders away. Still I don't doubt but that I'll get in with them; it only needs a start. Cape Nome is in Alaska. American territory, and that is another good reason why I was backward in deciding for the new diggings; you know my antipathy to Yanks and their country, I have many a hot discussion with some of them, nearly ending in blows.

However it is well known that Nome is very rich; and as we Britishers, give Americans just the same chance as ourselves to try and gather wealth in our country. I dont see why I should hesitate about trying my luck in theirs. There is a man just arrived in Dawson who was in Nome last summer, he went out to Seattle and is now on his way back. He claims that the average pay for men working on the beach down there, is $4.00 an hour. The Dawson Daily News sent a printing press and material to start the first paper in Nome, and they have just recieved the first issue of the Nome News, the front page of which, they reprinted on the front page of the Dawson Daily News. I will try and get a copy to send along with this, anyhow it says that the average pay per man is $35.7 per day, and other glowing reports. The people here are getting excited and there will be a great rush in the spring, a good many are already making their way over the ice to Dawson, intending to make this the starting point in the spring, as there are a number of ~~[illegible]~~ boats laid up here, which will be used for the passenger business to Nome. The manager of the N. A. T. Co. is getting many letters with money enclosed from people all over the States, wishing him to reserve passage for them on his Co's boats. I've caught the Nome fever bad, and have quite decided to go; and I shall very likely start about the end of February over the ice, so as to get there ahead of the rush. It will be a hard trip, as you may guess, 2.000 miles of a tramp on the ice; it has been done 2 or 3 times, and what one man can do I can. I dont believe there will be many that will try such a trip. I expect there will be 5 or 6 of us start together, we shall get teams of dogs to pull our loads, yet travel pretty light. There are posts at various places along the river where we will be able to get provisions, so that we wont need to carry a large supply. I shall take my fiddle along, and expect to make something

with it anyhow. I dont intend to let this trip interfere with my coming home next summer, I will come home, God willing, even if I leave a $50.00 a day job, or if I can only scrape together just enough for the return trip, and I have not the least doubt about doing that. I can make that much even now with my present job in 4 or 5, yes in 3 months; but I must have a little extra money. You know I want to bring a few presents, nuggets and other things, to treat you all, and have a good time generally, so I'm going to take one more chance. Dont despair of seeing me again in a few months from now. I hope this will reach you in quick time, for I want you to answer it cheerfully and approvingly before I start. There will be just about time enough to get a reply. I have written to our Jim, for I am very anxious to keep in touch with him so that if I have any luck, I can help him to a share. The last letter I had from him is dated June 15th, though I have written several to him. He makes me very impatient with his careless, happy go lucky ways, but I am glad to hear that he is or was doing well, and saving his money. There isn't much more to tell about this place, everything is quiet, the weather is improving for the miners, getting colder, it is 40 below zero now, and was nearly 50 below 2 days ago! We had another $5.000.00 fire close to the bank this morning. We get all the war news, which livens up our spirits a little. I dont need to express my feelings, I am going to write to our Martha Ann in a few days, and will try to scrape together a little more news. With love and best wishes to all. From

Your affectionate son

Tom

Be sure and write at once, and send it to in c/o Bank of British North America so that if I have gone, they will send it on to me.