

AN INVITATION

The Co-operating Churches Invite
You to Be Present at Their Services
Next Sunday. Big Union Meeting at
Night in the Baptist Church.

See News Columns for other Announcements.

If there is stock raising in Alaska I would like to be cited. There is nothing for cows to eat. They sure would starve on tundra and the stuff reindeers live on. There may be a few cows around the favored section of Fairbanks, but in my 2200 mile trip through the interior of Alaska I never saw a head of stock.

And with the exception of this one favored section, there is NO SOIL in Alaska, and it will be thousands of years yet before there will be. A few inches under the tundra the soil ceases. Even the trees cannot subsist. Over the millions of acres of Alaska you will see forests grown up to scrub dimensions and dead. On the entire length of the Yukon there is no timber worth while, for when it reaches a certain size it dies for want of root substance. The famous Alaska spruce you read about is not in Alaska proper, but far down in the panhandle, north of Prince Rupert.

If you want to go into the fishing or fur business, don't look for anything better than the north land, but if you want to take a long chance on farming or stock raising, take Death Valley as a better chance than Alaska for there you will have the satisfaction of at least keeping warm while you "go broke."

As to what the government's railroad will do for the coal section of Southern Alaska, it is but a matter of opinion, and my honest opinion—an opinion founded on all the information I could gather from all sources—is that it will never be a paying investment, and that the government took a chance that even the Guggenheims dared not tackle.

Around Fairbanks and Tenana you hear nothing but the glad music. The completion of the railroad is going to bring on a regular old-fashioned Seattle real estate boom. The great coal fields will be developed, thousands of men will be employed, and as a man told me "Nenana will skin Dawson for a grow."

"But what is going to be done with the coal?" I asked.

"Ship it to Seattle and down the Pacific ocean," was the reply.

"But," I countered, "great deposits of coal lie undeveloped in Washington today because it cannot compete with cheap fir wood, and how are you going to railroad your coal to Seward, boat it to Seattle and railroad it down the coast, and buck competition in Washington and Oregon that state deposits can't meet, and how are you going to ship it thousands of miles to California and compete with the cheapest fuel oil in the world?"

And after you have poked a few of such questions at the enthusiasts it is well to see if your boat is not about due—time to move along or lose your popularity.

There have been enormous unforeseen expenses in the construction of this road; there have been great washouts and other engineering problems almost new to the builders. In two years they say the road will be completed and ready for service. I may be a cold water thrower, but I wonder how much of the year it will be in service with the enormous snowfall in this part of Alaska, and with the terrible floods in the summer months, my guess is that it will be some job to keep that railroad in operation—even if there is a demand for its operation. However this is but an opinion, one I may have to renig on.

Alaska today is hitting the chutes. The territory is declining. Half of the population of the country has left this year. In every town, camp and mine I visited the people were leaving or making preparations to go out on the last boats. There was gloom and depression everywhere.

The reasons I found were three: No new strikes of size or permanency, the excessive cost of living in the mining camps and the stories of high wages and great activity on the outside. This trio was leading the passenger accommodations of all the last boats.

And yet almost every miner or prospector who was leaving would state that some day he was going back. Almost every man of them knew where, or about where, there was rich dirt, and some of these days when he had accumulated enough money to "hold him up" for a season, they were all going back and make good.

If these fellows could only cash in on their hopes, if they could develop one-tenth of their prospects, Dawson would lose its fame as the once greatest gold camp on earth.

They all have a "prospect" and a story with it, and those stories—well, they just get you, get into your blood and make you want to chuck the whole work-a-day world, get an outfit and beat it back to the unpeopled silence, back into the rugged hills where properties and worries don't go, back where you just let go of everything you were ever tangled with, rough it and hunt for the deceiving gold.

A peculiarity I found in Alaska is that there are almost as many Indian dialects as there are Indian towns, and that one community is almost distinct in talk and customs from the one perhaps 50 miles away. A newspaper man stated the Indians and Eskimos are not wanderers; that in the early

Allow other more or less adventurous pursuits, and many of them remain to farm or to raise stock. In many regions the plow turns up more gold—and more easily—than does the pickax. The government railroad is being built not to bring out gold, but coal and copper, and for miles around it there are valleys which have soil and climate that compare favorably with many regions in the United States proper. The weather records for the past winter show that the temperature averaged milder at the port of Seward than at New York and it is claimed they pick strawberries in the rich Matanuska valley as early as we do here in Oregon.

If Frank Carpenter wrote the above he must have seen Alaska from a different slant than I did. Let me state that the territory is not a farming country and never will be—unless the climate undergoes a great change. Anyone knows that a land that stays solidly frozen two and a half or three feet beneath the surface will never be a worth-while produce country, and anyone who knows anything about the very short summer seasons and the great danger of killing frosts, knows that when a profitable crop is raised it is when a 20 to 1 chance comes through.

The reference to Seward has little to do with Alaska. It is on the extreme southern coast. You will note the above clipping states "it is claimed," and I could fill a volume with that kind of dope. "It is claimed" of nearly all the towns on the southern Alaskan coast that the snowfall is from 20 feet up and it has to rain every day in the summer to melt it off. Yet with this almost constant rainfall there are thousands of acres on which the snowfall gains on the rain, hence the wonderful glaciers—great lakes and rivers of solid ice, slowly moving to the ocean. The lower coast may be the country for turnips, but don't take a chance on going up there for general farming.

PRINTING

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GOLD, FURS AND FISH ARE ALASKA'S ASSETS

Government Railroad is a Big Risk—
Half of Population of Alaska
Has Left This Year

(M. J. Brown)

I saw an Indian bring a fox skin into an N. C. Co. store and get \$650 for it, in trade.

Then I wondered if I hadn't better remain in Alaska and start a fur farm.

After the deal I talked with the trader and asked him if it was an every day occurrence for these kind of furs to be brought in, and if it only took ten minutes to strike a bargain?

And he told me a lot about fox furs that I did not know.

He said the Indian had had this skin for about three months and had been to every trader, store or fur buyer within 200 miles, driving a bargain, and had finally come back to him. The skin was that of a jet black fox, very rare in Alaska, or anywhere else.

I asked what price he would get for the skin, and he replied that it was about as big a speculation as gold prospecting; that its price might go to \$2000 or \$2500, or he might be glad to get his \$650 back. He explained that the price of it depended on whether some millionaire's wife had one like it and was hunting for its match, or whether the war income tax hit hubby so heavy that he wouldn't stand for the buy. "We take a big chance for a big profit," he said, "I will send it outside for tanning and making up and let it try for a sucker. If the war wasn't on, the chance would be a real cinch."

The dead black fox skin is far more valuable than the silver-grey. The silver-grey can be bred with considerable certainty, but the full black fox is a freak, a "patch," an accident of birth. This rare animal is a hybrid, a mongrel, the product of cross-breeding a red and silver fox, but the strange thing is there is no natural control. A breeder may wait for years for a black fox and he may get one in the first litter. But the chances are long in favor of the wait, hence the scarcity of this fur.

And after the dealer had told me all about fox farming, I concluded I would rather take chances on hen-raising in the states—that this black fox business was too much like the job the fellow in Mexico had—picking blossoms from a century plant.

I traveled many hundred miles with a government revenue officer, whose business it was to see that every salmon and joint that sold liquor came through with its government license to Uncle Sam. He said he traveled 6000 miles every year in Alaska, but that the territory would soon be dry and then he was going into the fur buying, which he had been doing as a side line for some time, and he gave me these outside market prices on the Alaskan furs: Silver Fox, \$500 to \$1,200; black fox, \$1500; red fox, \$18 to \$25; white fox, \$20. Then there are the otter, ermine, martin, wolf, all varieties of bears, wolverine, lynx, beaver, skunk and so on. Martin are forbidden to be trapped in Alaska and I believe seals also, except the dog seal. These can be bought for one dollar apiece. The walrus grow to an enormous size in Alaska, as large as the largest ox and often weights a ton.

What about farming, stock raising and timber, are questions that have often been asked of me, and a New York newspaper sends me the following clipping, said to have been in an article written by Frank Carpenter:

Men go up there to mine, or to



Saturday, Mar. 2nd Matinee 3:30

Evart Overton—Marian Fouche
in "SOLDIERS OF CHANCE"
Not a picture of the World's Great War

Burton Holmes Travel Picture—
"The Land of Madam Butterfly"

Also a Big V Comedy

Matinee 3:30 Admission 10 cents to all.

Evening one Big Show: 7:45; Admission 10 and 15c. Including tax.



Tuesday, Mar. 5th

Vivian Martin in "The Fair Barbarian"

Victor Moore in "The Installment Plan"

Evening one Big Show at 7:45; Admission 9 and 13c.



Thursday, Mar. 7th Matinee 3:30

Marguerite Clark in "Seven Swans"

Ford weekly, Bray Pictograph, and a very good comedy featuring Edward Earle and Betty Howe

Special Matinee 3:30, Admission 9c to all.

Evening one Big Show 7:45; Admission 10 and 15c; War tax 1 and 2c

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days they were forced by necessity to settle in small numbers where the hunting and fishing was good; that they gradually became tribes and in the hundreds of years the language changed into dialects and the original tongue became practically lost.

In this way the wide separation of the Eskimo and Indian is explained. Once they were all Eskimos, and lived along the coasts. Then they gradually moved up the Yukon, changed their manner of living and became a distinct family.

Take an Indian or Eskimo, dress him in American clothes and I will give a prize to anyone who can pick him out from a bunch of Japs. Unquestionably they originally came from China or Japan. They have the same yellowish complexion, high cheeked bones and a slight eye slant.

The natives care little for gold or money. They would rather have credit at a trading store than gold in their pockets. They are lazy and without ambition, they catch fish and never wash. For 20 years the influence of the white man has had little effect on them. They are content to exist. There are exceptions in the larger river towns where there are missionaries and schools, and splendid work has been done by these teachers.

POSITION OF THE AMERICAN FARMER

With practically every great food-producing country in the world, Argentina excepted, now engaged in the great world war, the tillers of the soil find nations turning to them for bread. This war has proved a gold mine to the farmer, not only here in America, but all over the world. A man with food to sell has made money wherever he marketed his produce.

The American farmer has been particularly fortunate. The United States held aloof from the struggle for two years and the American farmer received top prices for bumper crops. The wealth of the world flowed into his lap, while Swede, Dane, Frenchman, Englishman and Italian breakfasted, dined and supped off the crops and cattle he sent abroad.

All that is changed now. The United States has entered the war, and what, for two years, meant the American farmer's opportunity to make money, now means his opportunity to show hard, common sense and patriotism.

In the first place, his Government must be supported in this war against German autocracy in the form of submarines, or his crops will not get to market and he will not be able to get his share of the world's wealth. That is the hard, common sense of it. And, if his Government is not supported by his money, it will not be able to purchase from him here in the home markets. That also is hard, common sense.

In the second place, the farmer's patriotism should tell him that the Government at Washington has given him laws and an assurance of protection for his property rights as a free citizen, should be supported by his money—not because the Government at Washington is something apart from him, but because that Government is himself and his neighbor to the south and his neighbor to the east and all his neighbors in the state and in the United States. The Government is ourselves and we should know enough to display practical enthusiasm for our own good fortune and our own ideas of what is right and lawful among nations and individuals to back our opinion with our money and our lives.

The American farmer is feeding himself and his friends when he works hard and long to produce bumper crops in this war period and he is spending his money on himself and his future, as well as that of his allies, when he supports the Government by purchasing Liberty bonds.

THE HOME GUARDS

The following verses are from the February issue of the Bell Telephone News. They were written by one of the operators. The "C T C" in the last line refers to Chicago Telephone Company.

I've enlisted in an army
That wears no uniform,
But we're always out on duty
In sunshine or in storm.
We never wear a helmet to
Keep out the deadly gas,
Which sometimes comes in volumes
In the form of brutal sass.
And we never shoulder rifles
To protect us all the while,
For we win most all our battles
With a voice that seems to smile.
We have our staff of doctors
And a nurse to hold our hand;
And all those other little things
That makes army life so grand.
We take city after city
Treading rich and poor the same,
And we never flinch in battle—
We're the gamest of the game.
There's the fiery little corporal
Who marches up and down,
And if her soldier's arm's working,
Gee, you ought to see her frown.
Then there is the first lieutenant
Who gives orders in a tone,
That makes them work the harder,
These brave knights of the 'phone.
Why don't we fight for glory
In that land across the sea?
Well, we can't for we're the
Home Guards of the C. T. C.
—Marie Mulligan, Randolph Exchange
Evening Operator.