

State Families Will Emigrate

Times March 19
Are to Be Taken From Relief Lists, Given New Start in Alaska

FROM THE JOURNAL'S MADISON BUREAU
Madison, Wis.—Sixty-seven northern Wisconsin families, now on relief, will quit the state late in April for a fertile Alaskan valley where they will be given a new start by the federal government.

The "pioneers" will sail for their "new frontier" from Seattle, Wash., in May in company with similar groups from northern Michigan and Minnesota.

Announcement of Wisconsin's quota of the delegation of 200 families was made here Monday by Arlie Mucks, president of the Wisconsin Rural Rehabilitation corporation, which will choose the Wisconsin families and prepare them for the journey to their new homes. Mucks spent last week in Washington considering plans with officials of the FERA, which is sponsoring the project.

From 16 Counties

The 67 families will be selected from 16 northern counties. Relief offices in the various counties will make recommendations of families, but final choice is left to the rehabilitation corporation, which is a division of the Wisconsin emergency relief administration.

While all qualifications have not yet been determined, these few are definite. Families must have been on relief for some time. Their mem-



bers must be healthy. They must have an agricultural background. Husband and wife must be between 35 and 40. They must be perfectly willing to leave their homes and settle on the new land.

There is no limit on the size of families although the government is figuring on 1,000 persons in the migration, which would mean an aver-

age family of five. Mucks said, however, that couples will be chosen whether they have 10 children or none.

35 Miles From Anchorage

Half of the families selected in Wisconsin will concentrate at one or two northern cities late in April. On May 1 they will sail from Seattle, Wash. The remainder will concentrate 15 days later and sail May 15.

The "pioneers" will land at Seward on the southern coast of Alaska and go from there to their "new country" near the village of Palmer, in the Matanuska valley, 175 miles north of Seward and 35 miles northeast of Anchorage.

Today their homeland-to-be is timbered with softwood. By the time they arrive it will be cleared and some farm buildings erected. The government is sending 400 CCC youths and members of transient camps from the west coast to Palmer this month to clear the land, build roads, put up houses and farm buildings and erect a creamery, a school and a community building.

Given 30 Years to Pay

Each settler will receive 40 acres of land and buildings. Those who

have livestock and farm equipment will be allowed to bring a certain amount with them; those who do not will receive it from the government.

The government plans to spend in rehabilitating each family no more than \$3,000, most of which will go toward expenses of moving the families and erection of buildings. The government now owns the land. The settlers must agree to amortize the government advance over a period of 30 years.

Mucks was told in Washington that the land in the Matanuska valley is excellent for agriculture. There are now a few farms, all successful. Legume crops, small grains and fruits are expected to be the "pioneer's" best bets. The only grain common to Wisconsin that will not grow is corn.

The climate, Mucks was told, is much like that of northern Wisconsin. This portion of Alaska is warmed by the Japanese current, which comes up from the southern Pacific.

Other Colonies Planned

This first colony is admittedly to be a "model" one, according to Mucks. If it is successful, the gov-

ernment hopes to establish many similar ones on suitable Alaskan land. The plan has the triple advantage of settling Alaska with reliable families, of enabling these families, crushed by the depression, to again become self-sustaining, and of lightening the relief burden in "the States."

"No effort has ever been made," Mucks explained, "to get agricultural families into Alaska. The few farmers there now shifted from mining or some other occupation. There is a big market in Alaskan towns and cities for agricultural produce. Any surplus that is grown in the new colony will be snapped up."

To dispose of these surplus commodities, a co-operative organization is to be formed among the new settlers, he said. After each family has taken enough for its own needs, the remainder is to go to the co-operative for disposal at the best price obtainable.

Colonists Give Thanks to God

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Carl Erickson of Rhinelander, Wis., switched the pests away with a spruce bough.

Then there came still other disturbers to mar the pastor's triumph. Midway of the services he had to yell out the open side of the hall and say: "Somebody tell those kids out there that if they have to play baseball they should keep their mouths shut."

Hall Is Dedicated

The booming voiced strawboss from the transient laborers' camp did—and the kids did.

Lester N. Troast, the Alaskan architect on the project, spoke briefly in dedicating the building.

"I dedicate this hall to no religion, to no social group, but to you pioneers of Alaska," he said. "Let's call it Memorial hall. Let's dedicate it to those brothers and sisters and fathers who are not here. May it be of service to us in making this project succeed."

30 Seconds of Silence

Now came the wandering preacher's turn to lead the flock in song.

"We are going to sing together," he explained. "Those of you who have books lead—those of you who haven't can hum the tune. We're going to sing 'Taps' and then have 30 seconds of silence. This program is being sponsored by the colonists who were World war veterans—there must be 40 or 50 of them. You all know what 'Taps' means."

Erect and with heads undraped the pioneers stood. Rev. Bingle broke the silence. These are his words:

"God bless those who yet live that were connected with that terrible conflict. God bless those who live no more. Help us to be worthy followers of them. Amen."

Protest High Prices

The Wisconsin and Michigan colonists Wednesday asserted their authority as members of the colonization corporation by forcing a showdown from the commissary management on retail costs to them of camp materials and supplies.

About 40 of the colonists presented petitions to Camp Director Don Irwin demanding an investigation of Commissary Chief Charles Warters. Irwin, agreeing that they were within their rights, promised immediate satisfaction.

\$1.25 for Coffee Pot

The colonists named a committee to work with Director Irwin toward an adjustment of their grievances. Irwin says he will stick "100 per cent with the colonists," but he feels that their dissatisfaction is due more to their misunderstanding of conditions rather than mismanagement.

The chief complaint is about the high prices of food and needed household equipment. They cited the purchase of a coffee pot at \$1.25, selling in the States for 40 cents; \$2.25 for a washtub, costing possibly a dollar, and yeast cakes retailing at 10 cents, whereas they are obtainable for 5 cents at Anchorage.

"We are paying for this and think there is something wrong somewhere," said Colonist Clyde Cook of Minnesota. "We have rights and mean to find out about them. Irwin is our friend and is standing by us."

Government Supplies Delayed

Warters explained that only quality stuff comes into Alaska since the freight costs on it would be no more than for cheaper materials. Freight, however, is high. He explained that at present commissary purchases are being made at non-competitive bids in Anchorage, because two months' supplies purchased by the

government for the colony are not yet here.

Complaints have become so general and vociferous within the last few days that the commissary butcher quit. He said he was tired of being picked on.

Director Irwin is convinced, however, that everything will be satisfactorily explained when the committee spreads the facts of the situation throughout the colony, thus dispelling numerous "racket" rumors.

Delayed Stragglers Arrive

The Alaskan colony's farm population is now complete with the arrival Wednesday of seven Michigan and Wisconsin families who were left in Seattle on account of illness. The horses and cows arrived by the same train.

There are now 201 families here. The extra number being due to John Stahler of Oklahoma, who has been in Alaska since February and was permitted to take up a tract. His family will come on from Oklahoma later.

Only sporadic mumps and measles cases are reported and these are hospitalized. "I think health conditions are remarkably good," says the camp physician, "considering the ardors of the hard travel and new climate. We do not expect any serious measles or mumps outbreak, since most of the children had them back in the States."

FERA representatives, Harold Carleton and Mary Nan Gamble, left Palmer Tuesday after a short visit, declaring themselves satisfied with the colony's progress despite some confusion.

Colonists' dissention about campsites is easing as the administration is whipping the allotted grounds into shape.