

Wisconsin Group

1935 Pioneers Ready to Go

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of telling how generally Alaska may be settled.

"We feel that so far as this particular group is concerned we are on safe ground because there is a market there for everything they can raise, and they can have a decent standard of living. The organization of this community will be of benefit also to the isolated farmers now in the district. We know the land is fertile.

"No well developed system of production and marketing ever has been devised by the isolated farmers who are there now. We will have such a method.

"Not only will the families be provided with comfortable log houses, protected from the extreme cold of the arctic winter and the mosquitoes of the summer, but they will have companionship. The farms have been so laid out that the houses will be at the corners of the farms, forming groups of four. We have completed plans for a community center with a community store, and there is to be one industrial plant, a combined creamery and cannery.

Jerseys Being Sent

"We are taking 150 head of Jerseys into Alaska, cows and bulls, as the basis of our dairy herds. We thought of Guernseys first but it was the general impression the Jerseys could stand that extreme cold better, and that in view of the fact the objective was butter rather than milk they would be better stock, owing to a higher butter fat content in their milk. Of course, there will be plenty of chickens for a real farm establishment.

"The land is not worth much today—\$4 or \$5 an acre—but we believe that over a period of years the farmers who go there will be able to pay back the \$3,000 a family the government puts up for them."

Every man must have felt the urge to get up and go, to leave all behind and plunge into the new land lying beyond the far horizon. That is what these few Wisconsin men and women and children pioneers are doing. They are cutting loose from everything that has been near and dear—friends and farms and communities.

Theirs should be a fascinating story to live. I thrill in the anticipation of writing it.

1935 Pioneers Ready to Tell State Goodby

Leave for Alaska Within Two Days; Reporter for Journal to Write of Their Trip

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN OF THE JOURNAL STAFF

Why is the United States government spending \$900,000 to transplant 200 northern Wisconsin, Michigan and Minnesota families to an Alaskan wilderness?



Arville Schaleben

Director Harry L. Hopkins of the federal emergency relief administration answers that question, on the eve of the departure of the 67 Wisconsin families, in a statement to The Journal correspondent in Washington.

The Journal has assigned me to report their progress. I shall go with them to Alaska and live with them in their new homes. We shall record history, not after it has been made, but while it is being made.

Mr. Hopkins said: "Alaska is about the only unsettled country we have left. Now we are driving over the last frontier. Alaska is in the same latitude as Sweden and Denmark, and it is possible that it may develop into a dairy and agricultural country, as those have done, because Alaska is warmed by the Japan current while they are warmed by the gulf stream. This is a great experiment we are undertaking. If our people succeed there is unlimited ground for settlement, for the government owns 98 per cent of the land of Alaska."

Trek Starts Monday

The Wisconsin and Michigan families start their 4,000-mile trek to the Matanuska valley in Alaska Monday night and Tuesday. I shall ride their trains to Seattle and their boat to Alaska, and I shall accompany them into the valley. The Journal will report their story—as they live it and while they live it.

"We are allotting to each of the families a 40-acre farm," Mr. Hopkins continued, "and you can see how limited agriculture is there when I tell you that these 200 families will double the amount of land being used in Alaska for agriculture.

"It is true that the argument has been made that some of the miners who went broke in the Klondike rush tried farming in this same valley and could not make a go of it. A few of them are there now, widely scattered, but most of those who failed were not farmers to start with.

"We have selected young farmers for this pioneer development—men and women who come from pioneering stock, who are used to long, cold winters and hardships. I do not believe that they will find the mean temperature there much different from that they have been used to.

May Expand Plan

"We selected Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin as states from which to move families for a number of reasons, one of them being that in the copper and lumber regions we have so many on relief. However, we had over 5,000 applications for establishments on farms in Alaska. They came from every state in the Union, and if this experiment is successful there is no way

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