

Alaskan Pioneers Start First Log Building, Clear Townsite



[Photos by Arville Schaleben, of The Journal Staff]

THE Minnesota-Michigan-Wisconsin colony at Palmer, Alaska, faces a serious problem in getting settled before winter arrives and these pictures show that construction work is being rushed as fast as conditions make possible. Above, the Alaskan pioneers are shown starting the construction of the colony's first log building—an office for the construction division at the construction camp. Below, others are shown cleaning out brush on the townsite.

Other groups wanted to join Camp 5 in operating a sawmill now there.

Councilman Is Ousted

Conners was voted out as councilman because of his views and replaced by Ernest Porterfield of Michigan. After the meeting the men stood around arguing until John Bradley of Douglas county told Al Covert of Michigan to "keep your mouth shut so Conners can talk."

"You keep your mouth shut," Covert answered, "or I'll shut it for you!"

It happens that Covert and Bradley hold adjoining tracts and Bradley said: "If we're going to have an argument let's settle it now."

They grappled and fell with Bradley on top. The Bradley faction stood at one side yelling, "Let him have it, John! Let him have it!"

And someone on the other side answered, "Yeah, they're both 21, let them go."

Men Pull Wife Out of It

Mrs. Covert, in tears, jumped on Bradley as he held her husband down, but men in the crowd pulled her away. Bradley said he wouldn't hit a man while he was down, but he kept Covert pinned down so long that the Michigan man finally suggested, "Why don't someone serve cake and coffee!" and in a few minutes the two agreed to shake hands.

Since then, however, the Conners faction, badly outnumbered by the Porterfield faction, has refused to join in general colony sawmill operations—in which all men colonists are divided into work crews according to whatever they're fitted for—and declare they will build their own houses. They have asked for a team and wagon with which to get out logs.

"I don't care if we get only a shack," Bradley said Friday. "I don't need a mansion this year anyway. The only thing is that people back home think we are working in harmony and I wish we could."

Anchor Oil Co.

Texas Co. ned Stations

Ice Station 237 S. 1st St.

Ice Station

Ice Station W. Greenfield

Ice Station

Talk Desertion as Colony Lags

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other colonization problem, was overlooked. In the first place, just two bands of steel, representing the Alaska railroad, connect this wilderness with the rest of Alaska, there being no highway. It is a small system whose trains chase themselves around innumerable curves like a dog after its own tail. The entire railroad has only some 70 cars and there are some 12,000 and more tons of freight coming into the colony!

Approximately 4,000 tons have come into Palmer to date and it has kept the railroad practically swamped. Costly freight that never should be left uncovered has had to be dumped off and piled around Palmer to make cars available for more shipments. Bad weather could ruin thousands of dollars' worth of equipment.

Tools Never Came

Complicating the problem, materials have been shipped out of the United States that will not be needed for months.

"I've wired the shipping agent at Seattle time after time what we needed and had to have," Director Irwin declares. "I've told him ahead of time so we'd have things here when needed."

What has happened? Two hundred kits of tools, such as hammers, axes, saws, levels and planes for cutting house timber and erecting cottages, should have been here when the colonists arrived. They are still missing. Authorities here bought up all possible tools at Anchorage and Seward and these, with what the colonists brought along, are all that there has been to work with. Sixty-nine horses arrived a month ago. They were to be hooked onto wagons to haul timber out of the woods and supplement the overtaxed trucks on other haulage, but no wagons have come. They finally borrowed six in the valley and that is all they could get. Whiffletrees, which could be used on hand made sleds snaking timbers out, arrived one day, but there are no clevises.

"Wo are we, wo are we!" cried colonists helplessly and more official telegrams burned the wires.

Unneeded Supplies Sent First

But among the things which have arrived are eight carloads of cement which won't be used for months, retorts for a cannery whose site is not even staked out, radi-

just a blueprint, and onion graders for a prospective marketing cooperative although onions are just beginning to shoot sprouts through the fertile soil.

Speaking of soil, it was most disheartening last week for 11 colonists to discover that through error by surveyors they had been allotted tracts which were mostly gravel covered only by moss instead of the rich earth they so loudly lauded when they looked at it around Palmer. Irwin, who has stuck with the colonists through many annoying and unanticipated problems, immediately ordered new tracts for the unfortunate "gravel pit owners" as they designated themselves.

Well, no wonder the sturdiest pioneers who ever came to conquer a "last frontier" are beginning to grumble! No wonder, too, that loyal Colonist Ray Wilkes threatens grimly:

"Maybe we'll have houses when snow flies; we're going to do our

damndest to get at least some kind of shacks up, and I think we can make it if we get the breaks. But if we don't and there's women and children without shelter, some of these fellows are going to have some explaining to do—and maybe it won't be over an office desk or radio either!"

Fist Fight Over Logging

Once again fisticuffs have been resorted to in the new colony and this time the results were serious. Wounds have been created that certainly must prove harmful if and when planned co-operative marketing of products develops.

The latest difficulties involving personalities occurred in Camp 6, one of eight temporary home camps scattered throughout the valley. The camp is split wide into two factions, so bitter toward one another that their members refuse to work with opposing members.

What to do about sawing logs caused the trouble. A group headed

by Camp Councilman George Conners, from Douglas county, Wisconsin, wanted to go into the woods and cut down logs for their own houses and later get a sawmill.

resisting tread built with higher speed, scientifically designed tread

wear, but also lowest cost per mile

ANSWER—Firestone High Speed Tires

will they give me longer mileage

QUESTION 3—"Without sacrifice"

These are most amazing proofs of miles per hour, with temperatures of hot salt beds of Utah, 3,000 miles

Ab Jenkins drove his 5,000 pound drivers had tire trouble of any kind.

26-year-old rough brick track without tire trouble—in fact, not one of the 33 Gum-Dipped Tires. Kelly Pettilo won the race and broke the record over this

Indianapolis, May 30th, every one of the 33 cars was equipped with Firestone blowout-proof of any tires ever built. In the grueling 500-Mile Race at

ANSWER—Firestone Gum-Dipped Tires have the most amazing records for being

QUESTION 2—"Are they blowout-proof?"

ALIKE ON THE OUTSIDE THEY ARE DIFFERENT