

# Colonists Near Alaskan Goal

June 21, 1935

## Seward Landing Scheduled for Tomorrow; Many Are Seasick

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN  
OF THE JOURNAL STAFF

Aboard U. S. A. T. St. Mihiel, Alaska Bound—(By Radio)—The St. Mihiel is due in Seward, Alaska, at 8 a. m. Wednesday and at least 350 of the 573 colonists on board are praying nothing will happen to delay it.

The 350 are seasick, many seriously so. Entire families are down. Some persons have not left their bunks for 48 hours. A few braver souls crawl around the deck, trying to shake off the effects. The well carry food—usually just crackers and fruit—to the bedridden. A few brave souls, wan of countenance, have made brave attempts to shake off the effects by pacing the decks but they usually end up by diving back into the bunks.

### Taste of the Salt

The going was heavy again Monday, with long swells rocking the transport. A big wave doused four boys standing on deck.

"We're the first pioneers to taste the Pacific," they laughed.

The sun shone for a few hours early Monday, then there was a fog and more rain.

For those who were able to be on deck there was some excitement during the day. A school of porpoises played about in the sea, greatly amusing the children. Another vessel was finally sighted—a fishing ship that loomed through the fog. There was a fire drill, with men, women and children donning lifebelts and taking positions at the lifeboat stations.

### Dogs Sick, Too

The first contagious disease was definitely diagnosed Monday—Gloria La Flam of Shell Lake was hospitalized with a mild case of measles. Director Harold Carleton believed the child had been segregated before spreading the disease.

Oh, yes, and the dogs howl so loudly that it is hard to sleep at night. They are seasick, too.

## Manager to Be One of Colonists in Fact

BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT OF THE JOURNAL

Palmer, Alaska—The Matanuska valley colonization project has a recruit in the person of Don L. Irwin, general manager of the project.

Irwin announced Monday that he would take one of the 40-acre farms to be distributed by the government and support on it his wife, his two daughters, 17 and 15, and his 5-year-old son.

"I am going to become one of you," he told the colonists. "If you let me I will choose a tract after you have drawn yours and I will farm it just as you will farm yours."

He also announced his resignation as superintendent of the Matanuska experimental station, six miles down the valley, the post he held when he was appointed manager of the colonization project.

The move is not a mere gesture, Irwin said. He plans to get a government loan, the same as the other colonists, buy through the commissary on whatever basis of credit will be allowed for families of his size, and use his salary as manager only to defray the extra expense involved in his position, such as entertaining visiting officials and paying for help when his duties interfere with his

farm work. The only difference from the other colonists will be that he will use the old schoolhouse for a home until the new one is completed.

# Alaskan Colony Files Protest at High Prices

October 21, 1935

## Pay \$1.25 for Coffee Pot, 10 Cents for Cake of Yeast; U. S. Supplies for 2 Months Delayed

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN  
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Palmer, Alaska—(By Radio)—Wisconsin and Michigan colonists in the Matanuska valley, for the first time asserting their authority as members of the colonization corporation, on Wednesday forced a showdown from the commissary management on retail costs to them of camp materials and supplies.

About 60 of the colonists presented petitions to Camp Director Don Irwin demanding an investigation of Commissary Chief Charles Wartars. 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

Wartars 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' dissent about campsites is easing as the administration is whipping the allotted grounds into shape.