Colonial Faces Log Shortage

Two Small Sawmills in Struggle to Provide Matanuska Cabins

BY ARMAND SCHAREN

Palmer, Alaska—(By Radio)—A shortage of salmon-head house timber, which had been represented as so plentiful when the Matanuska valley colonization was undertaken, is causing project authorities to plumb the possibilities of constructing some frame houses.

This was revealed by Don Irwin, project director, whose members of the colony council in its second meeting Tuesday night fell to discussing their homes. Irwin said that Frank Bliss, construction chief, wanted to know the sentiment of colonists about frame houses, since it might be necessary to resort to them.

Later Architect N. L. Post announced that he didn't know whether there were sufficient logs for 200 houses and that a survey was being made to determine this point.

No Jobs, Lots of Men

Nome, Alaska (AP) A fake rush for jobs created the rush for gold before the turn of the century had left hundreds of men walking the streets of Nome. The steamship Victoria brought 300 men furred from the states by reports of jobs in rebuilding the city, swept by fire last fall. 1... jobs did not materialize. All available quarters were occupied before arrival.

The Log Problem

Another difficulty must be surmounted in getting out logs for the settlers' houses. At first the settlers were told that the logs would be hauled from three sides, which would insure eight loads. Then Traut announced several days ago that because "there are less than 120 days..." the administration was going to have to get along without squaring, much as the administration neglected that necessity. Now it has decided to run portable mills 24 hours a day, with three shifts of colonists, so that the logs can be handled.

While these shifts may solve the problem, it doesn't answer the log problem. There is plenty of spruce in the valley & some are advertised daily without a single breakdown. It would take 32 days to square all house timbers in that group. There is one more mill available and authorities hope to send another. They've been doing a lot of hoping in rain during the last several days so milling might be done by July 15.

There is therefore little doubt that the colonists will have to throw their homes together without cutting the logs and it is certain that many will not have the pleasant little dwellings they looked forward to when they left the United States.

Incidentally, as an indication of how colony freight stumps are coming to Palmer, the sawmills arrived looking fit and proper except that there were no drive pulleys. It was necessary to borrow one from the experimental farm to get one mill going and finally two pulleys were secured from Anchorage.

Special Wrench Lacking

Each mill has only one blade, the kind with inserted teeth to make removing possible, but there were no extra teeth or the special wrench required to change them. One unfortunate toothsome might lay up the whole mill.

Many colonists who are experienced woodsmen feel that they won't be able to get their houses done under present circumstances. Others feel they can get out and do some work before snow flies.

Lawrence Arndt and I can make the grades on our places," said Leon Heezen from Haines. "We know how to build a cabin and so I. We aren't looking for squared logs We want our rounds and will be a good time the warm but, of course, they won't be much finished in a. But some of these other...you can tell they don't know the woods—I don't believe they'll do under roofs without a lot of help soon.”

McCormack of East Tat- lax, Mich., has been helping get the colony sawmill ready. "We may be all right," he said, "if we can get a proper pulley and if the blade holds up. We had a wrench for the problem last but it pulled apart other one. You can do that on a soft tooth and that would give us extra teeth."

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