

Find Thieves in Matanuska

Freight Shipments Are
Rifled, Government to
Place Guards

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN
OF THE JOURNAL STAFF

Palmer, Alaska—With some 20 carloads of freight stacked in the camps of the Matanuska valley colonists, thieves are brewing a problem for authorities. Articles are being missed daily and federal officials are planning guards to protect the property.

Actually the thieves are looting their own treasure for as members of the Alaska Rehabilitation corporation all colonists must share the costs.

They're even stealing hooks off latrine doors," said Colonist John Kirsh, one of the foremen named to handle the new shipments. "We need some watchmen and need them quick."

"Holy mackerel," the veteran Palmer railroad agent added, "stealing freight in Alaska! Nobody ever heard of such a thing."

The headquarters camp here is laden with costly materials. There are piles of sewing machines, plumbing ware, engines, household goods and lumber of all shapes and descriptions. The present warehouse space is extremely limited so the materials are in high heaps, covered with tarpulins. The authorities, trusting in the integrity of the settlers sent them from the States, have been leaving the piles unguarded, awaiting the time to haul them to the ultimate destination.

Try to Visualize City

Like magic the gang from the construction division has brushed, stumped and burned over the community center land here in Palmer. Two days ago it was all overgrown with sprouting willows and mature spruce and birch. Now they are sheared to earth.

Singly, in pairs and in groups the colonists walk from their camps across the yet uncleared farm tracts to the townsite and try to visualize what is planned for them.

"It does not seem possible," they say, "that a city can grow out of this wilderness, but the government says there'll be one here."

What interests them most is plans for an elaborate school in contrast to the log one which served the area before. Many feel that, with so much work to be done getting homes

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Stray Hounds, Cow Shortage Other Worries

History Making Session
of First Council Breaks
Up Early as Pioneers
Want to Get to Bed

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN
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Palmer, Alaska—(By Radio)—Eighteen sturdy men and women made history Tuesday night out of garbage, dogs and cows.

They comprised the first council of the Matanuska valley colony. Each camp elected one man and one woman delegate, except the headquarters camp, which, because of its larger population, got four delegates. This council will make rules of conduct for the new society and advise the Alaska Rural Rehabilitation corporation, governmental sponsor of the colony, on knotty problems.

Record on Order Blank
At exactly 8:05 p. m. by Mrs. Carl Erickson's wrist watch the delegates pushed into the headquarters tent. Clouds overcast the evening sun so a gasoline lamp lighted the tent. The men and women sat on home made benches and boxes and four men lolled on a cot.

"Now the meeting will come to order," said Don Irwin, project manager, and temporary chairman. "First we want to get the names of the representatives from each camp."

"Mrs. Guilford Lemmon, Camp One," said a young woman dressed in blue corduroy pants and a zipper jacket. She was the first to answer the roll call. R. A. C. Atwood, chief corporation clerk, wrote her name and those of the other 17 delegates as they answered on a purchase order blank. That was the first record of the leaders who have come to build an empire.

"Not Pulling Together"
Campbell stepped to the plain board desk, rapped for order with a pair of shiny scissors.
"The meeting will be in order," he said. "There are a few men who sleep in this place and they want to get this over as soon as possible."

He went on aggressively: "Some colonists are running around here like a bunch of lost sheep. Some want to go fishing, some want to cut logs. They're not pulling together. We don't want to be big shots but as delegates we ought to start directing the camps."

The council agreed. Then its members tangled on the garbage problem. The government health men have been raising Ned with some of the colonists about garbage. They have suggested digging trenches to burn and bury refuse to prevent disease. Irwin demanded this be done.

A Pig Incinerator

"But we have a problem in Camp Two," Ray Wilkes from Wahkon, Minn., objected. "Charlie Maren's land is right up against our tents and we can't dig up his field to bury garbage. We just got 30 feet from the tents to the road and that's our street, our playground and what have you. What are you going to do about a thing like that?"

"I think it would be fine if each camp would have a pig or two to eat that garbage up," William Dingman of Frankfort, Mich., advised.

"Where would you keep the pig in our case," Wilkes demanded sharply.

"I think we got a pretty good idea in Camp Six," Mrs. Roy Hopkins of Arcadia, Wis., declared. "We have a big box at one end of the camp and four of our husky men haul it over to that big muddy river—I guess it's the Matanuska. Or if we have a good hot stove fire we just open the lid and burn it. We don't have any garbage in front of our houses."

And What About Dogs?

The council then unanimously passed a motion that each camp have a garbage disposal committee and post bulletin board notices to that effect. That was the first law of the Alaska colony.

Swanda, from Pine City, Minn., with a determined glint in his eye, brought up the next subject.

"If the children don't stop goosing the horses tied out by the hay they'll be shaking hands with St. Peter," he started, then swung into "and another thing—we've got a fine bunch of hounds running around. The biggest part of them would just take a man about one day with a gun. I like dogs but I take care of them like my children, not the way some are taking care of them."

"I make a motion the dogs in these camps be tied up so they won't

Law in Alaska Is the Law

Pioneers Who Don't Want
to Tie Up Dogs Find
Sentiment—and .32s Are
Against Them

BY ARVILLE SCHALEBEN
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Palmer, Alaska—(By Radio)—You take in the old days of the golden west, when there arose trouble too minor for a gun to settle, the boys got together in a noisy caucus, cussed hell out of each other, maybe had a fist fight or two and then parted with handclaps given and the trouble ended.

They do that in the Matanuska valley, too. It seems that there live those in the pioneer colony who thought that in the absence of any uniformed cop like back home they could damn well run things to suit themselves. Briefly, they decided that the new general council and its first law relative to hounds running wild at night—when it's tough enough trying to sleep anyway, what with the sun tanning your hide at midnight—could go plumb to the devil and lump it.

They've got a different slant on things now.

It Is Dogs or Hogs?

Pat Hemmer, grizzled, sinewy and fast lipped, called his headquarters camp colonists together Thursday night and together they laid down the law—and they're backing it up with guns.

"What about people not tying up these pooches as per the council's orders?" Hemmer demanded.

"Make 'em tie 'em up. Make 'em tie 'em up," several in the crowd yelled.

"No, sir," a recalcitrant dog owner protested. "I'm not tying up my dog. Snodgrass' hogs go through the camp tipping over garbage cans, and don't that make a sweet song, maybe even sweeter than dogs."

The Motion Is Made

M. D. Snodgrass is a resident settler living just across the railroad tracks from headquarters camp. Five or six of his little red pigs have been getting fat off the waste of some colonists, who have been living high, since all they have to do to get food is to sign for it at the commissary.

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