

Timber of Siberia and the Russian Far-East

By Waldemar Toritch, in the Timberman

A BETTER idea of Siberia's size will be gained if it will be mentioned that, roughly speaking, the territory of Siberia is larger than the combined area of Alaska, Canada, the United States and Mexico that the distance between Vladivostok and Petrograd is about 6250 miles, almost the same as between London and San Francisco; that a train leaving Vladivostok for Petrograd would make this run, including all stops, in about ten days, averaging about 28 miles per hour, and that the Vladivostok-Petrograd line is not by far the longest distance across Siberia.

Variations of Climates.

The climate of such a large country cannot be described without subdivision. The Trans-caspian district has all of the characteristics of the extreme South, with cotton, southern fruits, much sunshine, and, in places, very little water, with sand deserts and almost tropical flora. The central part of the country, the Siberia proper, is very much similar to the Inland Empire, and its northern part resembles the climate of Canada. The northeast and Kamchatka resembles some parts of Alaska, and the country to the south of the Amur River is similar to the northern Atlantic states and southern Canada.

Siberia is crossed by a number of mighty rivers. The Ob, Yenesev, Lena, Kalima and Amur are of Mississippi class, deep and navigable for boats of considerable draft for many hundreds and even thousands of miles. The source of most of these rivers and their tributaries lie in central and southern Siberia, some even in Mongolia and Manchuria. Many of them cross the Siberian and Chinese Eastern railroads and act as feeders for freight. The drawback of most of them is that they empty into the Arctic Sea and remain a considerable part of the year under ice. The Amur River is the only one of that class that discharges into the Pacific Ocean.

Navigation in the Arctic Sea has not yet developed to any large extent, but its beginning is already accomplished. The possibilities of bringing by water merchandise into the very heart of Siberia, and to exchange it for timber, grain, hides and other raw materials, has prompted European shippers to send steamers into the mouth of the Ob and Yenesev rivers. Fur, mammoth teeth, gold, are already attracting schooners to visit the Lena, Kalima and Anadir rivers and American traders are numerous in the Russian north-east.

Rivers Serve Twofold Purpose.

The great Siberian river system forms, practically speaking, the main inland

ways of communication in the northern part of that country, even in winter, when the river beds are used as sledge-ways. A little study of their direction will show that all of these northern waterways can be easily connected to form a water route across the whole country. Long before the construction of the Siberian railroad, the Russian government had begun and had partly carried out the work on a new wonder of the world—a Pacific-Atlantic inland waterway across the wildest part of Asia and Europe, consisting of a combination of rivers and canals, connecting Nicolavsk and Vladivostok on the Pacific Ocean with Archangel on the White Sea, Astrakhan on the Caspian, Moscow via the Volga River, Petrograd and Riga on the Baltic Sea, and Odessa and Novorossiysk on the Black Sea. Probably the time will soon come when this work can be reopened, and one can easily foresee what influence a cheap, though slow, transportation of timber, grain, ore and other commodities from the interior of Siberia to the seven seas and industrial centres will have on the world's trade.

Siberia has no railroads of its own. The

Siberian, Amur, Ussuri and the Chinese Eastern railroads are only the eastern termini of the Russian European railroad net. They were built, not to serve Siberian needs, but chiefly the needs of Central Russia, and as an outlet of the European Russian railroad to the Pacific

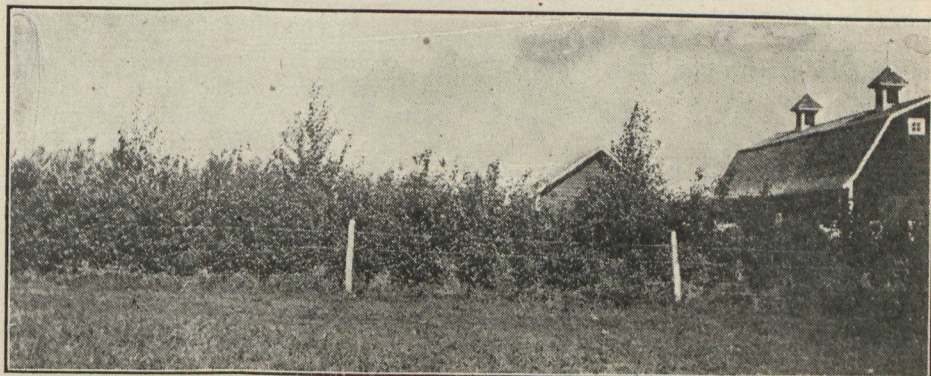
Population Extremely Sparse.

Siberia is sparsely populated. The official figures state it to be less than five-tenths inhabitant per square mile, as compared with 30.9 inhabitants per square mile in the United States. The greater part of the population is concentrated along the old mail route and the railroads. The towns are situated either on the principal rivers, or along the railroads, and are small, having from 5,000 to 250,000 inhabitants, and often are far from being improved.

Siberia is a hilly and mountainous country. Flat lands are found in the west (the Tobolsk and Tomsk provinces), along the border of the Arctic Sea (marsh plains), and the river valleys. Valuable deposits of various metals and minerals are known and quite a number



No, this is not a scene of tropical vegetation. It was taken on the Clearwater Forest Reserve in the Province of Alberta.



"Let the prairie winds blow! My live stock is protected." One of the thriving shelter belts on the farm of Mr. A. Fletcher, Zealandia, Sask.