

AGRICULTURE IN ALASKA

Exhaustive Report Submitted by Walter E. Clark.

Possibilities of the Country Are Very Great for Purposes of Stock and Cereal Raising.

Washington, Aug. 24. - Although Alaska would seem to be an unpromising field for agriculture, the agricultural department has maintained for some time that farming is feasible even in that far-northern territory, and now the census bureau has contributed some official statistics, gathered last year, which show that some success has attended such efforts as have been made to till the Alaska soil.

The five farms reporting less than three acres are all small market gardens. Four are devoted exclusively to the cultivation of vegetables, and on the other farm poultry is raised. The value of the products of these farms in 1899 was \$627, of which \$534 were from vegetables and \$95 from poultry and eggs.

Vegetables are the chief source of income of the three farms containing from three to nine acres each. In 1899 these farms, with thirteen acres of land under cultivation, yielded \$300 worth of produce. Of that amount, vegetables contributed \$265; poultry and eggs, \$195; hay, \$150.

The other four farms contain from twenty to forty-nine acres each, and have a total area of 147 acres of improved land. The operators devote small areas to vegetables, and, in addition, cut considerable quantities of grass. The value of the products raised in 1899 were as follows: Vegetables, \$2378; hay and ensilage, \$1180; live animals sold, \$310; dairy products, \$292; poultry and eggs, \$249—a total of \$4409.

The principal source of income of two of these farms was vegetables, while that of the other two was hay and ensilage. The United States experiment station at Sitka in 1899 cleared six acres, and the one at Kenai had three acres under cultivation.

The animals reported, except one horse, were found upon the four farms containing from twenty to forty-nine acres each. The work animals comprised five horses, valued at \$465; four oxen, valued at \$450; and three Eskimo dogs, value, at \$150. The dogs

other in the southwest region about Cook inlet and Kodiak island. The United States department of agriculture maintains experiment stations at Sitka, and at Kenai on Cook inlet, but no reports were secured of the land or live stock owned.

North of the sixty-second parallel agricultural operations are generally confined to small vegetable gardens, from which sales are rarely made. A small farm operated in connection with the Holy Cross Mission, on the lower Yukon, and a few gardens near Circle City produce small vegetables for market occasionally. Other small gardens are found in most of the villages of the Yukon valley.

The absurdity of stating the number of farms as twelve is virtually admitted by the census officials in one paragraph of the report in which it is stated that no investigations were made among the Indians, "many of whom," to quote the forthcoming report, "have made substantial advancement in cultivating the soil."

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were in use experimentally on a farm near Juneau. The relatively higher valuation of oxen than horses is explained by the statement that they are better adapted to farm work in Alaska, as they can be kept at less expense and are less susceptible to cold. The native grasses furnish abundant pasturage in the summer, and roots and ensilage take the place of natural forage in winter.

A herd of ten swine was found on a farm at Juneau, but no sales were reported in 1899. The lack of grain is an obstacle to success in this branch of stock raising, though it is partially overcome by the substitution of root crops.

No enumeration was made of cows, reindeer, pack dogs, and other live stock owned by the Indians, or kept in towns and villages. On many of the small islands along the coast of the Alaskan peninsula, and notably on Sanak and Shumagin islands, cattle are very successfully raised. No detailed report was obtained of the number of cattle kept on these islands north of those on Douglas island, near Juneau, where a number of cows are kept for dairy purposes.

The record presents a very incomplete summary, as the enumerated stock exceeds in number and value the stock reported.

"The cultivation of vegetables," the bulletin will say, "occupies the most important place in the agriculture of Alaska. This is the result of natural conditions. The mean annual temperature is too low, and the season between killing frosts too short to permit the successful cultivation of cereals. The long periods of daylight, the comparative high temperature, and the abundant rainfall, which mark the brief growing season, are highly favorable to the rapid growth and early maturity of nearly all kinds of vegetables, for which there is an active demand and ready market in the large towns and mining camps. Turnips, including rutabagas, in 1899, returned the largest revenue; potatoes and carrots were also quite remunerative. Onions and peas were successful under favorable circumstances only. The Moravian missionaries grow vegetables in different parts of the territory, their gardens in Kuskokwim, and at Carmel, in the Nushagak district, being especially prosperous, but no report was secured."

The number of acres under cultivation for vegetables was twenty-six, and the value of the product was placed at \$5565. Continuing, the bulletin will say: "Next to vegetables, grass cut for hay and ensilage is the most important agricultural product. Upon six farms seven-eighths acres of grass were mowed,

yielding a product of 113 tons. Very little of it can properly be called hay. Experience has shown that the uncertain climate renders impracticable any attempt to cure the heavy native grasses in the ordinary manner. This difficulty has been met by the construction of silos, of which in 1899 there were four, having a total capacity of 130 tons. Very little, if any, 'tame grass' is grown, and the silos are filled with beach or other native grasses, several varieties of which grow in abundance, both on the coast and in the interior.

"From the standpoint of income upon capital invested, poultry raising in 1899 was relatively the most profitable branch of Alaskan agriculture. The stock on hand June 1, 1900, consists of 176 fowls, valued at \$166. The total income was \$539 in 1899. Of this sum \$360 were derived from eggs and \$179 from the sale of chickens. Eggs found a ready market at an average price of 43 cents per dozen, while the average amount received for fowls was \$1.07 each.

"At Tyonek, in a recent favorable year, over 300 bushels of potatoes were raised. Some barley was grown on Kodiak island from seed furnished by the agricultural experiment stations. With that exception, no cereals have been successfully grown. Enough hay is usually gathered to feed the domestic animals through the winter. The wild grass is cut with sickles and hung on trees or poles to cure.

"Near some villages, contact with white men has taught the natives the use of improved farm utensils, but in other localities they till the land with staves and other crude implements. The missionaries are introducing modern tools among the Indians, and are instructing them in improved methods of agriculture. The establishment of agricultural experiment stations has been very beneficial, and gives promise of accomplishing still greater results."

WALTER E. CLARK.

HELD UP THE TRAIN

Robbers Steal the Engine From Arkansas Passenger Train.

Texarkana, Ark., Sept. 4.—No. 1 Cotton Belt passenger train, leaving Texarkana at 9:25 p. m., in charge of Conductor Armstrong, was held up and robbed near Elyan, four miles south of Texarkana, last night.

The train was flagged by one of the robbers, who forced the fireman to go back and cut off the mail and baggage cars, and, returning, forced the engineer to give up the management of his engine. One of the robbers, who, it appears, is an expert engineer, ran the engine, mail and express cars about a mile from the point where the first stop was made, and forced the express messenger to open his car. The robbers then blew open the safe with dynamite, securing, it is said, a very large amount of booty. The exact amount is withheld by the railroad company and the express people, but it is known that a very large shipment was made tonight on this train.

The robbers, after securing the loot, cut off the engine from the mail and express cars, and, forcing the engineer to get off, they took the engine, in charge of the robber engineer, and went south at full speed. At 1:30 o'clock this morning the engine had not been found.

No passengers were molested. They were, however, badly frightened, and hid their valuables. The robbers were evidently in possession of all the facts concerning this particular shipment of money, together with a schedule of the train, as their scheme was successful in every respect.

A suspicious character was seen to board the head end of the train leaving Texarkana. Railroad employes here seem to be confident that the robbery was committed by railroad men, from the manner in which they superintended the cutting off of the cars and the handling of the engine.

The spot selected for the robbery was well adapted for this kind of work, as it is very wild and heavily timbered. The conductor and several passengers walked back to Texarkana, a distance of four miles. The sheriff and posse have been summoned to go in pursuit of the robbers. At this hour the passenger train stands in two pieces, with the engine's whereabouts unknown. So far as known no one was injured. There were five men in the gang.

PACIFIC COAST CO.

Has in Contemplation Scheme for Peopling Alaska.

The Pacific Coast company has in contemplation a scheme which, if carried out and the proper changes are made in the land laws of the United States, will result in peopling of Alaska by Norwegians, Finns and Swedes and the entire country will be made self-sustaining. This scheme provides for the opening up of the millions of acres of low land along the southeastern coast, and in the interior of Alaska, and permitting homeseekers to occupy them and develop the agricultural resources. Given the proper legislation this company, in common with several other large transportation companies, will send photographers into Alaska, and later competent lecturers equipped with stereopticon views made from these photographs will be sent to European countries and a vast tide of immigration will be turned Alaskawards and the country will be transformed.

James G. Woodworth, traffic manager of the Pacific Coast company, has had the matter in hand for some time. Upon the general conditions prevailing and the wonderful future possibilities of Alaska, Mr. Woodworth says: "The United States owes its remarkable development, prosperity and extension of its territory to the pertinacity of the homeseeker and for his benefit many laws have been passed by the authorities at Washington, under the protection of which he is enabled to occupy and eventually become possessed of certain parcels of government land."

"The United States has been ably assisted in this matter by the various transportation companies, and now it has developed that Alaska, a country but a few years ago considered as worthless except from the standpoint of the fur trader, and during the past few years only looked upon as a country of vast mineral resources, is worthy of more consideration, and that with the advent of the homeseeker, it is possible to open up a country the agricultural resources of which will rival those of the Northern European countries."

GOES ON MERRILY

Steamer Rate War Shows No Signs of Abating.

The merry war in passenger rates between here and Whitehorse still continues notwithstanding the solemn assurance made by the News a few evenings ago that all differences were at an end. Day before yesterday Manager Calderhead dropped some hot shot into camp by announcing a cut to \$30 and \$15 on the next trip of the Flora which will be in this afternoon in time to leave tonight at 8 o'clock. Her accommodations have been sold out solidly since yesterday afternoon. The Yukoner, which arrived last night, it was thought might make a still further slash in the rates, but Agent Rogers has announced that for this trip tickets will be sold at the old schedule, \$30 and \$20 to Whitehorse and \$50 and \$40 to Skagway. The Clifford Sifton will

likewise sail on her next trip at the old rates of \$30 and \$20 to Whitehorse. Those in a position to know have ventured the opinion that with but approximately 30 days more of open river a readjustment of rates is liable to occur any day. As the season advances, rates heretofore have invariably stiffened, as a greater length of time is required in which to make a round trip and the operating expenses are consequently increased in proportion. Whether a further reduction is made or not will make but little difference, as each of the steamers concerned in the war leave port with every inch of space occupied.

This Year and Last. At this time last year there had been much more frost than has been seen this year and autumn leaves were falling, having passed the yellow stage which tint is this year fully ten days or two weeks behind last. Thus far there have been less than half a dozen frosts that were general. The prediction of sour doughs that the present will be a late fall bids fair to be fulfilled.

STAGE LINES THE ORR & TUKEY CO., Ltd.

TO GRAND FORKS—Daily each way, Sundays included. 9:30 a. m. and 5:00 p. m.
TO DOMINION AND GOLD RUN—Via Bonanza and McCormack's Forks. 8:45 a. m.
TO ABOVE DIS. HUNKER—Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays, returning following days. 9:30 a. m.
ALL LEAVE OFFICE N. C. CO. BUILDING. TELEPHONE NO. 8.

N. A. T. & T. CO.

Sole Leather Treasure Bags, Grips, Valises, Satchels, Packing and Steamer Trunks.

OVERTURES OF STRIKERS

Were Rejected by Tacoma Owners and Operators.

Tacoma, Sept. 3.—The striking machinists here have embodied overtures to the Metal Trades Association in a resolution passed by the local union last evening, and which was submitted to the local shop owners this morning. Under the terms laid down, the machinists announce they are willing to go to work, but have met with the absolute rejection of a portion of their terms by the shopmen. The resolution passed is as follows: "Whereas, The members of Cascade lodge 297, now on a strike for a nine-hour workday, have come to the conclusion that such can be obtained or brought about by the following conditions: "Resolved, First, that all members of this organization return to work who can get the 55-hour week, or better, with a rate of not less than 35 cents per hour. That all men who formerly received less than 32 1/2 cents per hour shall receive the same proportional increase in wages as did the 32 1/2 cents per hour men. "Second, that no member of this association shall work with an unfair or scab workman. "Third, that this lodge shall hold full jurisdiction over all its members returning to work under these resolutions. "Fourth, that all old employees be given preference to return to their old positions first. The shopmen emphatically reject the third stipulation of the machinists and declare their intention of standing by non-union men who have been working in their shops during the strike. The machinists apparently feel indifferent regarding the action taken upon their proposition by the shop owners, and assert that the resolution was passed at the instance of a representative of one of the large shops of Tacoma who desires to see an end of the strike.

Double Tragedy. Tucson, Ariz., Sept. 3.—Carlos McCormick, 12 years of age, shot and killed Antonio Soto, a playmate, 15 years of age, yesterday with a .22-caliber rifle. A couple in a buggy drove by and McCormick raised the rifle and said: "I will take a shot at them." Soto prevented him from carrying out his intention and McCormick, in a rage, shot and killed him. His sick mother, on hearing what her son had done, died a few hours afterward from the shock.

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