

THE NEEDS OF ALASKA

Plan to Divide the Country Into Three Territories.

POSSIBILITIES OF THE VAST TRACT

Tremendous Distances and Lack of Good Roads Are the Chief Obstacles to Efficient Administration—Transportation the Key to Alaska's Mineral Wealth—Indian Mission's Success at Fairbanks.

Alaska divided into three territories, each with a delegate or a commissioner or an agent to represent its interests in Washington, is the picture for the future of that great stretch of country which John S. McLean draws in a recently published book on "Alaska and the Kingdom," says the Washington correspondent of the New York Post. The circumstances under which it was written lead interest to it. When the special subcommittee of the senate committee on territories visited Alaska in the summer of 1904 to study the legislative problem which the new development of that region presented Mr. McLean was invited to go with them in an unofficial capacity. He saw the same things that they saw, and his view to a considerable extent is that of other persons who have visited this newest coast.

The tremendous distances and the lack of good roads have been the chief obstacles to the efficient administration of the law in Alaska, and for better transportation facilities Mr. McLean makes quite as strong a plea as for a subdivision of the territory. He tells that 500 miles of the central Alaska judicial circuit extend over a district 500 miles long and 100 miles wide, or fifty times the size of New Hampshire. And yet it contains not a mile of railroad or even of wagon road worthy of the name. The only roads are the south coast and on the Yukon river, which runs through the middle of the district, furnish the only real transportation. It took Judge McKean, United States examiner at Fairbanks, Foot, on the upper Koyukuk, twenty-seven days to get to Rampart to attend court, although the distance is somewhat less than from New York to Chicago.

Lack of transportation facilities greatly increases the price of the commodities which Alaska produces. This is an axiom of the world, but it is doubtful if it has been illustrated better in modern times than in Alaska today. Gold is still an expensive commodity to produce. Soot the shipped during the season of 1910 to Nome and St. Michael more than 300,000 tons of freight at rates ranging from \$7 to \$22.50 a ton. Coal, which costs \$17 in Nome, sells for \$30 a ton twenty-five miles inland. The rate at Nome would be considerably reduced and correspondingly for all the back country if suitable harbor facilities were provided there. A breakwater is the first need. It is estimated that it costs \$5 a ton for the lightness of ordinary merchandise at that point. The vessels must anchor about two miles from the shore. The deck and crew members are then conveyed in small boats to a point but a few rods from the water's edge, where everybody and everything is lifted by a sort of traveling crane from the boats and carried to the shore. The people of Nome believe that a jetty built out from the mouth of Snake river and the dredging of a sand bar which lies near the entrance would make it possible for small vessels and lighters to pass through to a safe harbor within the sand pit.

Mr. McLean's plan of division is to make southeast Alaska which is in substance the panhandle strip a territory by itself, with its capital at Juneau. It has a white population of 15,000. He would then take northwest Alaska, which has a white population of slightly less, and make it a territory, with the capital at Nome. The rest of Alaska, which would be its great central and inaccessible part, should remain under its present supervision of government until its development warranted its establishment as a third subdivision. "The people of Alaska are united throughout and are in a high state of excitement because one of her two real covets, which were the only representatives of their miles in any direction for hundreds of miles, seemed about to choke to death on potatoes. Happily this calamity was averted, and the supply of milk, which sold at \$1 a quart, was uninterrupted. The best demonstration of Alaska's agricultural possibilities was found at an Indian mission at Holy Cross under the charge of Father Leopold Van Gorp of the Jesuit order. This mission has under cultivation thirty acres, which produce fine crops of potatoes, beans, peas, cauliflower, cabbage, lettuce, radishes, turnips and other vegetables. About 150 Indians are attached to the settlement. The potatoes were found to be well kept and the buildings substantial.

Canada has expended \$1,000,000 in the last five years on roads and trails to render more accessible the part of her dominions lying near our own. The senate committee came back strongly impressed with the necessity of doing something of this kind on our

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side of the line. Senator Nelson secured the incorporation in the army appropriation bill of a provision for the survey of a wagon road from Valdez on the southern coast, to Eagle, on the Yukon river. The survey was made last summer, and great engineering difficulties were discovered. In fact, the river courses furnished a natural pathway for a line of communication into the interior. Unquestionably transportation is the key of Alaska's mineral wealth. Without it little progress can be made. There are some mining districts where the transportation charge reaches \$60 a ton on supplies. It is obvious that only rich strikes will pay at such points. In the spring of 1902, when four sold at \$7 a hundred pounds at Dawson, it was \$32 a hundred at a place which seems to take its name from the difficulty of getting any chickens. Potatoes are 25 cents a pound there and other things at prices to correspond. In fact, the scale at any point outside a workable gauge by which the difficulties of transportation may be measured.

DUCK HUNTING IN JAPAN.

William Dowdell Tells How They Are Hunted With Nets.

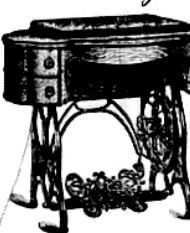
Duck hunting in Japan is thus described by William Dowdell in Harper's Weekly:

Moroku Kurada's pond is some ten acres in extent. Around its entire circumference a great ironlike wall some fifteen feet in height has been thrown up, and upon its summit and slopes a dense camellia has been planted, which rises some thirty feet into the air and absolutely cuts off all view of the interior expanse of water. At intervals of some thirty yards for half the circumference of the circle and on the landward side ditches about six feet deep and five feet wide have been dug. The ditches, with the waters of the lake some eighteen inches deep in them, are about a hundred feet long, banked with earth and marked on each side some three feet above the surface of the surrounding land. Where they enter the lake two right angled turns are made, which assume a complete screening of the lake from any outside view, or view across.

A thousand tame ducks are kept in this lake to decoy the wild ones into the water feeding ditches.

When the ducks once enter the ditch and begin feeding the warden pulls the fell wire and warns the boat and his guests at the house several hundred yards away, and as the birds approach he pulls a small string, which causes both wild and tame ducks to enter where the ditch debouches into the lake. The ducks are thus trapped in a

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deep, narrow ditch from which they have no escape except by upward flight. The warden hurries to either side of the bank (protected also) lines up along its entire length with their long poles held rigidly and their eyes fixed on the cut by the earth. A warden crouches to the rear end of the ditch and cautiously peers over. With a series of frightened snawks and a plashing and flapping of many wings the terrified birds rise like bullets from the water, the nets sweep through the air and are brought bottom side up on the rearward side, when a few of the most lucky and skilful are found to have a thrashing, loudly quacking duck ensnared therein.

FIRE HOUSE FOR ROOSEVELT

Atlantic City Firemen Building Model of Their Quarters For President.

For presentation to President Roosevelt the firemen of truck B and engine company No. 5 of Atlantic City, N. J., are building a miniature fire house, fully equipped, which when completed will, it is thought, surpass anything of the kind that the president has ever possessed, says the New York Tribune. Assistant Foreman William K. Foster and John C. Lewis, ladderman, who are practically doing the building, have been working on the fire house for about two months.

The exterior of the structure will be of brick, with brownstone trimmings. The roof, with its four twin dormer windows and tower, will be of slate. The floor above the double doors will bear the legend in gilt letters, "Truck B and Engine Company No. 5, Atlantic City, N. J."

Within the house is modeled after the central fire station. The ground floor has seven stalls and an office and will be equipped with a tiny truck, steamer and a hose cart. A flight of stairs, with highly-ornamented railings, leads to the second floor, containing the chief's office and bedrooms for the men. A sliding pole gives access to the lower floor. The rooms will be completely furnished after the manner of modern fire stations.

The Chicago Examiner

THE EXAMINER, the leading morning paper of Chicago, has just announced a unique Proverb Educational Contest, in which it proposes to give away 50 prizes to successful contestants, ranging in value from \$5.00 to \$50.00. First prize, \$50.00, total amount to be given away, about \$2,500.00, expires commencing February 27th and containing one well-known proverb for fifty days. This contest will create a widespread interest, and THE EXAMINER is advising that orders be given to the newsdealers at once, or send for a

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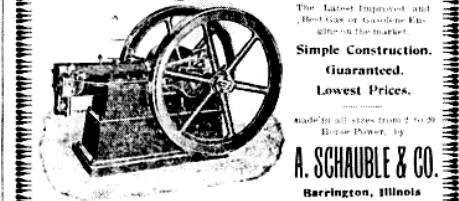
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