

ALASKANS WOULD GLADLY WELCOME GOVERNMENT R. R.

Syndicate's Grip on Territory So Strong That in Settlement of Affair Government Might Take Hand.

(United Press Leased Wire.)
Cordova, Alaska, Sept. 30.—Gifford Pinchot arrived here last night from Ketchikan. Later in the day he left for Valdez. Where a meeting will be held to hear him speak tonight. Senator Poindexter of Washington has gone into the interior over the Copper River & Northwestern railway. Pinchot is anxious to have Poindexter here for a meeting upon his return from Valdez. Friends of Poindexter say that he is prepared to deliver an important address when he returns here. Pinchot will go to Ketchikan before leaving Alaska.

By John E. Lathrop.
(Written for The Journal and the Evening News, Newark, N. J. Copy-right, 1911.)

Knik, Alaska, Sept. 16.—Shall it be that threatened permanent private monopoly of transportation facilities in Alaska is to be the cause of forcing the construction of a government railroad here? Such an enterprise would be absolutely satisfactory to the people of Alaska. It would be more—they would receive it with joy, and regard it as the means whereby they would be freed from the crushing and discouraging domination of the Alaska syndicate.

Along the entire southern coast of Alaska, with stops in Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, Juneau, Skagway, Sitka, Cordova, Valdez, Seward, Funtun Bay, La Touche, Chit, Kern Bay and here at Knik, one sees every moment the convincing evidence that the syndicate has this country in its grasp; that it is utterly disregarding of the interests of the settlers, and that it has already control of transportation, as a part of the general scheme to get into a position to control the natural resources.

Power Is Complete.
The people up here look at you in blank amazement when you ask them if these things are true. And you do not remain long before you wonder that anywhere in the United States there are persons of sane minds who, having looked into the subject, failed to discover the syndicate's complete power.

The problem is what to do to open the resources of Alaska, and at the same time to conserve the rights of society against the rule of unregulated monopoly. It is in answer to that demand that many have proposed a government railway in Alaska; and the growth of sentiment in support of it is astonishing.

The problems, therefore, that must be met by engineers in building railroads in Alaska, will soon take on a national interest, much as the debate over routes for the Isthmian canal became general and prolonged and called for details from the engineering of the public. And, with growing demand for a federal road up here, and with specific legislative proposals of that nature now actually before the congress, the facts relating to the proper method of shipping Matanuska coal will have to be investigated.

With this in view, and adjusting the movements to the conditions found here, the Pinchot-Poindexter party divided the time to advantage. Gifford Pinchot, with a guide, went to the coal fields, and Senator Poindexter and the other members of the party took up the investigation of the local waterway and harbor possibilities, the agricultural resources, the mineral resources other than coal, and, in general, the ascertainment of all facts that would in any way assist later in the settlement of the question. Later, Senator Poindexter went to the coal fields.

Almost every citizen living in this immediate vicinity was personally interviewed; every opinion touching rail-

way routes and harbor possibilities was obtained. The ground was gone over; the waters sailed over; charts were examined, and no detail left unexamined which it was possible in the limited time to cover.

Fisher's Method Different.
The method employed was different from that followed by Secretary Fisher. Although all courtesies offered were gratefully acknowledged, and representations of the syndicate interests heard with full earnestness, the effort was rather to get at what the people up here thought of the problem, and at the same time to get the economic facts independent of the influence of the big business interests. This method has been held to with tenacity, and will, it is believed, result in the development of valuable information for the outworking of the problems.

Only the most skilled engineers, of course, will be able to determine which port would be the best one from which to ship Matanuska coal, so far as the physical conditions are concerned. Many puzzling conditions will have to be investigated. Some creative genius must be utilized; for, if coal ever goes from Cook Inlet in quantities, engineering works must be constructed under conditions quite new to American transportation.

It was upon good authority that I was informed that already representatives of the Alaska syndicate have looked into the Baltic sea method of overcoming ice difficulties in winter water transportation. It is impossible now to say whether or not these ice conditions on Cook Inlet are the same as on the Baltic, or similar enough to make it possible to employ here the methods employed there. But there are some facts obtainable that tend to justify accepting the theory that in time coal will leave Cook Inlet in large ocean carriers, destined for the ports of the Pacific states.

Would Injure Seward.
This, of course, will necessitate the subtraction from Seward of its cherished coal shipping business. It does not necessarily involve the entire destruction of Seward as an important port. The original promoters of the Alaska Northern assert that they expended several millions in building from Seward to Kern Creek, and in partly completing a grade and rock work beyond that a few miles. More than 100 miles additional would have to be built to reach the coal.

It is obvious that less than that many miles of railway from the coal to tidewater on Cook Inlet would bring the coal out for ocean shipment, and that many real and expensive phases of the Seward-Kern Creek line would be eliminated. If, therefore, there were new engineering phases of meeting the ice, high tide and glacial silt conditions here on Cook Inlet were disposed of, it is plain that Seward may have to forego its dream of becoming the sole shipping port for Matanuska coal.

The whole situation is so inadequately reported on and analyzed, that it would be the height of folly to venture even a tentative opinion at this time. About as far as one could wisely go now is to say that there must needs be much study of these water and land conditions, and that the people of the nation will be demanding facts bearing upon the proposed government railroads in Alaska, just as they demanded them in respect of the Isthmian canal, as between the Panama and Nicaraguan routes.

See Puzzling Factors.
It is easy also to see that persons who have not at least been on the ground up here may easily fall into error in discussing these problems. One can see already the signs of annoying and puzzling features. There will be debate of the question as to whether or not the government should buy out railroad interests already in existence, or proceed with absolute independence to build. It will be contended by some that to buy them out would be to give profit to those who sought to steal Alaska's natural resources. Then will arise the question as to whether, if these interests are bought out, the government should pay for the actual present value of the physical plant, or pay also for money expended in failures of former schemes, and in fighting opposition companies during the days when Alaska was the battleground of conflicting financial interests.

Physical valuation, watered stocks, franchises and all of the elements that enter into the discussion of the common carrier questions in the states will have to be considered here; so that it is easy to see that debate over Alaskan transportation problems will inevitably involve the whole scheme of transportation economics, and call for most careful consideration. For precedents are going to be established in this matter which will affect the whole future of the nation and its distributive system.

Therefore, to predict a great national debate over Alaska is not to be presumptuous; it must come, and it must offer opportunities to public servants and writers to contribute materially to the discussion, and thus to leave an impress upon the history of the nation.

Alaska is virgin soil. It is so vast that only slight exploration has been done. Vast regions remain virtually a terra incognita, a land unknown. Already it has been proven that enormous gold, fish, fur, copper and coal wealth is here; that there are agricultural resources, always second, it is true, to the mineral wealth. What other resources are here, remains a question. It is probable that stores of natural wealth will be discovered to add immensely to the possibilities.

Is Inviting Field.
But, if none other be found, enough has been demonstrated to justify the nation in taking up the settlement of the problem with realization that its settlement is going to write pages of real history for the ages. Alaska is to be the battleground of conflicting schools of economic thought; to be the scene of contending between those who would utilize the benefits of cooperative public institutions and those who would retain public utilities in the hands of private interests. Probably, as these questions are settled in Alaska, so they will be settled for the whole United States.

It is an inviting field for engineers and capitalists, especially for those who recognize that a new day has dawned in which the nation proposes to handle public utilities in a new way. It is a field that invites men of earnestness in politics and statesmanship. Some names are going to be writ large in American history by reason of the Alaskan controversy; and the call is for that leader who has the constructive ability and leadership qualities to step forward and compel that it be so.

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Idaho Republicans Have Heavy Campaign in Prospect

Three North Idahoans Openly Want Governorship, While Receptive Candidates Number Two; Politicians Face Struggle Over Delivery of State to La Follette or Taft

(Special to The Journal.)
Boise, Idaho, Sept. 30.—With the announcement of Ben F. Tweedy, of Lewiston, that he will be a candidate for the Republican nomination for governor at the primaries next year, interest in the political situation has been revived, and it is apparent that there is to be a lively scramble for the honor of heading the Republican state ticket. It has been generally agreed, among party leaders that north Idaho is to be given a clear field in the race for governor so far as the Republicans are concerned. The only prospective candidate from the south, Lieutenant Governor Lewis H. Sweeter has announced that he will not enter the race; and this leaves the northern aspirants to fight it out among themselves.

Standpat and Progressive Fight.
While there is lively interest in the gubernatorial contest, real political interest at present is being centered in the fight between the standpat and progressive elements of the party for control of the Idaho delegation to the national convention. The Idaho voters are given no opportunity to express their presidential preference and as a result the fight is one of politicians. Already the lines are being drawn between the followers of the administration and the progressives, who are openly fighting for a La Follette delegation. It has been shown on every occasion in which the Republican voters of Idaho have been given a chance to express themselves that they are overwhelmingly progressive. The most marked instance of this was the defeat of Congressman Thomas R. Hamer at the Republican primaries last year by

reported that southern Idaho party leaders have agreed to lend their support to Judge Dunn. The retirement of Lieutenant Governor Sweeter from the race is said to have been in conformity with this program.

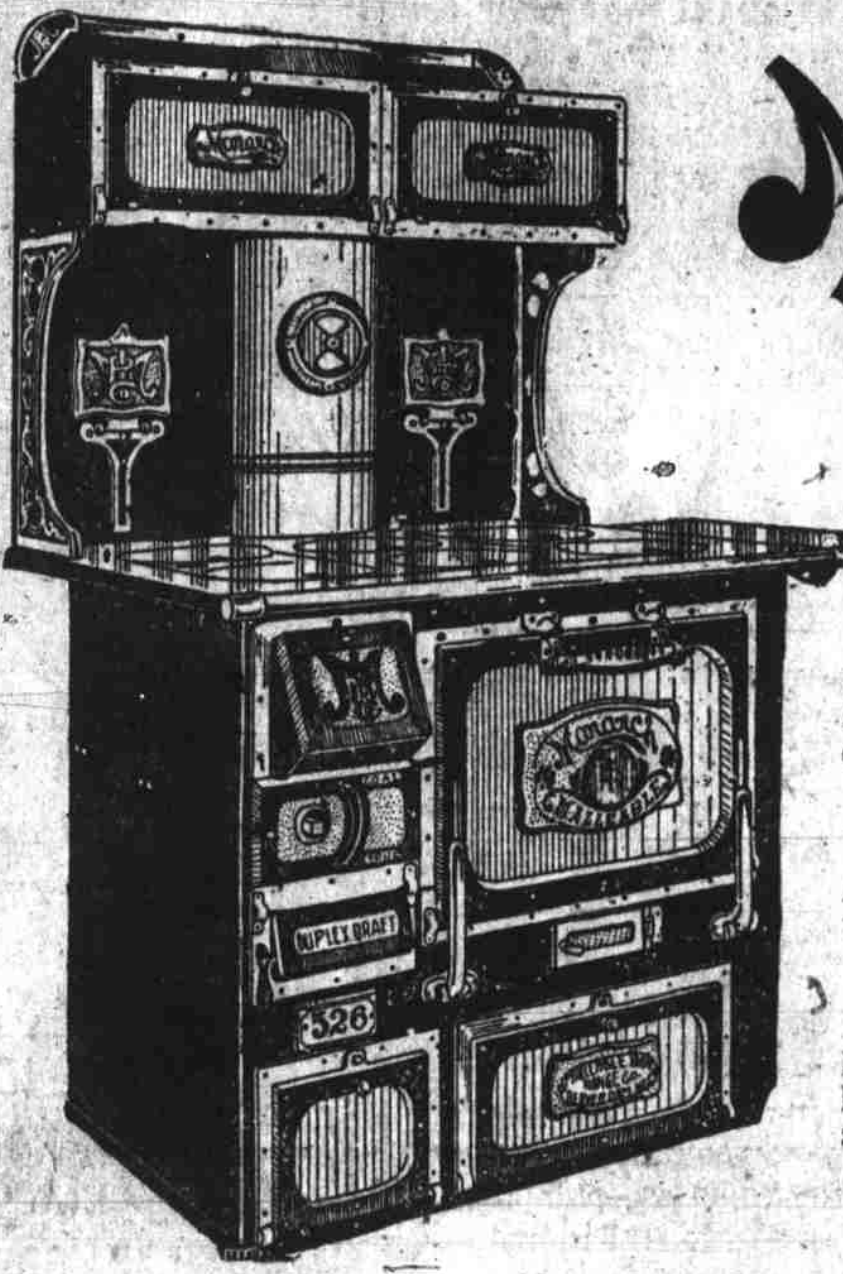
Notwithstanding the certain attitude of the Republican voters, the old standpat element, headed by Senator Hayburn, will make a hard fight to pledge the delegation to Taft. Speculation is rife as to the stand which will be taken by Senator Borah, who refuses to be classed as either an insurgent or a regular, but who likes the term "progressive." Borah has been a friend of the administration. He did not support reciprocity, but he did defend the president's stand on the recall of judges, and in other matters he has given his aid to the Taft cause. At the same time he is personally a great admirer of La Follette. A warm personal friendship exists between the two senators, and the progressive element is confident that when the time comes Borah will

be found on the La Follette bandwagon. For the present he contents himself with a middle-of-the-road attitude. The fact that Senator Borah's term of office expired March 3, 1912, and that he must stand for re-election next year may have something to do with his apparent desire to refrain from committing himself on the presidential situation at this time. The present indications are that he will have no opposition for the Republican nomination; but the activity of the Democrats and their success in electing the governor last year make the situation one which he is watching carefully.

Two Congressmen Next Year.
There is to be a new factor in the Republican political situation next year as a result of the passage of the re-appointment bill, under the terms of which Idaho will have two congressmen instead of one. Although both congressmen will be elected from the state at large, it is understood among political leaders that one will be from the north and the other from the south. Congressman Hamer and Addison T. Smith, private secretary to Senator Hayburn, are already in the race. This will be another battle between the standpat and the progressives, with Hamer and

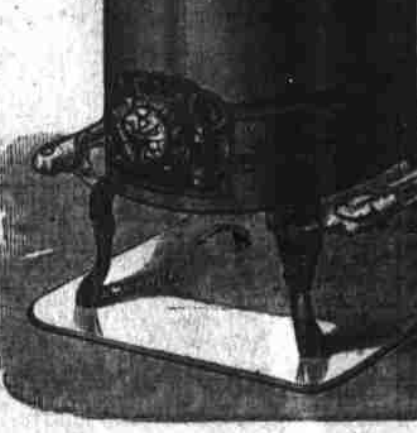
Smith lined up with the standpat element. Back of the congressmen, it is believed to be something more than the election of the lower house. This year Governor Brady was considered a possible candidate against Hamer next year, and it is reported that the junior senator is not only excited at a prospect in his candidacy for congress next year, but also in an effort to defeat Hamer in the United States by W. B. Hayburn two years ago when the Mormor was being agitated and when galleons contested for seats in the convention.

While all this activity is in progress, the Democratic party is endeavoring to bid their time for a foregone conclusion that Governor Brady will be renominated if accepted, and although there is a regard to the complexion of the national convention seems to be little to distinguish in party ranks. This is in marked contrast with the years ago when the Mormor was being agitated and when galleons contested for seats in the convention.



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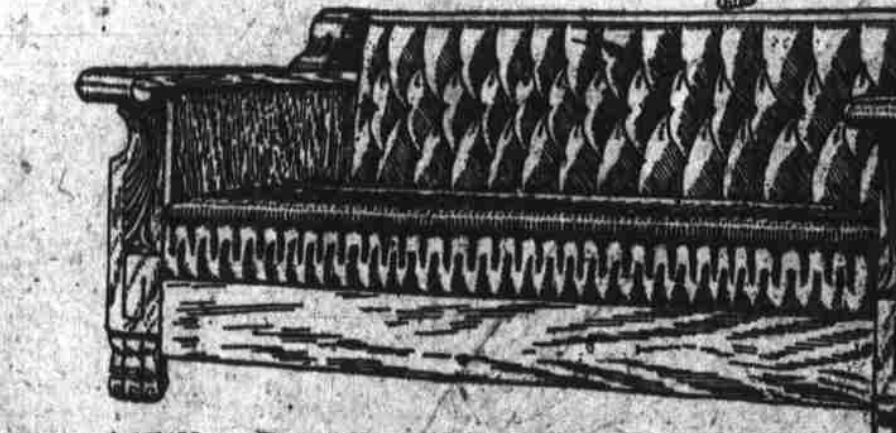
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