

REPORT ON ALASKA

MUCH INTERESTING
DATA MADE PUBLIC.

Great Need of Transportation Facilities and Government Asked to Help—Immense Output and Immensely Greater Undeveloped Resources—Vast Area of Excellent Stock Country.

Following is a portion of the highly entertaining report of the secretary of the interior on Alaska territory. The report is very long and another installment of it will be published for the benefit of the readers of The East Oregonian, as many of them are directly interested in that rich territory. The report says:

The report of Governor John G. Brady, of the district of Alaska, enters into extensive detail as to the affairs of the district, covering the great problem of transportation facilities, the population, the laws, the industries, resources and possibilities of the district.

Transportation Needs.

The problem of transportation is represented as of greatest importance, and suggestion is made that congress should encourage the construction of railroads through Alaska, not by further extension of land grants, but by the guaranty of a specified rate of interest upon the bonds of responsible corporations shown to be acting in good faith, and thus hasten the work of railroad construction.

The vast resources of the Yukon valley and the region lying between it and the sea, now lying dormant, the capacity to sustain a large population, and the activity of Canada in the way of extension of transportation facilities are presented as convincing arguments in favor of governmental encouragement of the development of transportation.

The people of Eagle, Valdez, Rampart and Nome appeal for congressional appropriation for the construction of wagon roads, bridges and trails into the permanent mining camps. The governor presents that the military trail from Fort Lisicum, near Valdez, should be widened to a wagon trail. Supplies are increased in cost by as much as 25 cents per pound by transportation charges to Copper Center and beyond that point by as much as \$1 a pound, and these charges could be enormously reduced by opening up the roads. This would also open up a large area of rich placer mining ground for profitable returns to thousands of men.

Government Aids to Development.

Congress in March, 1903, appropriated for the investigation of the agricultural resources of Alaska \$15,000; for light houses and fog signals in Alaskan waters, \$200,000; for protection of the salmon fisheries, \$7,000; for investigation of mineral resources, \$60,000; for propagation of reindeer, \$25,000; for a submarine cable, \$485,000; for an exhibit at the St. Louis exposition, \$50,000, and for carrying out the provisions of the treaty of January 24, 1903, with Great Britain, \$100,000.

By the census of 1900 the population was 63,592, of whom 45,872 were males and 17,720 females; the total white population was 30,507. The population represents only one person to every ten square miles of area. The recent liberal homestead law should, when the great opportunities it presents to the fertile valleys of Alaska, with their rich soil and healthful climate, invite a rapidly increasing population from the overcrowded sections in the states of the Union.

Agricultural possibilities are great, as shown by the reports of the governor and the testimony of officials of the district as to the quality and yield of such crops and vegetables as are being cultivated.

Natural Stock Country.

It is predicted that stock raising will soon become an important industry and that choicest grades of dairy products will be supplied to other markets. Grasses grow from the southern boundary line away beyond the Arctic circle. Cattle and sheep are being successfully herded on Kodiak Island. Poultry raising and egg production promise profitable returns on account of their high prices in the local settlements.

The timber resources of Alaska will be very great. The governor questions the policy of having made a forest reserve of the timber lands of southeastern Alaska, by proclamation of the president, on August 20, 1902.

This timber, he represents, is fully grown and going to waste in enormous quantities, that more lumber is shipped into Alaska than is taken from the land, and that congress by enacting a law providing for the collection of 25 cents per 1,000 feet for logs cut from lands in Alaska and brought to the mills, and some to be cut under a certain size, the government would get millions of dollars for the timber and the younger growth of the forest would soon renew them.

Timber and Lumber Problems.

Under existing law persons are entitled to take timber from the public lands of Alaska for their own individual use as actual settlers, residents, miners, prospectors, etc., but the only statute which authorized the disposal of timber is section 11 of the act of May 14, 1898. No timber, however, it is stated, has been disposed of under that act, it being urged by Alaskans that the time and expense necessarily involved in securing rights under it are too great to justify the attempt.

The greater part of the forests of Alaska are situated on the sides of steep and rugged mountains and in canyons and gorges, and the lack of sufficient soil has produced an uneven growth of timber, large and small trees being mixed indiscriminately.

The cutting and marketing of logs

require a great deal of labor, and heretofore it has been the custom to take valuable trees along the water front, working them into the water, towing them together and booming them. The labor required to perform this work costs in the neighborhood of \$6 per 1,000, and is not sufficiently remunerative to induce other than natives to engage therein. The timber situation in Alaska differs from that in almost any other locality, and seems to demand a simpler method than that prescribed by the above-mentioned statute.

Important Fish Interests.

The pack from the salmon fisheries, 2,400,000 cases, shows a shortage of 290,000 cases as compared with last year, but the prices are higher than ever, and the value of the product is placed at \$12,480,000. The danger of depleting the streams, it is stated, is a grave one unless the government, by establishing fish hatcheries, takes supervision of the salmon culture and stocking of the streams, and taxes the canneries for the expense and support of this work. The catch of halibut has increased.

These fish are caught in the open waters as well as in the channels, some of them weighing from 600 to 700 pounds. Shipments are made as far east as Boston in refrigerator cars. Codfishing grounds cover a larger area than those of halibut, but this industry as well as herring fishing is still only a beginning. Attu mackerel, a delicate and excellent food fish; the candle fish or ollachin, which produces a food oil said to be as valuable as cod liver oil; black bass, red snapper, black cod, trout, eels, shrimp, crabs and clams abound in the waters. There are no oysters in Alaskan waters.

That Fur Industry.

There were 21,000 sealskins taken during the year, being 2,000 less than last year. The payment of a liberal bounty for the head of each "thresher," which is a destructive enemy of the seal, is recommended for the protection of the seal herds. The idea of branding the female seals is again urged as a measure of great importance for their protection, and it is shown that the branding does not at all injure the animal. The trade in land furs, such as foxes, bears, mink, wolverine and beaver, continues in many localities.

Game in Alaska is protected from wanton destruction and from slaughter for purposes of shipment by an act of congress approved June 7, 1902, supplemented by definite regulations

prescribed by the department of agriculture.

On June 30, 1903, there were 5,150 domestic reindeer in Alaska, including 1,600 fawns born in the spring of 1903. They are kept in ten principal herds, and are owned by 82 persons, the majority of whom are Eskimos and Laplanders. These animals are wonderfully adapted for valuable practical uses in the country, and the policy of fostering their propagation is said to be wise and farsighted.

Mining Camps Prosperous.

Mining is the great subject of most absorbing interest in Alaska, and the urgent necessity is presented for a mining commissioner with a proper number of assistants, to collect and keep record of data and information relative to mining enterprises for the public benefit. Great prosperity is reported from the mining camps. The gold mining companies are exhibiting their prosperity and confidence by extending and enlarging plants and equipment, sinking new and deeper shafts, running new levels and purchasing new claims.

Much low grade ore is being mined at an enticing profit. There is great activity in mining upon Douglas Island and back of Juneau, upon the mainland, and the southern half of Prince of Wales Island is rich in mineral deposits. The mines at Silver Bow basin never were more prosperous, and great results are anticipated in the territory from Juneau to Berniers Bay, Nome, Council City, Fairbanks, Coldfoot, Rampart, Niznia and Fortymile are centers of activity in the placer mining industry and there is much rich and well paying ore being worked.

There are rich copper properties on Prince of Wales Island and at Creppen river, from which a great product will soon come upon the market. Silver, lead, tin, gypsum and marble are among the valuable minerals of Alaska, and there are great deposits of coal along the southern coast and in other parts of the district.

Extensive Oil Fields.

Great interest is now being concentrated upon the discovery and location of oil fields all the way from Yakutat west through the Alaska Peninsula. Many expert oil men have visited the section and many wells are being sunk. The oil produced has a paraffin base and is regarded as a valuable product. The system of locating claims and power of attorney is being greatly abused, as evidenced by one instance in which two men have located 51,200 acres of land under the

placer mining act. The same system is practiced as to coal and oil, and there is justly a strong protest from miners and would-be bona fide locators, and an appeal is made for remedial legislation.

An interesting tabulated statement covering specific and detailed classification of merchandise, compiled by the bureau of statistics, showing the status of the commerce of Alaska, is included in the report of the governor.

Imports and Exports.

It shows as follows: Domestic merchandise shipped from the United States to Alaska from the customs districts of Oregon, Puget Sound and San Francisco to the value of \$9,266,564, of which \$6,632,427 was carried in American steamers and \$2,634,977 in American sailing vessels. The shipments of domestic merchandise from Alaska to the United States were of the value of \$10,188,220. The shipment of gold and silver coin from the United States to Alaska amounted to \$137,518, and the shipment of coin from Alaska to the United States amounted to \$34,989. The shipments of ore from Alaska to the United States were: Silver, \$282; gold, \$15,698,864.

The imports of merchandise into Alaska from foreign countries were of the value of \$477,463 and the exports to foreign countries were \$1,688,932.

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Conrad Platzoeder
Meat Market

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Helen Gould Will Not Accept.

St. Louis, Dec. 14.—Helen Gould today notified her friends that she could not consider the acceptance of the position of president of the board of lady managers for the World's Fair to succeed Mrs. James Blair.

Policeman Skelly, of San Francisco shot at a footpad, missed him and badly wounded a boy named George King.

Suffered Eight Months

I can heartily recommend Acker's Tablets for Dyspepsia and Stomach Troubles. I have been suffering for eight months and tried many remedies without any relief, until I got Acker's Dyspepsia Tablets, which I used only a short time and am now perfectly well. Thanking you for the speedy recovery, I am gratefully yours, Francis I. Cannon, Vancouver, Wash. For sale by F. W. Schmidt & Co.

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