

INTERESTING POINTS ON ALASKA FUEL SUPPLY

Timber Scarce, Petroleum Possible, and Peat May Be Burned.

WASHINGTON, April 24.—In closing his discussion of the coal resources of Alaska, in part III of the Twenty Second Annual Report of the United States Geological Survey, now in press, Mr. Alfred H. Brooks adds some brief comments on the other sources of fuel.

In addition to coal, he says, there are three possible sources of fuel supply in Alaska, namely, timber, petroleum and peat; and of these, timber alone has been utilized.

Southeastern Alaska is heavily forested and affords ample wood for fuel. Certain species of trees are found as far west as Kodiak Island. Beyond Kodiak, to the west and north, the coast region of Alaska is practically treeless. Some willows, and occasionally spruce, are found in the sheltered regions, but for the most part the coastal belt is covered simply with moss, grass, and low shrubs. This type of vegetation extends northward to Point Barrow and thence eastward.

The moss and grass-covered plains and the rolling hills are called "tundras," and are found on the northern continental margins encircling the globe.

The interior of Alaska has usually a sufficient supply of wood for ordinary purposes of building and mining and for fuel. The larger river valleys are often heavily forested with spruce and other trees. In the Yukon, near the international boundary, the timber line is about 2,000 feet; northward it decreases in elevation, and on the Koyukuk it is about 2,500 feet. Still further to the north and west it still decreases in altitude, and on the Upper Kobuk the timber is said to be limited to the floor of the largest river valleys. In northern Arctic drainage reports state that there is no timber except the willows, which, however, grow to considerable size. The Kuskokwim, Shishna and Copper rivers all have timbered basins. During the great influx of population of the last three years, much timber has been destroyed by fire in the dry summer months.

In the northwestern and northern parts

of the territory, from North Bay around to the mouth of the Mackenzie, the shore was once abundantly supplied with driftwood. The Eskimos, who have been using this wood for generations, are very economical in the matter of fuel, and, until the coming of the white man, the probabilities are that the driftwood was accumulated faster than it was used. This driftwood is brought down from the interior by the larger rivers, whose banks are wooded. The cutting of the wood along the banks of the Yukon has already decreased the annual contribution of driftwood to northern Bering Sea. This, together with the rapid exhaustion by the white man of the supply which had accumulated in the past, will soon cause the Eskimo, as well as the white man, to be dependent on other sources for fuel. "The North Arctic Coast eastward from Point Barrow, which is but thinly populated by natives and seldom visited by whites, has some driftwood."

The possibilities of using for fuel the thick growth of vegetable matter which covers most of the treeless regions of Alaska, have been suggested, but have never been put to practical test.

During the months of June and July, 1900, extensive fires swept through much of the treeless region of Nome and other portions of the Seward Peninsula. The moss and grass, when dry, were found to burn rapidly with considerable flame, and fires ran over nearly the entire region visited by prospectors during the dry months. This fact makes it evident that the surface growth of the tundra could be used for fuel, provided it were properly dried. This material has in many cases been accumulated to considerable thickness in peat bogs.

With regard to the third source of fuel supply, petroleum, we have no definite knowledge of its existence in commercial quantities. It is reported to have been found in Southeastern Alaska, between Yakutat and Controller Bay, south of Mount St. Elias, and also on the east side of Cook Inlet, near Kachemak Bay.

been purchased already, but he will not make public the location until next week.

The village will have a dozen factories. It will have churches, schools, dwellings, stores and places of amusement, all to be built at Mr. Vrooman's expense.

"The village will be constructed and ruled along the lines suggested in a book recently written by Professor John Dewey of the University of Chicago," said Mr. Vrooman. "It will be more for the welfare of children than adults. There will be playgrounds of all kinds, and one of the principal structures will be devoted entirely to children, who will be under the care of young women nurses and teachers."

Mr. Vrooman said that he will open 25 co-operative stores in Kansas City within a few weeks. The factories in the model village will produce articles that will be sold in these stores. All this will place Mr. Vrooman at the head of the greatest co-operative system in the world.

LOS ANGELES.—Mose S. Springer, "the friend of the telegraph editor," for a long time press reporter at Sacramento and Los Angeles, is dead of heart failure. He left a widow and three children.

CHINOOK, Wash.—Lloyd Evans, a physician, of consumption. Funeral Friday.

ASTORIA, Or.—Irving L. Tewksbury, aged 57, of heart disease, after four hours' illness. Widow and two children survive. He formerly represented the United States Treasury Department at Honolulu.

MARSHFIELD, Or.—Frederick Schetter, aged 71, for 35 years resident of Coos County, and 27 years a messenger for the Western Union Telegraph Company. Two sons and two daughters survive.

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