

MATANUSKA GIVES DANGERED ALASKA NEEDED SUPPLIES

Seven-Year-Old Federal Project Stirs Widely Varying Opinion As To Success.

By William L. Worden

Palmer, Alaska, July 29.—(Wide World)—It is seven years now since 199 farm families, most of them from the relief rolls of Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota, were sent to new homesteads in the virtually untouched wilderness of Matanuska valley by the federal government.

And this year, despite protests, personalities, dissension and disappointments, Matanuska is producing vital vegetables, milk and meat for Alaska when the territory needs that produce more than at any time since the gold rush.

Many Opinions

If you ask two or three hundred residents "what is the matter with Matanuska," you will get almost as many different answers.

You will hear successively: That most Matanuska valley colonists are loafers and wasters, unfit for farming or anything else.

That the colonists never had a chance to get out from under government red tape long enough to grow anything.

That the Matanuska project never will return the government's original investment.

That the cooperative which operates the creamery, restaurant and other stores in the colony, is inefficient and the root of the colony's evils.

That the farm purchase contracts are drawn to keep farmers staggering under impossible debt loads and to prevent them from willing their property to their children even if they do clear their debts.

Kids Best Crop

That the best crop raised in Matanuska valley is kids.

You will also hear some hardy soul admit he considers the project a success, the officials efficient and the farmers industrious.

Somewhere between these views, typical of the dissension which never has quit the valley even in its most productive year, lies the approximate truth.

Of the original 199 colonists, perhaps 100 still are in the valley, although some no longer have any connection with the farming project.

When the colonists came to Matanuska, they signed contracts providing that the government-financed Alaska Rural Rehabilitation corporation would furnish each family with a 40-acre farm, help to clear it and build houses and barns, and finance the family until the farm could be put on a producing basis.

The valley they came to was a strange place to most of them—a forested flatland lying in a rough circle of 15 miles diameter, cut by two icy glacial rivers. The colonists were awed by the snowy semi-circle of Chugach and Talkeetna mountains around their new home. The town of Matanuska actually was no town at all. Only a weatherbeaten railroad station.

Inefficiency Appeals

Some colonists lived idly in tents while paid workmen built their homes. A commissary gave almost unlimited credit for everything from ice cream cones to farm machinery.

Hundreds of milk cans were stored in the open before there was a cow in the valley. Automobiles worth perhaps \$200 or \$300 were hired by government representatives at \$100 a month and kept for a year.

The cost of those first wild months to the government cannot be gauged accurately because of complicated accounting. The lowest estimate anyone in the valley will offer now is \$3,000,000. Others run twice that high.

Whatever the cost, the project was in operation in less than a year and Matanuska peas, potatoes and cabbage appeared on the market in Anchorage, closest city to the new project.

Storm Breaks

The real storm did not break until the rehabilitation corporation presented its bills for that first year's orgy of buying plus the necessary expenses of establishing the farms.

Estimates had been made that each family would owe be-

Irene Dunne, Patrick Knowles In Sunday Comedy



Comedienne Irene Dunne and handsome Patrick Knowles form a new romantic team in "Lady in a Jam," new comedy hit which comes to the Craterian theatre Sunday for a three-day stay. Ralph Bellamy, Eugene Pallette and Queenie Vassar have roles with Miss Dunne and Knowles.

tween \$3,500 and \$4,500, payable over a 30-year period.

When the bills were added, the lowest was just under \$4,000, the highest well above \$12,000 and the average about half way between.

After outcries that could be heard in Washington, commissary and hospital bills were wiped out, and additional credit was given to the colonists.

No longer are the liberal terms or the outright gifts of 1935-36 available. Today a newcomer must pay rent for a year and prove his intentions and ability before the rehabilitation corporation will sell to him on anything like the original terms.

He must farm the land, belong to the Co-op—the Matanuska Valley Co-operating association—and sell through it and pay regularly on his indebtedness. He cannot simply hold the land as an investment.

Bible School Pupils Receive Awards At Jacksonville Meet

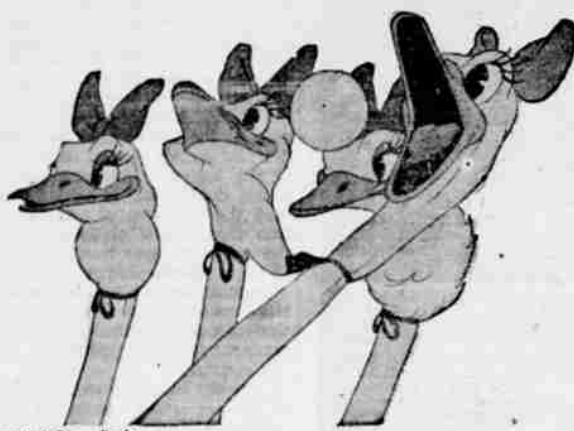
Jacksonville, July 29.—(Spl.)

—The first Vacation Bible school held in Jacksonville for a number of years closed Saturday with a picnic. Friday evening a graduation program was held in the church. Those having perfect attendance were awarded a diploma and those missing one day were given a certificate. Those in the primary department receiving diplomas were Alice Atherton, Pauline McCloud, Joan Qylin, Alvin Sales, Delores May Lynn, Betty Hoffman, Charles Mitchellmore, Vernon Gleason, Gary Alden.

Those in the primary receiving certificates were Phyllis McIntyre, Donna Davies, Carmen Davies, Virginia Johnston, Charles Johnston, Lora Lee Stevenson, Donald Coggins, Delores Coggins, Glen Backes, Manuel Buck, Andy Bjorn, Betsy Bjorn, Gary Burgess, Charlotte Reed, Gene Reed, and Marles Ann Rabeby.

Juniors having perfect attendance were Anita May Backes, Beverly June Backes, Buelah Leona Miller, Ann Ditto, Mildred Johnston, Mary Hinderer, Ray Johnston, Pauline Hardy, Bobby Joe Ruth, Richard Nidermeyer, Mary Beth McCurley, Dale Fick, Pauline Buck, Mary Alice Ryan, Arnold Nidermeyer, Emmett Johnston, Winto Miller, Paul Hardy, Kenneth Sales, Colleen McCloud, Alfred Gleason, Frank Ditto, Lynn Bernstein, Mary Lind, Mary Beriman, Pauline Wilcox, Norma Jean Backes, Lucille Gladys Brown, Rita Grubbs, Elsie Dell Brown, Peggy McCurdy, Paul Wilcox, and Betty Conley. Juniors receiving a certificate were Jack Allen, Johnny Hinderer, Gerald Grubbs, Gordon Wright, Jimmie Gleason, Vera Conley, Arthur London, Ann Louise Zattlin, Donald Wendt, Wilma

"Fantasia" Coming To Rialto



© Walt Disney Prods.

Sadie Twinkletoes, Minnie the Mooch and a couple of the girls trip the light fantastic in Walt Disney's eagerly-looked-forward-to cartoon feature, "Fantasia," which comes to the Rialto Theatre Friday for one big week. It is filmed in technicolor.

McIntyre, Thomas Wright, Gloria McGinty, Bonnie Shafer and Bobby Van Galder.

Closing time for Classified Ads 9 a. m.—Too late to Classify 12:30 p. m.

U. S. production of steel in the first half of 1942 amounted to 42.5 million tons or just a fifth below the output for the full year 1917, the biggest steel year in World war I.

Judy Canova On Holly Screen



Making a soldier out of Judy Canova is a man-sized job, but hilarious Jerry Colonna and golden-voiced Allan Jones will attempt to do just that in "True to the Army," howling army camp comedy which comes to the Holly Theatre Sunday for a three-day run.

"Dudes Are Pretty People," another stream-lined comedy from the makers of "Tanks a Million," will play as the companion feature, with Joan Woodbury and Noah Beery, Jr., in starring roles.

managers in Cleveland report that the two concessions showing the greatest increase in business this season are the shooting galleries and the motor boat rides.

REFLECT WAR

Cleveland—(UP) The exploits of America's sharp-shooting soldiers and the hard-hitting motor torpedo boats seem to be affecting the amusement parks. Park

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