

Valley FRONTIERSMAN

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Ten Cents

Construction Resumed On Matanuska Hotel

C of C Hears Soil Expert Explain Work

W. T. White, soil conservation specialist for states of the Pacific Northwest, was guest of honor at Wednesday's Chamber of Commerce meeting in the basement of St. John's Lutheran church. Mr. White outlined the purpose and goals of his work before an interested audience of 25 Chamber members and guests.

The soil conservation expert, who was formerly connected with experiment station work in Alaska, and at one time worked with M. D. Snodgrass of the Valley, introduced his subject by sketching briefly the course of agricultural trends in the United States.

He said that until recently it had been the accepted farming practice to till soil in a given area for a period of several generations, and then to move on to new and undeveloped areas when the soil "wore out."

However Mr. White denied that land ever wears out, as is generally believed. "Land will wash away, blow away, and leach away, but it doesn't wear out," he declared. "As a matter of fact, if we use our lands correctly, they not only don't wear out, they sometimes get better," he asserted.

The technician then explained that his work in soil conservation had been sponsored by an interested government, vitally alert to the necessity of making certain that sources of the nation's food supply do not diminish.

He outlined four steps by which his department proceeds. First, an attempt is made to reach the farmer by individual contact. Second, a study and inventory of the soils of his farm is completed, and third, a method of procedure is then set up for best conservation methods in each soil classification.

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N'West Livestock Show Dates Set

PORTLAND, Ore. (Special)—Special reserved seats for Alaskans who wish to attend the horse show and rodeo of the Pacific International livestock exposition scheduled for October 3-11, are now available from 801 Wilcox Building, Portland, it was announced by Theodore B. Wilcox, president.

"The date for advance sales was moved ahead a month to avoid a condition that existed last year when thousands of last minute fans were unable to get seats," Wilcox stated.

Prices are: Box seats \$3.60; reserved seats \$3 and \$2.40.

A specially chartered DC-4 will leave Anchorage Oct. 10 on a round-trip flight to Seattle. All Valley residents interested in attending the livestock exposition can leave aboard this plane Oct. 10, spend Oct. 11 in Portland and return home Oct. 14. Interested persons can get more details at the Frontiersman office. Round-trip fare for the flight is \$110 plus tax.

Potato Picking Time In Matanuska



(Photo by Palmer Photographic Center)

Children of the El-Nathan home, a branch of the Valdez institution which has been recently located in the Valley, harvest their first Matanuska crop, a field of potatoes on the Max Sherrod farm. The children took entire charge of the field from sowing to harvest. Yield from the small field was large enough to enable the Valley home to send a truck-load of potatoes to the Valdez institution this week. The El-Nathan home owns tracts of undeveloped and uncleared land in other areas of the Valley, and is looking toward the future when much of the food served on the home's dining tables will be the product of gardens and fields tended by the children themselves. In the second picture, Max Sherrod, Valley farmer, and Miss Helen Mae Stenvall are shown grading some of the outside potatoes grown on the Sherrod farm this year. The potatoes in the picture are "Arctic Wonders," a variety developed by Mr. Sherrod.

Rain Halts Valley Spud Harvest

Student Pickers—

Student potato-pickers all are due back in their classrooms next Monday morning, unless excused for further harvest chores, superintendent Carl Snelling reminded pupils of the Palmer school today.

Students who must take more time to work in the fall harvest, must apply for permission for the extended leave at the school office.

Although heavy rains prevented work in the fields during what was scheduled to be harvest week for Matanuska Valley's potato crop, pickers at the Max Sherrod farm sneaked out between the raindrops to gather in seven acres of the man-size potatoes shown in the picture above.

However, Mr. Sherrod is quick to explain that the pictured spuds are really tops, and the seven acres of "Arctic Wonders" which he will harvest this year don't all grow to the size of those in the picture.

But the Sherrod crop is good, the farmer stated. He is harvesting an estimated 9½ to 10 tons of potatoes per acre, which he figures is probably about three-fourths a crop or better. All Valley potatoes are producing less than a normal yield this year, because of the extremely dry winter and spring followed by an almost rainless summer.

Mr. Sherrod says his field is producing a better yield than some other in the Valley, because he is fortunate in being located on the riverbank, where air currents tend to produce warmer year-round temperatures, and also where there is a rich soil area.

The best potato yield on the Sherrod farm, which was purchased by its present owner in 1940, had been the 16 tons an acre which he harvested in 1940. However he said that had there been more moisture this year, the whole Valley would have produced a bumper crop, for other conditions were good.

The Sherrod potatoes are stored on the farm and marketed throughout the year. A former Co-op member, Mr. Sherrod withdrew from the group last year to become an independent farmer.

There are 80 acres in all on the Sherrod farm, 38 of them under cultivation. Although his potatoes make news, Mr. Sherrod does not consider them any more important than the other vegetables grown on his acreage.

The pictured "Arctic Wonders" (Continued on page 5)

Playfield Is Proposed

- VFW Sponsors Plan, Promises Quick Action

WASILLA—Determined that the children of this community would go no longer without a space for organized recreation, members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars voted at their last Monday meeting to sponsor the construction of a playground.

The playground, which will be located on ground donated by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Carter of Wasilla, will be laid out to include a baseball field, tennis court and volleyball court. VFW members are organizing the work now and have announced that the playfield and its installations will be complete by next spring. The club has assumed complete financial responsibility for the work, according to quartermaster Jimmy Nelson.

Playground planning was delayed momentarily at the Monday meeting, while four new members were welcomed into the Wasilla club. The four initiates are:

Clyde D. Farley, Andrew L. Mustain, Thomas L. Grier, Wesley H. Mailanen.

VISITS VALLEY

Holger Larsen, Fish and Wildlife Service agent of Anchorage, was a Palmer visitor last Tuesday afternoon.

C of C Endorses Petition to ARR

Petitions circulated in Palmer for the past 10 days, asking that two crossings of The Alaska Railroad in downtown Palmer be reopened, were endorsed by members of the Chamber of Commerce at the Wednesday luncheon meeting.

Chamber members discussed the matter at length. It was repeatedly pointed out that the crossing barricades can prove extremely harmful to the development of Palmer. Walter E. Huntley told the group that one local merchant, whose place of business lies near the north Palmer crossing, had already suffered materially in loss of business.

Several business men reported that the closed crossing was probably the oldest in Palmer—one statement asserted that it had been in existence for 20 years. The legality of closing such an established crossing was questioned, but no authoritative opinion was voiced.

The fact was also emphasized that the substitute crossing now in use, which necessitates routing traffic on a private road through the Alaska Road Commission camp, would soon be closed also, for ARC heads were reported planning to erect fences to keep public traffic from the camp.

Chamber members at first considered the plan of drafting a Chamber-sponsored petition to present to ARR officials, but it was decided the better policy to endorse the present petitions now in existence, which request that the two closed crossings be reopened.

It was suggested by Don Irwin that in the event the present petition received no consideration by the railroad, a second petition might be sponsored later, requesting an alternate crossing, if the two former roads cannot be reopened.

Building Due To Be Ready By May 1st

Halted for about six months, work got underway here again Tuesday on the \$160,000 to \$175,000 Matanuska Hotel.

The establishment, completion of which is expected before May 1, 1948, will attract tourists and businessmen to Palmer by assuring them of accommodations.

Work on the 45-room hotel is under the direction of Walter E. Huntley, at present in charge of construction. Huntley, William W. Head, certified public accountant of Anchorage, and I. M. Sandvik are the original group of stockholders. Andrew Hassman of the Union bank in Anchorage was recently added to the original trio on the board of directors. Other stockholders also were added, Mr. Head said.

The delay in construction was brought about by material shortages, the shipping strike and financial problems. "At present there is no material shortage and funds are available for completion of the hotel," Mr. Head said. Arrangements have already been made for furnishings as well, he added.

Of prime importance now on the construction job is putting on the roof and closing the building in so that work can be carried on during the winter. "If we can get the sheathing on, the roof on, and the heating system installed before the weather gets too bad, we can work all winter and be finished by spring," Mr. Huntley reported.

The hotel will provide Palmer and the Valley with many services. A modern coffee shop, seating 44 persons, is planned, Mr. Head revealed. There will also be a dining room. The new structure will also probably house an airways office and bus terminal on the ground floor.

The building is modeled on the same sort of design as the Westward hotel in Anchorage. It will be two stories high with the possibility that a third floor will be added, if the public so desires. This would then make a total of 65 rooms.

The building is of frame, reinforced, with steel-eye beams and columns.

Each of the 45 rooms will be furnished with a bath.

The ground was broken for the work in October, 1945. The project was incorporated in August, 1946.

The building has a full concrete basement. Steam heat will keep the building warm. The hotel will be insulated throughout.

One feature will be sound-proofing between the walls so that guests can enjoy their privacy.

Plans for the structure have been germinating for a long time, Mr. Head said. It was realized soon after the highway was put through that Palmer needed a hotel. A recent survey shows that the number of inquiries for rooming accommodations in the town has mounted over 75 a day.

Mr. Head said the stockholders have already inquired for a hotel manager. About 15 employees, preferably Valley residents, will be hired.