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Communication of S. Jackson

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 8, 1891.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed.

Mr. TELLER presented the following newspaper communication of Sheldon Jackson, urging the importation by the Government of the Siberian reindeer into Alaska Territory for the benefit and relief of the inhabitants of that Territory.

Alaska—Starvation ahead—Domesticate the reindeer and save the people—Moss meadows are the reindeer's pastures—In ten years they increase thirteen times—The Bear will bring them from Siberia—An agricultural experiment station wanted.

From time immemorial the Alaskans have lived upon the whale, the walrus, and the seal of their coasts, the fish and the aquatic birds of their rivers, and the caribou or wild reindeer of their vast inland plains.

The supply of these in years past was abundant and furnished ample food for all the people.

WHALES ARE DISAPPEARING.

But fifty years ago American whalers, having largely exhausted the supply in other waters, found their way into the Northern Pacific Ocean. Then commenced for that section the slaughter and destruction of whales that went steadily forward at the rate of hundreds and thousands annually, until they were destroyed and driven out of the Pacific Ocean. They were then followed into Bering Sea and the slaughter went on. The whales took refuge among the ice fields of the Arctic Ocean and thither the whalers followed. In this relentless hunt the remnant have been driven still farther into the inaccessible regions around the North Pole and are no longer within reach of the natives.

As the great herds of buffalo that once roamed the western prairies have been exterminated for their pelts, so the whales have been sacrificed for the fat that encased their bodies and the bone that hung in their mouths. With the destruction of the whale one large source of food supply for the natives has been cut off.

SO ARE WALRUSES.

Another large supply of food was derived from the walrus, which once swarmed in great numbers in these northern seas. But commerce wanted more ivory, and the whalers turned their attention to the walrus, destroying thousands annually for the sake of their tusks. Where a few years ago they were so numerous that their bellows were heard above the roar of the waves and grinding and crashing of the ice fields, this year I cruised for weeks without seeing or hearing one. The walrus as a source of food supply is already practically extinct.

The seal and sea lion, once so common in Bering Sea, are now becoming so scarce that it is with difficulty that the natives procure a sufficient number of skins to cover their boats, and their flesh, on account of its rarity, has become a luxury.

CANS CANNIBALIZE THE SALMON.

In the past the natives, with tireless industry, caught and cured for use in their long winters great quantities of fish, but American canneries have already come to some of their streams, and will soon be found on all of them, both carrying the food out of the country and, by their wasteful methods, destroying the future supply. Five million cans of salmon annually shipped away from Alaska—and the business still in its infancy—means starvation to the native races in the near future.

With the advent of improved breech-loading firearms the wild reindeer are both being killed off and frightened away to the remote and more inaccessible regions of the interior, and another source of food supply is diminishing.

Thus the support of the people is largely gone and the process of slow starvation and extermination has commenced along the whole Arctic coast of Alaska. Villages that once numbered thousands have been reduced to hundreds; of some tribes but two or three families remain. At Point Barrow, in 1828, Captain Beechey's expedition found Nuwuk, a village of 1,000 people; in 1863 there were 309; now there are not over 100. In 1826 Captain Beechey speaks of finding a large population at Cape Franklin; to-day it is without an inhabitant. He also mentions a large village of 1,000 to 2,000 people on Schismareff Inlet; it has now but 3 houses.

ARCTIC ESQUIMAUX DECREASING.

According to Mr. John W. Kelly, who has written a monograph upon the Arctic Esquimaux of Alaska, Point Hope, at the commencement of the century, had a population of 2,000; now it has about 350. Mr. Kelly further says:

The Kavea country is almost depopulated, owing to the scarcity of game, which has been killed or driven away. * * * The coast tribes between Point Hope and Point Barrow have been cut down in population so as to be almost obliterated. The Kookpororos of Point Lay have only three huts left; the Ootookas of Icy Cape, one hut; the Koognute has three settlements of from one to four families; Sezaro has about eighty people.

Mr. Henry D. Woolfe, who has spent many years in the Arctic region, writes:

Along the sea coast from Wainright Inlet to Point Lay numerous remains of houses testify to the former number of the people. * * * From Cape Seppings to Cape Krusenstern and inland to Nounatok River there still remain about forty people—the remnant of a tribe called Key-wah-ling-nach-ah-mutes. They will in a few years entirely disappear as a distinctive tribe.

I myself saw a number of abandoned villages and crumbling houses during the summer, and wherever I visited the people I heard the same tale of destitution.

On the island of Attou, once famous for the number of its sea-otter skins, the catch for the past nine years has averaged but three sea-otter and twenty-five fox skins, an annual income of about \$2 for each person. The Alaska Commercial Company this past summer sent \$1,300 worth of provisions to keep them from starving.

At Akutan the whole catch for the past summer was nineteen sea otters. This represents the entire support of one hundred people for twelve months. At Unalaska both the agent of the Alaska Commercial Company and the teacher of the Government school testified that there would be great destitution among the people this winter because of the disappearance of the sea otter. At St. George Island the United States Treasury agent testified that there was not sufficient provision on the island to last through the season, and asked that a Government vessel might be sent with a full supply. At Cape Prince of Wales, Point Hope, and Point Barrow was the same account of short supply of food. At the latter place intimations were given that the natives in their distress would break into the Government warehouse and help themselves to the supply that is in store for shipwrecked whalers. At Point Barrow, largely owing to the insufficient food supply, the death rate is reported to be the birth rate as 15 to 1. It does not take long to figure out the end. They will die out more and more rapidly as the already insufficient food supply becomes less and less.

THE REINDEER IS EVERYTHING.

In this crisis it is important that steps should be taken at once to afford relief. Relief can, of course, be afforded by Congress voting an appropriation to feed them, as it has so many of the North American Indians. But every one familiar with the feeding process among the Indians will devoutly wish that it may not be necessary to extend that system to the Esquimaux of Alaska. It would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars annually, and, worse than that, degrade, pauperize, and finally exterminate the people. There is a better, cheaper, more practical and more humane way, and that is to introduce into northern Alaska the domesticated reindeer of Siberia, and train the Esquimaux young men in their management, care, and propagation.

This would in a few years create as permanent and secure a food supply for the Esquimaux as cattle or sheep raising in Texas or New Mexico does for the people of these sections.

It may be necessary to afford temporary relief for two or three years to the Esquimaux, until the herds of domestic reindeer can be started, but after that the people will be self-supporting.

In the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of Lapland and Siberia the domesticated reindeer is food, clothing, house, furniture, implements, and transportation to the people. Its milk and flesh furnish food; its marrow and tongue are considered choice delicacies; its blood mixed with the contents of its stomach is made into a favorite dish called in Siberia "manyalla;" its intestines are cleaned, filled with tallow and eaten as a sausage; its skin is made into clothes, bedding, tent covers, reindeer harness, ropes, cords, and fish-lines; the hard skin of the fore-legs makes an excellent covering for snow-shoes.

Its sinews are dried and pounded into a strong and lasting thread; its bones are soaked in seal oil and burned for fuel; its horns are made into various kinds of household implements—into weapons for hunting and war, and in the manufacture of sleds.

Indeed, I know of no other animal that in so many different ways can minister to the comfort and well-being of man in the far northern regions of the earth as the reindeer.

The reindeer form their riches; these their tents,
Their robes, their beds, and all their homely wealth supply;
Their wholesome fare and cheerful cups.

Under favorable circumstances a swift reindeer can traverse 150 miles in a day. A speed of 100 miles per day is easily made. As a beast of burden they can draw a load of 300 pounds. They yield a cupful of milk at a milking; this small quantity, however, is so thick and rich that it needs to be diluted with nearly a quart of water to make it drinkable. It has a strong flavor, like goat's milk, and is more nutritious and nourishing than cow's milk. The Lapps manufacture from it butter and cheese. A dressed reindeer in Siberia weighs from 80 to 100 pounds. The reindeer feed upon the moss and other lichens that abound in the Arctic regions, and the farther north the larger and stronger the reindeer.

A BIG PASTURE OF TUNDRA.

Now, in Central and Arctic Alaska are between 300,000 and 400,000 square miles (an area equal to the New England and Middle States combined, together with Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois) of moss-covered tundra and rolling plains of grass that are specially adapted by nature for the grazing of the reindeer, and are practically useless for any other purpose.

If it is a sound public policy to bore artesian wells, and to build water-storage reservoirs, by which thousands of arid acres can be reclaimed from barrenness and made fruitful, it is equally a sound public policy to stock the plains of Alaska with herds of domesticated reindeer, and cause those vast, dreary, desolate, frozen, and storm-swept regions to minister to the wealth, happiness, comfort, and well-being of man. What stock raising has been and is on the vast plains of Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana, reindeer raising can be in northern Alaska. In the corresponding regions of Lapland, in Arctic Norway, and in Sweden and Russia are 27,000 people supporting themselves (besides paying a tax to the Government of \$400,000, or \$1 per head for their reindeer) and procuring their food and clothing largely from their 400,000 domesticated reindeer. Also in the corresponding regions of Siberia, with similar climate, soil, and environment (and only 40 miles distant at the straits), are thousands of Chukchees, Koraks, and other tribes fed and clothed by their tens of thousands of domesticated reindeer.

THE SIBERIANS ARE FAT.

During the past summer I visited four settlements of natives on the Siberian coast, the two extremes being 700 miles apart, and saw much of the people, both of the Koraks and Chukchees. I found them a good-sized, robust, fleshy, well-fed, pagan, half-civilized, nomad people, living largely on their herds of reindeer. Families own from one thousand to ten thousand deer. These are divided into herds of from one thousand to one thousand five hundred. One of these latter I visited on the beach near Cape Navarin. In Arctic Siberia the natives with their reindeer have plenty; in Arctic Alaska, without the reindeer, they are starving.

Then instead of feeding and pauperizing them, let us civilize, build up their manhood, and lift them into self-support by helping them to the reindeer. To stock Alaska with reindeer and make millions of acres of moss-covered tundra conducive to the wealth of the country would be a great and worthy event under any circumstances.

But just now it is specially important and urgent from the fact stated in the opening of this report, that the destruction of the whale

and walrus has brought large numbers of Esquimaux face to face with starvation, and that something must be done promptly to save them.

The introduction of the reindeer would ultimately afford them a steady and permanent food supply.

AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION.

Passing from Northern Alaska, with its adaptation to reindeer raising, we find the whole southern coast, stretching for thousands of miles, to possess a temperate climate. This is due to the "Kuro-siwe" or "Japan Current" of the Pacific Ocean. In this "temperate belt" it is probable that there are areas of greater or less extent that are adapted to agriculture. At least it is known that there are small farms or vegetable gardens on Kodiak and Afognak Islands, on the shores of Cook's Inlet, and in Southeastern Alaska. It is also known that wild berries grow in great profusion and abundance in many sections. But no intelligent and continued experiments have been made to test the agricultural and horticultural capabilities of the country.

FUR TRADERS AND GOLD SEEKERS.

Until a quite recent period (1867) the European population were fur-trading Russians. They were followed by fur-trading Americans, and more recently by the gold seekers. No one expected to remain long in the country, and there has been no incentive to carry forward intelligent experiments in agriculture.

As early as 1885 I called attention to the fact that there was a very wide diversity of views concerning the agricultural and horticultural capabilities of Alaska, and necessarily very great ignorance; that no systematic effort intelligently prosecuted had ever been made to ascertain what could or what could not be raised to advantage; that it was of very great importance, both to the people of Alaska and the country at large, that careful experiments should be made, extending over a term of years, to ascertain the vegetables, grains, grasses, berries, apples, plums, trees, flowers, etc., best adapted to the country; the best methods of cultivating, gathering, and curing the same; the planting and grafting of fruit trees; the development of the wild cranberry, cattle, hog, and poultry raising; butter and cheese making, etc. In 1886 my recommendation was taken up by the United States Commissioner of Agriculture. He said:

The Industrial Training School at Sitka would furnish an admirable basis for a station, where could be conducted careful experiments to ascertain the agricultural products best adapted to the climate and soil of the Territory, and what breeds of cattle and other domestic animals are most suited to its climate and soil.

Such an experiment ought to extend over a series of years.

DOMESTICATED REINDEER.

In view, therefore, of the national importance of introducing the domesticated reindeer of Siberia into Northern Alaska, and testing the agricultural capacity of Southern Alaska, I most earnestly recommend the establishment of an "agricultural school and experiment station" in connection with the system of industrial education in Alaska.

By an act approved July 2, 1862, Congress made provision for schools for the "benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts." By an act approved March 2, 1887, provision was made for "agricultural experiment

stations" in connection with the agricultural schools. And by the act approved August 30, 1890, certain of the proceeds of the sale of public lands were set aside for the better support of these agricultural schools.

These acts of Congress require the assent of the legislature of the State or Territory in order that their provisions may become available.

But Alaska has no legislature and is governed directly by Congress. On this account, and partly because nineteen-twentieths of the children to be benefited belong to the native races, Congress has committed to the Secretary of the Interior the duty of making "needful and proper provisions for education in Alaska." It is, therefore, eminently proper that he should be authorized to extend to Alaska the benefits of the agricultural acts of 1887 and 1890, and secure the establishment of a school that can introduce reindeer into that region, and teach their management, care, and propagation, and also to conduct a series of experiments to determine the agricultural capabilities of the country.

To reclaim and make valuable vast areas of land otherwise worthless; to introduce large, permanent, and wealth-producing industries where none previously existed; to take a barbarian people on the verge of starvation and lift them up to a comfortable self-support and civilization, is certainly a work of national importance.

It was my good fortune to make my visit to the Esquimaux in the United States revenue steamer *Bear*, commanded by Capt. Michael A. Healy, who has made an annual cruise in those waters for ten years past. Having seen much of the native population and taken a great interest in their welfare, he has probably a better knowledge of their condition and necessities than any other person.

When, therefore, I suggested the feasibility of introducing the domesticated reindeer of Siberia into Alaska in connection with the Government industrial schools he immediately indorsed the proposition and rendered me much assistance in pursuing my inquiries with regard to the subject. He is also ready to coöperate in carrying out any plan that may be devised.

SHELDON JACKSON.

SITKA, ALASKA.

Captain Healy testifies.

Under orders from the Secretary of the Treasury, I have been ten years on the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean station of the United States Revenue Marine Service.

My duties have brought me very closely in contact with and greatly interested me in the native population.

On account of this interest I have watched with pleasure the coming among them of the missionaries of the several churches and the teachers of the Government schools.

FOOD DISAPPEARING.

I have also seen with apprehension the gradual exhaustion of the native food supply.

From time immemorial they have lived principally on the whale, seal, walrus, salmon, and wild reindeer. But in the persistent hunt of white men for the whale and walrus, the latter has largely disappeared, and the former been driven beyond the reach of the natives. The white men are also erecting canneries on their best fishing streams, and the usual

supply of fish is being cut off; and, with the advent of improved fire-arms, the wild reindeer are migrating farther and farther away.

I have consulted with a few of the leading teachers, missionaries, traders, and whaling captains, and they, without a single exception, agree that the most practical relief is the introduction of domesticated reindeer into that portion of Northern and Arctic Alaska adapted to them.

In Siberia, but a few miles from Alaska, with climate and country of similar conditions, are tens of thousands of tame reindeer supporting thousands of people, and it will be a very easy and comparatively cheap matter to introduce the tame reindeer of Siberia into Alaska and teach the natives the care and management of them.

As in connection with the industrial schools in Dakota, Indian Territory, and elsewhere the Indian boy is taught the raising of stock, so in the industrial schools of Alaska it is proposed to teach the Esquimaux young men the raising of tame reindeer.

SAVE MILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

A few thousand dollars expended now in the establishment of this new industry will save hundreds of thousands hereafter. For if the time comes when the Government will be compelled to feed these Esquimaux it will cost over \$1,000,000.

With an assured support, such as will come from herds of tame reindeer, there is no reason why the present population shall not be increased in numbers and advanced to the position of civilized, wealth-producing American citizens.

M. A. HEALY,
Captain U. S. S. Bear.

The Yukon River explorer testifies.

My experience in Alaska permits me to state on authority, that the next decade will witness the extinction of the American reindeer, or rather caribou. In 1881, when I first visited the district of Norton and Kotzebue Sounds and the lower Yukon, deer were plentiful. This past winter (1889) not a single animal had been seen within a radius of 200 miles. Similar conditions are coexisting from Port Clarence to Point Barrow, and where in former years the hunters had to travel but 50 miles to reach the deer haunts, to day they traverse twice that distance. These contingencies arise from three causes:

1. The indiscriminate slaughter of young and old animals.
2. The use at the present day of improved weapons of the chase in lieu of the primitive bows, arrows, and spears.
3. The conditions of wind prevailing at the seasons when the deer go to and from the coast. It must be distinctly understood that upon a supply of these animals our Alaskan Esquimaux depend for clothing as well as their store of meat should their pelagic sources of provender fail.

BUT LITTLE MONEY NEEDED.

The proposition to introduce deer from the Siberian herds can be effected at a cost of but a few thousand dollars.

The location for the first experimental station should be on Choris Peninsula or the vicinity of Kotzebue Sound. This location has climatic similarities with Siberia. The deer food (moss) supply is abundant and herding easy.

As the results of this initial experiment become manifest, additional locations for herds can be established. Within two seasons the Chukchee herdsmen will be able to instruct the Esquimaux in the style of herding.

I have made inquiries upon the subject and now give you the result. Ten years ago the Russian steamer *Alexander* went to the Kamchatka Peninsula, and officers of the Alaska Commercial Company bought seven male and seven female deer, transporting them to Bering Island (one of the islands leased by the company from Russia). Captains Blair and Greenberg and Superintendent Lubegoil inform me that the herd now numbers one hundred and eighty. From this you can judge the rate of propagation.

The revenue steamer *Bear* can be utilized for transportation, and I know of no man more capable of conducting the experiment than Captain Healy.

I hope that the small sum required will be voted by Congress, as unless something is done for these people their annihilation is only a question of a brief period.

The whalers have so frightened the big fish that the natives are unable to pursue them in their rapid passage, while the extermination of the walrus is almost a fact.

These remarks I present as requested.

HENRY D. WOOLFE,

SAN FRANCISCO.

The Commissioner of Education approves the plan.

If this very desirable legislation is granted, and under its provisions a suitable school is established, it will be a comparatively easy matter to purchase in Siberia a herd of domesticated reindeer, transport them to Alaska, and give instruction in their care and management.

This would be a great step forward in lifting the native races of that boreal region out of barbarism and starting them toward civilization, a step from the grade of wild hunter to the grade of herdsmen who live on domesticated cattle, and besides this furnish an article of exportation and commerce. The native tribes on the Siberian side are thriving with their herds of reindeer.

It seems that all northern Alaska is filled with moss meadows (tundra), which furnish the very food that the reindeer requires.

Once started the business would grow into large proportions, and the most serious problem that threatens Alaska will be solved.

W. T. HARRIS,
Commissioner.