

no time to discuss what we may call academic principles, or to paint undue roseate pictures, which have no place in this practical campaign. We must always keep "our eye on the ball," as the golf players say, and that ball is our constitutional amendment as supported by the California State Federation of Labor.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

News From Alaska

THE conditions in Alaska may be briefly summarized as follows: The Alaska interior is a one industry gold mining. It is estimated that there are 25,000 gold mining claims in the territory free of taxes. Only a small percentage of these claims are being worked. A large majority are held speculatively. Most of them have been acquired fraudulently and are held so. They comprise all the known auriferous area.

The government has spent over one hundred million dollars in the construction of roads, railroads, trails, etc., since 1913. This expenditure has not and is not assisting in the development expected. The value contributed by these projects has been absorbed in speculative values.

One obstacle to use is being substituted by another. Because of low tonnage, and because the adjacent areas are held out of use, high freight and passenger rates result. This of course penalizes the genuine developer. It is stated that the railroads have not paid in the sense that the operating costs exceed the revenues. They have not "paid" because the real values they create have escaped into private pockets.

Because of the high freight rates caused by the above conditions an uneconomic competition by automobile and airplane has resulted, tending to further diminish tonnage. As a result a system of tolls on the highways is being installed. Thus a vicious circle against development is being instituted, so that a few speculative holders can charge through their holdings for governmental facilities. This condition is being aggravated by the recent increase in the value of gold. Claims are jumping rapidly. The whole country is being "staked" illegally and without "discovery." A certain fool in Congress with the help of Burton K. Wheeler, has removed the "assessment work" provision, the last vestige of the pioneer requirement, that a man could not hold land without using it. This because, as one Senator has put it, "the owners are poor men," and "this is all they have," etc. A fool form of charity that creates the very unemployment the N.R.A. is designed to relieve! It is a crime to hoard gold in banks but apparently it is a virtue to hoard it in the ground. Of course, the latter is more vicious as it creates unemployment.

As a partial solution of this mess I am proposing that an area 120 miles wide having 60 miles of such wealth on

either side of the center line of the Alaskan R.R. and the road system, be called a transportation zone and within that area all unused gold claims be taxed \$2.00 an acre annually, all base metal claims \$1.00 an acre, and all agricultural claims ten cents an acre. Also that all payments made by purchase of existing development agencies be taxed ten per cent and also all royalties received. All funds thus realized to be applied to reduction of freight rates, the construction of roads, etc. I am confident that the solution, imperfect as I know it to be, is practical, and will result in the opening up of the country.

Most of the right thinking people of the territory are cognizant of existing conditions but are afraid to tackle them. As an illustration, last winter I succeeded in convincing the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, and the president of the Alaskan College, of the soundness of my position. A memorial was drawn up and submitted to the Alaskan legislature, but they were scared to death.

It is difficult to do anything from here. It must be presented to Congress through the President's advisers. I am not financially equipped to do it myself. But I am confident that Frederick C. Howe might be able to do something.

Alaska presents a great field for our philosophy and there is a crying need for immediate action. If any of your readers can place me in contact with any one that can be of service it would be a great help.

DONALD MACDONALD.

Statement of Mr. Harry Weinberger

AT PUBLIC HEARING ON THE N. R. A., WASHINGTON, D.C.

I SAT here this morning and heard labor representatives talk about \$13.50 a week, and when I heard the Upholsterers' Union say that they were getting \$13.50, a minimum wage, which was now the maximum, and that they had twenty-five weeks of work a year, and then when I went out for lunch and read in the newspapers about the million dollar salaries that certain industries give to certain officers because they happen to be in the position where they can mulct the public, I wondered whether I was really living in a democracy where the people of the United States in reality are supposed to control the government. I wondered why it was that, having the richest country in the world, we still seemed unable to give human beings sufficient money to have what we used to call the American standard of living.

I came down here today, not as a representative of labor, but just as part of the public, because I felt that the N. R. A. seemed to be barking up the wrong tree. The N. R. A. has gone on the basis that we in America here are suffering from overproduction, that the things that we have got to do is to cut down the number of hours, cut down the use of machinery, take land out of use, pay farmers for doing nothing, and think that that was going to solve our problems.

America is not suffering from overproduction. American people are suffering from underconsumption. America can not buy the things that they can produce. With all of the natural wealth from coast to coast, with all of the improvements of machinery, with all of the inventions of science, we can still have men come here and,