

THE REINDEER INDUSTRY IN ALASKA.

BY R. I. GEARE.

Uncle Sam has found a very economical and successful way of sustaining life among the Alaskan Eskimos. About a dollar and a quarter a year *per caput* pays the bills, the "value received" consisting of reindeer, imported from Siberia, which furnish the natives with food, clothing, means of transportation, and other necessities of life.

It will be remembered that Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the Alaskan agent of the Bureau of Education, discovered as far back as 1890 that these people were rapidly losing the sources of their food supply. The whales were going further and further northward, the walrus were disappearing, the seals were becoming exterminated, and even the caribou had departed. In other words, the Eskimos of that region were face to face with starvation.

The result was that in the following year (1901) Dr. Jackson brought over from Siberia the first lot of reindeer, only sixteen, and started a little colony of them on Unalaska, an island lying off the bleak coast of Alaska.

At first the experiment was looked on as rather a waste of time and money, but time came to the rescue, and it was clearly proved that these animals could be successfully imported and taken care of, so that now our good law-makers are appropriating \$25,000 annually for increasing the supply. The reindeer have taken kindly to the native moss, which forms their principal article of food and of course needs no outlay for cultivation. There is said to be enough of this moss in Alaska to furnish plenty of food for 10,000,000 reindeer.

The first lot of reindeer imported were selected from the Chukches herds, a tough and hardy breed. Next, some of the Tunguse stock, larger and stronger than the others, were brought over. The price of the former in Siberia is about \$4 for a full-grown animal, and of the latter about \$7.50 apiece.

At the present rate of increase, even if no more are imported, there will be at least 1,000,000 reindeer in Alaska in less than twenty-five years. To go a step further, it will not be at all surprising, in the opinion of some, if this industry should grow to be one of considerable commercial importance to the United States, and it has even been estimated that in some thirty-five years Alaska may be in a position to sell annually half a million to a million reindeer carcasses, besides furnishing several thousand tons of hams and tongues. Nor may it be a figment of the brain to predict that at no very distant day, as suggested by Mr. Grosvenor, long trains from Arctic and sub-Arctic Alaska will roll into Seattle and some of our other westernmost cities, laden with cargoes of this very palatable food.

The profits that can be realized from reindeer are, if correctly quoted, very large. For instance, a fawn during the first four years of its life costs the owner less than a dollar a year, while at the end of that period it is worth \$50 to \$100 for its meat, and nearly double that amount if trained for the sled or as a pack animal.

The does are very prolific, and after the year may be counted on to add to the herd a fawn a year for some ten years. They also furnish very rich milk, which is said to make excellent cheese, the quantity of milk averaging about a tea-cupful at a milking.

The reliability and endurance of these animals is remarkable, making them invaluable for transportation service. This is proved by the fact that they have now for several years been used to carry the United States mails on regular routes with the greatest success

and in about half the time required for dog teams. They can also be ridden with a saddle, and travel along contentedly with a pack-load of 150 pounds.

Thus, while the original motive in bringing these reindeer into Alaska was simply to give the natives a

about three-fifths of them died from starvation, while the remainder were unfit for service. Fortunately for the miners, however, abundant supplies reached them in time to save their lives.

The illustrations accompanying this article are reproduced from photographs, taken by Dr. Sheldon Jackson, in the Smithsonian Institution's reprint of Mr. Grosvenor's article.



REINDEER RIDING.

permanent food supply, their excellent adaptation to transportation purposes (especially in view of the discovery of large gold deposits on the streams of those distant Arctic and sub-Arctic regions), has caused them to become an actual necessity for the white man as well as for the Eskimo.

These highly successful experiments with Siberian reindeer, it may be added, must not be confounded



A HERD OF REINDEER IN ALASKA.

with the unsuccessful attempt in 1898 to introduce reindeer from Lapland. On that occasion the motive was for hauling supplies from the head of Lynn Canal to miners in the Yukon. The failure in that case was due to the fact that the supply of Norway moss which had been brought with the animals soon became exhausted and the animals positively refused to eat the grass that grew around Seattle. The result was that

eight hours after the printing is done.—Geyer's Stationer.

The essential features of the wireless system of communication and the automatic fire alarm system have been combined by Emil Guarini, of Brussels, and by means of the apparatus devised by him the heat generated by a fire will itself be the means of giving

the alarm to the fire department or wherever else it may be desired. The inventor contemplates that the most valuable function of the system will be the dispensing with the extensive wiring of large buildings where the automatic fire alarm is desired and the method of procedure deemed the most desirable by him is to have the alarm turned in by wireless communication to some central point in the building where there would be some one to receive the alarm and to make an immediate investigation. If necessary, an alarm may then be turned into the fire headquarters by similar wireless methods.



HOBBLER REINDEER READY FOR SHIPMENT FROM SIBERIA.

No More Crisp Bank Notes.

The days of the crisp bank-note are numbered. Instead of being crisp, the money which the government Bureau of Engraving and Printing will hereafter turn out will be soft and velvety, if important experiments which are now being conducted in the presence of treasury officials for the purpose of demonstrating the advantages of a novel chemical treatment for paper prove satisfactory. The result of the adoption of the new secret process will be to revolutionize a portion of the work connected with the printing of the paper money of the United States. Under the new process it will take just sixty days less time to manufacture a bank-note than under the present method. The chemical solution not only renders the paper soft and velvety, but it also makes it non-shrinkable. By applying it to a Japanese napkin that article becomes as soft and pliable as a tissue of silk. The chemical preparation acts as an antiseptic and preservative. When applied to old documents it seems to knit the fiber together and prevent further decay. Under the present process of printing paper money the paper has to be thoroughly soaked in water. While it is in this soaked condition, one side of the paper is printed. The sheet is then placed in a steam-room and kept under a high temperature for thirty days, the time necessary for the ink to dry. The sheet is again soaked as in the first instance and the reverse side of the bill printed. The thirty-day drying process then has to be repeated. In cases where a third impression on the bill is necessary, which is required when the printing is done in two colors, the wetting and drying process has to be repeated for a third time, and another month is thus consumed in its production. Besides the delay of this process, the wetting and drying rot the fiber of the paper, and, although it is "starched" to give it the crisp appearance, the starch soon wears out and the bill becomes limp and worn. In printing bills on paper that has been treated by the new process no wetting is necessary. The ink loses none of its luster when applied to the paper, as under the old process, and is thoroughly dry within forty-