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In Far-Off Alaska

By ROBERT KALLENBERG

Robert Kallenberg, A. H. '25, a teacher in the government school at Kuluka, Alaska, is supervisor of the reindeer herds of that district and in charge of the local medical relief work. This article traveled almost three months in reaching us. In fact, all the mail there depends upon travelers who happen to be going "out".—Editor.

In order to come in contact with the reindeer industry, it was necessary to take a teaching position. The teacher supervises the local reindeer herds and is in charge of the medical relief work.

School work is rather difficult because all the children speak their native language in their homes, and at times it seems that the few hours spent in school are lost among the many hours in the home. School is interrupted by the necessary visits to the reindeer camp, which often take a week at a time. The law requires all children between the ages of six and eighteen to attend schools. The average daily attendance this year is about 17. There are three grades, and English, arithmetic, reading, writing, spelling and drawing make up the day.

The popular snow house of the geographies does not exist here. There is no timber, and the igloos are made of sod supported by willow poles. There is one window in the top of the house covered with a transparent sheet of walrus intestines. This window is never open except when the wind blows off the covering.

Very often two or three families live in the one room, and the room is not big enough to swing a cat by the tail; not if you care anything about the cat. The houses are practically dust free because the dirt floors are mud most of the time. Stoves are made from five gallon gasoline or kerosene cans and the smoke stacks are constructed from the tin cans picked up near the school house.

Alaskan women sew, cook, take care of the children, carry water, gather wood and do most of the work around the village. The men hunt, trap and fish. When a man comes home with a loaded kayak, or native skin boat, he pulls it up on the beach and the women unload the fish and game. The men certainly seem to have the easy life in this camp, and this seems to be characteristic of the Eskimo as well as the Indian.

Judging from the children's clothes, the women are fairly handy at sewing. Caps are made of beaver, mink or muskrat; parkas, sack-like coats with hoods, are fashioned from squirrel or reindeer skins, and the footwear is

made of reindeer or sealskin for the tops and with walrus soles. Beads, colored yarns and red flannel serve as trimming; the more trimming the better. Cheap calico is the only dress material available.

For a long time the native diet has been a puzzle to me. I gathered certain ideas concerning balanced rations, but these people seem to be the exception to the rule. Tea, flour, reindeer meat, fish and seal maintain life here. Very often it is straight reindeer meat or straight fish for weeks at a time. Flour and water hoecakes are the nearest form of bread. Baking powder is used if they have it, but it costs 75 cents a pound.

On one trip I made to the reindeer camp, ten miles away, via reindeer and sled, one of the native boys with me traveled at a good fast trot for three miles, facing a northwest wind, and it was 12 below. He ran between seven and eight of the ten miles. All the food that the boys had at the camp was salt, tea, baking powder, flour and deer meat. How they can climb up and down mountains after reindeer and be out in the cold, wind and snow on such "grub" is more than I can understand.

Last fall the men came in with kayak after kayak load of dead salmon picked up in the river. The fish were

put in the caches, and they were still using them for food in January. They bury walrus meat in the spring and eat it in the fall and will eat it in preference to the fresh fish and reindeer meat that they could easily have all the year round.

Perhaps you would be interested in the famous Alaska sour dough. Here is the recipe:

3 tablespoons cornmeal
3 tablespoons flour
3 tablespoons sugar

Mix with water and keep warm for about three days or until it ferments. Add flour and water to make a medium thick mixture. This is the starter and must be well fermented before it can be used. Flour and water are added to the sour dough pot in the evening to make batter enough for the hoecakes the next morning. If the sour dough is not fermented enough, add some sugar to "pep" it up. In the morning add sugar, salt and a little baking soda. Leave enough of the batter for a starter. If the sour dough is not used for a couple of days, a little flour and sugar must be added to keep it going. The starter can also be used in place of yeast in making bread.

Only Three "A" Girls

Women's "A" Fraternity boasts only three student members this fall, but lack of quantity is made up in quality..

The members are Helen Smith, '28, Virginia Alexander, '28, and Helen Newhardt, '29. Miss Winifred Tilden, an enthusiastic member, and Vergil Kelley, a loyal alumna, will both take an active part in the fraternity this year.

Fall sports season may add several more "A's" to the eligibility list. In the meanwhile, "A" Fraternity will carry on its activities as usual.

The apple sale will start next week, according to Helen Smith, president of

the organization. The proceeds of the apple sale are used to promote interest in women's athletics.

Last year "A" Fraternity bought the "A" blankets for senior awards, helped buy equipment for intramural baseball and volley ball, and helped send delegates to the National A. C. A. C. W. convention at Ithaca.

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