

Lunch was obtained at Rapids Roadhouse, 135 miles south of Fairbanks. The place was purchased July 21, 1944 by Mr. and Mrs. Jack B. Coble, he from Port Angela, Wash., and she from Paden, Oklahoma. They paid \$3000 plus \$1500 for accompanying foodstuffs. Capacity is 35 guests, most of whom are truckers, tourists, and, in season, hunters. Roadhouse proprietors along the Richardson highway have to cope with, among other things, six months per year of virtual isolation when the road is closed, a 16-cent per ton mile trucking rate on everything brought up from the coast or down from Fairbanks, and a terrific oil bill which in the Coble's case runs to \$600-700 a year. Winter temperatures here get down as far as minus-35 degrees. The Cobles are planning to sell out, primarily because the wintertime isolation constitutes a continual danger to the health of their young child. Rapids Roadhouse marks the division line in the telephone system; one line running up from Valdez ends here and another running to Fairbanks starts. Consequently when phone conversations take place between Fairbanks and Valdez, Mrs. Coble finds herself standing before two wall telephones relaying messages from one to the other. Naturally a photograph of this was taken.

A few miles down the road cameras again began clicking with three gold prospectors as their subjects. These gentlemen were employed by the Yukon Gold Corporation to test sidecreeks of the Delta River in order to determine whether or not the area would be worth large-scale operations. The Yukon company expects to put in a big dragline here but will have spent \$3000-4000 conducting tests such as this before any amount of gold is taken out.

The gentleman wearing long boots is Lloyd Wokasch, 37, of Helena, Mont., who commented that after all this posing he probably could get a job in Hollywood as a stand-in for Gene Autry's horse. Lloyd formerly worked for the Caird Engineering Works in Helena, and came to Alaska last May, with his brother, Leonard, by driving up the Alcan with a truckload of mining machinery intended for the Yukon company's Delta River project. The two had done a little mining in Montana and had always wanted to see Alaska, so they took a testing job for the summer.

Leonard, 27, still wearing his OD pants, spent four years with the 43rd Division, as a private, and fought his way from New Guánáa to Tokyo. He plans to return to Montana next fall but may come back in 1947 to do some prospecting on his own. "There are thousands of acres the old-timers never touched," he says. "They couldn't have found all the gold in Alaska. Now we've got roads so we can drive farther into the bush, taking more equipment and staying in longer. Besides, at least we know now a lot of places where not to look." Len says it costs \$3-4000 to outfit and prospect for one summer in Alaska, and even if you hit some colors you'll probably have to come back again & again to show enough to attract the interest of a mining company. The profit, of course, comes not from what you pan but from the sale or lease of land in which you can prove there is paying gold.

The third member of our panning trio was the foreman, Ed Hulbert, of Hillsborough, Montana, who is spending his fourth year in Alaska. Ed said this was a lousy-paying creek and he'd stand in it on his head if they got a single two-bit pan. He also said Alaska was the blankity-blankest place and the only reasons he was still here were (1) he's still trying to get out of it the money he put in, and (2) he hasn't got enough for a ticket home.

Early in the evening we pulled up at Paxton's Lodge, one of the finest roadhouses on the highway, to spend the night. Paxton's is located in the heart of one of the best hunting and fishing areas in Alaska. It is a large, clean, attractive log building much resembling a hunting or fishing lodge you might find in the States. It is 180 miles south of Fairbanks.

John Windust, the owner, had this to say: Four excellent fishing lakes are located near the lodge. They are Fielding, 20 miles away, Summit, 5 miles, Paxton, 5 miles, and Tango, 30 miles. The first three are in the process of being fished out because they are among the few lakes in Alaska accessible by highway. Tango can be reached only by foot or helicopter. Greyling average  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pounds and run up to 4 or  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . Lake trout go to ~~20 pounds, but average much less~~ ~~(5)~~ 42 inches, the local record. Last year at one time a party brought in seven trout each more than 20 pounds. Rainbow are good July 1 to Sept. 1, and they run one to  $4\frac{1}{2}$  pounds. Follow kings up.

Headwaters of the Gulkana River are near the lodge, and to them come four runs of salmon each summer, starting about July 1. In order, they are the silver, coho, king, and dog. The first few silvers to come up make good eating, but the bulk of the runs are too scaly and "moth-eaten," to make them worthwhile catching. Until a few years ago, Windust said disgustedly, there was a bounty on Bull Trout which the conservationists figured followed the salmon to eat their spawn. Finally they discovered that salmon also lived on Bull Trout spawn and the bounty was doing more harm than good. Somebody has figured out a way of determining when salmon will eggs will hatch. Each day, beginning with the day they were fertilized, you subtract freezing temperature (32) from the highest actual temperature during the day. Thus, if the thermometer reached 36, your day's figure is four. If the temperature was below freezing, you count nothing. When all of these daily figures add up to 90, the eggs hatch.

Mosquitoes are terrific here, as elsewhere, and whitesocks (tiny white band around forelegs) are worse, tearing small hunks of flesh from their customers. The whitesocks, however, at least have the decency to go to bed at night. Paxton's has boats on all four lakes. Greyling is strictly a job for fly fishing. Lures are used on lake trout, but no live bait whatsoever. When the trout are feeding on "silvers" (small salmon), any silver-colored bait will drag them in. On dull days copper and brass are best.