

Norwegian Arctic Archipelago of Svalbard Invites Settlers

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A popular bumper sticker in Alaska at the present carries the message: "Secede or Succumb," reflecting the discontent of many Alaskans with the long delays in government action on the projected trans-Alaska pipeline.

Petitions are being circulated throughout the state, urging Alaskans to secede from the United States. Now a new alternative has emerged — Svalbard! For those who like Arctic living but not Alaskan politics, the Norwegian government has opened up new vistas.

Attractive terms are being offered to lure settlers to the widely beautiful, Norwegian-owned Arctic archipelago known as Svalbard. Not only individual immigrants are being sought, but companies are being encouraged to explore the economic possibilities of Svalbard.

The personal income tax is 4 per cent, the area is duty-free, and there is no added value tax.

Where is Svalbard? Known as "The Cold Coast", Svalbard is located at the tip-top of the globe, north of the European continent above Norway. It lies between the 74th and 81st parallel north, and at a longitude from 10 to 35 east.

The total land area covers about 23,958 square miles, of which only 2,362 experience spring thaw. Winter temperatures drop below -21° and during the high point of the summer seldom exceed 51°. Not a land for the faint of heart.

Today, about 1,000 Norwegians and 1,800 Soviet citizens live in the mining communities on the main island, West Spitzbergen. Each summer sees an influx of scientists and research teams studying the geology, glaciology, botany, and zoology of Svalbard. Generally, there are at least 24 to 30 field expeditions per season with participants from 10 to 15 nations.

Another important activity which Alaskans can well understand is the international search for oil. Oil claims have been filed on nearly all geographically exploitable areas of Svalbard, but as yet no positive results have been announced. Meanwhile, drilling and exploration goes on under the watchful eye of a special nature conservation officer.

For many centuries, polar bear were hunted in Svalbard but in 1970, hunting was severely regulated and in 1971, a ban was imposed on all trophy hunting in Svalbard waters.

The island of Kong Karls Land (no relation to King Kong, but rather to King Charles) was set aside as a reserve for the great white bear. Today, only photo safaris are allowed, taking adventurous tourists onto pack ice to the mating grounds of the huge animals.

The native people of Alaska — the Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut — have long known how to survive in a climate much like that of Svalbard. Therefore, Alaska natives would make excellent polar bear guides and special

"THE COLD COAST" WANTS SETTLERS — The Norwegian-owned archipelago of Svalbard is looking for immigrants and entrepreneurs. With a climate and scenery much like Alaska it may be the answer to Alaska's disgruntled citizens

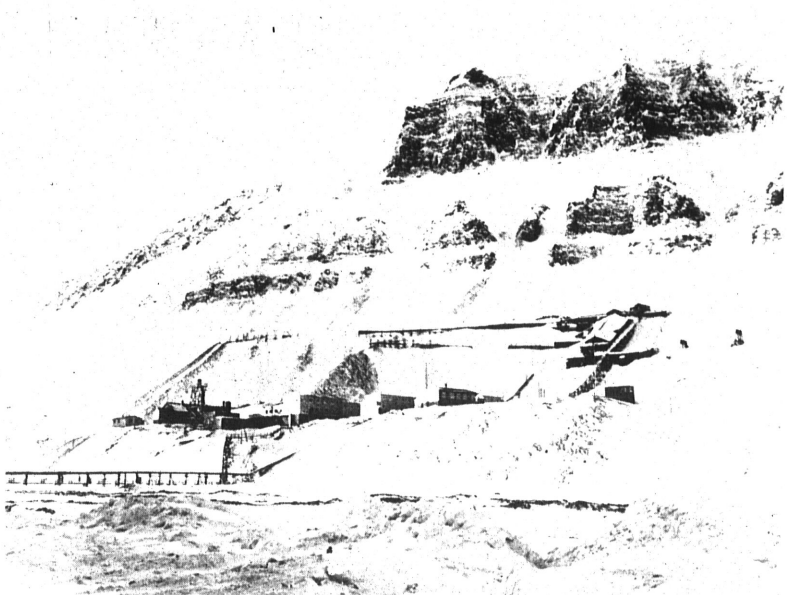
assistants to the many scientific expeditions, having no problem of adaptation to Svalbard's unique conditions.

Alaska's natives may well want to look into some of the possibilities for establishing enterprises in their sister Arctic communities.

The Norwegian government is very concerned with protecting the delicate Arctic ecology and natural resources. The only native land mammals on the archipelago are Arctic fox, reindeer, and polar bear. Musk oxen were brought to Svalbard in

who are threatening to secede. Why not immigrate to Svalbard instead? Pictured is the mining community of Longyearbyen.

— Photo courtesy of the Norwegian Information Service.



1929 and appear to be thriving.

In the coastal areas, a limited number of walrus are seen and four species of seal.

It is easy to see why Alaskans would be the most likely immigrants to this rugged land. In April a large conference will be held in Oslo to discuss the future of Svalbard. Its theme is "Development or Stagnation — which way is Svalbard to go?" Svalbard need people and it needs enterprises.

Anyone interested in this Arctic outpost may write to the Norwegian National Tourist Office, 505 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y., 10017. In 1973 there will be five 17-day expeditions to Svalbard, leaving New York by air on June 8 and 22, July 6 and 20, and August 3.

Happily, if enough Alaskans are disgruntled they will all book passage for Svalbard, leaving a less-populated Alaska for those who like it here, in spite of the hassles.