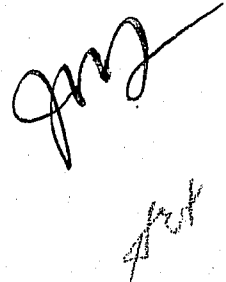


GEO. A. PARKS  
GOVERNOR

TERRITORY OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

October 10th, 1925.



Colonel James G. Steese,  
President, Alaska Road Commission,  
2802 Munitions Bldg.,  
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Dear Friend Steese:

The following letter is submitted in compliance with your request for my opinion on the advisability of abandoning the Richardson Highway.

I have been familiar with the construction of the road from Fairbanks to the Coast since the inception of the project, and in the course of my official work in the Territory I have traveled over the route nearly every year. Prior to the completion of the Alaska Railroad, the wagon road furnished the only overland route to the interior of Alaska and materially assisted in the development of the Tanana Valley and other interior districts. For many years all winter traffic destined for the interior of Alaska, passed over this road. It is impossible to overestimate the value that the road has been to Alaska.

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Only those who have followed it through all of its stages of development, from the days when it was a pack trail and it required twelve or fifteen days to make the trip from the Coast to Fairbanks to the present time when one can get in an automobile in Fairbanks and in two days easy driving, reach the Coast, can appreciate its worth.

I am sure that the costs of construction and maintenance over a period of twenty-one years, as shown by your report, are reasonable and are seldom equalled in a similar country.

I am advised that the statistics compiled by the transportation company now operating cars on the Richardson Highway, show that the tourist travel for 1925 increased approximately twenty-five per cent over that of 1924, and each year this business will prove to be a growing asset to the Territory.

The development of any new country naturally follows the roads and this is true along the wagon road in question. Since the road has been improved so as to be suitable

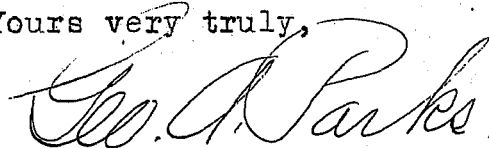
for travel at all times during the year, many new homesteads and fox farms have been improved in the region adjacent to the right of way. The public land surveys have been extended over a large part of the region traversed by the road in the Tanana and Copper River valleys, and it is reasonable to assume that normal development of these lands will follow the only available transportation route.

I feel that it would be a very serious mistake to abandon the project at this time.

In order to reduce the maintenance charges to the minimum, it is essential that the project be completed as soon as possible. Recently I made a trip from Fairbanks to Chitina during one of the heaviest rainfalls of the season, and the only places where we encountered trouble were on the uncompleted sections of the road. A few impassable places impairs the value of the entire project.

I hope that you will be successful in obtaining funds to complete this project according to your program.

Yours very truly,



Governor