

10-00

Mr. Wm. J. Miami, Regional Engineer  
Juneau, Alaska

September 1, 1959

10-00.2

A. D. Stewart, Jr., Construction and  
Maintenance Engineer, Juneau, Alaska

Maintenance Ditching, FAP Route 62, Big Bend-South Cushman Street Area,  
Fairbanks Vicinity

Following receipt of complaints by the office of Governor Egan, an investigation has been made of the subject operation. Mr. W. P. Cameron, Chief, Force Account Construction and Maintenance Unit, was in Fairbanks when the complaint was received and he was requested to check into this matter and submit a telephoned report.

According to Mr. Cameron's report, and confirmed by later conversation with Division Engineer H. W. Johnson, the Division maintenance forces have been engaged in a normal and routine operation. Early in the summer work of removing drainage obstructions from the roadside ditches was begun at Mile Post 330, located 13 miles south of Fairbanks, and continued north toward Fairbanks. Obstructions removed included entrances to private driveways that had been constructed without formal permit and which did not provide adequate drainage. Included in the area in which this work has been completed were several access roads to Eielson Air Force Base. All such work in this area was consummated without discord or argument on the part of the property owners involved.

Early in August the maintenance supervisors decided that similar work, necessary to provide adequate drainage in the Big Bend area immediately south and east of the Fairbanks city limits, should be scheduled next in order to accomplish the work before freeze-up and because the problem was more acute there than in other as yet uncorrected areas.

The Division Engineer reports that unauthorized filling of the roadside ditches had been observed in the Big Bend area early in the summer and the parties concerned were at that time verbally notified by the maintenance foreman that they were in trespass and that the unauthorized ditch blocks would have to be removed. He was assured by the property owners that they would apply for permits and construct the approved driveways at a later date. One property owner did follow this procedure. This man has since complained to the Division Office that he was being flooded because the other parties did not comply and their ditch blocks were causing the water to back up over his land.

September 1, 1959

The Maintenance General Foreman again contacted the offending property owners but received only non-committal assurances that the required work would be performed. The State Police were then requested to assist in securing removal of the obstructions. The property owners were contacted by State Police patrolmen and were given the same non-committal assurances. Finally, on August 14, 1959, the Division Engineer notified all trespassing property owners in the area, by letter sent via certified mail, that maintenance crews would begin the ditch cleaning operation on August 24, 1959, and that costs incurred in removing the unauthorized obstructions would be at the owners' expense. No corrective action was taken by any of the offenders, therefore work was begun on August 25, 1959.

The charge that this action is arbitrary and capricious is without foundation. The charge that property owners on South Cushman Street are being given favorable treatment in that no similar work is scheduled there is without foundation. The South Cushman Street drainage is such that no roadside ditching is required. There is uncontrolled access over the full width of each lot adjacent to South Cushman; however, the indicated corrective action in this area is to reconstruct the highway as a street, with curbs, gutters and sidewalks. Authorized curb cuts will then control the access.

Similar ditch cleaning work is in progress in both the Anchorage and Juneau Divisions as a normal maintenance function and has aroused no undue criticism or argument such as occurred in this instance.

cc: Washington DC  
Mr. Downing

*Cong. Bk. - Alaska*  
*Alaska F.A. Rep.*  
*Alaska 14 Special*

23-10

NOV 24 1959

Mr. Grayson C. Allen  
Times Building  
Cordova, Alaska

Dear Mr. Allen:

Reference is made to my letter of October 8 relative to the burning of old materials from dismantled bridges near Cordova.

As previously advised, this matter was referred to our regional engineer at Juneau for his investigation. Information regarding this subject was forwarded from our office at Valdez following some delay due to storms which grounded airplanes serving that area.

It is understood that representatives of our Alaska office were in contact with you subsequent to October 8. Perhaps you have been advised directly of the circumstances concerning the bridge materials burned, as well as those salvaged and stockpiled during the period of constructing current projects in the area.

The materials in question are from bridges that remained from the old Copper River railroad. Following the abandonment of the railroad in 1938, the rails and ties were removed and replaced with a deck to serve one-lane highway traffic. The present wooden decks are considered practically worthless. We do not know the age of the bridge stringers, but it is reasonable to assume that they were in place from 10 to 20 years prior to the abandonment of the railroad. A thorough investigation has revealed many of the timbers to be of questionable value. Stringer materials which are generally being burned are those which have rot at either end and where they were in contact with the intermediate bent. If these were stockpiled it is very doubtful that prospective buyers would be interested in them, and the State would be burdened with the additional expense of disposing of the material. Other materials, however, which have a salvage value and which may be used in future maintenance activities are salvaged and stockpiled. Although these materials were

contemplated for maintenance purposes, consideration will be given to advertising them for sale through established advertising and bidding procedures if the local demand is sufficiently great to justify this action.

We have not been advised of the names of citizens in Cordova who may have been previously interested in these old materials, nor whether the previously indicated interest still exists. However, in the event further interest in this regard should be expressed by the local citizens, we have been advised that used stringers in good condition may be purchased from Mr. George Date of Cordova (a local contractor) at a very reasonable price. Undoubtedly these materials are superior in quality to any that our contractors may salvage from the structures referred to above.

Although our field investigation indicated the handling of old dismantled materials appeared to be generally satisfactory, every reasonable effort will be taken to minimize the waste of salvageable materials in future operations.

We trust that the above explanation of the pertinent factors concerning the disposition of old bridge materials adequately replies to your letter of September 30.

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Royster  
Assistant to the  
Federal Highway Administrator

CALewis:nk (Refer to: Control No. PR-5088)(11/24/59)

cc - Files (2)

Federal Hwy.Projs.Div. ✓

Mr. W. J. Niemi (2-cc)

Mr. B. D. Tallamy

Mr. E. L. Armstrong

CC Unit

Mr. Royster

Cleared Through  
Administrator's Correspondence Unit

EN to Niemi 10/8/59 att.

← Cong. Book  
X Alaska FH - [unclear]  
X " FA - " - [unclear] 7.K

23-10

OCT 8 1959

Mr. Grayson C. Allen  
Times Building  
Cordova, Alaska

Dear Mr. Allen:

This is in reply to your letter of September 30 regarding the burning of materials from dismantled bridges near Cordova, Alaska.

We have referred this matter to Mr. W. J. Niemi, our regional engineer at Juneau, and have requested that we be advised in this regard. Upon our receipt of this information we will promptly advise you further concerning the subject. You may, however, because of the apparent urgency due to the reported schedule for demolishing the structures, wish to contact Mr. Niemi's office directly.

Sincerely yours

Paul F. Royster  
Assistant to the  
Federal Highway Administrator

MLHarshberger:CAL:SER:nk  
Control No. PR-5088 (10/8/59)  
cc - Files (2)

Federal Hwy. Projs. Div.  
Mr. W. J. Niemi (2-cc)  
Mr. B. D. Tallamy  
Mr. E. L. Armstrong  
CC Unit  
Mr. Royster

Cleared Through  
Administrator's Correspondence Unit

LAW OFFICE

GRAYSON C. ALLEN

Times Bldg.  
CORDOVA, ALASKA

*Handwritten initials and scribbles*

Sept. 30, 1959

Department of Commerce  
Director of Bureau of Public Roads  
Washington D. C.

Re: Bridge Timbers,  
Copper River Road  
Cordova, Alaska

Dear Sir:

A quantity of valuable timbers are being removed from wood bridges in the Cordova Area and are being burned on the job by order of your department instead of permitting the citizens of Cordova to have them and haul them away for profitable use. Such timbers are scarce and high-priced in Cordova if to be had at all.

The citizens of Cordova request that your office make these timbers available to them at once instead of spending taxpayers money having them piled and burned on the job site as your order requires.

I most respectfully insist that this order be revoked at once and the local people be permitted to haul these timbers away before the next bridge is demolished, which will probably be next week.

I understand the order requires the burning of the timbers the week they are removed.

Most respectfully yours,

*Handwritten signature of Grayson C. Allen*  
Grayson C. Allen

cc: Senator Ernest Gruening  
Rep. Ralph J. Rivers

RECEIVED  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC ROADS

SEP 30 1959

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC ROADS

PR 5088

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

Mr. W. J. Niemi, Regional Engineer  
Juneau, Alaska

October 8, 1959

Clifford A. Lewis

Paul F. Royster, Assistant Commissioner  
Washington 25, D. C.

23-10

Bridge Timbers - Copper River Road, Cordova, Alaska

There are attached two copies of a letter dated September 30, from Mr. Grayson C. Allen of Cordova, Alaska, and of our interim reply, relative to the destruction of timber from bridges dismantled on Public Roads construction projects. Please note that copies of Mr. Allen's letter were also sent to Senator Ernest Gruening and Representative J. Rivers. As a result of this distribution we have received an informal inquiry from the office of Congressman Rivers concerning this matter with the request that his office be further advised in this regard.

We have no positive identification of the project in question. In our review of the PS&E of the Copper River projects we have noted that the special provisions generally require the contractor to stockpile salvageable material for later use by the Government and advise that he may retain any of the necessary items for use in his operations, with the balance of the quantity to be burned.

We shall appreciate your prompt investigation of the alleged complaint, and the circumstances pertinent thereto, and advise this office as soon as possible in order that we may appropriately reply to Mr. Allen, and to congressional inquiries regarding this matter.

If your findings reveal that a considerable quantity of useable material is being wasted, perhaps the contractor could make some arrangement wherein the local citizens could obtain some of the quantity scheduled for burning, provided such removal was made at no inconvenience or additional cost to the contractor. Your comments in this regard will also be appreciated.

Attachments (2)

MLHarshberger:CAL:nk Re: Control No. PR-5088

cc - Files (2)

7/11/21 Federal Hwy. Projs. Div. ✓

CC Unit

Mr. Royster

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Mr. Paul F. Royster, Assistant Commissioner for Operations, Washington, D. C.

ATTENTION: Mr. E. E. Erhart

FROM: Mr. J. Niemi, Regional Engineer, Juneau, Alaska

10-00-21

SUBJECT: Bridge Timber - Copper River Road

DATE: November 4, 1959

*Handwritten initials and marks*

Reference is made to your memorandum of October 13, 1959 with copies of correspondence with Senator Gruening and Representative Rivers on the burning of dismantled bridge timbers on Project S-0851(6), Mile 9-13, Copper River Highway. The needed information from the field had to come via Valdez where it was delayed for a number of days by storms which grounded airplanes.

A thorough field investigation shows these old timbers to be of questionable value; in fact, had it not been for the question raised they would all have been disposed of by burning. In deference to those who might be interested in purchasing them, those that are in the better condition will be stockpiled and advertised for sale.

In a conversation with Mr. Grayson Allen an attempt was made to find out what citizens in Cordova were interested in these bridge timbers. His replies were vague and evasive and it appears he was the only interested person. At this point it is relevant to mention that a local contractor, Mr. George Dale of Cordova, has a large supply of such better stringers for sale at \$30 a MBM or approximately \$10 per timber. They are almost new and, at the price, very reasonable.

It would not be too presumptive to predict that these old bridge timbers will find no buyers and the State will be burdened with the additional expense of their disposal through their maintenance operations. The attached photo will give a good impression of the general condition of the stringers. All have rot at either end and where they rested on the intermediate bent.

The handling of this matter in the field seems to be resolved to everyone's satisfaction and it is doubtful if any further question will be raised.

Attachment as noted above



*Memorandum to Mr. Roystar - 10/16/59 - 10/16/59*  
*for Mr. J. Niemel, Regional Engineer*

This should be created as an interim report pending further advice from our field offices.

As to the ultimate disposition of any stockpiled bridge material it has been our experience that timbers of this nature are exceedingly valuable in our maintenance activities. However, in view of the local demand, arrangements for sale of the usable stringers could be made through our established advertising and bidding procedures.

The present wooden decks are practically worthless and will no doubt be consumed by fire. We do not know the exact age of the stringers, but it can be reasonable assumed that they were in place for 10 to 20 years prior to abandonment of the railroad in 1938. They are untreated and due to their age there may be some question as to their present value. However, our contract provides that the contractor shall salvage and stockpile any part of the old bridge that is salvageable. Our field forces are now making a survey for the purpose of making this determination. Any timbers that have salvage value will be stockpiled on the project in accordance with the terms of the contract.

The bridge in question are those that remained of the old Copper River railroad, and were put into use as highway bridges subsequent to the abandonment of the railroad in 1938. The rails and ties were taken off and replaced with one-way untreated deck suitable for highway traffic. The old untreated wooden stringers - 8"x18"x30' long rested on untreated wooden caps and piling, continuous over two 15' spans.

An investigation is underway to determine the several aspects in regard to this situation and as quickly as all facts are obtained a complete report will be made. As an interim report, we can offer the following:

Reference is made to your memorandum of October 13, 1959, relative to complaints concerning the burning of dismantled bridge timbers as made by Mr. Grayson C. Allen of Cordova, Alaska.

*Re. Exhibit # 5126*

SUBJECT: Bridge Timber - Project FH 32-A5 and S-0851(6) - Copper River Highway

FROM: Mr. J. Niemel, Regional Engineer  
10-00-21 Juneau, Alaska

TO: Mr. Paul E. Roystar, Assistant Commissioner for Operations, Washington 25, D. C.  
21-00

Ref: Proj. FH 32-A5  
Proj. S-0851(6)

DATE: October 16, 1959

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

*Wm*

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC ROADS

EE

Discussed with  
Merrill 10/22

Regional Engineer

October 13, 1959

Assistant Commissioner  
C.

OCT 13 1959

Mer River Road

Paul F. Royster

Reference is made to our memorandum of October 8 relative to the burning of dismantled bridge timbers on the Mer River Road. In response to Senator C. Allen's letter of September 30.

Receipt of a letter dated October 12 from the Senator further commenting on this matter. Copies of our interim reply, are attached.

In consideration of our request of October 8, it is ordered that Senator C. Allen and Congressman [Name] be advised in this regard.

Very truly yours,  
Paul F. Royster  
Assistant Commissioner  
Federal Highway Administration

Attachments - 2

- cc: Lewis/tb
- Files (2)
- Federal Hwy. Projs. Div.
- Mr. Royster - Rm. 814
- Mr. B. D. [Name]
- Mr. J. L. Armstrong
- CC Mail
- Mr. Royster - Rm. 814

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