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The White House  
Washington

COPY

September 26, 1923.

Honorable Scott C. Bone,  
Governor of Alaska,  
Juneau, Alaska.

My Dear Governor Bone:

The Secretary of War has brought to my attention a duplication of effort in the conduct of affairs in Alaska. It appears that the Department of Agriculture is building roads on Government land and the War Department, under the provisions of the law, has been constructing highways in Alaska for many years. It is the opinion of the Secretary of War that this construction should be in the hands of the same bureau which is concerned with this work in the United States, and the appropriations for carrying on this work should be taken from the annual appropriation made for good roads as is the money expended in Alaska for road construction by the Secretary of Agriculture.

Another matter under consideration is the signal stations and telegraph connections on the telegraph line along the Richardson Highway running from Fairbanks to Valdez.

I have been informed that there are not seventy permanent white settlers along the entire length of the 375 miles of this wagon road, which is open to wheel transportation for only a short time each summer. This telegraph line has been in operation about twenty years, having been placed along the trail which at that time was the main highway from the Coast to the interior of Alaska. This is no longer the case and there has been no development of this territory. On the contrary, activity has all but ceased since the construction of the railway from Seward to Fairbanks. It costs the government approximately \$75,000 per annum to maintain and operate this line. I am informed that at a conference in Seattle on January 22, 1923, between yourself, Colonel Hartman of the Army Signal Corps, Officer in Charge, and Mr. Hickerson, Manager of the System, you concurred in the view of the Signal Corps, that all requirements would be met if the line was turned over to the road commission for use as a telephone line.

A Signal Corps Inspector, only recently returned from Alaska, has recommended this transfer. It has been urged that early action be taken so as to rid the telegraph system of Alaska of this unprofitable line and that steps be taken to secure a right-of-way for a line along the railroad, either by placing additional wires on existing railroad poles, operating existing

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lines under mutual agreement, or by construction of a new pole line, either of which would ultimately be much cheaper than operating the present trail route.

Both Secretary Work and Secretary Wallace feel that the existing telegraph service is unnecessary; they recommend its discontinuance and I have no desire to maintain it if it is not a useful public service.

I am enclosing you letters from the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, which I shall be glad to have you read and return to me. Before taking action in either of the above cases, I shall appreciate having your views, as my desire is to further the best interests of the territory of Alaska and therefore of the Federal Government.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) CALVIN COOLIDGE.

enclosures.