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Alaska

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Alaska Road

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UNITED STATES

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Alaska Road Commission, Juneau, Alaska



*Alaska and the
Alaska Road Commission*

TERRITORY OF ALASKA

The Territory of Alaska is big. Its total area is approximately 586,400 square miles, which is roughly one-fifth the area of the continental United States. Naturally, such a huge land mass as Alaska would have widely different climatic conditions and physical features. It is not a land of continual ice and snow. Three-fourths of Alaska is in the North Temperate Zone, the remainder being north of the Arctic Circle. In southeastern Alaska the climate is quite similar to coastal Washington and Oregon. Western Alaska is similar to the New England States. Interior Alaska is similar to Montana, Minnesota and the Dakotas. All of Alaska experiences varying degrees of summer weather. In the interior the thermometer may register 90 degrees above zero in the summertime; by contrast, it may register 50 degrees below zero in the wintertime.

Living conditions and local customs among the people of Alaska are not unlike those in comparable parts of the United States. Established and growing Alaskan cities and communities have quite modern features and conveniences. They have modern stores and homes, amusements, churches of all denominations, hotels, banks, newspapers, bakeries, cleaning establishments, hospital and medical facilities. These cities and communities have good grade and high schools with excellent educational standards. The Territory maintains a university at College,

Alaska, which is near Fairbanks. Since Alaska is recognized as one of the last frontiers, it is only reasonable to understand that there are still evidences of that fact in all the cities and many of the outlying communities.

Transportation facilities in Alaska need to be improved and greatly enlarged to meet the demands of its growing population. Major transportation lines include two railroads, several steamship companies and many airlines which will require investments of millions of dollars to keep current service adequate. Despite Alaska's improved and rapidly growing highway system, Alaskans are predominately air-minded. According to aviation figures, there are more planes per capita than in any state in the Union. This fact is partially due to lack of adequate roads. A car ferry service from Prince Rupert, British Columbia, Canada, to Haines, Alaska, to connect with the interior road system, has been proposed as an auxiliary transportation route. This program has been actively sponsored by the Alaska Road Commission.

Alaska is many things to many people. It is home with families, good friends and good living to most of its inhabitants. To others it represents adventure, excitement, outdoor living and sports, a bank account, just a chance to get along, the most beautiful country in the world. Much misinformation has been disseminated by careless and inaccurate reports made by casual visitors or disgruntled people who couldn't weather the four seasons. But in Alaska, as in all the world and at all times, courage and imagination and work can create opportunity where the less zestful thinks none exists!

Recent Literature About Alaska:

A GUIDE TO ALASKA *by Merle E. Colby*. Macmillan Co., 1939. Altho statistics are now incorrect, the basic facts and information contained in this book are still excellent.

ALASKA NOW *by Herb Hilscher*. Little-Brown, 1948.

ALASKA TODAY *by B. W. Denison and Associates*. Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1950.

HERE IS ALASKA *by Helen Stefansson*. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943.

ALASKA ALMANAC *compiled and edited by William Tewkesbury*. Tewkesbury Publishers, 200 Lyon Building, Seattle, Washington.

LOU JACOBIN'S GUIDE TO ALASKA AND THE YUKON.

Guide to Alaska Co., Juneau, Alaska. Fourth edition published in 1949 and presently being revised.

THE MILEPOST. Alaska Research Co., Box 2446, Anchorage, Alaska.

WORLD ALMANAC—1951. New York World Telegram, New York, N. Y.

THE ALASKA ROAD COMMISSION

An Act of Congress in 1905 created the Alaska Road Commission as an agency of the War Department. The Commission commenced construction of a comprehensive road system consisting of a main road, now known as the Richardson Highway, from the south coast port of Valdez to Fairbanks in the interior, and a large number of secondary roads connecting mining districts and other inhabited centers with each other, with the Richardson Highway or with navigable water. These were supplemented by winter sled roads and trails leading to the more remote localities. Modest appropriations financed the progress of the road program until World War II focused national attention on Alaska and its needs. In 1932 the Commission was transferred to the Department of the Interior. In 1948 a Commission of Roads for Alaska was assigned the responsibility for a greatly expanded program of road work.

The Alaska Road Commission is a Federal agency under the United States Department of the Interior. The Headquarters Office is in Juneau, Alaska, and the four district offices are at Anchorage, Fairbanks, Valdez, and Nome, with a subdistrict office located at Haines, Alaska.

The Commission has jurisdiction over all roads and highways in the Territory which are not located within national forest areas. The responsibility for construction and maintenance of roads within the national forests is assigned to the Bureau of Public Roads, U. S. Department of Commerce, and these roads are generally under the supervision of the U. S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture. These agencies operate with funds appropriated by the Congress of the United States and funds are also provided by the Alaska Territorial Legislature for road construction. A part of the Alaskan funds is expended



General Richardson's monument at Isabel Pass in the Alaska Range.

in cooperation with the Alaska Road Commission, the Bureau of Public Roads, mining companies, and others properly equipped to handle construction work. The Territorial agency does not maintain a construction organization.

The Alaska Road Commission also constructs and maintains airfields, using Territorial funds, and acts as a construction agency for several Federal bureaus which do not have a construction organization in Alaska. One of these organizations is the National Park Service of the U. S. Department of the Interior where about 90 miles of road were constructed and are maintained in Mount McKinley National Park. The Alaska Road Commission works with the U. S. Corps of Engineers, Civil Aeronautics Administration, Alaska Communications System and The Alaska Railroad on cooperative projects.

The road system of Alaska consists of a network of main roads connecting the Kenai Peninsula, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Valdez. This connected system is joined to the Alaska Highway which runs east and south through Canada to the United States. Various local road systems branch off from the main roads to connect isolated mining camps or other inhabited localities with each other and with other means of transportation such as The Alaska Railroad or the navigation routes.

The connected system of roads under jurisdiction of the Alaska Road Commission consists of about 2,200



Penthouse addition for the Anchorage District Office at the Anchorage Depot. Construction completed January 1951.

miles and the isolated roads have a total length of about 1,000 miles. The main highways are in the process of being surfaced with a bituminous asphalt paving and many miles of new roads have been constructed to connect additional communities to the road system.

The need is great for qualified personnel to assist the Alaska Road Commission in its vital program of building and maintaining roads. Present indications are that the road program will be continued for at least three years on approximately the same scale as it was advanced in 1950. There is every reason to believe that funds will continue to be appropriated for some years by Congress and the Territory of Alaska.

EMPLOYMENT WITH THE ALASKA ROAD COMMISSION

Application: Application for Federal Employment, Standard Form 57, is required of all applicants before consideration for employment with the Alaska Road Commission may be given. Applications will be accepted only from individuals possessing suitable qualifications (actual work experience and/or training). There is no charge for government employment. Public laws preclude the payment of any sums of money to an individual or agency



Principal road system



system of Alaska.

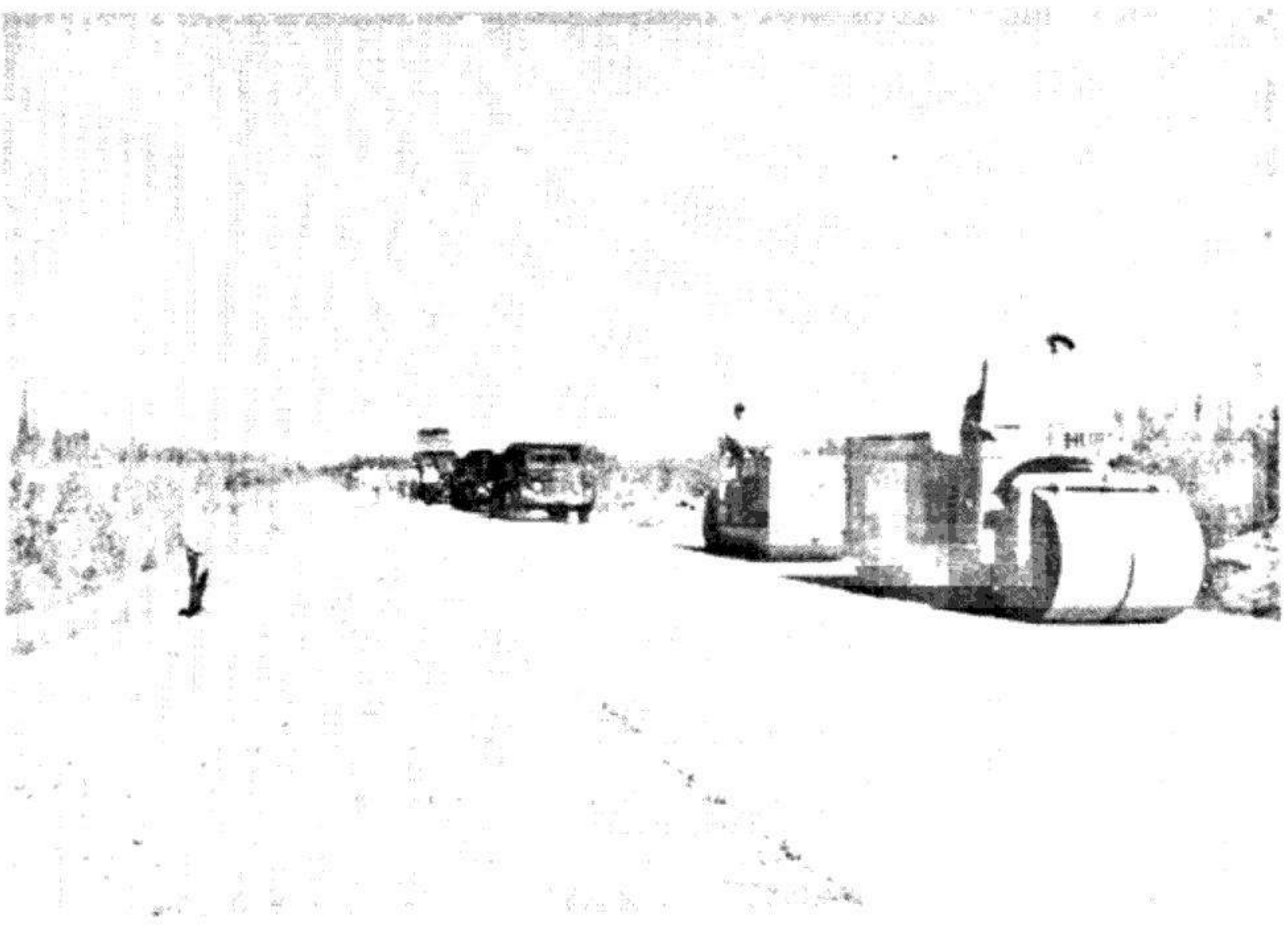


Ninilchik—A fishing village on Cook Inlet—Kenai Peninsula. The village is serviced by the Sterling Highway which was completed in 1950.

in obtaining information or accepting a position with the U. S. Government.

Appointment: U. S. Civil Service appointments for the Alaska Road Commission are made under Schedule A of the U. S. Civil Service Rules and Regulations and are excepted from the competitive service. Permanent (competitive) status is not acquired through such an appointment. Federal Civil Service employees transferring to Alaska and who have previously acquired a permanent (competitive) status will not forfeit this status while serving in an excepted appointment.

Contract: Employment agreements will be required of all stateside appointees in accordance with the terms of the Administrative Expenses Act of 1946, as amended. Agreements will provide for payment of travel and transportation expenses for the employee, his dependents and household effects, from his point of hire to his initial point of duty in Alaska, and will provide that these costs shall be recoverable by the United States from the employee in the event of voluntary separation within a period of twelve (12) months after appointment. Separation for cause within the first twelve (12) months of employment shall require the recovery of monies expended for travel and transportation expenses to Alaska by the U. S. Government. The agreement will provide for payment by the Government of return travel and transportation expenses to the original point of hire at any time

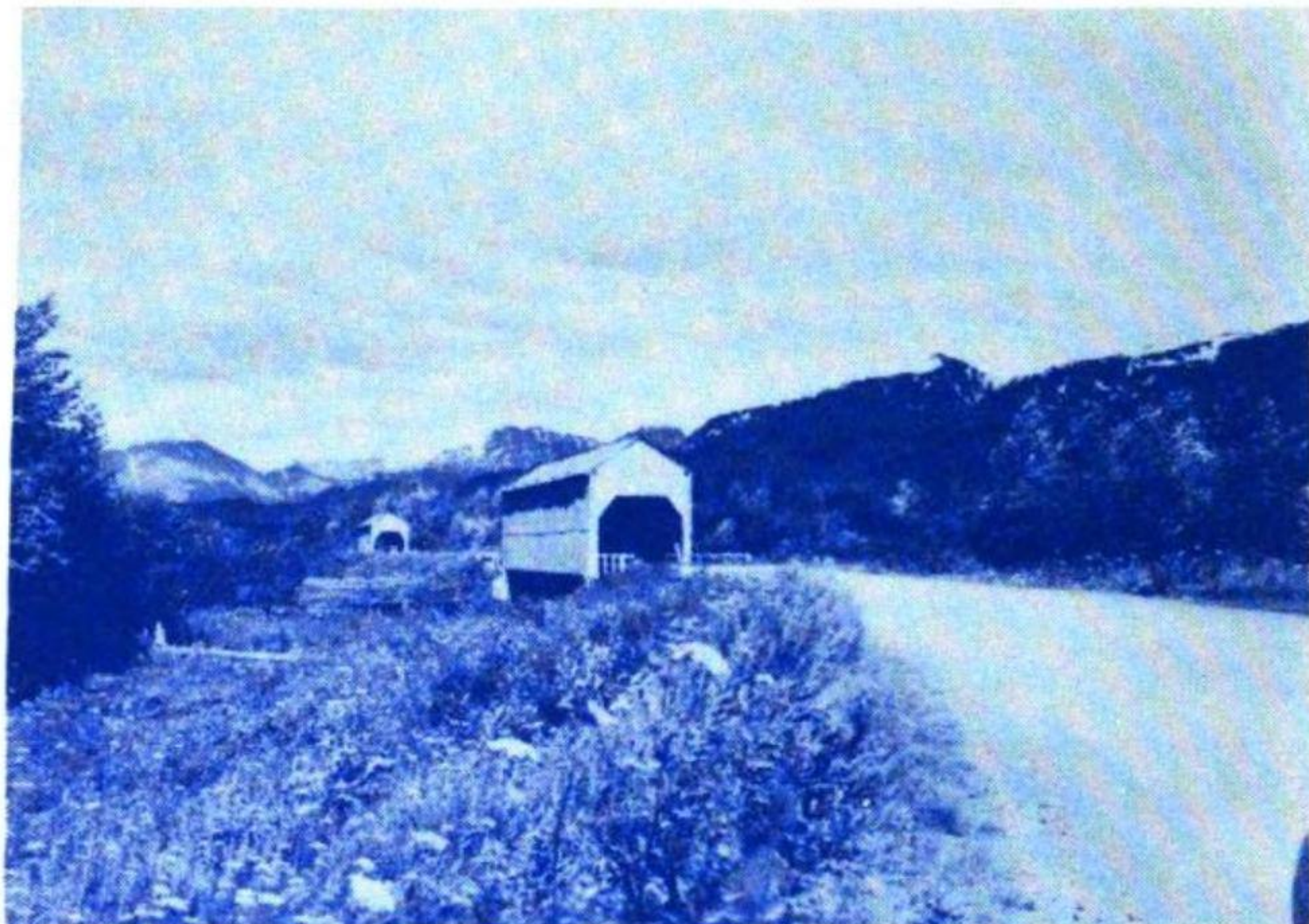


Richardson Highway showing completion of asphalt surfacing.

after two (2) years of service have been completed, unless a shorter work period is agreed upon in writing to provide for temporary employment on seasonal work.

Transportation: Travel of new employees, their dependents and the shipment of household effects to the initial point of duty will be arranged in each instance by correspondence with the new employee. In no case should a new employee make arrangements for travel or transportation of dependents or for the shipment of household effects without specific directions from the Headquarters Office, Alaska Road Commission, Juneau, Alaska, as to the proper method of travel and transportation of effects. It is uniformly required that standard government practices be followed in such cases and that the most economical means of travel and transportation be used, unless an employee is willing to absorb differences in costs arising from use of superior type transportation facilities or methods of shipment.

Salaries and Deductions: Salaries will be paid by the Alaska Road Commission to classified employees on the basis of a standard work week of 40 hours at the appointment rate, and legal holidays will be credited to working time. These salaries are based on standardized government pay tables and are paid bi-weekly or 26 times a year. During the construction season overtime work will be required and authorized at various times on most locations. Payment for such overtime will be in accordance



Old covered bridges on Seward-Anchorage Highway. These are soon to be replaced by modern steel structures.

with current pay regulations which does not mean that overtime paid will always be at the time and one-half rate of the base pay rate. Salary of a new employee will start at the time of departure from his point of recruitment and will cease at the time of his separation from the Alaska Road Commission. A Territorial cost-of-living allowance, which is 25 percent of the base pay, is provided by law for Federal employees in Alaska and is paid each employe in addition to the prescribed rate of pay for the position to which he is appointed. This allowance begins upon entrance on duty in Alaska.

Deductions from salaries required by law will be made for Federal Withholding Tax and for U. S. Civil Service Retirement Fund or Social Security Tax as provided by the Federal Insurance Contribution Act. Persons employed on an indefinite basis will be subject to a six percent deduction to be credited to their U. S. Civil Service Retirement Fund account. Persons employed on a seasonal or temporary basis will be subject to a one and one-half percent Social Security Tax deduction on the first \$3,600 earned in the calendar year 1951. Deductions for rental of government quarters will also be made when applicable.

Leave Provisions: There are many advantages in working for the Federal Government, one of them being the very generous leave provisions. Classified (indefinite) employees earn and are credited with annual leave at the rate of 26 days a calendar year, and sick leave at the rate

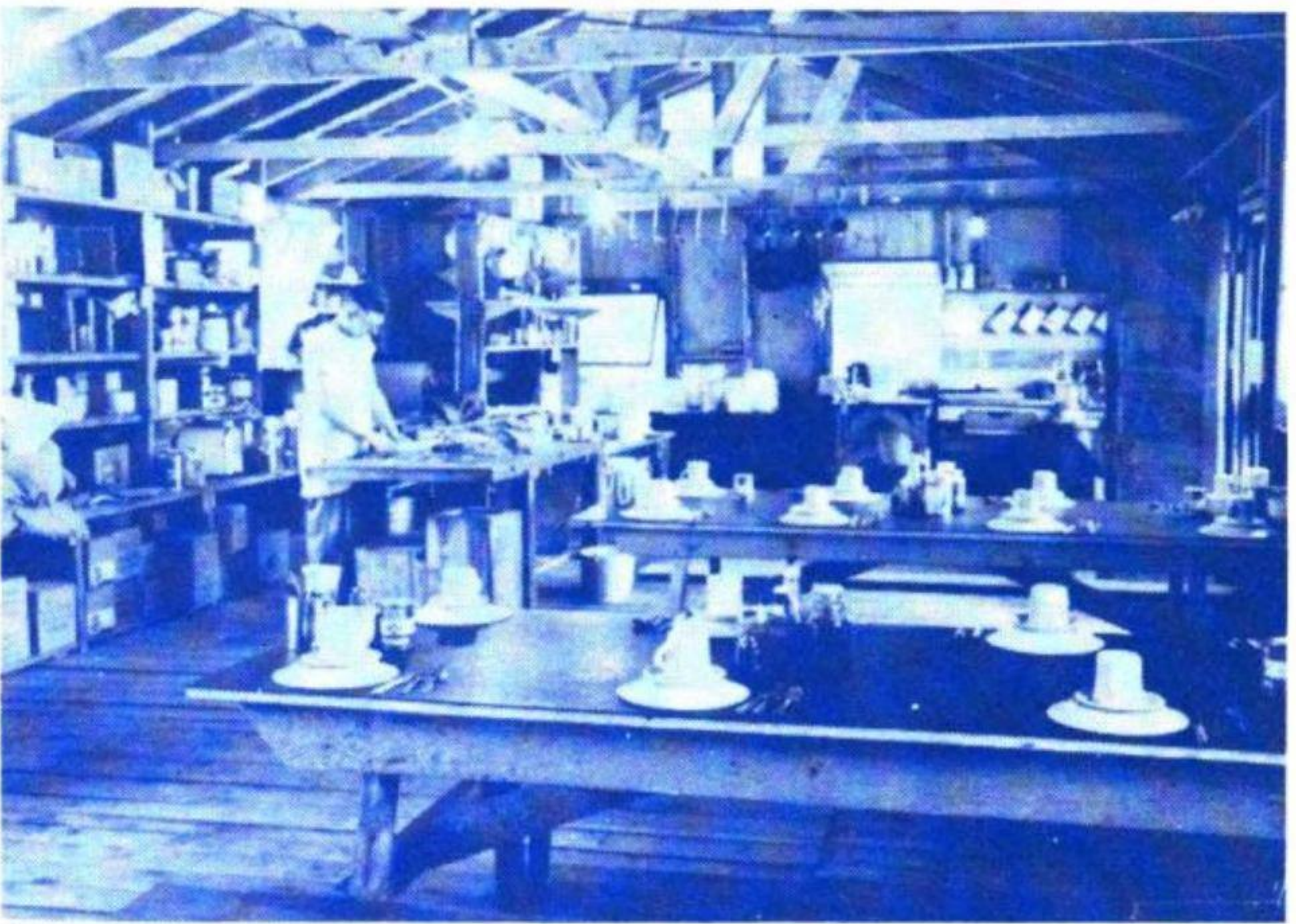


Richardson Highway showing Rainbow Mountain.

of 15 days a year. Personnel employed on a seasonal or temporary basis earn and are credited with annual leave of two and one-half days for each full continuous month of service and one and one-fourth days of sick leave for each full continuous month of service. Providing no penalty is involved, such as an unfulfilled contract, a lump-sum terminal leave payment will be paid an employee for all unused annual leave to his credit upon his separation from the Alaska Road Commission. Accumulated sick leave remaining to the credit of an employee at the time of his separation is cancelled unless he transfers to another Government agency.

Official Travel: Official travel may be required from time to time after entrance on duty. Necessary expenses will be reimbursed on the basis of the Standard Government Travel Regulations, a copy of which will be furnished to any employee upon request. In general, travel orders provide that the Alaska Road Commission will pay all costs of necessary transportation performed either by commercial transportation facilities or in government-owned vehicles. In addition to the costs of transportation, personal expenses of the traveler will be covered by a per diem rate in lieu of actual expenses. The per diem rate is established at a level which ordinarily will cover personal expenses encountered while in a travel status.

Food: Because Alaska is largely dependent upon imports of food and manufactured goods, and because of



A typical Alaska Road Commission mess hall.

the high cost of transportation, the cost of living in Alaska is higher than in the States. Where local production of food is not sufficient it is frequently airborne; however, most food items are available most of the year. Such items as fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, and meats are obtainable at a cost reflecting higher shipping expenses. These higher costs are usually offset by the 25 percent cost-of-living allowance included in the salary.

Clothing: Clothing requirements of new employees will depend entirely on the part of the Territory in which they are to be employed. Southeastern Alaska requires the same type of clothes as those worn in New York or Seattle, with emphasis on rain apparel. In the interior the employee would need lightweight clothing for the warm summers and very warm clothing for the cold winters. If the employee does not already have a winter wardrobe, it is suggested that he wait and make the necessary purchases after his arrival at his duty station, as there is not too much difference in clothing costs in Alaska as compared to stateside costs. This would preclude any unwise or unnecessary purchases and would insure acquisition of the most suitable clothing for his particular work locality.

Housing: The housing situation in Alaska, as elsewhere, is somewhat acute. The Alaska Road Commission has available for nominal rent a limited number of modern trailers for married men and their families. Prior arrangements may be made to rent parking space, utility

connections, and wash house facilities for those individuals who may desire to bring their own trailer to the particular installation. Altho the housing problem in the main cities, Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, is serious, every effort will be made to locate suitable quarters for new employees and their dependents. A designated person has been appointed in each office who will be glad to assist new employees with their housing needs. Generally, appointees with families should precede them to Alaska and arrange for their transportation after suitable housing has been secured.



