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Division Ten

April 1, 1949

TO: Dr. L. I. Hewes, Chief, Western Headquarters, San Francisco,
California

FROM: H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer

SUBJECT: Confidential Monthly Report for March 1949 for Division 10

The volume of Forest Highway activities has been limited again for this period and the Sitka survey being carried on is the only engineering work in the field, except minor investigations of proposed surfacing projects and construction staking of the Juneau Airport project. On the Juneau Project crushing will start in April and a determination will then be made regarding the necessity and/or method of adding 200-mesh material.

Further progress was made on the design of projects noted in the last report; namely, the Wards Cove Project near Ketchikan, the surfacing from the Gastineau Channel Bridge to Douglas and the surfacing projects on the Forest Highways through Wrangell and also through Petersburg.

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Ideal weather made the trip very pleasant, permitted very good progress and offered favorable conditions for inspection of the winter maintenance.

The winter travel conditions are considered to be excellent and high average rates of vehicle speed was possible of attainment. It was particularly evident that the icing or glaciering of seepage water on the roadway surface noted during the construction period has been largely well controlled, as in only two or three places was any ice from this source noted on the road's surface.

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The Canadians have proposed a long term program of bridge construction involving the replacement of the existing timber bridges by new steel structures using the steel made available for that purpose and stockpiled at Whitehorse. The work is to be handled by a small bridge crew.

The first project to be undertaken is the Donjek River Bridge which involves a bridge consisting of eight 200-foot spans and approximately six miles of necessary roadway to connect with the existing highway. They estimate that this single project will require about three years.

Following that, there is proposed the replacement of the Leves River Bridge. The program also includes replacement of minor structures, replacement of existing timber bridges with steel structures at minor crossings west of Watson Lake.

The replacement of the Nisutlin Bay Bridge has been given a great deal of study and it seems to have been decided to construct a roadway on a new location around Nisutlin Bay and including a new bridge crossing the Nisutlin River. The revision requires construction of 22 miles of new roadway and will increase the road length by 16 miles. The decision apparently has been reached on the basis of comparative estimates which indicate a probable saving of about \$500,000, based on an estimated cost of replacement of the bridge of \$1,500,000. For winter use the present roadway could be made available for traffic by crossing the bay on the ice.

Information was also received that a program of construction of permanent-type housing for the service troops is contemplated to replace the existing temporary structures which are considered to be rather expensive to maintain.

It was stated that the budget for the next year was set at about \$10,000,000. This gross cost is inclusive of maintenance of airports and new permanent housing. The figure previously used of \$3,000,000 for actual maintenance and main betterments still represents the cost of the work chargeable to these strictly highway costs.

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It is reported that traffic over the highway in February consisted of 270 vehicles northbound and about 70 vehicles southbound, indicating that much of the present traffic is generated by construction activities getting under way in Alaska.

All the staff officers for both the Division and District Offices have arrived in Alaska and also a number of the Resident Engineers. Mr. Miller from Denver still continues to fill the assignment of Materials Engineer on a temporary basis and no information has been received regarding the assignment of a permanent employee to this position. Mr. M. H. Flint has arrived and replaced Mr. H. P. Hart as Division Construction Engineer, with Mr. Hart returning to San Francisco. Mr. W. A. Wood arrived from Billings, Montana, to take the assignment as District Construction Engineer for the Juneau District. Mr. John A. Hewes reported to this office and was assigned as Resident Engineer at Ketchikan. Very few additional employees were recruited at points in the United States for this Division, but a number of people were employed in Alaska to fill the lower-grade positions and it is thought that we may obtain a number of additional men in this area. It appears that the groups most difficult to recruit are the intermediate grades comprising the paving plant inspectors, transitmen, and levelmen. It has been suggested that to fill this last group, that employees may be obtained from the P-2 to P-4 examination register for temporary assignment in this area, to be given a permanent assignment later in the States.

There are enclosed two copies of the monthly report from the Seward District. Activities in the Juneau District have not been sufficient to warrant submission of the narrative report for March for this District.

EnclosureHAS:rb

PUBLIC ROADS ADMINISTRATION
DIVISION 10
SEWARD DISTRICT

NARRATIVE REPORT FOR
MARCH 1949

TURNAGAIN ARM PROJECTS

Sections C & D - Mile 58 to Quartz Creek

Work on structure excavation for the Canyon Creek Bridge at the extreme south end of Section C was resumed on March 23 with a small crew. The last of the foundation pedestals should be ready for pouring concrete this week. The bridge contractor has freighted some materials and camp supplies to the project from Seward and is attempting to get supplies to various points on Section C before the frost goes out of the ground. There is no activity on the grading work. Snow at Mile 58 is still about 2 feet deep. An engineering crew of 4 men has been returned to Mile 58. Clearing and grubbing operations have barely reached the north end of Section D by the crew working up Quartz Creek from the Portage end. Progress on this work has been extremely slow. The contractor is now rigging a logging donkey on skids in an attempt to accelerate this operation.

Section E - Quartz Creek to Portage

Good progress has been made on this project since work was resumed in January, and progress is now reported satisfactory. All pile bents have been driven and capped. Forms are being constructed for pre-casting concrete stringers, and it is expected that the contractor will start pouring concrete beams during the next month.

A 1-1/2 c.y. shovel is working in the borrow pit at the mouth of Quartz Creek and a 2-1/2 c.y. shovel is working in the borrow pit near Portage. A lift of borrow one lane wide has been placed across the tidal swamp area between Portage and Quartz Creek. Completion of this operation affords the contractor access to Quartz Creek and the D section south from Turnagain Arm, and should accelerate progress on both the D and E sections. Comment on the lack of progress on the clearing up Quartz Creek on the south end of E and the north end of D was made in the foregoing paragraphs.

An engineering crew of 9 men is working out of Portage and a crew of 4 men is working out of a portable camp at the mouth of Quartz Creek.

Section F-1 - Portage to Peterson Creek

All pile bents on the last bridge on this section have been driven and capped. There is no activity at the present time except hauling pre-cast beams to the bridge sites.

Tidal action during the high tides around the middle of March lifted the ice that has built up around the pile bridge bents and has broken a number of the sway braces on the bridges on both Sections E and F-1. The upshift of the ice against the lower end of the sway brace that projects beyond the outside pile has caused the breakage. Ten sway braces are known to be broken on the Twenty Mile Bridge on Section F-1, and four on the Placer River Bridge on Section E. Braces on many of the other bridges are still buried in 3 to 4 feet of ice. When this ice goes out other broken sway braces may be found. The problem is under study now and recommendations as to corrective measures will be made in the near future. All damage to result from ice and tidal action this year has already occurred. On the one bridge where the bents were completed after the ice damage was discovered, the sway braces were installed so the lower ends of the sway braces are above the elevation expected to be reached by the ice. The design of the bents and arrangement of the sway braces is conventional, in that no features are incorporated to provide any protection against ice action.

Section F-2 - Peterson Creek to Indian

Max J. Kuney, the contractor on this project, is erecting camp at Girdwood and expects to start clearing and grubbing operations in April. Present plans contemplate working over the part of the project between Girdwood and Indian this year. Drilling and blasting operations will be started on the heavy rock just north of Girdwood and are expected to progress toward Anchorage. A 3-1/2 c.y. shovel and hauling equipment will be sent to the project later in the spring or early summer. An engineering crew of about 12 men is staking this project from a camp at Girdwood.

Section G - Indian to Potter

Plans have been completed by the Alaska Railroad and approved, subject to certain changes and conditions, by the Division Office. The Alaska Railroad and Alaska Road Commission are working out the details of financing. When this has been completed it is understood that the project will be advertised.

GLENN HIGHWAY

Section A - Anchorage to Palmer

Contractors operations have not yet been resumed, although the previous report indicated work would start by the middle of March. The contractor is unloading large amounts of very good equipment in Palmer and will start crushing operations probably late in April or early in May. The sub-contractor on the grading has apparently been preparing to resume clearing and grubbing operations for more than a month, but no work has been started.

Action is being taken by the Alaska Road Commission to provide the rights-of-way necessary through private lands.

The supplemental agreement for the work through Ft. Richardson has been drawn up in its final form and submitted to the contractor by the Division Office. The letter from the Ft. Richardson officials approving suitable sources of material for the work within the Post was recalled and the necessary approval must now come from the War Department in Washington. The Alaska Road Commission takes the optimistic view that the approval will be forthcoming in sufficient time to preclude delaying the work.

There is an engineering crew of 10 men at Palmer staking work ahead of the contractor.

Section B-1 - Palmer to Glenn Highway Mile 92

Plans have been prepared in the Division Office. The Alaska Road Commission at the present time intends to award the contract and supervise the construction operations.

RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

Sections A & B - Fairbanks to Big Delta

All construction work has been shut down since last December and is not expected to be resumed before late April or May. The contractor is getting large quantities of excellent new equipment on the project and preparing to resume work when the weather permits.

An engineering crew of 5 men is located at the Alaska Road Commission camp at Mile 66 south of Fairbanks and is staking Section B. Arrangements have been made to again obtain board and lodging for some engineering personnel at Ladd Air Force Base in Fairbanks, and at Edelson Air Force Base 26 miles south of Fairbanks.

ALASKA HIGHWAY

Section B - Johnson River to Tok Junction

The contractor for this project recently was in Alaska making preliminary plans to start operations probably in May. He expects to start shipping equipment to Valdez in April. No contract work has been done and no engineering parties have been organized. Effective April 15 this project will be placed under the jurisdiction of the Southeastern Alaska District and will be handled from Juneau.

KENAI RIVER HIGHWAY; FOREST HIGHWAY PROJECT 5-B1

Right-of-way for this project is being acquired by the Forest Service. Work is now in progress by maintenance forces to replace the north bent and bulkhead in order to keep the old bridge in service during the coming year.

SEWARD MAINTENANCE OPERATIONS

Danger of snow slides has apparently passed as the snow in most of the slide areas has already descended without covering the road. Warm weather during the past month has made it possible to get most of the ice off the road that accumulated because of the glaciating last Fall. Work is in progress thawing culverts and repairing the Kenai River Bridge at Coopers Landing.

Increased activity in the vicinity of Girdwood because of the Turnagain Arm construction will make it necessary at some future time to perform considerable maintenance and rehabilitation on the Crow Creek Forest Highway north of Girdwood. During recent years use of this highway has not been sufficient to justify any appreciable amount of maintenance work. Under these circumstances, the bridges have deteriorated and alders and willows have encroached so that ditches and shoulder are now practically non-existent. When the Seward-Anchorage highway is opened it is expected that this area will develop to the extent that rehabilitation of the road will be justifiable.

PERSONNEL

Personnel recently transferred from the States has strengthened our organization in this District very materially and most field parties are adequately staffed to perform the limited amount of engineering work that can be done this early in the season. Recruitment of experienced personnel in the higher SP grades and lower professional grades should continue, as the need for such personnel will be great as soon as contract operations start on additional projects.

March 29, 1949

B. M. French
District Engineer

YANKEE HIGHWAY

Station 107 - Johnson River to the junction

The contractor for this project recently was in Alaska making preliminary plans to start operations probably in May. He expects to start shipping equipment to Alaska in April. No contract work has been done and no engineering parties have been organized. The contract for this project will be placed under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner. Plans for this project will be handled from Alaska.

YANKEE RIVER BRIDGE : FOREST HIGHWAY PROJECT 2-2

Light-of-way for this project is being acquired by the Forest Service. Work is now in progress by maintenance forces to replace the north bent and culvert in order to keep the old bridge in service during the coming year.

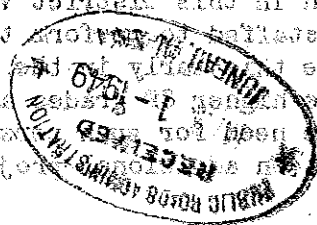
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Increased activity in the vicinity of Birdwood because of the program for reconstruction will make it necessary at some future time to perform considerable maintenance and rehabilitation on the new Green Forest Highway north of Birdwood. During recent years use of this highway has not been sufficient to justify any appreciable amount of maintenance work. Under these circumstances, the bridges have deteriorated and slides and willows have encroached so that ditches and shoulders are now greatly non-existent. When the Sawtooth-Anchorage Highway is opened it is expected that this area will develop to the extent that rehabilitation of the road will be justifiable.

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FROM: H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer

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