

March 2, 1950

To : Dr. L. I. Hewes, Chief, Western Headquarters, San Francisco  
From: H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer  
Subject: Confidential Monthly Report for February 1950 for  
Division No. 10

Late in the month the weather moderated and with rising temperatures snow is rapidly disappearing at lower elevations in Southeastern Alaska, and indications are given that the spring season will not be so retarded as was the case a year ago.

The Ketchikan project being the only one now active, the more favorable weather has had no effect on progress in the field. Engineering activities on Forest Highway projects are presently limited to a single location survey from Juneau to Thane, and office design for several projects involved in the pulp mill program.

During the winter Governor Gruening has initiated a movement to effect the elimination of forest reserve areas adjacent to the cities of Juneau, Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan, and Sitka. His plan appears to contemplate withdrawing a strip of from a mile to two miles in width paralleling the principal Forest Highways in the area. The ostensible purpose of the proposal is to permit more rapid settlement of the most accessible areas by settlement under private ownership. To gain support of the proposal it has been suggested that larger appropriations for highway construction could be obtained through the Department of the Interior, which would be permitted to construct roads when the areas were transferred into the public domain. This argument does not appear to be pertinent since there seems to be no legal obstacle under the existing arrangement. It is indicated that the Forest Service is not strongly opposed as its reaction is that benefits, which would accrue to that organization, would include reduced cost and effort in administration of forest areas now occupied as home sites of various types. They also note that the burden of maintenance of the Forest Highways might be shifted to other organizations, permitting more emphasis on construction in the future. It is not clear that important changes would result to the Public Roads' activities in the area but it appears possible that our program might be very definitely effected.

March 2, 1950

It has been previously noted that the Community Facilities Service's local office has been reactivated to administer a program of Public Works in Alaska. The program includes public buildings, schools, sewers, roads and streets, bridges, et cetera. A request has been received from the District Engineer, Mr. John D. Argetsinger, for assistance in reviewing plans of previously designed projects and assistance in supervision of construction projects involving street improvements and pavements. The importance of this work involved will be appreciated when it is borne in mind that the plans were originally made as a portion of the Public Works planning program which was based on the assumption that the sponsors would administer the contracts. Under the present program the Community Facilities Service is required to administer the construction under government contracts and with the direct responsibility resulting, is quite anxious to have the design and specifications conform to usual government practice. It has been indicated to Mr. Argetsinger that Public Roads is in a position to render the type of engineering assistance required, but there are some questions of scope of the work and responsibility to be assumed which must be resolved before a memorandum of understanding covering the work can be drafted.

During the last month the general contractors operating in Alaska have been negotiating with labor unions for wage rates to be included in the labor agreement which will govern for the coming year. The principal objective of the contractors has been to eliminate as many of the fringe benefits previously granted as possible, to be offset by equivalent wage increases. Information has been received that an agreement has been reached by providing a 57¢ an hour across the board wage increase with an increase in subsistence charges to the men from \$1.50 to \$5.75. The existing agreement providing a \$5.75 cost per day for subsistence on army projects controls the new charge for that expense. It is understood that plumbers and electrical workers unions have sought a more liberal wage scale, but the A.G.C. is hopeful that these unions will fall in line.

On February 20 plans, specifications, and estimate were completed for Section F of the Richardson Highway, extending from Tonsina to Gulkana, and forwarded to the Alaska Road Commission. On the same day the Road Commission advertised the project, with bids to be opened in Juneau on March 20. They had previously advertised for bids on sections of road extending from Fairbanks to College and from Anchorage to the vicinity of Spenard Lake. Bids for these two projects will be opened a day or two in advance of the Richardson Highway project.

The design for Section H of the Richardson Highway, extending from Valdez to Mile 36, is in progress and is expected to be completed late in April. Designs are also in progress for some short relocation proposed on Sections A and C of the Alaska Highway. As previously noted, it is planned to defer final selection of surface type on these two sections until the behavior of Section B can be observed during the coming spring breakup period.

March 2, 1950

The Road Commission has awarded the contract to the Standard Oil Company of California to furnish approximately 120,000 barrels of bituminous materials at the bank farms at Valdez and Anchorage for use in road construction during the coming year. The low bid unit price for RC-3 was \$16.92 per ton and for MC-2 was \$16.42 per ton, f.o.b. tanks, a very substantial reduction under last year's unit prices for these materials of \$23.60 and \$23.10 per ton, respectively. The quantity involved is about the same as was purchased last year.

Recently the Secretary of the Interior awarded to Ike P. Taylor, who has been Chief Engineer of the Alaska Road Commission for many years, the award for distinguished service. Also awarded, posthumously, the same award to Hawley Sterling for many years Mr. Taylor's assistant with the Road Commission.

Due to the mild weather prevailing throughout the month, an inspection and study of snow removal on the Thompson Pass section of the Richardson Highway was not made, as it was thought that such an inspection should be made during storm conditions. With the approach of spring it has been decided to make the inspection early in March as there appears to be no advantage gained by waiting any longer.

Notice has been received that Mr. W. K. Boyd has accepted the offer tendered him to transfer to the Public Roads from the Corps of Engineers, for assignment as Materials Engineer in this Division.

Attachments:      Narrative Report by District Engineer Wyller  
                     Narrative Report by District Engineer French

HAS:pm

MONTHLY REPORT  
ON  
ACTIVITIES IN THE JUNEAU DISTRICT, DIVISION TEN  
FOR THE MONTH OF FEBRUARY 1950

A definite change in the weather from the month of January was noted during the current month, particularly in the Ketchikan area. Snowfall from February 3rd to 6th at Ketchikan was reported at 49 inches and additional snowfall occurred several times during the period up to the 18th of the month. During this period the FWD Truck with mounted snowplow broke down and snow removal work since then has been limited to two motor patrols. As a result it has not been possible to widen the roads nor to completely remove snow from the roadbed shoulders. All roads were, however, kept open, although not to the degree usually maintained. During the last week another decided change in weather has occurred in Ketchikan, with considerable rainfall, and the frost is beginning to leave the ground and a few soft spots have developed.

Additional snowfall also occurred at Wrangell and Petersburg during the month, although the total snowfall has been considerably below that of last year. Snowplowing equipment at Wrangell and Petersburg has operated satisfactorily until last week, at which time a piston in the motor of the rotoblade at Petersburg broke. No additional damage occurred to the motor, however, and the unit is expected to be back in operation within the next few days. Roads are reported as in good condition for this period of the year.

No excessive amounts of snowfall occurred in the Juneau area during the month, and all highways have been kept in good condition, with snow and ice completely removed from the travelled portions of the roadbeds, except for short periods of time. Considerable thawing has occurred during the past week, and it is anticipated that blading of graveled surface will be required in the coming week.

Snowfall has continued to be lighter than normal in the Cordova area, and no blockage of roads has been reported. The new rotary snowplow has continued to operate satisfactorily. The Foreman at Cordova has reported excellent results from the use of Shunk Sawtooth Grader Blades, with the result that practically no sanding has been required.

Construction progress on Projects 1-B7,G3 and 1-D6,E4 at Ketchikan continues to be very slow. Right-of-Way clearing, advance drilling and shooting and some excavation have proceeded despite the heavy snowfall, with the result that Project 1-B7,G3 is reported as 12.85% complete as of this date. Practically no additional work was accomplished on Project 1-D6,E4. The subcontractor on clearing the Right-of-Way had 5 or 6 men at work for a few days the first of the month. This work was halted during the heavy snowfall and apparently has not been resumed. The Project is reported as .003% complete as of this date.

Resident Engineer Hewes reports that the contractor has advised him by long distance telephone that the present Superintendent, Grade Foreman and the Office Manager on these projects will be removed on March first, and that a Superintendent with some 15 years highway construction experience will be placed in charge on that date. Contractor supervision on these projects has been entirely unsatisfactory to both the Resident Engineer and this office. It is, therefore, hoped that this change in supervision will materially increase the construction progress and improve the methods and quality of the work.

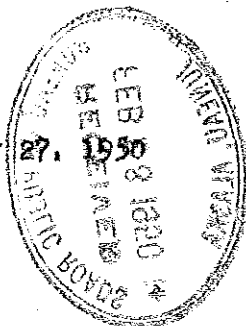
Work on Projects 31-A7,B2, Douglas Highway and 7-A5,B2, Mitkof Highway, continues suspended during the winter.

Progress on the Juneau - Thane Section of the Glacier Highway has continued to be slow during the month because of adverse weather conditions. The extremely cold weather, with several days of Taku Winds, was not suitable for work of this nature and, in addition, large amounts of ice and frozen snow on the shoulders and cutslopes deterred the work. As of this date the survey is reported as 52% complete. It is anticipated that it can be completed with approximately two weeks of favorable weather.

C. F. WYLLER  
District Engineer

Dy: Wm. A. Wood  
Highway Engineer

February 27, 1950



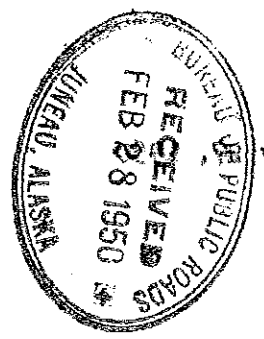
Construction progress on Projects I-37, (G) and I-35, (M) at Kotzebue has continued to be very slow. Night-of-way clearing advances drilling and shooting and some excavation have proceeded despite the heavy snowfall, with the result that Project I-37, (G) is reported as 12.8% complete as of this date. Practically no additional work was accomplished on Project I-35, (M). The superintendent on clearing the night-of-way had 2 or 3 men at work for a few days the first of the month. This work was halted during the heavy snowfall and apparently has not been resumed. The Project is reported as 00% complete as of this date.

Resident Engineer Howe reports that the contractor has advised him by long distance telephone that the present Superintendent, Grade Foreman and the Office Manager on these projects will be removed on March first, and that a Superintendent with some 15 years highway construction experience will be placed in charge on that date. Contract or supervision on these projects has been entirely unsatisfactory to both the Resident Engineer and the Office. It is, therefore, hoped that this change in supervision will materially increase the construction progress and improve the methods and quality of the work.

Work on Projects 31-47, (S), Douglas Highway and 7-A, (S), Niterok Highway continues suspended during the winter.

Progress on the Inman - Thane section of the Glacier Highway has continued to be slow during the month because of adverse weather conditions. The extremely cold weather, with several days of heavy winds, was not suitable for work of this nature and, in addition, large amounts of ice and frozen snow on the shoulders and cuttings deterred the work. As of this date the survey is reported as 25% complete. It is anticipated that it can be completed with approximately two weeks of favorable weather.

C. F. MILLER  
District Engineer  
Dy: Mr. A. Wood  
Highway Engineer



February

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS  
Division 10  
Seward District

NARRATIVE REPORT FOR

FEBRUARY 1950

TURNAGAIN ARM PROJECTS

All work on Sections C&D, E, F-1, and F-2 remains inactive as previously reported. The Alaska Railroad's contractor has been driving coyote holes for shooting some of the larger rock cuts.

GLENN AND RICHARDSON HIGHWAYS

All work remains inactive as previously reported. Extensions of time have been granted on both of the Richardson Highway projects. Work will probably be resumed on the B section late in April or early in May. Work on the A section probably will be resumed early in June. Work on the Glenn Highway will probably be resumed in May.

FOREST HIGHWAY CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

All Forest Highway construction on the Kenai Peninsula remains suspended. Due to the condition of the old Kenai River Bridge at Coopers Landing it was necessary to open the new bridge and road on February 22. The condition of the new road in its present frozen condition is satisfactory, but it may be necessary to close it in the spring when frost comes out of the ground.

KENAI RIVER HIGHWAY

Section B - Quartz Creek Location Survey

Field plans have been submitted on the Dave's Creek line and the low line down Quartz Creek by Sopers to the east end of the Kenai River Bridge project. Work is in progress on the Johns Creek line and the high line that goes through the pass above Sopers.

SEWARD HIGHWAY

Forest Boundary to Mile 12 Location Survey

Field plans are complete except some right-of-way plats. The part of this line that occupies part of the Alaska Railroad right-of-way has been submitted to the General Manager of the Railroad for approval. Right-of-way where the new line departs from the old road is being acquired.

GENERAL

Snow fall is far below normal on the Kenai Peninsula for this time of year. The depth of snow at various locations follows: Seward 12"; Mile 12, 36";

Mile 42 to 50, 45"; Coopers Landing, 15". The road is all covered with hard packed snow and chains are needed for safe travel. Minor accidents on the more narrow sections are common.

During the past month a new 6 HP horizontal boiler has been put into service for thawing frozen culverts. This equipment has worked very well during the rather limited use made of it to date. A picture is enclosed which shows the boiler mounted on a truck before a shelter was constructed over the boiler. Storage is provided for both coal and water within the shelter built on the truck.

Photographs are enclosed. As no construction work was active during the month progress charts are not included.

The photographs submitted show ice breakers which were constructed upstream from the Canyon Creek bridge foundations on Turnagain Arm Section C. A heavy flow of ice in Canyon Creek in December 1949 indicated a necessity for greater protection for the tower footings than was afforded by the single concrete pedestals which were designed and constructed under each tower leg.

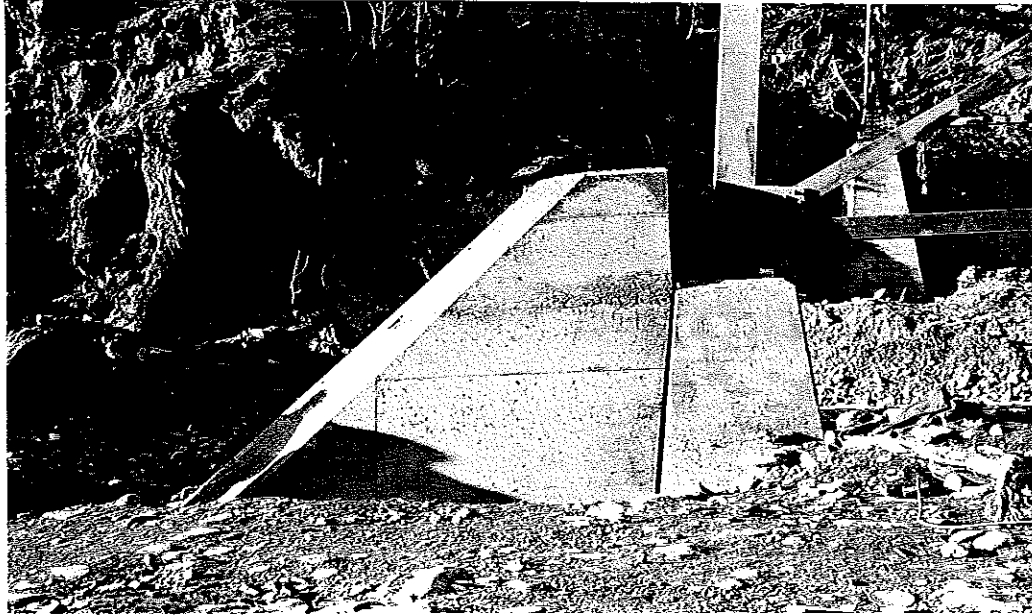




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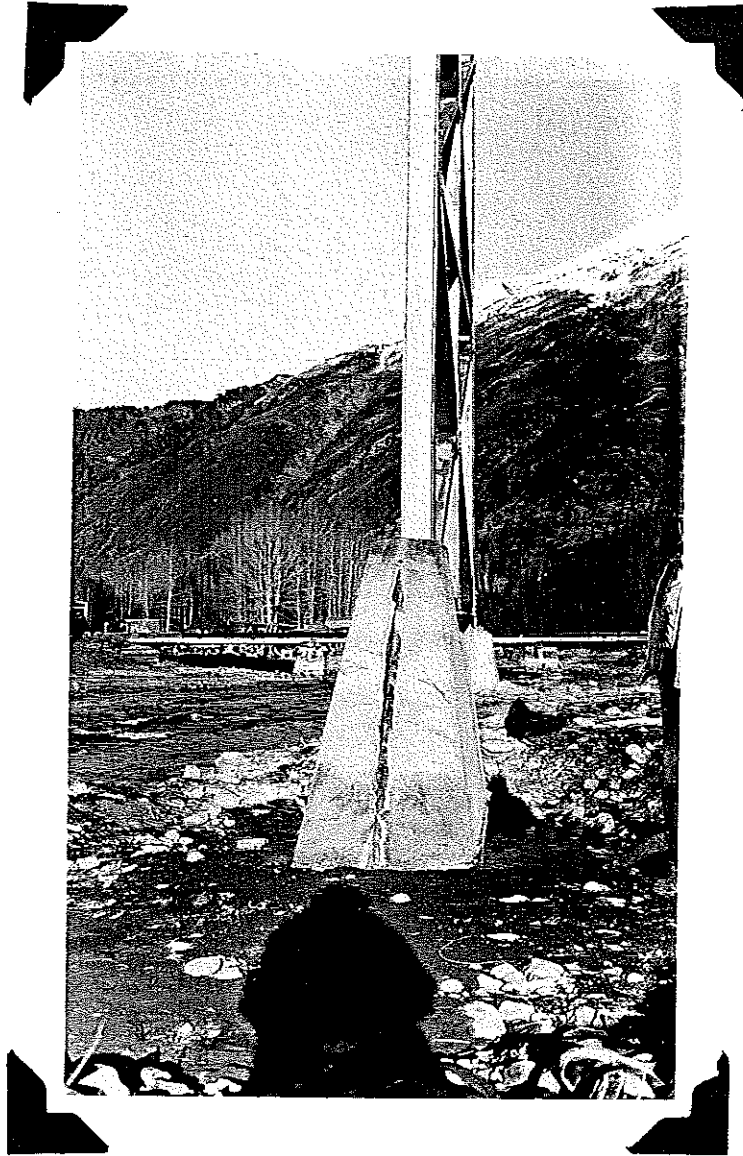
**Seward Division Maintenance**

No. 565 View of 6 H.P. horizontal boiler mounted on truck. Boiler is used for thawing culverts. A shelter was later constructed over the boiler and water and coal storage provided inside the shelter.

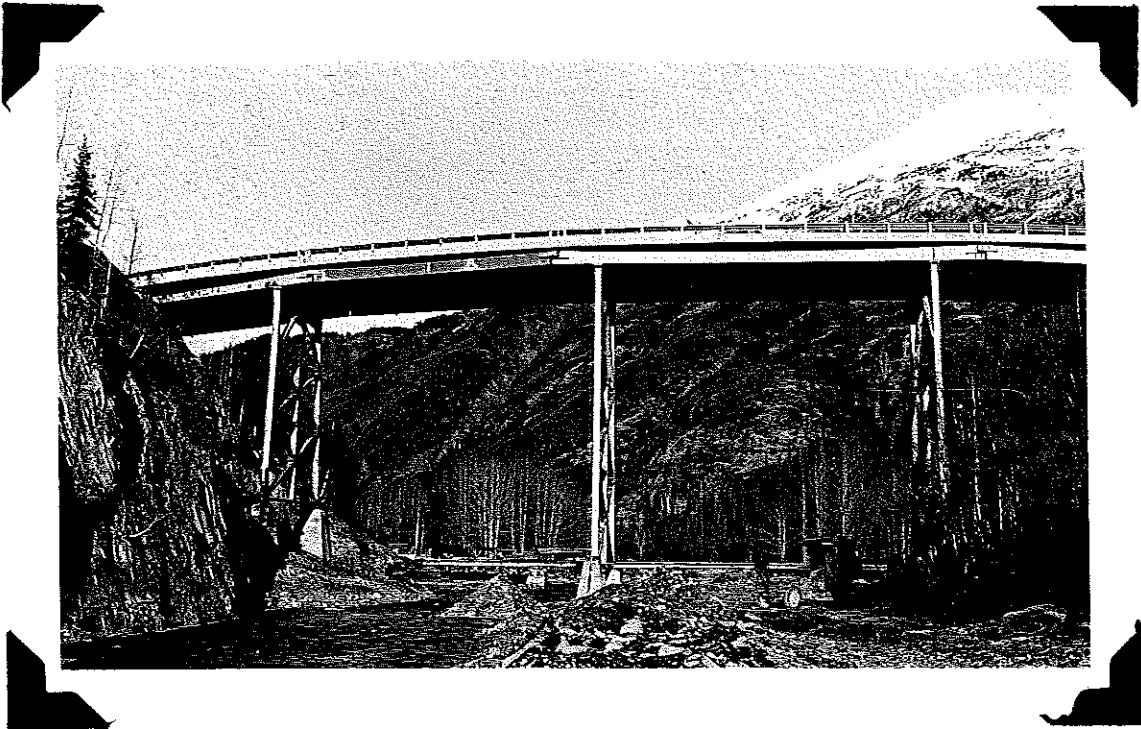


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No. 571 Turnagain Arm Section G. Side view of concrete ice breaker at Canyon Creek Bridge. Pedestal in background is protected by rock bank and no ice breaker was required.



No. 572 Turnagain Arm Section C. End view  
from upstream of concrete ice breaker at  
Canyon Creek Bridge.



61-94-130

No. 575 Turnagain Arm Section C. View of Canyon Creek bridge from upstream. Shows concrete ice breaker upstream from center tower leg footing. Old Forest Service bridge may be seen in the background.

March 3, 1950

To : Mr. A. C. Clark, Deputy Commissioner, Washington, D. C.

From: H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer

Subject: Excerpts from Confidential Monthly Report for February 1950 for  
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Mr. A. C. Clark

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