

April 7, 1950

To : Mr. G. W. Mayo, Acting Chief, Western Headquarters, San Francisco

From : H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer

Subject: Confidential Monthly Report for March 1950 for  
Division No. 10

Weather for the month has continued to improve and the frost recession is well advanced at the lower elevations in Southeastern Alaska. Reports from the interior indicate that snow is disappearing, but that the spring breakup has not begun to date.

Of the Forest Highway projects the Ketchikan job is showing improved progress. Whether the change in management will result in the minimum necessary improvement in progress is still to be determined. Progress has continued on Forest Highway project design in the Division office and most of the projects in the program are now approaching the plan completion stage.

The Regional Forester has been in Washington for the month on Department of Agriculture business. Information has been received which indicates action will be taken in the near future to put into effect the proposal for elimination of areas from the National Forest adjacent and parallel to the National Forest highways of Southeastern Alaska.

To avoid possible confusion and misunderstanding in presenting the case for the pulp mill appropriation a revised Forest Highway Program Letter has been submitted to substitute a project on the Kenai Highway, not on a list of special projects, for the project on the Glacier Highway which had been previously programmed for regular Forest Highway funds, but which had been included in a list of projects to be financed with special funds.

Reference is made to the discussion regarding engineering services requested by the Community Facilities Service in connection with its Public Works program for Alaska. A preliminary review was made of proposed projects in Ketchikan involving improvements of city streets but the arrangement is apparently to be terminated as a result of a Washington office ruling by the Community Facilities Service.

It was noted in the last report that an agreement had been negotiated by the general contractors with the labor unions for wage rates to govern for the coming construction season. Information has been received that the agreement has been executed and was made effective March 13. The minimum wage established for common labor is \$2.40 per hour. On a basis of a 60 hour week the laborer's earnings will be approximately \$168.

Mr. G. W. Mayo

April 7, 1950

The bids for Section F of the Richardson Highway, extending from Tonsina to Gulkana, were opened by the Alaska Road Commission on March 20, 1950, with C. F. Lytle Company and Green Construction Co. being low bidders at \$2,339,810. The second bidder was S. Birch & Sons Construction Company and Morrison-Knudsen Company, Inc. at \$2,469,350. There were four more bidders with the high bid being \$2,913,560 submitted by a combination of Portland, Oregon bidders. The engineer's estimate was \$2,776,860. On March 15 the Road Commission opened bids for two projects; one being located between Anchorage and the new international airport at Lake Spenard, 2.83 miles in length, with a low bid of \$195,297; the second project was between Fairbanks and College, with a total length of 5.74 miles, the low bid being \$389,713.10.

In making detailed designs for Alaska Highway projects, Sections A and C, a number of revisions were proposed by this office and approved by the Alaska Road Commission which contemplate correction of some sections with the most deficient alignment of the highway, which resulted from Army influence at the time the road was constructed. It has been quite gratifying to incorporate these very desirable improvements in the work now proposed. On Section A, at approximate Mile 1384 and beginning one and one-half miles west of Johnson River bridge, by constructing a mile and one-half on new alignment it is possible to save one mile in distance and eliminate many very sharp and objectionable curves. In this same section the reconstruction grading will be extended a mile and one-half west to improve both line and grade. The improvement will have the effect of raising to a satisfactory standard the first 250 miles extending southeasterly from Fairbanks. On Section C, at approximate Mile 1303, the east approach to the Tanana River bridge will be improved by eliminating the reversed curves at the east approach to this fine structure. The material will be used to eliminate the dip in the grade at the other end of the bridge and make some other minor grade corrections. At approximately Mile 1246, at Gardner Creek, a hazardous sharp, horizontal curve at the foot of a steep grade will be eliminated, with a saving of 600 feet in length of line. At Mile 1233, at a point locally known as Seaton's Corners, by constructing 3,800 feet of new roadway, requiring only about 8,000 yards of excavation quantities, a saving in 1,800 feet of distance is made with a very substantial improvement in curvature.

In the spring of 1949 a snow slide seriously damaged the superstructure of the upper crossing of Lowe River in the Keystone Canyon on Section H of the Richardson Highway. It is found that, by reconstructing the road on the opposite side of the canyon and crossing further upstream, the hazard of damage from slides may be avoided with no additional cost of reconstructing the bridge in its present position and following the alignment of the present road. The section to be built on new alignment is 2.86 miles in length.

Abbreviated plans were completed in June 1949 for the improvement of Section C of the Richardson Highway extending from Big Delta to Black Rapids roadhouse to meet the original schedule of plan completion. The Road Commission having revised its sequence of project construction, with the result that this project has been deferred until early 1951, we have been requested to make a more elaborate survey and prepare detailed plans for

the work. This request has been approved, as detailed plans will more closely define the work and we agree such plans should be prepared when the time necessary for preparation is available.

In connection with the Road Commission's revision of its sequence of project construction, we are informed that it is planned to place Section M of the Richardson Highway, extending from Valdez to Mile 36, and Section A of the Alaska Highway, extending from Big Delta to Johnson River, under contract shortly after the beginning of the next fiscal year. It is further proposed to place Section C of the Richardson Highway under contract early in the spring of 1951. It is also probable that a portion of Section D, extending north from Gulkana on the Richardson Highway, will be placed under contract for grading and surfacing only sometime after July 1. Incidentally, plans for Section D are based on surveys and design by the Road Commission, while the designs for the others mentioned have been prepared by this office.

In preparation for the season's work, contractors on the two projects near Fairbanks are planning to fill their storage facilities on the project in advance of any possible application of road restrictions due to soft conditions during the spring breakup period. The contractors are planning to commence the work at as early a date as possible to take advantage of the most favorable construction weather which often occurs in May and June.

The study of the snow removal project on Thompson Pass section of the Richardson Highway was made during the month and a report will be submitted in the near future. Due primarily to the mild winter, interruptions to traffic have not exceeded two or three days at any one time.

Information received from the Territorial Employment Service indicates that there are 4,000 unemployed persons registered at this time, which has given concern that should there be a large influx of workers there will not be sufficient job offerings to absorb the available labor. Employment officials are discouraging additional people from coming to the Territory at this time since the construction activities will not reach the peak for 30 to 60 days.

A review of requirements for engineering personnel has been completed and a conclusion reached that only 10 or 12 engineering assistants in the GS-5 and GS-6 grades need be recruited in the States, as all necessary lower grade assistants are available in the Alaska area.

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

HAS:pm

cc: Files

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS  
Division 10  
Seward District

NARRATIVE REPORT FOR

MARCH 1950

TURNAGAIN ARM PROJECTS

All work remains suspended on the G&D, E, and F-1 projects. The Girdwood engineering camp for projects F-2 and F-3 was reopened March 21 with an engineering crew of about 12 men. Engineering work on the staking is in progress. The contractors have been reopening camp, working on equipment, etc. preparatory to resuming operations. Contract work is expected to start within a week on both the grading and bridge operations. Mr. Keranen, the District Bridge Engineer is now Resident Engineer on the F-2 and F-3 projects.

The contractor on Section G from Indian to Potter which is being handled by the Alaska Railroad is drilling and blasting heavy rock cuts.

GLENN AND RICHARDSON HIGHWAYS

All work remains inactive as previously reported. An inspection trip was made of these projects during the past month. Contract work on the Richardson B and Glenn Highway projects is expected to start about May 1. Contract work on the Richardson A project will probably start about May 10 to May 15. Engineering crews will be moved to the Richardson B project about April 13 and to the Glenn Highway about April 15.

KENAI RIVER HIGHWAY  
Section 5-B1 Kenai River Bridge

Work on this project may be resumed within a week depending upon the availability of unfrozen borrow to complete the grading. The new grade is still frozen except about the top 4 inches which has thawed and dried out satisfactorily. The new grade is in satisfactory condition for travel. All borrow pits are frozen and it may be difficult to find suitable unfrozen material for borrow. The contractor is getting equipment ready to resume operations but has not established a camp. An engineering crew of 4 men will be established at Hentons Lodge, 6 miles west of the bridge site, within a week.

Section B Quartz Creek Location Survey

All field plans have been completed and forwarded to the Division Office for completion of the design. Some right of way acquisition is necessary on the west end of the project between Sopers and the east end of the 5-B1 project.

SEWARD HIGHWAY  
3 A9 Mile 3 to Mile 5 Grading

Most of the snow has melted off the hillsides where rock excavation is to be accomplished. An engineering crew will be established at Mile 5 and slope staking started April 10. The contractor has not started work but is expected to start limited operations in 10 days or 2 weeks.

Sec. 3E3, 14, Snow River Bridge

Work on this project is not expected to start until about June 1. Piling were driven last Fall. All other bridge materials have been ordered by the contractor.

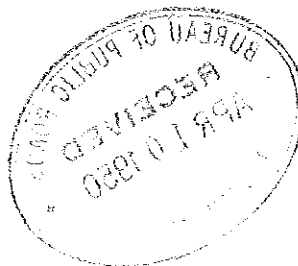
Forest Boundary to Mile 12 Location Survey

All field plans have been completed and forwarded to the Division Office to be used on the design. Practically all of the necessary easements for right of way have been obtained. The project can be designed and built without additional easements.

GENERAL

Snowfall is still far below normal. The maximum snow on the ground is about 40 inches at Mile 12 and a similar amount at Mile 52. There is about 20" at Mile 58 and about 10" at Coopers Landing. Most of the snow and ice are off the road surface from Seward to Mile 36, and west of Mile 44 on the Coopers Landing Road. From Mile 36 to Sunrise the road is generally covered with hard packed snow. Roads generally are in good condition. Maintenance forces have been removing ice from some bad curves between Mile 10 and Mile 14, and between Mile 38 and Mile 44 on the Coopers Landing road. On this latter section glaciering is causing some difficulty. Temperatures have been so low that frost is coming out of the ground slowly. Recent nights have varied from  $-5^{\circ}$  to  $-15^{\circ}$  at various points on the Kenai Peninsula roads.

As no construction work has been active during the past month, progress charts and photographs are not included.



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

The weather during the month of March was considerably warmer than usual. In some areas in the District considerable rainfall occurred, but generally the weather was unusually clear and warm, with the result that most of the snow accumulated during the early part of the winter has now disappeared, and the road surfaces partially thawed. The thawing process has, however, been gradual and unusually few breakups of the road surface caused by frost boils have occurred. In the Ketchikan area, where the thawing process usually is very rapid, and where we therefore usually have severe breakups, we had practically no difficulty during the breakup period. In this area the roads are now all free of frost and the danger of severe breakup damage is past. On the smaller projects, such as Mitkof Highway and Sitka Highway, some breakups occurred but were minor in character. Due to the very light traffic on these highways, the damage so far to the roadbed has been negligible. Because of the gradual thaw there have, so far, been no major snowslides on any of the highways in the District. The danger period is, however, not past either for slides or breakups, but it is probable that any such occurrences which may happen after this date will be of minor importance.

Particular attention has been given during the month to the paved section between Juneau and the Juneau Airport. Isolated unevenness of the pavement, and both transverse and longitudinal cracks, appeared in the pavement during the latter part of January and the early part of February. There are two transverse cracks extending over the entire pavement width, and a number of short longitudinal cracks over a section 500 to 600 feet long, immediately north of Lemon Creek Bridge. The longitudinal cracks are all located in the joint between the two lanes. It is believed that these cracks were caused by contraction due to the long cold weather period in the early part of the winter. The unevenness in the pavement increased during the month of March and appears almost invariably over culverts. While there are no signs anywhere on the pavement of serious subgrade failure or breaking up of the pavement itself, the unevenness is an indication of at least a temporary weakness in the subgrade, and the Territorial Board of Highway Commissioners has, therefore, imposed a stringent temporary load limitation on the paved section whereby all trucking with loads in excess of one ton has been prohibited. The duration of this severe load limitation will depend on weather conditions for the next few weeks, and it may be possible to lift the limitation in ten days to two weeks. Close observation of the conditions will be continued and a detailed report submitted

when the road is completely thawed and the subgrade is again stabilized.

The progress on Projects 1-B7,03 and 1-D6,24 has improved somewhat, but is still generally unsatisfactory. The new superintendent took over approximately March 6 and appears to be a capable and efficient operator. He is, however, handicapped by the inefficient previous drilling and shooting operations, and also by the lack of adequate equipment. Project 1-B7,03 is approximately 24% complete, while Project 1-D6,24 is less than 1% complete. At the same time approximately 60% of the contract time has elapsed. The new superintendent believes that he can finish substantially on time if he can obtain sufficient additional equipment. Mr. Martin, one of the principals of the contracting company, is now in Ketchikan and is expected in Juneau any day for a conference with this office. It will depend on the outcome of this conference, and on the contractor's willingness and ability to obtain additional equipment, whether or not more drastic steps should be taken by the Government to insure completion of the contract within reasonable time.

Project 31-A7,B2, Douglas Highway, and Project 7-A5,B2, Mitkof Highway, continued in closed-down status. It is expected that construction of both these projects can be resumed the latter part of April.

The field work on the Juneau-Thane Survey was essentially completed during the month and the field plans will be ready for the Division Office Design Section in the first week of April. There is some additional culvert data to be obtained as soon as snow conditions permit.

  
CHR F WYLLER  
District Engineer

March 31, 1950

April 7, 1950

To : Mr. A. C. Clark, Deputy Commissioner, Washington, D. C.  
From : H. A. Stoddart, Division Engineer  
Subject: Excerpts from Confidential Monthly Report for March 1949  
for Division No. 10

-----

Weather for the month has continued to improve and the frost recession is well advanced at the lower elevations in Southeastern Alaska. Reports from the interior indicate that snow is disappearing, but that the spring breakup has not begun to date.

Of the Forest Highway projects the Ketchikan job is showing improved progress. Whether the change in management will result in the minimum necessary improvement in progress is still to be determined. Progress has continued on Forest Highway project design in the Division office and most of the projects in the program are now approaching the plan completion stage.

The Regional Forester has been in Washington for the month on Department of Agriculture business. Information has been received which indicates action will be taken in the near future to put into effect the proposal for elimination of areas from the National Forest adjacent and parallel to the National Forest highways of Southeastern Alaska.

To avoid possible confusion and misunderstanding in presenting the case for the pulp mill appropriation a revised Forest Highway Program Letter has been submitted to substitute a project on the Kenai Highway, not on a list of special projects, for the project on the Glacier Highway which had been previously programmed for regular Forest Highway funds, but which had been included in a list of projects to be financed with special funds.

Reference is made to the discussion regarding engineering services requested by the Community Facilities Service in connection with its Public Works program for Alaska. A preliminary review was made of proposed projects in Ketchikan involving improvements of city streets but the arrangement is apparently to be terminated as a result of a Washington office ruling by the Community Facilities Service.

It was noted in the last report that an agreement had been negotiated by the general contractors with the labor unions for wage rates to govern for the coming construction season. Information has been received that the agreement has been executed and was made



effective March 13. The minimum wage established for common labor is \$2.40 per hour. On a basis of a 60 hour week the laborer's earnings will be approximately \$168.

The bids for Section F of the Richardson Highway, extending from Tonsina to Gulkana, were opened by the Alaska Road Commission on March 20, 1950, with C. F. Lytle Company and Green Construction Co. being low bidders at \$2,339,810. The second bidder was S. Birch & Sons Construction Company and Morrison-Knudsen Company, Inc. at \$2,469,350. There were four more bidders with the high bid being \$2,913,560 submitted by a combination of Portland, Oregon bidders. The engineer's estimate was \$2,776,860. On March 15 the Road Commission opened bids for two projects; one being located between Anchorage and the new international airport at Lake Spenard, 2.83 miles in length, with a low bid of \$195,297; the second project was between Fairbanks and College, with a total length of 5.74 miles, the low bid being \$389,713.10.

In making detailed designs for Alaska Highway projects, Sections A and C, a number of revisions were proposed by this office and approved by the Alaska Road Commission which contemplate correction of some sections with the most deficient alignment of the highway, which resulted from Army influence at the time the road was constructed. It has been quite gratifying to incorporate these very desirable improvements in the work now proposed. On Section A, at approximate Mile 1384 and beginning one and one-half miles west of Johnson River bridge, by constructing a mile and one-half on new alignment it is possible to save one mile in distance and eliminate many very sharp and objectionable curves. In this same section the reconstruction grading will be extended a mile and one-half west to improve both line and grade. The improvement will have the effect of raising to a satisfactory standard the first 250 miles extending southeasterly from Fairbanks. On Section C, at approximate Mile 1303, the east approach to the Tanana River bridge will be improved by eliminating the reversed curves at the east approach to this fine structure. The material will be used to eliminate the dip in the grade at the other end of the bridge and make some other minor grade corrections. At approximately Mile 1246, at Gardner Creek, a hazardous sharp, horizontal curve at the foot of a steep grade will be eliminated, with a saving of 600 feet in length of line. At Mile 1233, at a point locally known as Seaton's Corners, by constructing 3,800 feet of new roadway, requiring only about 8,000 yards of excavation quantities, a saving in 1,800 feet of distance is made with a very substantial improvement in curvature.

In the spring of 1949 a snow slide seriously damaged the superstructure of the upper crossing of Lowe River in the Keystone Canyon on Section H of the Richardson Highway. It is found that, by reconstructing the road on the opposite side of the canyon and crossing further upstream, the hazard of damage from slides may be avoided with no additional cost of reconstructing the bridge in its present position and following the alignment of the present road. The section to be built on new alignment is 2.86 miles in length.

Abbreviated plans were completed in June 1949 for the improvement of Section C of the Richardson Highway extending from Big Delta to Black Rapids roadhouse to meet the original schedule of plan completion. The Road Commission having revised its sequence of project construction, with the result that this project has been deferred until early 1951, we have been requested to make a more elaborate survey and prepare detailed plans for the work. This request has been approved, as detailed plans will more closely define the work and we agree such plans should be prepared when the time necessary for preparation is available.

In connection with the Road Commission's revision of its sequence of project construction, we are informed that it is planned to place Section H of the Richardson Highway, extending from Valdez to Mile 36, and Section A of the Alaska Highway, extending from Big Delta to Johnson River, under contract shortly after the beginning of the next fiscal year. It is further proposed to place Section C of the Richardson Highway under contract early in the spring of 1951. It is also probable that a portion of Section D, extending north from Gulkana on the Richardson Highway, will be placed under contract for grading and surfacing only sometime after July 1. Incidentally, plans for Section D are based on surveys and design by the Road Commission, while the designs for the others mentioned have been prepared by this office.

In preparation for the season's work, contractors on the two projects near Fairbanks are planning to fill their storage facilities on the project in advance of any possible application of road restrictions due to soft conditions during the spring breakup period. The contractors are planning to commence the work at as early a date as possible to take advantage of the most favorable construction weather which often occurs in May and June.

The study of the snow removal project on Thompson Pass section of the Richardson Highway was made during the month and a report will be submitted in the near future. Due primarily to the mild winter, interruptions to traffic have not exceeded two or three days at any one time.

Information received from the Territorial Employment Service indicates that there are 4,000 unemployed persons registered at this time, which has given concern that should there be a large influx of workers there will not be sufficient job offerings to absorb the available labor. Employment officials are discouraging additional people from coming to the Territory at this time since the construction activities will not reach the peak for 30 to 60 days.

A review of requirements for engineering personnel has been completed and a conclusion reached that only 10 or 12 engineering assistants in the GS-5 and GS-6 grades need be recruited in the States, as all necessary lower grade assistants are available in the Alaska area.