

October 4, 1950

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

From: Hugh A. Stoddart, Division Engineer, Juneau, Alaska

Subject: Confidential Monthly Report for Division Ten for
September 1950.

Early in the month the fine weather that had continued through August deteriorated and a period of rainy weather began which continued through most of September. The rainy weather affected the Reed and Martin contract at Ketchikan adversely and made the operation more difficult and even slower than previously reported. The only other large active operation, the Kuney grading and Badraun bridges on Sections F-2 and F-3 of the Turnagain Arm project appears not to have been seriously delayed.

The Lytle and Green operation on 5-B2 on the Kenai River Highway became active, with the contractor building camps, clearing, and moving major grading equipment onto the job. The rainy weather slowed the work on the Copper River location survey but it is still expected that the survey can be completed this season with design work to be advanced to completion during the winter. There are indications that the Alaska Road Commission would like to construct this project by day labor as a demonstration of the alleged economy to be made by this method.

The Seward to Mile 58 location survey has continued without incident and should be completed this fall without difficulty.

Public Law 843 approved September 27 provides \$7,500,000 for reconstruction grading and surfacing of the Seward to Mile 58 section of the Seward-Anchorage Highway. Public Roads has been requested to undertake the work under the terms of the agreement negotiated between the Alaska Road Commission and the Bureau of Public Roads for improvement of roads in the Chugach Forest, effective date of the agreement being June 28, 1950. The understanding is that the first stage of the work including regrading and probably gravel surfacing is to be

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completed in the calendar year 1951. Plans have been made for advertising the four contracts, into which the work will be subdivided, on November 1, November 15, February 1, 1951 and March 1, 1951. These dates are tentative and subject to some adjustment but represent the schedule that is expected to be maintained.

It is further understood that the Interior Department will request necessary funds for construction of plant mix pavement over the entire highway from Seward to Anchorage, to be constructed in 1952. The funds are expected to be made available next year in the 1952 appropriation bill. The portion from Seward to Girdwood is included in the scope of the work provided in the extension of the August 17, 1948 agreement with the Road Commission for construction of surfacing and pavements on roads in Alaska.

With the passage of the Federal Highway Bill preparations are being made to place a number of the projects under contracts which are to be financed by the first increment of the special appropriation for roads in the Tongass Forest.

Designs for the work are substantially complete and it is expected that if funds become available before the first of the year or if the winter is not too severe that the contracting of the work can be scheduled in January or February. It is believed desirable to place the projects under contract as early as possible to obtain the full benefit of the 1951 construction season.

Since funds are being made available for the highest priority projects on the Forest Highway system during the next two or three years, it will be necessary to review and reconsider the three-year and ten-year programs since these programs were predicated on the availability only of normal Forest Highway funds. The next submission will therefore be radically modified from the form in which they were presented in the last submission.

Bids were received for Section A, E1 of Alaska Highway on September 20. The project is ^{approximately} 51.75 miles long, approximately ~~40~~ 42 miles southeast from Big Delta on the Alaska Highway. It includes 4 1/2 miles of regrading partly on new alignment, subgrade reinforcement and necessary widening over the remainder of the project and construction of a bituminous plant mix surface 20 feet wide and 1 1/2 inches thick. Keen competition was developed with five bids being received, ranging from the low bid of the Rogers Construction Company and Babler Bros. at \$1,884,391.00, to the high bid submitted by S. Birch & Sons and Morrison-Knudsen Company in the amount of \$2,190,029.50, with all bids being under the Engineer's Estimate of \$2,217,594.00. The low bid was accepted and contract awarded to the low bidder the date of the bid opening.

On September 21 the Alaska Road Commission received bids on 34.69 miles of the Richardson Highway, extending north from Valdez, for a project designed by the Bureau of Public Roads. The work includes grading of two line revisions totaling about ten miles and regrading of the present road over the Thompson Pass summit to improve the snow removal characteristics of the road and particularly to correct the extremely short sight distance on the existing road at the summit. The project also includes enlarging the Keystone Canyon tunnel to a roadway width of 24 feet to permit two-way operation. On this project three bids were received with McLaughlin, Inc. being low with a bid of \$3,790,141.00; S. Birch and Sons and Morrison-Knudsen Company second \$3,826,076.00; and Lytle and Green Construction Company high with a bid of \$4,112,788.00. While the low bid is materially in excess of the Engineer's Estimate of \$3,268,267.00, the contract has been awarded to the low bidder.

With reference to the note on the last report that it was desired to place Section C of the Richardson Highway, which extends from Big Delta to Black Rapids, under contract, verbal advice has been received that the Department of Interior has ordered a reduction in expenditures of \$1,500,000.00 to be made by the Road Commission to conform with the saving stipulation of the appropriation bill. The Road Commission has decided to make the saving on Section C and accordingly this project will probably be deferred until next year or until subsequent funds become available for its construction. An effort is being made to restore the project to the program due to its defense characteristics, with the expectation that final decision will be reached in the near future.

About the middle of the month an inspection trip was made over the Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek to Whitehorse, the Alaska Highway connections to Edmonton, the Hart Highway to Prince George, and over the proposed connection into Juneau by way of Atlin and the Taku River, by the writer in company with Colonel Noyes of the Alaska Road Commission. It was found that on the Edmonton to Dawson Creek connection by way of the present road that substantial progress is being made to raise the road to an all-weather surface type, although there still remains a section between Valley View and the crossing of the Big Smoky River that is undoubtedly difficult to travel during wet seasons by reason of almost complete lack of any surfacing on this section. Construction on the Hart Highway, particularly on the 30 mile section having the Farnip River as its midpoint, is progressing satisfactorily with the probability that the road will be open for traffic by the end of the 1951 construction season. There remains, however, about 70 miles of low standard unsurfaced road in intermittent sections adjacent to Dawson Creek on which construction has been deferred and which will be difficult to travel during wet periods.

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The new construction which has been completed represents a very satisfactory improvement with reasonably good alignment and with a very substantial roadbed. The alignment includes almost continuous curvature for many miles that will reduce the traffic capacity but although potential traffic volume is not foreseeable at this time, it does not appear to be large enough to be seriously affected by the general absence of sufficient passing sight distance.

The Alaska Highway appears to be well-maintained although the heavy traffic in the southerly portion has caused the wearing surface of crushed gravel or stone to become almost completely worn-out. It is indicated by the present Acting Commander of the Northwest Highway System that serious consideration is being given to programming of funds for improvement of the highway and preference will probably be given to surfacing and paving of the southerly 75 miles and replacement of the Nisutlin Bay bridge.

A rather low type of road has been constructed from Jake's Corner on the Alaska Highway to the town of Atlin or Atlin Lake, a distance of about 63 miles. The work has been done by the Canadian Army, using Province of British Columbia funds, with a total cost estimated to be \$145,000. The roadway width is 16 feet between shoulders on top of the native material surfacing. The general alignment and gradient are quite satisfactory and steep grades and sharp curvatures have been used to effect economies in avoiding muskeg areas. From Atlin to tidewater on the Taku River the trip was made by plane. It was found that a very low type road exists for about 30 miles out of Atlin to a point near the divide between the drainage down Atlin Lake and the drainage down the Taku River. The most favorable route appears to follow the Silver Salmon and Nakina River to the Taku River although there are ten miles immediately below the confluence of these two streams where the canyon slopes are extremely steep and construction will be very difficult and expensive. It is understood that the Canadians are giving the construction of the road serious consideration, although the first construction would certainly be to provide an outlet for the mines at Tulsequah to tidewater, a distance of about 17 miles. Probably the most serious obstacle results from the westerly portion of the route being in Alaska.

Incident to the road inspection trip information was received that the Canadian Chamber of Commerce at its convention at Banff passed a resolution urging that immediate joint and cooperative action be taken by the Dominion Government and the appropriate Provincial Governments to:

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(a) Complete the John Hart Highway connection between Prince George, B. C. and Dawson Creek, B. C. within the next three months for use during the coming winter.

(b) Proceed with the construction of a class one highway between Edmonton, Alberta, and Dawson Creek, B. C., and

(c) Improve the Haines Highway to the same standard as the Alaska Highway, keep it open the year around, and provide its approach with improved port facilities to be undertaken by the United States Government at Haines, Alaska.

Enclosure: Graph showing progress on major projects.

HAS:mb

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

From: Hugh A. Stoddart, Division Engineer, Juneau, Alaska.

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Enclosures: Narrative Report by District Engineer French
Narrative Report by District Engineer Wyller
Graph showing progress on major projects

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
Division 10
Loward District

NARRATIVE REPORT FOR

SEPTEMBER 1950

TURNAGAJN ARM PROJECTS

Sections C and D, E, and F-1
Mile 58 to Peterson Creek

All work is complete and the projects present a very good appearance. Riding qualities on C and D are excellent considering that selected material only has been used as a surface. The surface material on the E and F-1 sections is clean river sand and gravel. The material is an excellent base but it becomes corrugated in a short time and is difficult to maintain under traffic. Until a bituminous surface is provided these sections will be difficult and expensive to maintain. Final blading of the surface, some ditch and culvert cleaning, and minor cleanup on the projects was the only work performed in September. The contractor is now cleaning up campsites and moving equipment and buildings from these projects to nearby Forest Highway project 5-B2, on which he is now starting work. Work is in progress on the final estimate under Mr. Killewich, who is now in charge of the F-2 section at Girdwood.

Section F-2
Peterson Creek to Indian

Practically all borrow has been placed and the project is in good condition for travel from about Sta. 1490, which is 3-1/2 miles north of Girdwood, to the south end of the project at Peterson Creek. This is about half of the project. It appears unlikely that the contractor will complete the work south of Girdwood to the point where this section can be accepted for traffic this Fall.

The 3-1/2 c.y. Lima shovel that has been working south of Girdwood has been moved into the rock work at about Sta. 1600, to replace the 2-1/2 c.y. Northwest. Practically all material to Sta. 1600 has been moved. The Northwest has been moved to Bird Creek and is working on the north approach fill. The contractor may be able to complete the Bird Creek fills in time for the bridge contractor to complete all bridge work this year.

Two D-8 tractors, one with scraper and one with dozer, are working on the north end of the project near Indian Creek. Little progress has been made on this grading work due to lack of equipment.

Work on the 4 timber and concrete bridges on this project is progressing satisfactorily. All piling have been driven and capped, and precast stringers have been made. Forming of decks is expected to start in the near future.

It appears unlikely that the work will be completed within the extended completion date of June 30, 1951 and progress continues to be reported unsatisfactory. No additional equipment has been placed on the project in an effort to improve progress.

Section F-3 (Bridges on F-2 Section)

Four of the five bridges on this contract are substantially complete. Some painting remains to be done. The only bridge remaining to be built is at Bird Creek, where specifications require the fills be placed before abutment piling are driven. The grading contractor has done some work on the north approach fill. The 2-1/2 c.y. shovel of the grading contractor is now working at Bird Creek on the north approach fill. If good progress can be made with this shovel the approach fills may be completed in time for the bridge contractor to complete his work this year. Both piers at Bird Creek are complete, and all materials are at the site.

Section G - Indian to Potter

This work is being handled by the Alaska Railroad. The railroad grading work was not completed by September 1, as provided in the contract. Railroad grading work south of Rainbow is substantially complete, but there remains considerable grading work north of Rainbow. Steel and ties have been placed on considerable mileage south of Rainbow. There appears little chance that the railroad will be placed in operation on the new grade this year. No work can be done on the highway grade until the railroad has been placed in operation on the new railroad grade.

GLENN HIGHWAY

Sec. A - Anchorage to Palmer

This project has been completed and final inspection made. The resident engineer and three assistants are working on the final estimate.

Sections B-1, B-2 and B-3

This work is being handled by the Alaska Road Commission. On September 16 a representative of this District made a trip over these projects.

McLaughlin, Inc., contractors on project B-1, had about 18 miles of plant mix paving remaining to be done. Grading and base course did not appear to be far enough ahead of the paving work to assure completion this year. It is understood the contractor concedes that he cannot complete the project this year. Appearance and riding qualities of the completed paving are good.

Sections B-2 and B-3 are under contract to Babler and Rogers. No work has been started on B-2. Progress on B-3 appears to be better than observed previously. About 25 miles of base course and 19 miles of paving, and 12 miles of seal coat and cover aggregate had been completed. Borrow material had been placed for 7 or 8 miles ahead of the base course on September 16. Weather during the latter part of September was generally good and considerable additional progress should have been made.

RICHARDSON HIGHWAY

Sections A and B - Fairbanks to Big Delta Jct. 97.1 miles

Both of these sections have been completed, final inspection made, and projects accepted. Both projects present very good appearances, and, except for minor settlements caused by differential settlement of the frozen ground under the fills, riding qualities are excellent. Pictures attached to this report show some of the completed work.

Sec. C - Big Delta Jct. to Rapids 39 miles

This project is under design in the Division office. It is expected that plans will be complete so the work can be advertised this Fall. Some staking of the "L" line has been accomplished by the engineering crews located on Section B.

ALASKA HIGHWAY

Sec. A - Big Delta to Johnson River

Bids were received September 20. Award has been made to the low bidders, Rogers Construction Co. and Babler Bros. on the basis of their bid of \$1,884,391. Bids on the project were surprisingly close, the second bidder, Lytle and Green, being only about \$12,000 above the low bidder. The spread between the high and low bidders, 5 bidders total, was about \$337,000 or 15%.

The contractor plans to do no work this year. Grading will be performed next year, and base course and paving will be done in 1952.

Staking is being done by engineering crews transferred from the Richardson A project. These crews are operating from Big Delta and from Johnson River, the two ends of the project.

KENAI RIVER HIGHWAY

Sec. 5-B2 from Moose Pass Highway Junction
at Mile 38 to Mile 41, and from Mile 47 to
Mile 50, 5-1/2 miles

The contractor has established camp at Daves Creek on the east end of the project and clearing work has started. A camp is being established at the extreme west end of the project near the Kenai River Bridge. The contractor plans to clear; and drill and blast most of the rock cuts this Fall. There is no shovel equipment on the project at present. Three D-8 cats equipped with dozers or scrapers are on the project and a limited amount of grading work may be done with this equipment this Fall.

An engineering crew of two men has been established at Daves Creek. This crew will be increased as the work requires. Board is being furnished

under contract with the construction contractor. Present plans are to slope stake the project as fast as the clearing is completed.

Location Survey from Coopers Landing
to Forest Boundary at Mentons Lodge.

This work started about the middle of the month with a crew of 5 men working under Mr. Hugh Tyler as party chief. The "P" line has been run and work on levels and cross sections is in progress. Most of the area traversed by this survey is claimed by one individual as mining property. The claimant is adverse to use of the land around Schooner Bend for highway purposes and ordered the survey party off the land. The land is not patented. Some difficulty may be encountered as the claimant has threatened to institute a law suit and places a preposterous valuation on the land because of the gold it allegedly bears.

SEWARD HIGHWAY

Section 3-E3, I4 - Snow River Bridge

Progress is slow but ample time remains to complete within the time limit. Structural steel has been set and work is in progress on the timber deck. Borrow is being placed on the approach fills. The small amount of roadway excavation has been moved. Work of a very good quality is being obtained. Only 4 or 5 men are employed on the project.

Location Survey from Mile 12 to Mile 58

The main "P" line has been completed throughout and some short alternates are being run. Several men are employed in the office in an effort to keep the field plans up with the field survey work. Consideration is still being given to alternate proposals to follow above, and below the railroad from Mile 12 to Mile 14. Lack of decision as to the future of the Alaska Railroad complicates many of the decisions as to the highway location.

GENERAL

Loss of men returning to school and being inducted into the Armed Forces has left most of the projects short on engineering personnel. Increased employment on defense work in the States is expected to make the shortage of good men for highway work in Alaska more acute.

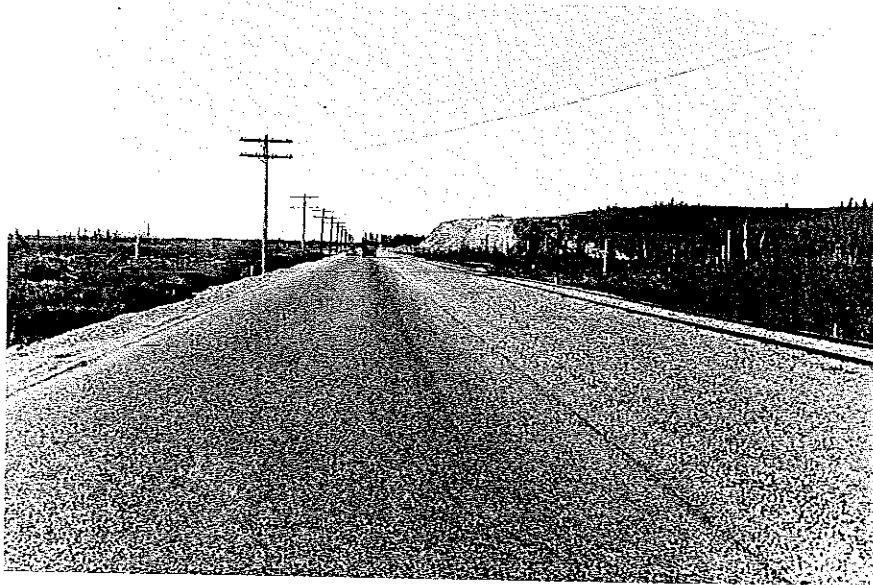
Maintenance work in September consisted of repairing washouts, particularly on the Nash Road, which resulted from heavy rains early in September, and hauling and placing borrow material needed to reinforce the roadbed between Mile 5 and Mile 12. The heavy rains have made it impossible to effectively blade the road surface, and the road has been rough during part of the month.

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Considerable difficulty is expected in keeping the E and F-1 sections satisfactory for travel. The material is too clean to compact well, and the surface becomes corrugated within a few days after each blading.

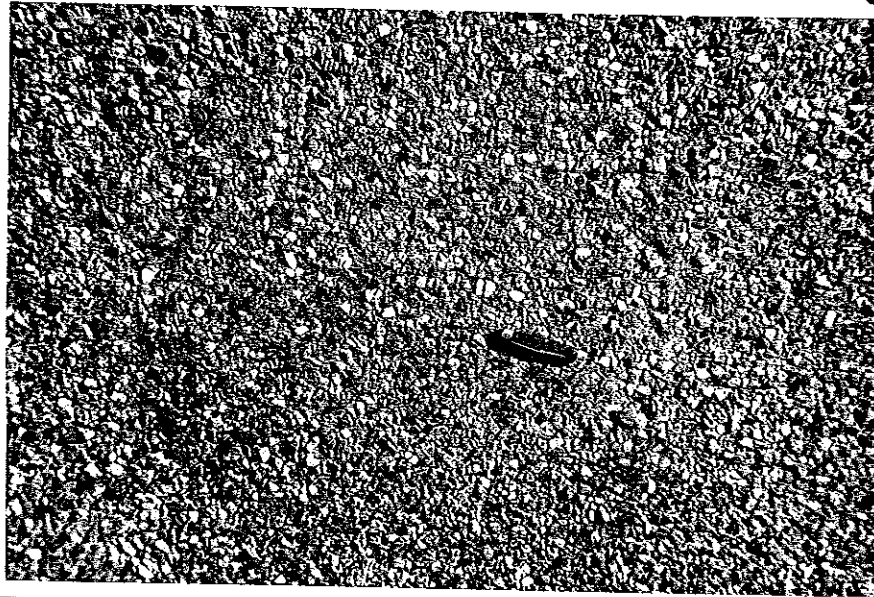
Present maintenance plans, as previously reported, are to operate one rotary snow plow from Fortage to keep the Ingram Creek summit, between Turnagain Arm and Mile 58, open.

Photographs and a progress chart for the Turnagain Arm work are enclosed.



61-94-85

BMP-865 Richardson Highway, Sec. A. View of completed plant mix paving about 15 miles south of Fairbanks. The railroad on right is a spur from Fairbanks to Nielson Air Force Base.



61-94-86

BMP-866 Richardson Highway Sec. A. This picture shows the general texture of the surface on this project after seal coat and cover aggregate were completed.



61-94-87

BHF-504 Richardson Highway Sec. A. View of completed plant mix paving about 37 miles south of Fairbanks.

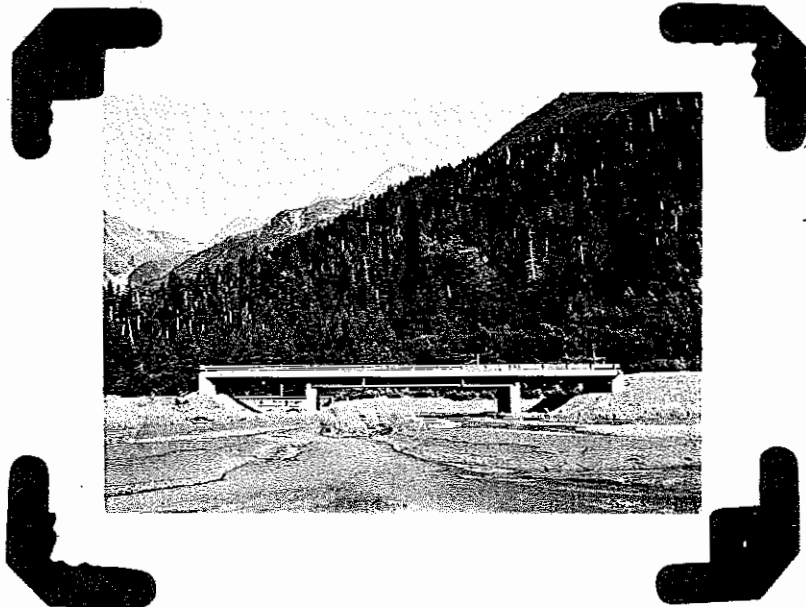


61-94-88

BHC-855 Glenn Highway Sec. A. View toward Anchorage from Mile 13.5. Eagle River Bridge may be seen in the background.



EHC-851 Glenn Highway Sec. A. View of completed paving after seal coat and cover aggregate were applied. Looking toward Anchorage from Mile 15.



BMF-816 Turnagain Arm Section F-2. View from downstream of Peterson Creek Bridge. This stream flows into Turnagain Arm from the north about 5 miles west of Portage.

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

The month of September is usually a period of high precipitation in Southeastern Alaska. This year the month was drier than usual, but occasional heavy rain storms occurred all over the District causing some damage to existing roads, and slowing progress on construction projects and surveys.

The two construction projects, 1-B7,63 and 1-D6, E4, in the vicinity of Ketchikan continued to lag. However, Mr. Reed, one of the principals of Reed & Martin, Inc., arrived on the projects the middle of the month and has made drastic changes in the management and supervision. Mr. Stone, the former Superintendent, has been released and Mr. Reed intends to personally supervise the projects until completion. A Progress Schedule submitted by him indicates that the projects will be substantially completed by the end of November. It is believed that this schedule is somewhat optimistic, particularly since Project 1-D6, E4 is only about 18% complete at the end of this month.

Mr. Reed appears to be a very energetic personality, and the effect of his presence on the projects is noticeable. He, of course, has full authority to take any action necessary on behalf of the company, an authority which it is believed the previous superintendents did not have. Also the slow and delayed payments of local bills indicated that the financial status of the projects has been somewhat tight which, we believe, also has contributed to the slow progress. During a conference with Mr. Reed, held on September 26, this phase of the work was also discussed and Mr. Reed assured that the projects would be adequately financed.

This office has for some time felt that the very unsatisfactory progress on the projects was approaching a point where it might be necessary to take some drastic action, such as requesting the Bonding Company to take over. At the present time we feel that Mr. Reed should be given an opportunity to show what he can do, but that drastic action will be necessary unless he, within the next month, can show greatly increased progress.

The Post Construction Project on Routes 4 and 32 at Cordova was continued during the month and progress is satisfactory. Mr. Vanborg, Maintenance Foreman at Cordova, who has been supervising the work, took ill during the month and, after an examination and a period of hospitalization at Cordova, was advised to proceed to the States for treatment and possible operation. Mr. Mantila, Equipment Operator, has taken over the duties as Foreman and has been carrying on very well. The Post Construction work will be essentially completed in the next month, with the exception that the large culverts, which are to replace existing box culverts, will not be placed before late winter or early spring. The reason for the delay in this work is that the lower end of the culverts is submerged by the lake during the comparatively high water level during the summer and fall. A heavy rain storm, which occurred on September 11th did some damage to the roads in this vicinity, but the work done under the post construction project came through the storm in very good condition.

The work on the Copper River Location Survey is progressing satisfactorily. As mentioned before, this survey is being done under very difficult conditions and the progress obtained is very good considering the difficulties under which it is necessary to work. At the time of inspection, made in the middle of the month, the survey was completed between Cordova and Mile 15 and between approximate Mile 20 and Mile 33. The slashing of the line to Mile 40 had been substantially completed. The clearing of the line is one of the heaviest items on the survey because of the very dense alder and willow thickets through which the line traverses. At the time of inspection the majority of the crew had been moved up to the camp at Mile 40 which, at the time, was approachable only by skiff with outboard motor. The river is very swift in the upper reaches and, at times, carries a considerable amount of ice, so that the supplying of this camp presents a problem. It is expected that the river will soon recede because of the approaching winter in the interior. This will make boat travel on the river still more difficult, but it will make it possible to reach camp by airplanes landing on an adjacent river bar. Incidentally, while the survey crew has so far been unmolested by bear, the crew has had some trouble with bear destroying survey stakes, pickets left on the line, and even knocking down a transit which was left temporarily on the line while the crew was up ahead brushing.

The project of rewiring the Douglas Bridge was started the last part of August and completed September 14th. The work was completed in a satisfactory manner and was accepted as of the above date.

Anderson and Runnels, Painting Contractors, who have the contract for painting the Douglas and Lawson Creek Bridges, began the work the first part of this month, and the Lawson Creek Bridge has been partially sandblasted and covered with red lead. However, it soon became evident that due to weather conditions, progress on this type of work would be very slow at this time of the year, and the contractor requested a shutdown which was authorized on September 6th.


A small party under the jurisdiction of Mr. J. R. Davis continued to stake the centerline on Project 2-D4, F6. This work is being pressed as rapidly as possible in order to secure the data on which to obtain the Right-of-Way.

The usual fall turnover in engineering personnel took place this month, due to the number of employees returning to school. So far there have been only isolated cases of men being drafted but, as the draft continues, it is probable that we will lose more employees for this reason.

The maintenance on the various projects within the District was largely routine. But, because of several severe rain storms, there was some extraordinary maintenance required on some of the projects. A severe storm hit the Juneau area on September 21, causing a number of minor slides and washouts, one of the most severe being the washout on the Thane Section, approximately 1/2 mile south of the town. The firm of Hayes & Whiteley had previously dug a very deep hole in the A-J tailings pile immediately below the road as part of their mining operations. The company had been warned that this hole must be filled and that they would be liable for any damage which occurred to the road because of their excavation. The washout which occurred this month was definitely caused by the company's operations and the repair was, therefore, made by them. Approximately 230 cu.yds of rock was required to fill the washout.

As part of the maintenance operations on the Glacier Highway, the paved section between Juneau - Juneau Airport was center-striped during the month. A small hand-operated striping machine was used, and it appears that it is rather difficult to operate a machine of this type and get an absolutely true line. However, after a little experience, the crew was able to obtain a satisfactory result. So far no "no-passing" stripes have been painted, and it is doubtful whether this will be done before next spring.

September 29, 1950


CHR F WYLLER
District Engineer