

SOURDOUGH NOTES

FROM THE ALASKA REGION



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JUNEAU SPRUCE BURNS - The Juneau Fire Department was called to fight a fire at the Juneau Spruce Mills late in the evening of August 28. The fire had made a good start before the alarm was turned in and the best the fire department could do was to confine it to a small area. The mill building and manufacturing plant were completely destroyed. Most of the wharf and piled lumber were saved together with the power plant, fuel shed, dry lumber shed, three dry kilns and the office building. The estimated financial loss to the Company was \$400,000. The plant was running on a one-shift basis but had expected to run two shifts per day shortly. Approximately 120 men were working and 100 more men were to be hired for the extra shift. The Company is not expected to rebuild the mill.

LUMBER CENSUS - A recently completed census for 1948 shows that the lumber production in Alaska for that year (58,181 M feet) was about thirty per cent lower than that of 1947 (80,480 M feet) although the number of active mills increased from 40 in 1947 to 55 in 1948. Shingles cut in 1948 were 1,365 squares. Inventory of lumber stock on hand December 31, 1948 showed a total of 6,758 M feet. Sawmills located on the public domain cut only 2895 M feet of white spruce. The balance of the cut was made by national forest sawmills. The mills by size classes are 19 under 50 M; 25 from 50 to 499 M and 11 over 500 M feet.

INSPECTORS - Region 10 was host last month to three Washington Office men - John Sicker, Chief, Division of Recreation and Lands; Lloyd Swift, Chief, Division of Wildlife Management; and B. H. Payne, in charge of Timber Appraisal, Division of Timber Management. Their first stop was at Ketchikan. After traveling in a group through the three Tongass Divisions, Swift and Sicker continued on to the Kenai Division and will finish up at Fairbanks. They are due to fly to Seattle from that point on September 3. Payne remained on the Admiralty Division to accomplish field work in the vicinity of Sitka.

JIRP - Colonel Bernt Dalchen, famed Arctic and Antarctic flier and pioneer in the field of aviation, now commanding officer of the U. S. Air Force 10th Rescue Squadron at Anchorage, was aboard a ski-equipped C-47 plane which recently made two successful experimental landings on the Juneau "Ice Cap". This marked the first actual ski landing at high altitude in Alaska by a twin-engine aircraft. More than 3000 pounds of freight and three members of the JIRP expedition were landed by the plane. Jato, jet assisted take-off, was used in taking off from the ice field. These are small jet-propulsion engines fastened to the under side of the plane's wings.

ROADS - The Turnagain Arm project, designed to link the Kenai Peninsula with Anchorage and Interior Alaska, is now in the midst of its second construction season. Contracts are in effect for nearly eight million dollars within the Kenai Division of the Chugach National Forest. Many more millions are embraced in contracts and Alaska Road Commission construction outside the national forest boundary. The project within the Forest is broken into five separate sections of road building and one additional contractual section of bridges. Three major contracting companies and several subcontractors are working extremely heavy summer schedules in an effort to complete their work by the deadline dates.

C.F. Lytle and Green Construction Company of Iowa have the lion's share of the contracts, \$4,645,000 worth of construction. They will build 28 miles of road from Mile 58 on the Seward-Hope highway to Peterson Creek, beyond Portage, Alaska RR junction on the east end of Turnagain Arm. Lytle and Green have sub-contracted all bridges on this section to Munter and Phillips of Seattle. Road deadline is the end of 1949; bridges must be erected by September 1, 1950.

Max J. Kuney Company of Spokane was awarded the contract to build the road along the north part of Turnagain Arm from Peterson Creek to Indian near the forest boundary for a cost of \$2,500,000, to be completed by the end of 1950. Kuney has set up headquarters at Girdwood. Construction on this section has bogged down at various times this summer due to the muskog areas between the mountains and the Arm. J.J. Badraun, Seattle, is constructing five bridges across Peterson, Kern, Bird, Indian and Glacier creeks for a cost of \$500,000, with deadline the end of 1950.

From the boundary at Indian to Potter, a distance of 12 miles, Peter Kiwit, Morrison-Knudsen and Birch and Sons have combined forces to build the new road and relocate the Alaska Railroad tracks for a cost of nearly \$5,500,000. The Alaska Road Commission is completing the stretch from Potter to existing roads east of Anchorage. The Indian-Potter section is probably the most difficult part of the whole project, since two million cubic yards of solid rock must be removed from the mountains to allow for both rail and road rights-of-way.

Several other minor projects are going on within the Kenai Division this year and next. The most important of these is the new Kenai River Bridge being built over the narrows east of Cooper Landing. M.P. Munter was successful bidder on this project; he will construct a treated pile bridge at a cost of \$183,000 to be completed by January 15, 1950. A new forest road will lead from this bridge to Snug Harbor; construction is planned within the near future. BPR will award contracts soon for a new bridge across Snow River at Mile 18 and for two miles of improvement work near the forest boundary, Seward end. Regular maintenance workers of the BPR have been working this summer in improving the Seward-Hope highway by widening the roadbed and straightening out some of the more hazardous curves. Survey crews have also been at work locating new routes to funnel the Turnagain Arm traffic over a better road to Cooper Landing.

When these tremendously costly projects are completed, the Kenai Peninsula will be wide open to anyone in North America who owns an automobile. Alas, for not only will the influx of settlers, tourists, hunters and fishermen be rapid and extensive, but the "good old days" of plenty of game and fish will be gone forever. "The price of progress" -- as Roger and his Kenai gang lament. (Williams-Kenai)

ROADS (Continued) - Hayes and Whiteley of Juneau were the successful bidders for reconstruction of the Douglas highway from the bridge to the Douglas city limits. The work will consist of widening and reinforcing the present roadway, placing crushed rock surfacing and bringing the highway to a standard on which an oil mat similar to that placed on Glacier Highway can be laid.

Reed and Martin, Fairbanks contractors were low bidders for relocating 1.6 miles of the North Tongass Highway at Herds Cove and reconstruction of 2.7 miles of South Tongass Highway from Rotary Beach to Mountain Point.

THIS AND THAT - The young son of Colonel John Noyes of the Alaska Road Commission was a member of a hunting party on Douglas Island. He became separated from his youthful companions and could not be found by them the next day. Colonel Noyes organized a searching party that evening, including Doug Smith of the Admiralty Division. The boy was found the next day on the south end of Douglas Island, hungry but none the worse for his experience. He ran across a bear where he expected to spend the night and shot it so that he would not be molested....The Forest Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service recently issued a joint news release which furnished advice to hunters....The manuscript for a booklet furnishing information on the Kenai Peninsula, with emphasis on the national forest section, has been sent to the Forest Service printing plant at Oakland. The need for such a booklet was caused by hundreds of inquiries received from people in the States who hope to make that section their future home....Midshipman David Sperling made use of his six weeks leave from the U. S. Naval Academy to pick up a new car for his father at Detroit and drive it over the Alaska Highway to Haines. He expects to spend about three weeks in Juneau visiting his family before returning to the Academy for his second year.