

STATEWIDE IN ALASKA

Highlights: Out of a total projected 1970 population of 299,000, an estimated 66,000 Alaskans will be in need of employment related assistance, according to the Alaska Comprehensive Manpower Plan, Fiscal Year 1970 (Part A). These estimated 66,000 disadvantaged persons, an astounding 22 percent of the population, are classed as either unemployed or underemployed. The unemployed category contains an estimated 10,000 persons - a low figure realizing that a large number of rural area residents, dependent on subsistence hunting and fishing, are not reflected in the labor force statistics. While the underemployed persons comprise the most difficult group to define, the Department of Labor estimates that there will be 56,000 underemployed persons in the state in 1970. A person is underemployed when: the number of hours worked are less than full time under normal economic conditions; the present job is below a person's skill capacity; the skills that a person possesses are becoming obsolete.

The commercial fishing industry has proven to be the biggest money maker in the state for 1968 according to preliminary data released by the Department of Economic Development. Based on 1968 resource production figures, the commercial fishing industry brought in \$217.5 million in wholesale value exceeding the previous 1967 high of \$197 million. The prior five year average was \$148 million. Petroleum followed with a resource production total of \$181 million; forestry products were worth \$91 million, and tourism added \$30 million to the economy.

Work on a communication satellite earth station at TALKEETNA will start this summer. It is expected that it will take 15 months to complete the \$7 million facility. The station will be built on a 250-acre site about 2 1/2 miles northeast of TALKEETNA. The facility will enable Alaska, for the first time, to receive live network television programs, but the high cost is expected to make regular programming prohibitive for local stations. Comsat's television rates are now \$4,300 an hour.

Two Southeast Alaskan communities are slated to have their airports upgraded this summer. Low bid contracts have been awarded to an ANCHORAGE construction company in the amount of \$172,660 for HAINES and \$47,200 for SKAGWAY. The landing strip at HAINES will be extended 500 feet, and a crushed bare course will be laid the entire length of the field. At SKAGWAY, the 3,300 foot landing strip will receive a light duty surface treatment through the application of a crushed bare course and double-shot penetration treatment of asphalt.

Early next month a new sea food employer will open for business in SOLDOTNA. The firm will quick freeze fish and ship them out on freezer vans to California markets. A freezer capable of handling 5,000 pounds a day will be in operation, while repairs are contin-

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uing on a larger freezer which will provide handling from 20,000 to 30,000 pounds of fish. The combination warehouse and freezing facility will be open for business 24 hours a day, according to a company official. The firm also owns two B-25 aircraft which are based at the SOLDOTNA airport. Daily flights to DILLINGHAM, KING SALMON and BETHEL are planned to purchase scallops, crab, shrimp and halibut.

SEWARD has been chosen as a base of supply by a major oil company active in exploratory drilling in the Gulf of Alaska. Two oil supply vessels are currently based in the city to support drilling activity off MIDDLETON ISLAND.

Work on the \$3 million bridge from SITKA to JAPONSKI ISLAND--halted because of objection from the Alaska Historical Society--has been resumed, according to the Sitka Manpower Center. At present, travel between the two areas is by water transportation.

An Idaho based construction camp manufacturer has announced plans for a \$1 million dollar factory in PALMER. The plant, which will produce industrial housing, low cost residential dwellings, and mobile homes, will be a year around operation. The plant will employ 65-80 persons and have a first year payroll in excess of \$650,000. Initial production is scheduled to begin in October and will be geared to the building of construction camps for establishment along the 800 mile oil pipeline. Construction of the plant may eventually lead to the need for a sawmill in the PALMER area, but initially raw materials will come from out of state.

Employment:

Awaking to the Alaska spring, total estimated employment sprouted upward gaining substantially over April employment level. Food processing recorded the most notable increase advancing 1,600 hires and should continue to rise until mid-August. Construction activity on a state wide scale is burgeoning with forecasts of a high employment summer season even though, at present, levels are lower than last years. Service and miscellaneous employment gains are attributed to activity generated by the initial influx of the summer tourist trade. All remaining industries showed slight seasonal gains.

Over-the-year total estimated employment increased by five percent. The year-to-year employment growth within the mining industry is credited to oil industry activity taking place in the Arctic. In response to the oil industry demand to move tons of supplies and materials from staging areas in Fairbanks and Anchorage, both air and trucking transportation employment have increased. Retail trade continues to grow as new business concerns open and expansions occur in major Alaskan population centers. Service and miscellaneous