

Statewide in Alaska

January, 1971

Final Census Figures Available: Final 1970 Census figures for Alaska, including population counts for all places having a population of 25 or more persons, are now available. Although the final figures did show significant adjustments in population counts for specific areas, trends in population changes from 1960, noted in earlier "Trends" publications, were not affected.

Most notably, the city of Anchorage gained 1,892 over preliminary figures for a final count of 48,029. Fairbanks also received a higher population count, by 435, changing its total to 14,771. The population of the Anchorage labor market area is now pegged at 126,333 including the two military reservations, a gain of 2,702 over preliminary figures. The Fairbanks labor market area, including its two military reservations, also showed an increase, rising to 45,864 from the preliminary 44,082 figure.

Two significant downward adjustments from preliminary figures were made in the populations of Kenai and Seward. Kenai was reduced from 3,934 to 3,533 while Seward's population count was revised downward to 1,587.

Populations of other parts of the State remained relatively unchanged from preliminary figures. Exceptions to this were the cities of Bethel and Ketchikan. Bethel, with a gain of 240, went from 2,176 to 2,416, while Ketchikan was revised upward by 291 to its final figure of 6,994.

Now that final population counts are available the much awaited data will find many important uses, not the least of which will be in revenue sharing and election district apportionment. Detailed data, such as characteristics of population are not expected to be released by the Census Bureau until later in 1971.

Government Employment to Continue 1960's Trend: Government employment during the 1970's in the State of Alaska is expected to trend in much the same fashion as it did during the late 1960's. Civilian employment in the Federal government will increase only slightly from the present employment level. The greatest employment gains are expected in the Post Office and Transportation Departments.

State government is predicted to grow at an increasing rate. With additional operating revenues many functions, services, and public construction programs will be undertaken by the State. The greatest percentage increases are expected in the Departments of Law, Revenue, Military Affairs, Public Safety, Public Works, and Economic Development. Many departments will show larger numerical growth but due to their already large size do not reflect it in their relative increases.

Local governments will show a substantial amount of growth during the 1970's. Much of this expected expansion will be in organized school districts. The revenue sharing policy, expedited by recent legislation, will make possible the initiation of public improvement programs and services.

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For a more complete analysis of government employment trends in the 1970's a copy of Analysis of Federal, State and Local Government Employment and Outlook in Alaska 1960-1980, may be obtained by writing to:

Department of Labor
 Research and Analysis Section
 P.O. Box 3-7000
 Juneau, Alaska 99801

Total Employment: Total estimated employment fell by 5,900 from October to November as winter tightened its icy grip on most of the State. Large declines were noted in construction and manufacturing. Over the year employment was ahead by 2,300 with large gains noted in services and government.

Mining: Employment in mining remained unchanged over the month in spite of an upsurge in petroleum activity. Although well behind last year's pace, oil exploration is moving ahead, both on the North Slope and around Cook Inlet. On the North Slope one well, with Placid Oil and Gas Company as operator, is drilling ahead. Another, being drilled by Humble Oil and Refining Company, is to begin drilling shortly. This well is of special interest because it is located in the Mikkelson Bay area near the site of a rumored oil strike by Mobile Oil Corp. If Humble should encounter oil, it could result in a rise in oil employment as more wells are drilled and as lease holders in the area attempt to define the size of the field.

On the shores of Cook Inlet one exploratory well is drilling ahead at this writing with Mobile Oil Corporation as operator. Another Inlet well, also by Mobile was abandoned recently. Seismic activity in the Inlet should get a boost this winter as interested companies gather data for the May 1971 sale of oil and gas leases there.

Construction: Cold weather and project completions caused employment in the construction industry to recede seasonally from October to November. Over the year employment in construction fell by 900 bringing the industry below year ago levels for the first time in some months. Much of the drop came among firms engaged in road and highway construction. The decline is attributable to the fact that last winter firms were waiting to begin work on the pipeline access road from the Yukon River to Prudhoe Bay. As a result they kept large crews on their payrolls waiting for a go-ahead, which never came. With it now a virtual certainty that no major pipeline related construction will be started before spring of 1971 at the earliest, these construction companies have pared their workforces back to normal winter levels.

The outlook in construction, according to industry sources, is for 1971 to be at least as good a year as 1970. However, it appears that some problems could develop. In the public sector, capitol improvements authorized by the last legislature, as well as construction bond issues approved by voters in November's general election should contribute substantially to construction employment, particularly in the Juneau and Fairbanks areas. In the private sector, services and trade oriented work has been brisk for the past year and, at the present time, shows no sign of easing up during the coming year. However, if the pipeline project continues to be stalled and a depressed national economy curtails tourism as it did last year, then the private construction picture could change for the worse. This would come about as projects are postponed until conditions are more favorable. If this in fact occurs, areas