

STATEWIDE IN ALASKA

Highlights: The first phase of construction on the Snettisham Dam project is now in the 88 percent complete stage, according to the Alaska District Corps of Engineers. Projects concluded in the preliminary work are: access roads to the powerhouse area at tidewater level on SPEEL ARM and to the dam site at elevation 815; the 2,500 foot airfield; a boat basin, floatplane and boat floats; and permanent camp buildings. Powerhouse, dam site, and surge tank adit excavations are still underway. Bids on the main construction will be called for in 1969. This will entail erection of an estimated \$40 million concrete gravity dam penthouse fashioned atop the natural rock dam confining LONG LAKE in the TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST, 28 air miles southeast of Juneau. When completed in 1972, the 70,000 kilowatt hydropower plant is calculated to cut the whole-sale cost of power in JUNEAU by 50 percent. The dam project is unique in the sense that it will use the latest equipment to convert alternating current to direct current for transmission on high-voltage underwater cables to the power consuming Juneau area. At present, this technology has only been used in Scandinavia. Future plans call for the extension of services to the cities of SITKA, KETCHIKAN, and PRINCE RUPERT, B.C.

A new refinery will be constructed this spring at NISKISKI making it the third petroleum refinery to locate in the booming NORTH KENAI industrial area. At present, Alaska has a 20,000 barrel-a-day capacity refinery in production and one still under construction. The new plant, which is scheduled for completion this summer, will have a 5,000 barrel-a-day capacity producing gasoline along with other petroleum by-products. A topping plant will be installed on the NORTH SLOPE by one of the major oil companies active in exploratory drilling at PRUDHOE BAY. The plant will produce 42,000 gallons of diesel fuel daily for use by the producer and other companies operating on the Slope.

The Atomic Energy Commission awarded a \$2.2 million contract to a Nebraska company for a construction project at the AMCHITKA ISLAND nuclear test site. The first test by the Atomic Energy Commission at the new site is expected sometime next year.

SAGWON or Bust: Construction has started on the first section of the winter road which will connect the oil rich North Slope with FAIRBANKS. The State Highway Department has undertaken the first 60 miles of road construction from LIVINGOOD to the YUKON RIVER, where an ice bridge will be built across the river to connect the road with STEVENS VILLAGE. The road will be approximately 420 miles long, at a maximum cost of \$350,000. The remaining 360 miles from Stevens Village to SAGWON is divided into three rough 120 mile sections and will be offered for bidding to interested construction concerns. Construction of the road is projected to be completed in the middle of January. An expected minimum of 36,000 tons of supplies are to be moved over the road prior to the spring thaw when the road will be rendered impassable.

The dedication of the new \$2 million PETERSBURG airport was held this month. The 5,000 foot long airport had been under construction for the past year.

The 1968 salmon catch is estimated at 260 million pounds with an exvessel value of \$37.5 million - up 88 percent in volume and 52 percent in value over 1967, according to Bureau of Commercial Fisheries. King crab landings of about 85 million pounds will be down 33 percent from 1967 landings of 127.7 million pounds, but value will set a record - up about 66 percent from \$1.5 million to over \$25 million. Shrimp landings may be slightly less than 1967. Estimates are for a year-end total of 40 million pounds, compared with 42 million pounds in 1967. Scallop landings will hit 1.5 million pounds of meats with an exvessel value of \$1.4 million - this is the first year scallops have been landed commercially.

Statewide in Alaska

November 1968

The SOUTHEASTERN ALASKA halibut harvest was down 50 percent with a total catch of 8,594,000 pounds for the year. The 1967 catch was 17,287,000 pounds.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded an \$800,000 grant to the GREATER JUNEAU BOROUGH. The grant is for a water system in the MENDENHALL VALLEY and will be opened for bids next year.

School enrollment is up in Alaska's three largest school districts, placing an additional 4,878 pupils in the public school system. The KENAI PENINSULA school district increased 23 percent, making it the fastest growing borough school district in the state, according to the Alaska Department of Education. Enrollments also increased substantially in the Anchorage and Fairbanks borough school districts.

The former cattle grazing island of SITKALIDAK has been transformed into a mink farm. The island's 600 cattle have been dispossessed by a plane load of 1,000 mink. Seal hunters have been employed on Sitkalidak to supply the island's new residents with food. The former residents, the 600 cattle, were butchered for Alaska markets.

Employment: Total estimated employment continued to fall in November registering a 3 percent drop from the previous month's level. Construction accounted for the greatest portion of the total employment's downward slide. Influenced by winter weather, construction dipped 17 percent below October level of 6,900. Trade was the only major industry group revealing a gain, the result of holiday shopping. All remaining industry groups indicated slight losses in employment or no change in employment over-the-month, as seasonal factors dominate the Alaskan economy pushing the employment trend downward. Pulp industry employment remains unchanged over-the-month, but logging employment has dropped due to a reported log surplus. A reduction in the king crab and shrimp landings has influenced the decline in cannery hires which is located in the food processing sector.

Total estimated employment gained 3 percent over-the-year, as all major industry groups scored gains with the exception of manufacturing. Additional hires by the Departments of Education, Health & Welfare, and Highways and the University of Alaska raised state employment by 1,400. Local government's slight gain is located in the borough school system. The nationwide federal budget cutback has caused employment in the federal sector to drop by 600. Services & miscellaneous registered a moderate gain effected by the growing demand for personal, educational, and business services. Petroleum and gas industry activity on the Cook Inlet and North Slope lifted mining employment by 35 percent and construction by 4 percent. Oil industry utilization of large capacity cargo planes to supply North Slope drilling operations has advanced air transportation employment by 100. Employment gains located throughout the retail trade sector increased that industry's employment by 6 percent. A poorer than usual king crab and shrimp harvest has decreased cannery hires, thus dropping food processing employment by 300. A soft market for logs is credited with the over-the-year employment drop in the logging-lumber & pulp industry.

Unemployment: The continued seasonal sensitivity of Alaska's economy is well illustrated by the increase in total estimated unemployment of 2,500 over-the-month. Heavy seasonal layoffs in logging, construction, and cannery employment advanced the rate of unemployment from 6.7 to 9.2 percent. The civilian workforce remained at October's level, as seasonal out-migration tapered off.