

# It's Progress

*... Isn't It?*

Few, if any, subjects are discussed nowadays as much or as often as the "pipeline impact". Virtually any problem or ailment can be attributed to this condition, and usually is. "But", as most people will tell you with a shrug of the shoulders, "That's progress".

Being reminded of this progress on a daily basis somehow soothes the growing pains and, after all, progress IS good, ISN'T it?

I decided to examine the progress of this city and Alaska in general to see if the end really justified the means. Having just run the demolition derby through downtown Fairbanks to my home, I considered first the mass transportation problem. Now that the polluted air has become invisible for the summer, it's hard to get anyone interested in a transit system to the core area. Certainly the city has grown enough to warrant scheduled bus service.

It's hard to believe unless you have been here for twenty years or so, but in the early 50's Fairbanks HAD a scheduled bus service. The University of Alaska, South Cushman, Mooreland Acres and Fairview Manor, Birch Park, Graehl and Hamilton Acres, and downtown Fairbanks were all served on an hourly basis from 6:00 a.m. until midnight. Fort Wainwright (then Ladd Field) was serviced on the hour and half hour for the same period. I can still hear the scratchy P.A. system in the old bus terminal on Noble street (now a popular eating place) bleating out "Bus number 27, now leaving for South Cushman, Big Bend, Six Mile, North Pole, Big Horn, Moose Creek and Eielson Field. E-i-e-l-s-o-n Field bus now leaving. All Aboard!" Every hour.

Some slightly older residents might remember the University station of the Alaska Railroad, and many a local student bound for that institution of higher learning boarded by the Cushman Street bridge and rode the TRAIN to school.

At least four cab companies enjoyed all the business they could handle, although it should be pointed out that this was before Mr. Freeman and his headbolt heater arrived on the scene. Cars didn't run all winter unless they RAN ALL WINTER!

Progressing a little further back in history, scheduled river boats plied the Yukon and other Interior rivers bringing tourists, freight, and all the bush news to the small towns on the waterways.

Local residents enjoyed beer brewed in a local brewery. Fresh milk (not AIR fresh or reconstituted milk) was delivered to your door from local dairies, and groceries could be ordered by telephone if the weather was bad. Speaking of telephones, they existed all up and down the creeks to mining camps, villages like Circle and Central, Nenana and some other places that no longer exist due to progress.

Did you know that you could take a bus up the Steese highway or to Valdez or Nenana then? That's REAL progress!

The news media didn't bring current international problems into your home, but they DID tell you if your neighbor's daughter got engaged, or if the berries were ripe. As a bonus, the newspapers published the roster of guests at the local hotels and the passenger lists of airline flights into and out of town.

Well, there we have our progress, and I keep telling myself it's all been worth it. With the rate of acceleration of today, maybe we will progress more in the next decade than we have in the last two or three put together. The only thing that bothers me about reviewing and reporting the events of the days when we had no progress is that I am becoming able to report them from MEMORY.

— DGA