

Improve Ferry, Hwy. North from Juneau

JUNEAU—Governor Walter J. Hickel announced last week that the Departments of Highways and Public Works are proceeding jointly toward the improvement of ferry and highway service north from Juneau.

Improvements include an extension of the Glacier Highway to Berner's Bay and a shuttle ferry from Berner's Bay to St. James Bay on the west coast of Lynn Canal.

A highway is then to proceed to Haines to a connection with the Haines Highway into Canada and Central and Western Alaska.

With completion of the highway system to Haines and the use of the first ferry across Lynn Canal there will be established an initial capacity of approximately 500 vehicles per day.

As traffic increases warrant, an additional vessel can be added to keep pace with the traffic demand at relatively minor cost.

Ferry connections can be made at Lynn Canal from either direction on approximately 2-½ hour intervals.

To continue and improve service to Skagway, a ferry will be put on shuttle service between that city and Haines. It is expected that four round trip runs per day can be accomplished between these two cities.

This will provide an overall service of much more convenience and capacity to Skagway, Haines and Port Chilkoot. It will also provide a more direct connection from the capital city of Alaska with the balance of the state.

Upon completion of the highway-ferry system in about 1974 and the addition of the mainline vessel now planned for construction, the

Marine Highway system will have approximately a 50 % increase in capacity.

An increase is vitally needed since the demand this year has proven that existing capacity is sorely taxed, according to the Governor.

"It is expected that demand will continue to increase as the tourist industry and the economy of southeastern Alaska continue to grow," he said.

Governor Hickey stated "We have high expectations in the growth of the cities and industry along the Southeastern marine highway and this administration intends to keep the necessary transportation system in pace with this growth in the most expeditious manner possible."

The highway-ferry system is expected to be completed and in operation by 1974.