

Man Says Incomplete Roads Stifle Economy

By LEVI

There's a road to nowhere in Interior Alaska.

The Eureka to Rampart pioneer access road is incomplete.

Out of the total 27 miles of road to be constructed, only 9.2 miles have been completed. It climbs up the south slope of Eureka Dome, over the crest, then starts down the other side only to end at Joseph Creek.

Another beautiful road to nowhere.

At a time when Alaska so desperately needs all of the growth and progress it can attain, the non-completion of this road both suppresses and restricts the struggling economy of a great stretch of the Yukon River.

Every village on over 200 miles of Yukon, from Ft. Yukon to Ruby, could benefit in lower freight costs, greater exploration, and more homesteaders to help develop the area.

Yet, on October 5, 1963, all work stopped on this badly needed road. One year and a month (construction began on August 20, 1962) of sporadic construction. From that time to this, the road not only has not progressed but has deteriorated.

When construction ended in '63 it was because of bad weather. When it failed to resume in '64 it was because of insufficient funds.

This cause prevails today with no evidence of a remedy in sight.

The road was originally authorized with an initial appropriation of \$150,000 on May 16, 1962. It was augmented by an additional \$50,000 on June 20, 1963, and also another \$25,000 on September 27, 1963.

This made a total of \$225,000 that had been appropriated for this road construction. When all was said and done in '63, \$195,863.86 had been expended. The remaining \$29,000 was considered inadequate to make it worth while for any further construction.

The intended purpose for this road to Rampart was manyfold.

The residents of Rampart, both the old and the prospective new ones, would benefit. With this incentive, homesteaders would be encouraged to move into this area. The placer miners already in the area could operate at a lower cost due to reduced freight rates. They could then expand, bringing added prosperity.

Since the area of the Minnook Creek drainage is considered to be worth serious attention by lode prospectors, the road would enable them to gain access to a before-restricted area. An area restricted by a high prohibitive cost. This latter purpose is further enhanced by the publication of the recent geological report.

The report points out the high potential of various metals and minerals in this area. Also, the talk of our

country's gold shortage and impending legislation to increase its price, adds importance to the Rampart area.

Sportsmen, tourists, and Fairbanksans would have access to the Yukon River at a considerable savings. Even in the event of the Rampart Dam, the benefits of such a road would be immense. From an existing road to the village of Rampart, another road could be pushed down the south bank of the Yukon to the dam site. Then after the waters backed up, the remaining road would be invaluable to sportsmen and commercial usage.

So any way you look at it, this road would serve a good purpose.

Since the Eureka-Rampart road will not become a part of any road to Nome, prospects for its completion are dim.

No funds have been set aside for the completion of this road.

Financing has been done entirely through the Pioneer Access Road Fund, which was supported by direct appropriation from the Legislature. For several years the Legislature has not made an appropriation to the Pioneer Access Road Fund and all money previously appropriated has been expended.

To quote Mr. Charles F. Herbert, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources, in a recent reply regarding the Rampart road, "It is not pleasant to think about a road that goes nowhere and presently benefits only a few hunters and casual motorists. However, there seems to be little chance that the Legislature would appropriate the \$572,000 that is estimated to be the cost of completion of the road to Rampart. There is some hope that the road may some day be put on the State Secondary Road System and completed with Federal aid."