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It's ours now!

By SAM BISHOP Staff Writer

NENANA—Officials signed over the 530-mile Alaska Railroad to the state Saturday evening in Nenana and enthusiastically spoke of its future in developing Alaska's resources.

The \$22.3 million deal culminated five years of effort, said Gov. Bill Sheffield. Sheffield presented a check to federal railroad administrator John Riley and accepted in return a railroad switch key made from Alaska gold.

"This may be the best deal since William Seward bought Alaska from the Russians," Sheffield said.

Sheffield said that Alaskans will finally decide the future of the rail-

The transfer gave Nenana a chance to show off. See page 3 and 5.

road. Riley agreed, noting that the federal government "can't run this railroad anywhere near as well as you can."

"What we're doing is removing the last vestiges of Alaska's territorial status," Riley said.

The railroad was completed in July of 1923. The final golden spike was driven by President Warren Harding on the north side of the Tanana River at Nenana.

"This is where it happened, where it's happening and where it's going to happen," said state Sen. Jack Coghill, former mayor of Nenana.

Officials asked the 800-member audience to consider the economic (See RAILROAD, Page 3)



Gov. Bill Sheffield presents a \$22.3 million check for the Alaska Railroad to Federal Railroad Administrator John Riley Saturday evening in Nenana. Sheffield had

just asked Riley not to cash the check until Monday. Riley responded that he needed to see three pieces of ID from Sheffield.

(Staff photo by Vince DeWitt)



Nenana serves up stew and hospitality

By JIMMY BEDFORD Correspondent

NENANA—At least 800 people were "stewed" and "buffaloed" Saturday night here in this Interior city which seemed a microcosm of Alaska, as the golden key of railroad ownership was passed from the federal government to the state of Alaska.

Besides the dignitaries who came on special trains from Anchorage and Fairbanks, there were ordinary folks who drove down for the occasion from Fairbanks. There were also homefolks from Nenana including Howard Luke who was on hand July 15, 1923 when President Harding drove the golden spike here in Nenana to join

the railroad together. The crowd joined in the singing of the national anthem and applauded vigorously when the Alaska "Flag Song" was played by a musical group from the University of Alaska and sung by Mrs. Glenys Bowermen.

Dads hoisted up their little children so they could get a better view. Shutters clicked. People smiled, laughed, and joined in the pride of ownership of the new Alaska state railroad which only minutes ago belonged to the big federal bureaucracy in Washington.

The people of Nenana did themselves proud with a marvelous buffalo stew from an Alaska-grown buffalo brought from the Mercer

(See NENANA, Page 3)

## CITY BRIEFS



### TODAY

5 p.m.—Zig Ziegler's "Living Your Potential" series, First Baptist Church of North Pole, Fifth and Richardson Highway. Information: 483-2340. Public invited.

7:30 p.m.—Santa's Swingers square dance class, Alaskanland Dance Center. Information: 456-2493. Visitors welcome.

8 p.m.—Eagles Lodge 1037 and Ladies Auxiliary meeting and initiation, 200 First Avenue. Information: 452-2828.

### MONDAY

12 noon-1 p.m.—Parenting is a Mixed Bag Series "There's a Monster in My Closet!—Dealing with Children's Fears," presented by Tina Kocis. Information: 456-2866.

12 noon—Icebreaker's Toastmistress Club business meeting, Captain Bartlett Inn. Guests welcome.

8 p.m.—Pioneers of Alaska Igloo and Auxiliary meeting, Alaskanland Pioneers Hall. Information: 452-4044.

### TUESDAY

12 noon—Senior Companions/Foster Grandparents advisory board meeting, State Farm Building.

### MISCELLANEOUS

Teachers Workout, serobics for men and women, are held at the Big Dipper. Times: 6:10-7:10 a.m. Mon. Wed. Fri.; 8:30-9:30 a.m. Mon. Wed. Fri.; and 1:15-1:35 p.m. Monday through Friday. Information: 452-3030.

Items for City Briefs should be submitted by 5 p.m. the day before the first day of publication. Drop off items at the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner office, 200 N. Hudson St., mail them to P.O. Box 216, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701, or call 456-6661. Briefs will be published twice, space permitting.



## Looking Back

**Fifty years ago**  
Basketball fans were greatly surprised last night when the local high school lads upset all previous basketball hope and swamped the strong Elk aggregation by a score of 24-14. Alford J. Hays, the star of the show, netted a high point man of the game, netting 15 points. Kenny Ringstad was aggressive and broke up many of the Elk plays.

**Twenty-five years ago**  
A consulting engineer in Chicago has heard that Fairbanks is so dry that 40 years ago the wooden legs of beds and tables each stood in a pan of water to prevent the legs from cracking because of the dry air. Mayor Paul Hagglund referred the letter to City Clerk Einar Tomseth, who couldn't recall ever seeing this done. However, anyone who does remember can write the engineer.

**Ten years ago**  
Ed Hemken closed his Moose Creek Union service station New Years Day and posted a sign reading, "Sorry, FEA has cut off our gas supply, we're doing all we can . . . please come back. Federal Agency Administration officials deny it is responsible for closing his station, but they won't approve his allocation of gas."

**Five years ago**  
The Wall Street Journal put the views of Alaska sportsmen and small miners on its front page recently in an article about objections to the Alaska lands bill. The story begins with a fiery quote from Alaska Independence champion Joe Vogler. The story outlines protests against last summer.

**MANHUNT.**  
(Continued from page 1)  
direction the man was headed. Montgomery followed the man down the road. As he watched, a Trooper drove up just as Nylund began to head into the woods again. "He knew he was here," Montgomery said. "The officer told him to lay down in the snow. Then he went over and put handcuffs on him."  
When arrested, Nylund was dressed warmly in an Air Force parka and down pants.

# Nenana rolls out the red carpet

By ANDY WILLIAMS  
City Editor

**NENANA**—For the people of Nenana, Saturday night's transfer of the Alaska Railroad from federal to state ownership was a chance to show off. About 800 jammed into Nenana's Civic Center to witness the transfer ceremony, far more than the town's total year-round population of 560. The crowd included many Nenana residents, plus more than 500 guests who arrived on special trains from Fairbanks and Anchorage.

Jack Coghill, who is stepping down after more than 20 years as mayor of Nenana to take a new elective office as state senator, coordinated preparations by the city. His brother, Bill, manager of planning for the railroad in Anchorage, coordinated preparations from the railroad's end.

Jack Coghill said he obtained a commitment from Gov. Bill Sheffield to hold the transfer ceremony in Nenana in July 1983 at the 60th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike by President Warren Harding.

"I jokingly—with a tone of seriousness—asked the governor to consider Nenana because this was where Harding drove the spike," Coghill said. "It was logical and the governor had no objection to it."

Preparations began in earnest last August and much of the work fell to Judy Clouse and Carol Bursager, who were in charge of the food.

"At first, the two thought they could make do with beef from Delta and home-grown vegetables."

"I picked low-bush cranberries for days," said Clouse.

But as planning progressed, it appeared that as many as 1,000 people might attend the ceremony and it was evident that even the most plentiful garden would not feed the crowd. They decided to serve buffalo stew.

They contacted Beryl Mercer, who raises buffalo on a ranch near Healy. Two Nenana residents and a state veterinarian picked out a buffalo and brought it back to Nenana, where it



A crowd of about 800 converged on the Nenana Civic Center for the railroad transfer ceremonies Saturday.

was butchered by the Nenana Lions Club. They bought 300 pounds of potatoes from Henry Gettinger's farm on Chena Hot Springs Road and added 60 pounds of celery, 80 pounds of onions and 125 pounds of carrots, Bursager said.

With a crew of 30 volunteers, they spent Wednesday and Thursday cooking the buffalo meat on a large gas stove at the civic center and Friday and Saturday cutting up the vegetables.

By late Saturday afternoon, the food was set out in covered pans on a long serving table and the smell of buffalo stew filled the civic center.

Getting people to and from Nenana was the job of Bill Coghill, who was

butchered by the Nenana Lions Club. They bought 300 pounds of potatoes from Henry Gettinger's farm on Chena Hot Springs Road and added 60 pounds of celery, 80 pounds of onions and 125 pounds of carrots, Bursager said.

born in Nenana just a week too late to be present on July 15, 1923 when Harding drove the golden spike on the far side of the railroad bridge across the Tanana River from Nenana.

Coghill said the capacity of the civic center determined the number of people invited to ride on the two special trains.

"We figured the capacity here, backed off from there and figured we could take about 500," he said.

About 220 left Fairbanks at 3:30 p.m. on the last train of the Alaska Railroad under federal ownership and arrived in Nenana about 5:15 p.m. About 300, including the governor and most of the state and federal officials participating in the cere-

mony, were on the train from Anchorage, which left at 9 a.m. and arrived shortly after 6 p.m.

For some railroad workers, including manager Frank Jones, transfer of ownership ended their careers with the Alaska Railroad. Others also found the moment poignant.

Solomon Luke of Nenana was a boy of 5 when he watched Harding drive the spike Saturday night he witnessed transfer of the railroad to state ownership.

Alfred Starr Sr., 85, worked as a laborer during construction of the railroad. Now he wants to extend it to the Yukon River.

"I think this country will still grow. It's getting more populous than ever before," he said Saturday night.

Alison said that the purchase price originally could have been as much as \$500 million.

Allison, who is based in Seattle, said the Alaska Railroad was unlike any other railroad he has seen.

The facilities are clean, the employees care about the operation and the people of the state are interested in its future, he said.

Jack Diamond, who failed in efforts to unseat Carr in 1980 and 1983, said Sinnett was a logical choice. "He was so close to Jess," said Diamond.

Sinnett started as a truck driver 20 years ago before becoming a business agent for the union. A heart attack in the early 1960s sidelined Sinnett from his job with the union. He went to work as a kodiak handler on the North Slope for Kodiak Offshore Haulers before being summoned back to Anchorage when John Creed, a close Carr aide, joined his boss at the Western Conference.

Soon the whistles were blowing and it was time to leave for home via the new Alaska state railroad. One train went south to Anchorage. The other went north to Fairbanks and those in Nenana went home to bed.

## State railroad to fine shipper for coal delay

**ANCHORAGE (AP)**—The Alaska Railroad says it will assess penalties of nearly \$10,000 against Sunsteel Alaska Corp. for delays in unloading coal in Seward.

"All losses across the board are going to be assessed," Arnold Polanek, assistant general manager of the railroad, said Friday. "The Alaska Railroad will not lose one cent as a result of these delays."

The coal unloading facility at Resurrection Bay has been plagued with operational faults, including faulty welds in the loading dock, numerous bearing burn-outs in the conveyor belt system which takes coal from the hopper cars to storage areas, and—most recently—malfunctioning shakers which vibrate the coal from the hopper cars.

subject of the delay penalties for several weeks," Polanek replied.

"People sometimes get the wrong impression that we're here to benefit others at our own expense. That's not correct. We're here to make money."

Polanek said delay penalties are standard in coal shipping contracts because of the consequences of delays are so costly to the railroad.

A crew delay in Seward costs the railroad \$900 a day. Several delays of more than 30 hours have occurred in the unloading of the seven trainloads of coal delivered thus far from the Usibelli Mine near Healy.

Polanek would not estimate the dollar loss for equipment delay, the amount the railroad loses by having equipment sit idle when loading or unloading schedules are all being held up. Official estimates admit they haven't met their expectations of being able to make the Healy-Seward haul in 12 hours. The first seven shipments have averaged 16 hours.

## Anchorage water okay . . . maybe

**ANCHORAGE (AP)**—Health officials say no human health problems have resulted from the pollution of Anchorage creeks and lakes.

"We do have some very loud warning signals," said Robby Robinson, manager of the municipality's Environmental Health Division. "And if we don't heed them, I don't think I can tell you the same thing (at a later date)."

Robinson made the comments at a hearing Friday before the Senate Health, Education and Social Service Committee. The information will be used in upcoming budgetary considerations, according to Sen. Joe Josephson, D-Anchorage, who chaired the hearing. About 20 people attended.

Robinson estimates it will cost \$25,000 to test 10 local streams and six lakes over a year. He said neither the city nor the state can afford such a program without help from the Legislature.

The city health division's budget for water analysis is \$15,000, Robinson said. A single test can cost between \$1,200 and \$2,000.

Jim Richardson, a spokesman for the Knik Canoeists and Kayakers, said 84 of its some 350 members have reported health problems after boating on local waters.

# Congress arrives, followers to follow

**WASHINGTON**—The capital city suffered its first annual onslaught of visitors this week—members of Congress.

That meant the groupies—lobbyists, constituents and general curiosity seekers—can't be far behind.

For those Alaskans willing to risk it, here's a few tips that may make you look and feel a bit less conspicuous in this city of tourists.

Getting around. There are two chief streets of transport—Carr and Metro, Washington's multi-million dollar space-age subway system.

Cabs are everywhere and cheap—\$1.70 from the Interior Department to the Capitol, about 20 blocks—unless the driver discovers you're a tourist unfamiliar with the zone system. One of my editors had a couple of weeks ago when he cabbed to the Capitol that should have cost about \$10.

Carry a wad of dollar bills because taxi drivers conscious of hold-ups don't like to make change. One once delivered me to a liquor store to change the only bill I had, a twenty.

Metro was designed primarily for Washington's bureaucratic commuters so it's safe, reliable and relatively cheap—30 cents for most downtown trips. If possible however, avoid it during morning and evening rush hours when even standing space is at a premium.

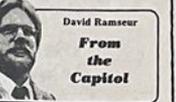
Also avoid driving yourself because you risk a face-to-face encounter with Washington's most feared horror, The Traffic Circle.

The city's master planner, Maj. Pierre L'Enfant, laid out the federal city in the late 18th century like a tic-tac-toe grid but sliced by diagonal streets named after the states such as Pennsylvania Avenue. Scattered around town where all these streets run together are traffic circles, honking, merry-go-rounds of angry cabbies and lost tourists.

Exit a traffic circle and you're just as likely to be headed for Baltimore or Richmond as your downtown Washington destination.

Attire. Mourning clothes are popular, the drabber the better. Government is a serious business and those who do it like to look the part.

The female uniform consists of a Navy blue or black suit, skirt draped to the knee, matching pumps and hair cropped short and usually pinned back.



David Ramsauer From the Capitol

Most men dress as if they're about to meet the president—dark suits and brown tasseled loafers although a touch of red in the tie is permissible if it's not too bright.

Red Stevens is about the only regular who wears an occasional string tie but then he's good at ignoring the snickers.

Those woolly beards cultivated to look like the face wars in Fairbanks are frowned on here. There's nary a bristle of facial hair in the entire U.S. Senate.

South Dakota Sen. Larry Pressler sprouted one in November for a pioneers celebration but home but promptly shaved it when he returned to Washington.

Sights. It would take years to see everything in the Smithsonian's nearly two dozen museums, galleries and observatories and then there are all of the private museums, galleries and observatories.

There are a few sights of special interest to Alaskans including native culture displays in the Museum of Natural History, Redoubt brown bears at the National Zoo and the most recent Alaska attraction, a plaque commemorating Alaska and Hawaii statehood at the Lincoln Memorial.

There's even an Alaska Avenue, but you have to navigate a traffic circle to reach it.

Weather. It's predictable in the summer, as hot and steamy as the Amazon in August, and unpredictable in the winter. Two days after Christmas it hit 70 degrees but then we got our first snow Saturday.

And like many southern cities, its residents are not used to winter road conditions. Drivers often abandon their vehicles on the highway when they realize they can't pretend they're in a demolition derby.

Alaskan-turned-ambassador Tony Montley once spent the night on the couch in his office rather than risk damage to his 1968 Mercedes sports car driving home in a Washington snowstorm.

(David Ramsauer is the News-Miner's Washington correspondent.)

## Valley lawyers honor crash victim Whiting

By KRIS CAPPS  
Staff Writer

The Tanana Valley Bar Association paid tribute Friday to local attorney Harrington Bixler Whiting, 43, who died in a plane crash in Arkansas last month.

Whiting's four-year-old son Harrington Bixler Whiting Jr. also died in the crash Dec. 14 when the single-engine plane Whiting piloted hit some power lines and plunged into the Arkansas River. The two were traveling from Anchorage to Mobile, Ala. for the holidays.

A large crowd filled a courtroom where Whiting's friends and colleagues described him as an avid outdoorsman, a confident and exceptional attorney, and a dedicated family man.

Tanana Valley Bar president Richard Burns recalled the first and last time he tried a case against Whiting 13 years ago.

"All the evidence was on my side," he said. "The trial lasted three days. I lucked out. I got a hung jury."

Where there were no defenses. Bix created defenses," he said. "He was one heck of a trial attorney."

Alaska Supreme Court Justice Jay Rabinowitz described Whiting as "one of the most effective appellate advocates I ever appear before in the state's highest court."

Whiting was a "strong, matching, compelling, down-to-earth manner, Rabinowitz said.

really served justice said, Anchorage Superior Court Judge Karl Johnstone.

Besides practicing law in Alaska, Johnstone said Whiting had also practiced law in six other states, appeared before the Alaska Supreme Court more than 20 times, in federal district courts in four different districts, before Courts of Appeal in four different circuits, and before the United States Supreme Court.

Judith Kleinfelder remembered Whiting through the eyes of her young son who idolized him and longtime friend Charles Wirschen read a poem he wrote about favorite past escapades that the outdoorsmen had shared.

"It's a terrible tragedy," said Rabinowitz. "A terrible loss."

## 2-car collision injures youth

A 17-year-old youth was injured in a two-car collision that cost \$10,000 in damage to one vehicle and \$1,000 to the other.

According to Alaska State Troopers, a pickup truck driven by Richard Sitton, Jr., 17, turned left off the Richardson Highway at the 30th Avenue intersection, and was struck by a southbound car driven by Thomas Vandorp, 32.

Sitton's passenger, Shawn Vandorp, 17, was taken to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital with back injuries. Troopers said O'Rourke and Sitton were not wearing seat belts.

Damage was \$10,000 to Vandorp's vehicle and \$1,000 to Sitton's truck. Sitton was cited for failure to yield.

A 30-year-old Fairbanks woman arrested for driving while intoxicated was also charged with trying to escape from Alaska State Troopers by climbing out of the patrol car window.



John Riley, head of the Federal Railroad Administration, holds the check and Gov. Sheffield holds the key.

# All aboard Alaska's Railroad

Story by Jimmy Bedford  
Photos by Vince DeWitt

**NENANA**—The two-hour train trip to Nenana Saturday afternoon was a sentimental journey for 213 passengers who were on the last ride of America's last federally owned railroad. On the way home it would be the first ride on the new state owned railroad.

The difference, of course, would be minimal. No great changes are in store for the passenger service in the near future, at least until the new management gets a firm hand on the throttle, according to Frank Chapados, one of the state's railroad commissioners, who was one of the passengers on this trip.

Although the sun had gone down and the sky was fairly dark for most of the trip, it was light enough to see the winter scenery along the 58.6-mile run and many passengers remarked about how good the view was and how nice it was not to be driving.

For some, it was the first train ride but for most of the invited guests representing various community groups and businesses, the Alaska Railroad had long held a fascination for them and they had ridden this train on more than one occasion.

To Bill Stringer, trains are a favorite mode of transportation and for his birthday, Aug. 3, 1983, his wife gave him a one-way ticket to Anchorage, and let him fly back home.

"It was terrific," he recalled, while munching shrimp and deviled eggs in the buffet car with the other passengers Saturday afternoon. "I went into the train's kitchen on my birthday and told the chef that I'd like a salmon steak and he broiled it over a small-charcoal fire. It was the best salmon steak I had ever tasted."

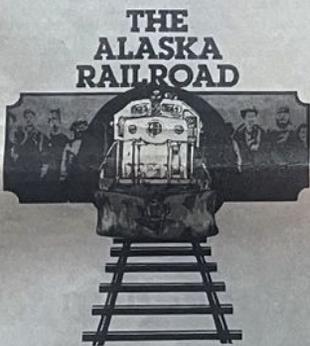
That was not the end of the meal, of course, said Stringer. "From the beginning to the after dinner coffee, the movable feast lasted for about 150 miles."

For others, memories of train travel extended to European trains or those in America. No one recalled any unpleasant experiences.

"I love trains," exclaimed Cindy Spanyers who has traveled dozens of times on the Alaska Railroad including several trips all the way to Anchorage. Like many of the passengers, there was a renewed excitement about the railroad and an optimism that state ownership will bring about better times.

Meanwhile, the aisles of the train cars were busy with people passing to and from the buffet car loaded with all kinds of delicacies. Although catered by an Anchorage firm, Boatel Catering Service, the food for this run was prepared in Fairbanks by Tiki Cove.

After being greeted by the friendly folks of Nenana and watching the official passing of the ownership to the state, the passengers ate buffalo stew and got back on the train for the ride home.



Dignitaries gather on the stage during Saturday's ceremony. From left, John Riley, Gov. Sheffield and Jim Campbell, Alaska Railroad chairman.



Gov. Sheffield signs autographs before the ceremony at the Nenana Civic Center.



Former Fairbanks Mayor William Wood and his wife Dorothy Jane on the train ride to Nenana.



Chef Phillip Cummings carries a tray of hors d'oeuvres on the Fairbanks Special.



Bob Wood, conductor on the Fairbanks Special, helps passengers off the train in Nenana.

## Railroad transfer gives state control, growth possibilities

Employee complaints against management may now be addressed

By JOHN CREED  
Staff Writer

As the historic Alaska Railroad passes from federal hands to the state-controlled Alaska Railroad Corporation, officials say they want to continue its widely held reputation for high-quality freight and passenger service.

"The people of Alaska are getting a good buy for their money," said Arnold Polanchek, the railroad's acting general manager, in a recent news release. "The equipment and track are in good condition, and we are continuously upgrading and improving."

But others don't think the \$22.3 million that Alaska is paying for the railroad is such an outstanding deal. "Misinformation regarding the railroad's assets and liabilities provided by railroad officials in the transfer process is so grossly misrepresented," according to a report issued by "RAILS," an Alaska Railroad employee group, "that no astute businessman would knowingly purchase it until all assets and liabilities have been independently verified."

RAILS (an acronym for "reliability, accountability, integrity, legality and safety") issued a 24-page report Dec. 28 urging Gov. Bill Sheffield and Alaskans to postpone state acceptance of the Alaska Railroad pending an investigation of past and present top management practices.

But the governor's office rejected these claims, clearing the way for Saturday's transfer, and argued it can't do anything about the allegations until the railroad is under state control.

Employees are now asking for a full investigation of alleged abusive and discriminatory personnel practices, disregard for occupational health and safety regulations, private use of government property, and others.

• **State-of-the-art technology.** According to a report by the U.S. Railway Association, it will take about \$12 million a year to maintain the state-run Alaska Railroad's equipment. This includes money for acquiring and upgrading locomotives, cars, track construction, stabilization of roadbeds, and realignment work to reduce curves in the track, according to officials.

The railroad currently owns 57 locomotives, four of which are state-of-the-art diesel electric locomotives purchased in 1983, officials said. The all-new "GP-49" engines are the first of their type to enter service on a North American railroad, according to Polanchek, with another five GP-49s scheduled to arrive in 1985 to expand coal service between Healy (next to Denali Park) and the port of Seward on the Alaska coast.

"The major technological feature in the new locomotives is a radar and solid-state circuit wheelslip detection and control system," said Polanchek. "This radar-controlled device measures the ground speed of the locomotive by bouncing a signal off the roadbed."

• **Passenger service.** Railroad officials say Alaskans and tourists alike can expect continuation of the daily scheduled summer trains between Anchorage, Denali National Park and Fairbanks, as well as the Anchorage-Whittier service, which operates throughout the year.



**HURRICANE**—Above, The Hurricane Gulch Bridge passes through the Alaska Mountain Range at mile 284. The bridge is the highest point on the railroad (2,363 ft.). Completed on Aug. 8, 1921—the last beams are shown being lowered—the bridge is 918 feet long and 286 feet above the gulch. Above right, one of The Alaska Railroad's 27 cabooses carries the brakeman and conductor on a freight train.

(Alaska Railroad photos)



**BARGE**—The first SeaWay ocean barge arrived at Seward on April 13, 1984. One of two triple deckers and the largest in West Coast service, the barge is 487 ft. by 104 ft. and is capable of carrying up to 350 rubberized trailers. The barges sail weekly from Seattle to Seward.

(Alaska Railroad photo)

During the winter months, one passenger train a week, primarily serving local residents, operates between Anchorage and Fairbanks, according to officials.

Special runs are also available for charter runs for cruise ship passengers out of Whittier, or special public events such as the Seward Salmon Derby, the Alaska State Fair, and the KSKA Blue Grass Festival.

Records show passenger traffic steadily increasing over the years, with the railroad carrying 231,000 passengers in 1984 alone.

But passenger service is just that—a "service"—according to James Blasingame, chief of administration. "There is no railroad in the world that makes money on its passenger service," Blasingame said.

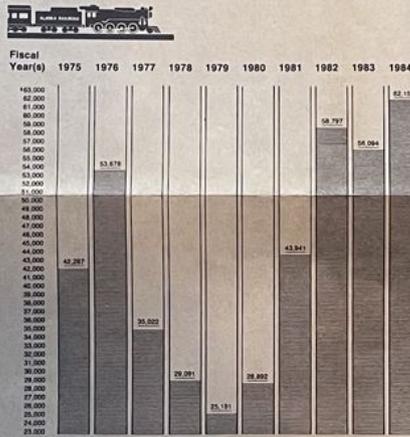
• **Freight service.** The Alaska Railroad's freight services comprise the lion's share of railroad operations in Alaska, according to officials. The railroad turned a net profit of \$1.8 million in fiscal 1984, according to officials, largely by hauling 8.3 million tons of freight over the past year, up 37.5 percent over the previous year, according to officials.

For the fourth consecutive year, sand and gravel tonnage led all other commodities, primarily from construction projects and continued public works projects in Anchorage, officials said.

The largest revenue-getter for 1984, however, was from the "piggyback" service of trailers and containers on flat cars, according to officials.

But a full 92 percent of the revenue tons hauled by the railroad last year were in natural resources—sand, gravel, coal and petroleum, according to William Coghill, the railroad's manager of planning and capital improvements.

Additionally, the recently established coal haul from Usibelli Mines in Healy—railed to Seward and



**REVENUES**—Total Alaska Railroad revenues for fiscal years 1975-1984 are shown above (dollar amounts are in thousands).

(Alaska Railroad illustration)

barge to South Korea—will add another 880,000 tons of coal to annual figures, he said.

• **Railroad expansion.** Officials wish to expand its rail lines into mineral districts such as Red Dog and Ambler in northwest Alaska, as well as a link to Canada for a transcontinental line.

That, however, not only depends on the economic feasibility of extracting

Alaska's natural resources, but on the wishes of Ambler residents and other communities in the Kobuk River drainage, who may not want such a link to the outside world.

"The railroad has the technological capabilities to expand the line," Coghill said. "But now it will be up to the state to determine the economic feasibility of various expansion routes."

## Title XI—a federal overstatement

The Alaska Lands Act is a stacked deck of cards with at least a dozen "jokers" shuffled in. One of my favorites is Title XI.

It has never been employed in the four years since the law was passed. It sits like a sleeping dragon, and I think everyone is a bit afraid to wake it.

Title XI covers transportation and utility corridors across the national parks, wildlife refuges, wild rivers and other federal domains in Alaska.

In Title XI Congress observed that its land actions were so broad and hasty that it should provide a special new law for future times when the lands must be crossed.

So Congress conjured up perhaps its most bad language yet. It states, "Notwithstanding any provision of applicable law, no action by any federal agency under applicable law with respect to the approval or disapproval of the authorization, in whole or in part, of any transportation or utility system shall have any force or effect unless the provisions of this section are complied with."

Title XI goes on to set up a procedure for considering an application for a road, trail, pipeline, railroad, airstrip, power line, dock or radio tower. The only exceptions are for what federal agencies themselves do "incident to management of the unit or area."

Within 60 days the agency receiving the application must notify the applicant if it is acceptable or not. The draft environmental impact statement must be done in nine months, and the final EIS in another three months.

The various federal agencies



**Fred Pratt**

third of Alaska's land. Its impact may go far beyond just the new parks and refuges. It outlines the federal government's control over all the state and Native corporation land which can only be reached by crossing the federal holdings.

The new wild and scenic rivers are key here. Several of them seem to be aimed more at control of access to non-federal land through Title XI than conservation interests.

The Gulkana and Delta wild and scenic rivers form an unbroken line bordering two highways. The Gulkana is more a recreational river than a place where any Alaskan would go for a "wilderness experience," yet it must be managed as a wild river.

The Unalakleet River is a better example. There is virtually no recreational use by non-residents now, no access to its upper reaches and nothing special to see, but it does control a historic access route to the Interior.

NANA Regional Corp. could have used Title XI for a corridor from its Red Dog mineral deposit through Cape Krusenstern National Monument, but instead it chose to acquire the route through a much larger land exchange.

Title XI even applies to improved rights-of-way for snow machines. I won't even begin to consider how it might affect the RS 2477 right-of-way issue.

Clearly, this is another case where government set out to simplify something and ended up in a whole new mess.

Fred Pratt is a freelance writer covering Alaska politics and economics.

## Prospects good for industrial nations in 1985

The New York Times

PARIS—The economies of the world's industrialized countries are doing better than expected and overall prospects are the best in a decade, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development said recently.

That positive message, weighted down by caveats and concern about the persistent sluggishness of the European economies, forms the core of the new edition of the OECD's Economic Outlook, the highly regarded semiannual review of the economic scene in the non-Communist industrial world in general and in the 24 nations that are members of the organization.

"The overall prospects for output and inflation now appear as good as, or better than, at any time since the watershed year of 1973," the report said.

According to the OECD, continuing expansion and substantially reduced inflation may be marking the end of the period of "stagflation"—the combination of economic stagnation and inflation that was initiated by the oil price increases of 1973.

The report said that the current slowdown in growth in the United States would be a pause and not a halt, and predicted that the American economy would experience real growth—output increases adjusted for inflation—of 3 percent in 1985.

The figure is the average for the OECD and a cautious one compared with recent estimates by Reagan administration officials, who project a 4 percent growth rate.

The study also foresees unemployment in the United States falling to 7 percent this year, from an average 1984 level of 7.5 percent. The rate for all OECD countries is 8.5 percent.

The report also sees inflation in the United States edging up to 3.5 percent from 3.25 percent. The OECD average is 4.75 percent.

The output, inflation and unemployment figures are all more optimistic than those published six months ago.

Japan is expected to outperform the United States this year, with an output growth of 5 percent, down slightly from 5.75 percent in 1984. The report sees that country's unemployment dropping to 2.5 percent from 2.75 percent, and its inflation rate remaining under 3 percent.

West Germany, France and Britain are expected to show increased rates of economic growth—in Britain's case because it is assumed that the current coal strike will end—but the overall levels remain low and the prospects for improvement in unemployment are dim. In fact, the OECD sees jobless rates remaining steady in West Germany and Britain, and rising in France.

The outlook for Western Europe in general is better than it was six months ago, but the unemployment level is nonetheless expected to rise to 11.5 percent from 11 percent.

With a further increase projected for the beginning of 1986, the OECD predicts that by the middle of 1986 some 20 million Europeans will be unemployed, including 9 million under the age of 25—about 25 percent of that age group.

According to David Henderson, the OECD's chief economist, the record indicates that because of structural problems in Europe, such as the inflexibility of its labor markets, the demand created by increases in Government spending is more likely to increase inflation and less likely to produce jobs than is the case in the United States or Japan.