

ADDRESS ONLY

THE ALASKA RAILROAD

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
THE ALASKA RAILROAD

Anchorage, Alaska  
November 14, 1947

Mr. John E. Manley - The Alaska Railroad  
Division of Territories & Island Possessions  
Department of the Interior  
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear Mr. Manley:

Reference is made to our telephone conversation of the 12th regarding the Diesel locomotives.

I believe that you could get together with Mr. Lee or Mr. Flakne and figure out an approach to the Navy with a plan to see if they would not go along with the Army on standardizing on the Alco 1,000 horsepower Diesels in order to release the six 99-ton GMC Diesels the Navy now holds, and make them available to The Alaska Railroad. If this could be worked out it would completely fill our requirements for Diesel switching locomotives and Diesel locomotives for work-train service; these 99-ton Diesels will be ideal for work-train service as we plan to place one of the 315 cu. ft. air compressors in a box car for each work-train to furnish sufficient air for the air-dump cars; this is necessary as the air compressors on the Diesel locomotives are not of a sufficient capacity to supply the required amount of air to operate the air-dump cars in work-train service. I believe that with the proper approach to the Army and Navy this could be worked out and will certainly be a life-saver and an ideal set-up for The Alaska Railroad to acquire these additional six 99-ton GMC locomotives.

I am very much interested in the Bethlehem people going ahead with the contract on overhauling the 1,000 horsepower Alco Diesels so that we will have sufficient motive power for our work-trains this coming spring on our rehabilitation program. It will be necessary to have ten work-trains in service in order to accomplish the rehabilitation of the roadway as it is now planned, which covers the amount of rehabilitation to be done by our maintenance-of-way forces and by contract. We must furnish work-train service for the contractors as well as for our own forces. So, you see it will be necessary to do all possible in the way of overhauling the 1,000 horsepower Alco Diesels and have them ready by early spring.

This last summer we used the 300-class switchers you acquired from surplus, that is, the 0-6-0 steam locomotives, and we had some bad accidents and also severely damaged long stretches of our track due to the fact that these engines have no engine trucks and they hunt or fish-tail along very severely on tangent track and spread the track constantly.

2—Mr. John E. Manley, November 14, 1947

There was more damage caused by this than we realized and, in fact, the damage was done before we were aware of what was causing it; so, the Maintenance-of-Way Department is refusing to permit these locomotives to be used other than in switching service in the yards. We will, therefore, be very short on locomotives when the next work season starts if the Diesels are not forthcoming.

I have just received information from Col. Rudy that the locomotive assembly plant in Portland, which he was in charge of during the war on assembling Russian locomotives, is now surplused and in the hands of the War Assets Administration for disposal; this was surplused on November 5. I am wondering if it will not be wise for us to take this plant over on a temporary basis and turn it over to the Chicago Freight Car and Parts people for the car conversion program and then surplus it back after their contract has been completed. I understand from Col. Rudy that this plant has a seven-car capacity, or, was set up to assemble seven locomotives at a time and is equipped with overhead cranes and the necessary machinery to make it an ideal plant for this purpose. We are also calling for bids to convert the hospital cars into coaches and buffet lounge cars and this could be done in a plant of that type. Also, we are calling for bids for the construction of twenty new cabooses. Please check into this back there as quickly as possible and let me know; I am also contacting the Chicago Freight Car and Parts people, advising them of this plant being available and they may check with you on it.

If it is possible for us to make a plant like this available for the above type of work I believe that we could effect a considerable saving to the Railroad. However, when the specifications were drawn up and when we called for bids, we did not indicate that facilities of this nature would be made available and we would have to work this matter out later with the successful bidder should the above-mentioned plan materialize.

Very truly yours,

(SIGNED) J. P. JOHNSON

J. P. Johnson  
General Manager