

Introduced: 5/26/75  
Referred: Rules

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY MILLER AND DUNCAN

2 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 69

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Congratulating the White Pass & Yukon  
6 Route on the occasion of its Diamond  
7 Jubilee.

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 WHEREAS July 29, 1975 marks the 75th anniversary of the completion of  
10 the famed White Pass & Yukon Railroad built to provide transportation to the  
11 Klondike gold fields; and

12 WHEREAS the first rails were laid on May 27, 1898 in Skagway; never were  
13 there fewer than 1,000 men, and sometimes as many as 1,900, employed in laying  
14 the rails to the summit of White Pass, a distance of 20 miles by rail; it was  
15 a monumental undertaking: the roadbed had to be hand hewn and blasted out of  
16 granite for almost every one of those miles; over 450 tons of explosives were  
17 used between Skagway and Lake Bennett, British Columbia, 40 miles from  
18 tidewater on the Lynn Canal at the head of Southeast Alaska's "Inside Pas-  
19 sage"; and

20 WHEREAS, on February 16, 1899, rails reached the summit; by July 6 of  
21 that year the Skagway to Lake Bennett section was completed; within the next  
22 year materials were shipped down the lakes to Whitehorse, the head of navi-  
23 gation on the Yukon River, and construction started south from Whitehorse and  
24 north from Bennett; the rails finally were joined July 29, 1900, at Carcross,  
25 thus linking Skagway and Whitehorse with 110 miles of steel; and

26 WHEREAS, because enormous amounts of material had to be moved to the  
27 construction camps on the Alaska Highway, the U. S. Army took control of the  
28 railroad at the outbreak of World War II; when it was returned to its owners  
29 at war's end, the roadbed was rebuilt and rolling stock had been added; and

1       WHEREAS the 1950's brought "containerization" of freight and the  
2 replacement of steampower by diesel; today the railroad is a year-round  
3 operation hauling the majority of the freight entering the Yukon and Northern  
4 British Columbia and large amounts of lead, zinc ore and asbestos from the  
5 Yukon and B.C.; and

6       WHEREAS, in addition to the hauling of freight, the railroad provides  
7 daily passenger service and during the summer months is best known to the  
8 traveling public because this unique narrow gauge railway enables thousands  
9 of tourists annually to view the spectacular vistas of mountains and canyons  
10 visible from along the "Route of the Trail of '98"; without question, this  
11 railroad trip is one of the scenic wonders not to be missed by visitors to  
12 Alaska and the Yukon;

13       BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska State Legislature that 75 years after the  
14 driving of the "Golden Spike" at Carcross, on the occasion of the Diamond  
15 Jubilee of the White Pass & Yukon Route, it pauses to acknowledge the enor-  
16 mous contribution this railroad, and the other transportation services in  
17 addition to rail the parent company now provides -- maritime, pipeline and  
18 truck -- have made to the development of Alaska and the Yukon; the White Pass  
19 & Yukon Route has, in fact, become one of the historic landmarks of this  
20 "Great Land" that we proudly share with our Canadian neighbors, particularly  
21 those residing in the Yukon Territory and the Province of British Columbia.

22       COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the President and Chairman  
23 of the Board of the White Pass & Yukon Route, Ltd.; to the superintendents  
24 of the railroad in Skagway and Whitehorse; and to the respective mayors of  
25 Whitehorse, Carcross, and Skagway.  
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