

SENATE MEMORIAL NO. 7

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR; THE DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF TERRITORIES AND ISLAND POSSESSIONS; THE GENERAL MANAGER OF THE ALASKA RAILROAD AND THE DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM ALASKA:

Your Memorialist, the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska, in Nineteenth Regular Session assembled, respectfully represents that:

WHEREAS, the people of Alaska have been informed it is the policy of the Interior Department to suspend operations on the Seward to Portage portion of the Alaska Railroad and to cease maintenance of the right-of-way on that portion of the line as soon as the Turnagain Arm Highway is connected through to the Kenai Peninsula system, such connection expected to be accomplished in the fall of 1950; and,

WHEREAS, the interests of national defense and of the economic welfare of the Territory of Alaska require that alternative means of rail access to the communities of interior Alaska should be maintained in good condition; and,

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Act of March 12, 1914 authorizing construction of the Alaska Railroad is expressly declared therein as follows: "To aid in the development of agriculture or other resources of Alaska, and the settlement of the public lands therein, and . . . to provide transportation of coal for the Army, and Navy, transportation of troops, arms, munitions of war, the mails, and for other governmental and public uses and for the transportation of passengers and property", which general purpose should be strongly adhered to instead of thwarted by trying to put the Alaska Railroad on a commercially self-sustaining basis through imposition of rates that are so high as to retard development and cause shrinkage of traffic and general hardship, or through abandonment of the Seward end of said railroad because it is the money-losing segment of said railroad; and,

WHEREAS, the growing needs of the Territory demand that there should be not fewer, but more transportation facilities available in Alaska at rates comparable to those charged for similar transportation in the States;

NOW THEREFORE, your Memorialist, the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska, in Nineteenth Regular Session assembled, respectfully urges that the Department of the Interior, in consultation with national defense officials and representatives of the Territory of Alaska, re-examine immediately the expressed policy with respect to the Seward to Portage portion of the Alaska Railroad with the objective of completely rehabilitating that portion of the line for service to the defense establishment and the civilian economy of the Territory of Alaska and with the further objective of affording freight and passenger rates comparable to those charged for similar transportation in the States.

AND YOUR MEMORIALIST WILL EVER PRAY.

Passed by the Senate March 23, 1949.

Approved by the Governor March 24, 1949.