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GOVERNMENT RAILWAY OF ALASKA

SOME INTERESTING NOTES ON AN INSPECTION OF THE LOCATION OF THE ALASKA CENTRAL RAILWAY, ABANDONED FOR EIGHT YEARS, BUT CONSTRUCTION NOW RECOMMENCED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

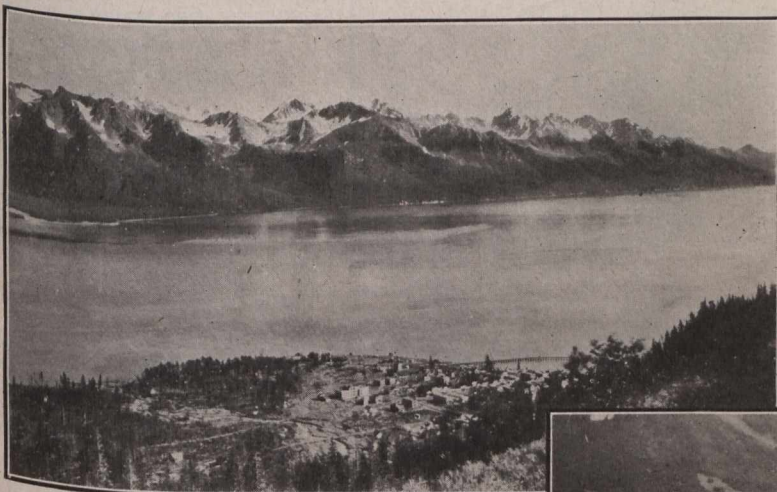
By W. R. C. MORRIS, M.Inst.C.E.

THE Alaska Central Railway was begun in 1902, but in 1907 the works were stopped on account of want of capital, and have since then been in the hands of the official receiver. After careful investigation into the best route for opening up the country, the United States government

on August 8th on S.S. "Pennsylvania" and touching at Nanaimo, Catella and Valdez, arrived at Seward on August 17th.

As mosquitoes were reported to be very bad in the interior, the season was too advanced to attempt the Cook Inlet later in the year, and stories were rife of the difficulties of travel by the usual boats, the delays caused by them, and the length of time they generally took, it was decided to go first to the coal fields, and to inspect the railway route on the return. A gasoline launch, "The Valdez," 12 tons burden with 16-h.p. engines, which had just been built, was chartered and we proceeded along the coast. Though the weather was perfect on leaving Seward, it came on wet and stormy and we did not reach Seldovia in Cook Inlet until August 21st, having kept behind every available island to get protection from the Pacific swell.

At Seldovia we watched with interest the

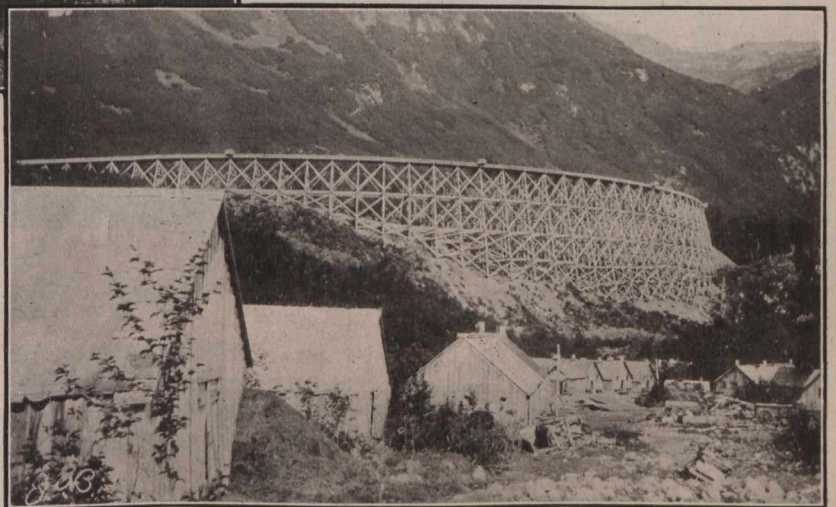


Town of Seward, Resurrection Bay, Southern Terminus of the Central Alaska Railway.

determined this year that the Seward to Fairbanks location was the most satisfactory one to fulfil all conditions, and they have consequently purchased the works, and last June they sent a large staff of engineers and assistants to recommence construction.

In 1908 it was the writer's good fortune, instructed by Sir Douglas Fox and Partners, of London, England, to visit Alaska, with the object of drawing up a report on the advisability, and cost, of constructing the railway (of which about 60 miles from tide-water were nearly completed), as far as the newly discovered Matanuska coal fields, some 184 miles in all, leaving the main line from Knik Area to Fairbanks for future consideration.

I left Vernon, B.C., in July, 1908, for Seattle, where I joined the rest of the party. We sailed from Seattle



Bridge at Mile 49, Central Alaska Railway, 1,000,000 Feet of Timber in its Construction.

Aleut Indians curing salmon and building canoes. The former cured us of any wish to eat this form of salmon in the future, as the fish being hung up in the open sun for drying purposes were covered with crawling maggots.