

ALASKA CAR FERRY

THE KETCHIKAN CHRONICLE makes no bones about the fact that it believes, unless something radical occurs in the coastwise shipping picture, the Territory of Alaska should go into the business of operating a car ferry some time next year. It is writing this explanation of the proposal so the public will know about the plan and can address to candidates for the territorial legislature a question as to how they feel about it.

These in brief are the reasons the Chronicle favors Alaska operating such a service for a few years until its feasibility can be proved or disproved:

1. The Haines highway into interior Alaska from Haines will be maintained. We have the word of Secretary Krug that this is a virtual certainty, for defense and development reasons. By the time the legislature meets in January, the Haines road will be a settled fact, one way or the other. The Skeena river highway and the Cariboo trail, connecting Vancouver with Prince Rupert over a scenic and inviting 1000-mile frontier road, also will be maintained and improved, bringing tourists to within 40 or 50 miles of the Alaska border.

2. That means that all Alaska needs to make the Skeena and Haines highways serve as great tourist attractions for the thousands who want to drive north is a ferry to close the 420-mile gap from Rupert to Haines. In the States a state highway commission would operate such a ferry, collect tolls from all tourists putting their cars aboard, make up the deficit if any from the fuel tax (Alaska will have about \$600,000 collected in its fuel tax by the end of this year) and clean up from the \$8 to \$10 per day each tourist spends while visiting in the state. This figure of expenditures is from the state of Oregon, whose advertising budget for tourists runs upward from \$100,000 per year, a fund expended by Harold B. Say, whose salary is \$8860 per year.

3. We imagine the tourist dollars would make up any operating loss on the ferries, since their purchases in Alaska would be considerable. But if they didn't, the saving to Southeastern Alaska citizens in freight charges would certainly make up any such loss, because the ferry would be equipped to handle railway cars on one deck along with automobiles. Since the three coastal steamer lines threaten to raise rates next year or go out of business in Alaska, the saving on freight could be considerable; more so if these three operators were to double their charges, as they propose.

4. The ferry would serve the Third and Fourth divisions, and even the Second division to some extent, because it would connect with the Alcan highway which in turn is linked with Anchorage, Fairbanks and Valdez. Thus about 1500 miles of beautiful highway in the interior would be made available to tourists. Bus lines could bring southbound Alaskans to Haines to meet the ferry, if they did not care to drive their own cars. But the ferry would allow Alaskans to drive outside and back again, visiting Southeastern Alaska towns going each way.

5. The ferry would benefit old and new industries in Southeastern Alaska, including those paper mills we are hoping to land here. It would make practical the investment of considerable money in lodges, cafes and service stations between Rupert and Circle hot springs. It would provide a beautiful loop trip by use of the Alcan highway going one way and the Haines-Rupert tieup the

other way. Continued use of the Alcan road is a military inevitability and tourists have been promised use of the road as soon as facilities can be built to care for them as they go north. It would be a shame to let a 420-mile water link bottleneck the most picturesque loop trip in North America.

6. If Alaska operated this ferry, British Columbia probably can be induced to improve the Skeena and Cariboo roads and to turn over right of way on the Haines cutoff. An idea of the travel over the ferry and highways can be gained from the fact that over a million autos tried to get onto the Alcan road this last summer and were refused permission. If each of them came north with three persons aboard and each person spent \$10 per day he spends elsewhere, the total money released in Alaska and Canada would be considerable. If it took three weeks for the round trip of said three million persons, total spending on the trip would be approximately \$630,000,000. And yet we Alaskans think the \$50,000,000 Uncle Sam is spending for Alaskan defense in the next two years is a lot of money.

7. Southeastern Alaska traditionally gets the short end of legislative spending on roads because it has few roads. This is its chance to catch up, yet benefit the rest of Alaska. The combined road and water trip, through the totemlands, evergreen forests and glacier area of Southeastern Alaska and the frontier road-land to the Midnight sun and the Yukon has tremendous pulling power for the tourists. Tourists are repeat business. They take no raw materials from the soil and it costs little to harvest their annual crop. Yet once this ferry and road route were opened, all the northwest would start boasting that it was the gateway to Alaska. Wealthy associations like the Evergreen Playground association, the Redwood Empire highway association, the Pacific Coast Highway association, the Oregon Coast Highway association, the Lincoln Highway association, the oil company travel and map agencies, the American Automobile association and others would begin routing tourists to Alaska. Our investment in hotels, airlines, cafes, auto courts and resorts would begin to zoom. We know of one small county, Lincoln, on the Oregon coast whose assessed valuation went up \$4,000,000 the first year after the Oregon Coast highway was paved. Its resort construction mushroomed again this year on the strength of the first season of post-war travel.

8. We propose that a committee of citizens such as the Alaska Development board operate the ferry system directly or on contact as a highway commission would in the states, paying so much per trip made, buying surplus military equipment where available for conversion, contracting with companies or individuals to operate the ships, and possibly agreeing to get out of business whenever private capital wished to take over. However, the Territory might wish to continue in the business, since it should be operated at low cost to encourage travel and bring in tourist money and the resultant development.

9. Local corporations might have to be formed to handle loading and unloading of railroad cars, construction of slips and operation of feeder barges. These details could be worked out later. The important thing is to assure tourists a through route, to assure Alaska cheap rates on imports and exports, and to encourage development of a great new tourist industry.

"A Wagon Road"

From The Victoria Colonist
A second automobile has succeeded in crossing Canada, from Halifax to Prince Rupert, on Canadian roads. The trip earned CPO. Leslie Paige and his wife a gold medal, presented by the Prince Rupert Public Relations Council—and it was worth a gold medal, as was the first trip which ended in Victoria not long ago. Looking the other way along the transit, however, is this not an outrageous state of affairs after the hundreds of millions of dollars that nine provinces and the Dominion have been spending on highways since Confederation?

Why must it be hailed as a feat taxing the limit of human endurance to drive an automobile across Canada on public highways? Is there none—not even the "Trans-Canada Highway"—which does cross Canada in a passable condition and in one piece? Six blowouts and two flat tires were mended during the Paige Expedition. If we may call it so, Gasoline consumption, with oil, was \$100 for the trip, so the car was in good shape if the roads were not.

British Columbia was promised "a wagon road" across Canada when this province entered Confederation in 1871. Two trans-continental railway systems, the rudiments of a trans-continental airway route, and much else has been achieved since, but we still are lacking "the wagon road" it would seem. How else would it be worth a gold medal to cross Canada once on Canadian roads from Halifax to Prince Rupert, with six blowouts and two flat tires? Every Public Works Department in the country should ask itself this question, because Confederation was a long, long time ago.

20 YEARS AGO

September 21, 1926

Several fishing boats near Haysport and at the Skeena mouth were sunk during a fierce gale which lashed the north coast during the night. At Canoe Pass a restaurant on a scow was driven ashore and several small boats were reported in trouble.

A. C. R. Yuill, Vancouver electrical engineer arrived in the city from Prince George to investigate the taking over of the city light and power facilities by the International Utilities Ltd. of New York.

Unsorted ore from the Patterson mine on Porcher Island assayed \$55 a ton, and the owners were reported to be planning further development. However, a lack of blasting powder handicapped operations, the owners said.

BOTHA STATUE UNVEILED
CAPETOWN (C)—A statue of General Louis Botha, South Africa's first prime minister, was unveiled here recently by his daughter, Mrs. Helen de Waal.

LIFE in this Prince Rupert

by BIDDEE JINKS

Whenever I think of the USS Tucson there immediately comes to mind the tragedy she vainly tried to avert the pity of the "Skeena Queen" winging above her in an impenetrable fog to sink a few moments later beneath the weight of fathoms of water.

Tragedy and death were not a new thing to many of the boys who walked the decks of the Tucson or made such a familiar sight walking jauntily along our streets flipping rhythmically the loose, sloppy trouser-width that narrowed into impeccable neatness over slim hips. Some bore marks of many months, or years, of service at sea (although the Tucson herself was used solely for training), but others seemed still to carry traces of fuzz on their fresh ruddy cheeks.

Talking to one of this number, I expected to head what some had already said: "This is my first trip, Ma'am. I've just been in six months"—this being said with inflections and variations, depending chiefly on whether 'home' was Ohio, Arizona, Louisiana, Texas—or the Bronx! The lad in question was from Washington. 'The lad' had been just three years in the Merchant Marine. At seventeen, he had literally seen the world and, to him, the names of these distant places where we would like to travel are merely ports of call.

He told of starving, cold groups huddled on the wharfs. Of coming back to ship with just enough clothes to cover "neckedness" but at other times they returned only barefoot! Shoes? People would give nearly anything they possessed for them. But not in Russia. "Well now, maybe they would have," he added, "but we didn't get to see. There were so many restrictions and guards that we never left ship in Russian harbors," he explained.

"Were you in the South Pacific?" I asked, hoping somehow that he hadn't.

"Yes, I was in part of that but never got a scratch." "You mean you were raided and all that?" trying to choose words that would carefully conceal how little I really knew of what he might have encountered.

"Yeah. They would sound the alarm and each of us would take our post. We'd really move. Smoke screens would be laid, but Gosh! our highest gun turrets always seemed to poke through!" He laughed at that one—now.

"Were you ever frightened?" "Scared? I'll say I was. So was everyone I bet. Some missed it once but got it next time. Ya' never knew when!" He kind of moved his shoulders. "I'll never forget the sound of those bombers."

"Not likely you will, kid," I said to myself, trying hard to think back, to imagine what it might feel like to be seventeen

or eighteen—or ye gods! any age—out in the South Pacific on a floating cache of destruction, fighting for your life, but all the same, the target of those screaming, diving, dealers of death.

I couldn't. "It must have been a happy day—the day you got home," said I, knowing that the joy of that reunion was also beyond my comprehension. He grinned: "I'll tell the cock-eyed world! It sure looked good to me. The country and all." We were standing on the Tucson and his glance swept from Tucks Inlet to the Metlakatla Passage. "I sure like it up here though," he said. "D'ya know, I think I'd like to live here."

Which saying voiced the opinion of nearly everyone on board. Said in different ways, for the aforementioned reason it would come: "This is a great country. First time I've been up this coast"—or "Helluva good country you've got up here" but they all concluded in one way or another with the same phrase—"Ah'm athinkin' Ah'd like t' live up heah!"

One found one disadvantage. He even mentioned it but then, he didn't know what he was talking about. I mean, he didn't know whether it was a fly, a mosquito, or an especially healthy wasp that struck occasionally. He did know that they shore can sting. Look at my neck—and he pointed to a distinctly inflamed area.

"Oh that!" I tittered carelessly. "That must have been a black fly that nipped you. We get used to them," I lied, glad I had worn slacks to cover my swollen legs.

He may have believed me. Or maybe he knew that my intentions were good. As good as is the relationship between our two nations: cordial and willing to be blind to the odd 'fly bite.' In this present world, rife with hatred and prejudice, that is no small thing.

The USS Tucson lay anchored at our docks one week; the HMCS Charlottetown, the next. Some of those on each know how to fight. They have been taught to fight but for a common cause. Wisdom and friendship has long moved the banner extending across our borders. In large lettering it reads: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace."

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