

TERRITORY OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES
JUNEAU, ALASKA

May 24, 1952

MEMORANDUM

TO: Phil R. Holdsworth, Commissioner of Mines
FROM: James A. Williams, Associate Mining Engineer
SUBJECT: Future Mining Possibilities in the Anchorage and Lower Railbelt Areas.

The Anchorage and lower railbelt areas have not many possibilities of future base metal mining. A few small copper prospects and an antimony showing are about all that are worthy of mention. The copper deposits are on Iron Creek, tributary to the Talkeetna River; on Moose Creek, tributary to the Matanuska River; and others on tributaries to the Susitna River. In the upper Susitna Basin, copper deposits have been unofficially reported, but not examined. The antimony deposit is on Antimony Creek, tributary to the East Fork of the Chulitna River.

Should lode gold mining again become profitable in Alaska, the Willow Creek District will most assuredly be back in production. The Willow Creek gold deposits are mesothermal veins on the border of a quartz diorite intrusion, and so far have been mined at relatively shallow depths--mostly stoping from above the main adits. It is believed that ore of the above character will be found at greater depths, which would indicate that the ore reserves are good. This district was producing at the rate of about \$1,800,000 per year just prior to the last war.

Small gold placers have operated in many places through the areas concerned. An improvement in the gold mining economy would bring many of them back into production again.

An interesting silver prospect is located on Portage Creek, nine miles east of the Chulitna Station on the Alaska Railroad. It is in a brecciated slate formation, and arsenopyrite, chalcopyrite, galena, and pyrite are associated with the pyrargyrite.

Coal mining will undoubtedly increase in the next few years if the indicated increasing demand is met. However, because of narrow and steeply dipping beds and difficult mining problems, production of the coal fields will not increase as rapidly as some agencies are predicting. Anthracite Ridge contains the highest grade of coal and may possibly see mining activity in the not-too-distant future.

A large anticline extending from the Alaska Peninsula through Cook Inlet and into the Nelchina District is regarded by petroleum geologists as having definite oil-bearing possibilities. The present oil-well drilling program at Katalla will probably attract more oil venture capital to the Territory, and the Cook Inlet structure would be the next logical location for oil exploration. The economy of the Territory would be helped by the discovery of large amounts of oil probably more than by any other industry that could be developed. The acquiring of cheaper fuel, the attracting of the working capital, and the taxes that would accrue to the Territory would be a terrific boost for Alaska as a whole and Anchorage in particular.

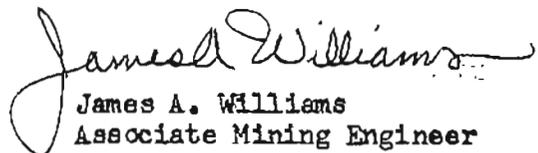
The obtaining of construction materials may create many mining operations in the areas concerned here. A deposit of

gypsum that may come into production is at Sheep Mountain, 112 miles from Anchorage on the Glenn Highway. There are approximately 311,000 indicated tons of gypsiferous rock containing 25% to 50% gypsum and 348,000 additional tons inferred in this deposit.

Also on the Glenn Highway at mile 67 is a formation of shale that could be used for the production of lightweight aggregate for concrete. Preliminary tests of the material have given excellent results. Another deposit of the same shale is located on mile 16 of the Matanuska Branch of the Alaska Railroad.

The large deposits of pumice in the Katmai National Monument that can be, and are, used for light weight aggregate are well known. This pumice is also suitable for the making of Pozzolan for Pozzolin-portland cement. Other cement materials can be mined in the near vicinity of Anchorage such as limestone and argillite at Potter. This latter material can also be used for the making of rock wool. Numerous shales and argillites exist that can be used for the manufacture of Haydite, a particular type of lightweight aggregate. Sand and gravel can be obtained almost everywhere in this part of the country.

Two clay pits are located near Anchorage from which suitable clay is, or can be, obtained for brick making. A clay deposit of suitable material also exists at Sheep Mountain, and a lower grade of clay, which would probably also be suitable, is at Chickaloon.


James A. Williams
Associate Mining Engineer