ALASKA GEN.

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TERRITORY OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF MINES

JUNEAU, ALASKA

May 1, 1952

MEMORANDUM

TO: Phil R. Holdsworth, Commissioner of Mines

FROM: James A. Williams, Associate Mining Engineer

SUBJECT: General information on limestone mining possibilities in southeastern Alaska.

In considering the mining possibilities of southeastern Alaska, the tremendous tonnages of easily available limestone are often overlooked. There are many large deposits of this material which are of suitable grade for use in the various industries such as cement and pulp manufacturing that utilize limestone. Accessible portions of these high-calcium deposits represent many millions of tons, and could be developed into an important part of the Territor's mining industry if the Pacific Coast users find that it is a competitive source.

The chief limestone deposits are in the southern part of the southeastern panhandle, mostly grouped around Dall and Prince of Wales Islands. A few good deposits are on Kuiu and Kupreanof Islands. The most recently mined deposit is at View Cove on Dall Island where the Superior Portland Cement Co. quarried limestone until about 1946. They mined approximately 1,000 tons per day and transported it to the States in their own ship, completing one trip per week. About 25,000,000 tons of limestone are available within a one-mile radius of this former operation. Other well-known locations with tonnages ranging from 3 to 200 million tons bring the total available high-calcium limestone up to more than 950 million tons.

This huge amount of limestone is all within one-mile radii of 14 or 15 harbors on the above-mentioned islands. This fact makes it accessible to salt-water transportation, which is seldom interrupted by weather conditions. It could be delivered to Pacific Coast industries without a rail or truck haul. Good limestone deposits are rather meager on the Pacific Coast, and most of the limestone for California's growing industries is brought from Nevada. The current California price for the untreated, crushed material is about $5 per ton.

The mining or quarrying operations can be carried out on a year-around basis. Production of a successful operation would have to be large, say about 500,000 tons per year, so a large and steady market would be necessary. Other industries besides pulp and cement which use limestone or its derivatives are agriculture (fertilizer), steel, building construction, glass, water treatment, chemical, and textile.

In building construction, marble is also used. There are at least two deposits of very excellent marble in southeastern Alaska which have been producers in the past. The marble used in the building of the Juneau Federal Building is Alaskan marble. However, the use of marble has been declining slowly for the last twenty years.

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