

# Radar Building Rising On Remote Alaska Peak

ANCHORAGE, June 4, (Special) — The wedge-edge of a mountain known as Sparrevohn in Alaska's Interior is the windy construction site for a complicated radar composite building.

The work is slated to be essentially completed this summer under the supervision of the U. S. Army Engineer District, Alaska, despite mountainous difficulties.

The sides slant down at 60 to 70 degree angles from the summit where the wind often

blasts at gale force summer or winter. A unique aspect of the job is the airborne supply involved. All equipment and materials must be flown to the base camp and then bucked to the top by trucks. The road switches back and forth getting grade for three miles.

## North of Anchorage

Sparrevohn is located about 300 miles north of Anchorage across the rugged Alaska mountain range and uninhabited tundra land. The project although remote and difficult is nothing new to the District which has built defense installations in remote places of Alaska during the past 13 years.

The composite building will be built near an existing radar station and provide quarters and facilities for U. S. Air Force personnel who staff the station and watch northern skies for the approach of unfriendly planes.

Besides the building, a 1,100,000 gallon insulated water tank and supply line will be installed by workmen this summer. Raber - Kief of Seattle, Washington, has a \$1,590,000 contract to do the work on the summit. Chris Berg Company of Seattle, also has a \$244,000 contract with the District to install a low-pressure heating plant at the Sparrevohn base camp.

## Furious Pace

During the next three months, work will proceed at a furious pace to meet the deadline imposed by a harsh climate. Over 275 plane-loads of supplies, each are about six tons, will be flown to the airstrip at the foot of the mountain. The strip is down between the base of the mountains, stuck like a piece of black tape.

Art Casler, Jr., a young general inspector who has worked for the district for six years, will be one of the men supervising construction. "The job will be done on time," he says.

"I've been on several sites and some of them were like this — hard as nails. We always made it."

Herb Marshall has been with the district for three years, coming from Colorado Springs, Colo. He is the project engineer. "We've got a difficult schedule," he admits. "The weather and wind have us in a straight jacket a lot of the time. It would be different if there was a road in here. When you depend on planes to airlift all your supplies, you get good delivery when the weather is permissible. Up here, you don't take bets on what the weather will be tomorrow morning."

## Contractor Fortunate

"The contractor has been fortunate this spring in getting a pretty good backup of supplies but it is still early in the season. We do expect to get done on time."

The airstrip slopes uphill and stops at the side of the mountain. It isn't the easiest place to land on. One pilot, Fred Frakes, does considerable flying for the District. He said, "It's not LaGuardia Airport, but it is as good as you can get around here without building a platform."

Frakes circled down between the mountains to lose altitude before landing. "It's kind of a leap - frog operation," he said, humping his Super-Widgeon over a hill. Frakes had the banana nose of the craft headed for the lower end of the strip.

## Moment of Truth

"This is the moment of truth," he remarked, evidently referring to the onrushing mountain. "You don't get another chance, ordinarily, if you miss the first one." Frakes set his plane down lightly. It lost momentum fast running up the 11 per cent grade.

"This strip gives you brakes when you need them landing and extra thrust taking off," Frakes said.

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