

THE AMERICAN ROLE IN DISASTER RELIEF

This booklet describing the help extended by the United States in cases of disasters abroad, was published in August 1970. It may be obtained from the address given below.

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LE ROLE DE L'AMERIQUE POUR L'AIDE EN CAS DE DESASTRES

Ce dépliant, publié en août 1970, décrit l'aide fournie par les Etats-Unis pour les désastres survenus hors de son territoire. Il peut être obtenu à :

Agency for International Development,
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20523,
U.S.A.

THE ALASKA EARTHQUAKE

A PROGRESS REPORT

279 Days of Federal Reconstruction Effort

This booklet may be obtained from:

Defence Printing Service,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

LE TREMBLEMENT DE TERRE EN ALASKA

UN RAPPORT DE SITUATION

279 jours de l'effort fédéral pour la reconstruction

Cet opuscule peut être obtenu à l'adresse ci-dessus

THE GREAT ALASKA EARTHQUAKE OF 1964I. Economic Effects of the Earthquake

By George W. Rogers,
University of Alaska

Although value of property damaged and destroyed was high in relation to Alaska's population and income base, recovery of the economy following the great Alaska earthquake of 1964 was rapid and the activities engendered gave employment and income an important boost over previous levels. Since the 1940's, the Alaska economy has been based on government or government-related activities. In 1963, for example, 58 per cent of average monthly employment was in government (civilian and military) and only 5.8 per cent in commodity-producing industries other than construction. There was no need to restore the industrial plant, therefore, before the economy could resume functioning, and the largest private industry (construction) was immediately expanded. The effort was substantially financed or underwritten by the federal government. The emergency and reconstruction work completed between April 1964 and September 1966 pumped \$321 million of new federal money into the Alaska economy, money which would not have been available in the absence of the disaster. The government of the State of Alaska received extra fiscal aid at a critical stage in its early career by the extension of the 5-year federal transitional-grants program provided under the 1959 Alaska Omnibus Act and by the establishment of the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska.

The impact of the 1964 disaster on the total economy appeared to be beneficial, but this benefit differed among communities and areas within the state. As the principal and largest center of government and construction in the state, the Anchorage area benefited more than any other from the reconstruction activities. As the only major port of entry in operation immediately after the disaster, the Port of Anchorage captured the bulk of the freight movement into the south central and interior Alaska from the rival ports of Seward, Whittier, and Valdez, and retained this new business during the ensuing years. In contrast, despite rebuilding and substantial improvement of its port facilities, the population and economy of Seward underwent an immediate and continuing decline attributable to the 1964 disaster and to the aftermath of freight loss. Valdez gave no evidence of growth following its complete rebuilding at a new location. The natural-resource harvesting and processing communities in south central Alaska were either unaffected or made rapid recovery following the disaster. They may even have benefited from the replacement of obsolete gear and plant under favorable terms of financing.

II. Urban Planning in the Reconstruction

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Because of the need for immediate disaster relief and for rapid reconstruction following the earthquake, and in view of the limited resources in Alaska for handling these tremendous tasks, considerable federal aid was needed. This extensive aid was provided through existing programs, by special legislation, and through executive powers.

An effort was made while repairing the earthquake damage to plan, rebuild, and reorganize the area to make the damaged communities safer, economically sounder, and more attractive. Some of these efforts succeeded, but some were defeated by individual communities anxious to resume their customary activities with the minimum of delay.

As a generalization for the handling of disasters, the Alaska experience suggests that prevention, immediate relief, and long-term recovery should be considered separately. Efforts should be coordinated by a single state planning agency, with local and federal assistance.

The full report may be obtained from:

Printing and Publishing Office,
National Academy of Sciences,
2101 Constitution Avenue,
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20418,
U.S.A.

N A T O U N C L A S S I F I E D

PERU EARTHQUAKE

May 31, 1970

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This report may be available at:

Disaster Relief Coordinator,
Agency for International Development,
WASHINGTON, D.C.