

School for St. Paul Island

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has opened a new school on St. Paul Island, one of the two inhabited Pribilof Islands, about 900 miles southwest of Anchorage in the Bering Sea. It will provide education for about 140 Aleut students, in its eight grades.

The Pribilof Islands are the land habitat of the world's largest herds of northern fur seals, and are administered by NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service.

The nearest school to St. Paul is on St. George Island, about 40 miles away, housing about 50 Aleut students in eight grades.

William L. Peck, director of the Pribilof Island Program, said the new school replaces a deteriorating three-story structure built in 1930 and enlarged in

(Continued on page 5)

New School for St. Paul Island . . .

(Continued from page 1)

1949.

The old structure was condemned by the Alaska State Fire Marshal in 1969, and kept open only by the addition of outside fire escapes and other emergency measures.

By special arrangement with the State of Alaska, funds were appropriated for construction and made available to the Federal Government subject to repayment on an amortization schedule.

The new building is a one-story, 20,000-square-foot structure containing nine classrooms, a gymnasium, science and home economics rooms, manual training shop, and library.

The building is of weather and fire-resistant construction suitable to the isolated location. Architectural design and construction inspection was provided by Alaska's Department of Public Works.

Mr. Peck added that all labor and materials were supplied by the National Marine Fisheries Service and supplies were transported on the NOAA/NMFS vessel Pribilof. Resident Aleuts employed by NMFS accomplished the construction and off-island workmen were required only for specialized jobs, principally electrical.

The residents of St. Paul urged

that the new school be adequate to provide education through the 10th grade. Nine grades will be taught this school year, and a tenth grade is planned for the 1974-1975 school year.

Previously only eight grades were taught at the St. Paul school, and students went to the mainland for further education.

Mr. Peck said that the school is operated by the State of Alaska under an agreement requiring the state to provide education to the natives of the islands.

He said that while total enrollment figures at St. Paul are not yet available, it is expected that approximately 140 students will be taught by nine teachers.

The state-operated school system of Alaska is reimbursed by the Federal Government for operating the Pribilof Island schools. The cost of operating both schools is currently being negotiated with Alaska.