

Committee meets-

The Bush Justice

The Bush Justice Implementation Committee met at Ft. Yukon and Anchorage January 10-13. Based on suggestions at a community meeting held for the Committee, Captain James D. Vaden, Commander "I" Detachment, Alaska State Troopers, Fairbanks volunteer to use his resources to assist the villages around Ft. Yukon in obtaining radio communications with Ft. Yukon.

Presently these villages (Chalkyitsik, Birch Creek, Beaver, Stevens Village, Venetie, Circle, Arctic Village etc.) have to rely on hand delivered notes to bush pilots to request a Trooper for their village.

After a report from the Bush Justice staff and based on his own investigation, Captain Vaden also ordered the Ft. Yukon Trooper to make regular and more frequent visits to those villages surrounding Ft. Yukon than in the past.

Because of numerous complaints about the Ft. Yukon Trooper's job performance brought out in the Bush Justice Committee's investigations, Captain Vaden also informed the public that thorough investigation would be conducted into that matter and the Bush Justice Committee staff informed of the results.

In other business, the Committee approved publication of the Bush Justice staff's Dillingham area report on justice. The report is written by Evan C. McKenzie, Field Representative for the Bush Justice Project and is based on an eight-day investigation of criminal justice problems in Dillingham, Manokotak, and Togiak made by Field Representatives Joseph Curran and Evan McKenzie.

The report includes specific recommendations for improvement of justice delivery in the Dillingham area and is especially critical of the

Dillingham Magistrate's job performance.

The field investigation revealed overwhelming criticism of the Magistrate and substantial allegations of denials of due process, racial bias, and handling of juvenile offenders, to mention a few.

The report requests that the Judicial Qualifications Commission investigate the allegations turned up against the Magistrate in Dillingham.

The report also recommends that a Fish and Game bilingual education program, similar to that set up in Bethel by the Department of Fish and Game biologists be established in Dillingham.

Because the Dillingham Fish and Wildlife Protection Officer admitted destroying a fisherman's net as "punishment" for a Fish and Wildlife violation, and because of other complaints that the Fish and Wildlife Officer cited people for mere technical violations of the law, the report also recommended that necessary disciplinary action be taken against the Dillingham Officer and that he be better advised in the performance of his duties.

The Bush Justice Project has recently received endorsement of their Law Writing and Justice Education Project for next year from the Governor's Commission on the Administration of Justice. The grant must still be approved by Federal authorities in Seattle under the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

If approved (and that appears likely) five villages will be selected for the pilot project. The project will use video tape and other oral methods to determine exactly what sort of justice education village people want.

The Bush Justice staff will then develop educational materials to meet the expressed needs of the village people. The

project will also assist these five villages in writing village laws that are based on Native culture and values.

Joe Curran and Evan McKenzie, Bush Justice Field Workers, are now in the village of Manokotak, near Dillingham, for about teays to begin the first phase of this project and to wind up the final phase of this year's project.