

# LAST WEEK IN ALASKA

A weekly summary of Alaska News prepared for  
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**KOTZEBUE SEN. FRANK FERGUSON** HAS introduced two bills dealing with the bowhead whaling issue. One measure would set up a board to conduct a study of the number of bowheads that do exist, and the second measure would appropriate \$250,000 for the study. Ferguson says the research may uncover that there are more whales than actually realized at this time. And he says that may lead the International Whaling Commission to expand its present 12 whale quota for Alaska Eskimos.

**THE STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT** have reached tentative agreement on procedures for a joint oil and gas lease sale scheduled in the Beaufort Sea in December of 1979. When Governor Hammond and Interior Secretary Andrus sign the measure, the call for nomination of areas to be included in the sale will go out to the public.

**CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG TOLD A** Congressional oversight hearing last month he is tired of the inconsistency in the way the Federal Government regards Alaska. The Republican representative noted that the Federal Government regards Alaska as a state when it is convenient and as a territory when that better suits its purpose. "If they are going to treat us like a foreign nation," Young said, "maybe it would be better for us to secede from the Union because if we're not going to be treated like a state, what's the use of being one. They are actually classifying us with Italy, Sicily, Germany." Young was testifying on a proposal by the Department of Defense to change from the current rotation basis to a low bid procedure for awarding contracts for moving household goods. Alaskan movers have said the switch will drive two-thirds of them out of business.

**THE STATE HOUSE HAS OVERWHELMINGLY** voted to voluntarily observe a budget ceiling for fiscal 1979 of \$946.6 million. That means the projected budget surplus from fiscal 1978 would not be touched. Rep. Clark Gruening led the floor debate for the issue. He said legislators have the option of amending the resolution, but they would be "embarrassed" if that happens.

**REPUBLICAN REP. MIKE BIERNE** of Anchorage announced this week that he will throw his hat in the ring for statewide office later this month. Bierne says he prefers to run for lieutenant governor, but if none of the announced gubernatorial candidates is willing to give his whole hearted support to Bierne's homestead initiative, Bierne says he will run for governor himself.

**DEMOCRATIC REP. STEVE COWPER** OF Fairbanks officially filed as a candidate for Congress last week. Cowper will probably face off against Anchorage Democrat Sen. Pat Rodey, who has announced his intentions to run in the primary. Incumbent Republican Congressman Don Young has announced his intention to run for reelection. Republican legislators asked Cowper to resign from his post as chairman of the Alaska Lands D-2 Steering Council following Cowper's announcement. Minority Leader Rick Urion says Cowper violates the spirit of the law which says statewide candidates must resign interim committees. The Legislative Affairs Council has ruled the Steering Council is not an interim committee. But Cowper says he will resign if the council votes that he should.

**NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH MAYOR EBEN** Hopson kicked Barrow Public Radio Station Manager Bill Weeks out of the Assembly chambers last week as the battle continued over Weeks' broadcasting of the assembly meetings. Weeks maintains they are public hearings. But Hopson says it is a matter of common courtesy to ask permission before broadcasting the meetings.

**TWENTY-TWO MEMBERS OF THE** State House have sponsored two measures that would take all 60 members of the State Legislature to Washington, D.C. to lobby on the d-2 measure. The trip, planned for the first week of April, would cost \$34,000.

