



THIS SMALL, rundown building on Cushman and 4th Street in Fairbanks is presently the home of the Fairbanks Native Welcome Center.

The Center is due to move to larger quarters this month. See story on Page 5.

—Photo by MADELYN SHULMAN

# Fairbanks Native Welcome Center Plans Move

## New Center Location Will be 102 Lacey St.

The Fairbanks Native Welcome Center is planning a move—to newer and larger quarters to house its expanding program of services to urban Eskimos and Indians.

"It's a lot nicer place," explains Center director Clara Carroll about the move. "Hopefully," she says, "we'll be in our new building by the end of the month."

Presently housed in a flood damaged, decrepit building which is due for destruction this year, the Center has finally found a new location.

When necessary alterations are complete, the Welcome Center will move to a former print shop and restaurant several blocks away.

"The place was recently the 'Burlap Bucket' restaurant, explained Miss Carroll. It used to be the 'Lettershop' (a commercial printing firm in Fairbanks.)

The new building, at 102 Lacey Street, will house a recreation room, play area and office space for the nine offices for programs already run by the Fairbanks Native Association.

The Native Association, which runs the Welcome Center, also operates employment, youth, job training and Native economic development organizations.

Last summer, the Fairbanks Native Welcome Center was one of four urban Indian centers in the country awarded grants as a "model center" to tackle problems of urban Indians.

The program is jointly sponsored by several federal agencies. Fairbanks is slated to receive over \$207,000 for this year, and is still awaiting the funds. Till they arrive, they cannot begin their planned expanded youth outreach, studies of urban Native problems and other programs.

Most of the new building will remain set up much as its former restaurant tenants left it. The large recreation room will maintain its chairs and tables.

"There will be space for a permanent arts and crafts exhibit and workroom," explained Miss Carroll. "We also have a play

area in the back for our pool table and space for all of the offices."

Recently, the Welcome Center received a \$35,000 grant from OEO. The grant was speeded up for this year to tide the Center over till the model center program is set up. They were in desperate need of money to pay operating expenses.

For the present, the Native Association is leasing the Lacey Street quarters, with an option to buy.

"We hope to be able to raise the money to buy the building," explained Miss Carroll.

Presently, the Native Welcome Center operates an arts and crafts workshop, emergency relief and counseling service, and may contract BIA employment services. It houses various Native activities, including an AA group, courses in Athabascan languages and a youth activities program.

The Native Association has been handling recruiting for various manpower training programs, as well as operating its own economic corporation—DNI.

For the present, Welcome Center employees demonstrated their peeling walls, crowded and dark building, tiny antiquated bathroom, with obvious pleasure in the prospect of leaving it all behind.

"You'll have to use a flash," explained volunteer worker Stephanie Rogers, to the Tundra Times photographer. An amateur photographer, she takes many pictures of Welcome Center activities.

"There's so little light in here it practically doesn't register on the meter," she explained.

Young people at the center were enthusiastic about the prospective move. Plans are under way for an extensive youth program, utilizing the larger facilities.

The Native population of Fairbanks is plagued by alcoholism, bad housing, poverty and health problems. Hopefully, Native center will be able to become a real and constructive center for Native community life in a strange city.