



TOP HEW OFFICIAL IN ALASKA—Bernard E. Kelly, newly-appointed director of Region X of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare toured Alaska last week. The other states in Region X are Washington, Idaho, and Oregon.

HEW Installs Regional Office in Seattle

There is probably no family in Alaska untouched by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, and, therefore, probably few people who would oppose efforts by the department to give people more for their money.

These efforts were spoken of last week by a newly appointed official of the Department of HEW as he stopped in Fairbanks while touring the State.

Bernard E. Kelly, regional director for the states of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, noted last week that efforts are now underway to decentralize the numerous HEW programs and "give people more for their money."

One of 10 regional directors in the nation, Kelly explained that he and about 17 staff members of the regional office were

visiting Alaska to meet the people and gain an overall impression of the State.

The impression received, he

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HEW Seattle Office...

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said, will aid the region in making decisions that are not remote to Alaska.

The regional office, for the four states was set up this month in Seattle where about 350 are employed. Before, Alaska was served by a regional office in San Francisco.

The change was made, the director said, in order to bring the regional office closer to Alaska and the other three states in Region X.

As a result, the lines of communication between the government and the people will be shorter, giving the people less staff members to go through.

Also, Kelly continued, "Our people will be able to visit Alaska more."

Currently, he explained, the department employs about 400 people in Alaska and a total of about 1600 in the region.

In Alaska a few of the programs funded by HEW are Medicare, Vocational Rehabilitation, Venereal Disease programs, Headstart, Alaska Native Health Service, Social Security, and Manpower Development Training programs. About 240 programs are sponsored by the department nationwide.

More and more, Kelly said, the department is administering these programs in conjunction

with a state agency, tribal council, or city which matches federal money with its own funds.

The trend, he continued, is the result of an order from the President on March 28, 1969, to decentralize federal structures. The creation of the Seattle office is one evidence of this trend.

Each regional office, Kelly said, has been given more and more authority and has been told to "get the decisions out of the State and to the community."

"We want to get citizen involvement and let them make the decisions."

"We want decisions to filter up from the grassroots instead of from the top down," he added.

Operating on this philosophy, HEW has been giving state or local agencies federal money to use as they see fit, within certain limitations.

The next step, he said, currently under consideration by Congress, would be for the federal government to remove the limitations.

The director and staff members visited Barrow, Kotzebue, Nome, Bethel, Anchorage, and Fairbanks on their tour. Several planned trips to a couple of villages.