

Colletta unveils alcohol package to counter Hammond

Thirteen bills designed to make the battle against alcoholism in Alaska a winning proposition have been introduced in the legislature by Sen. Mike Colletta of Anchorage. The bills were drafted by his Special Committee on Alcohol and Alcohol-Related Problems after several months of public hearings last summer on the state's number one health problem.

Most of Colletta's bills were referred to Sen. Glenn Hackney's Health, Education and Social Services Committee and he indicated that hearings on the bills would be scheduled soon.

Colletta's package differs in several respects from that introduced by Gov. Jay Hammond a little more than a year ago. Hammond feels that state-financed programs should not be initiated or expanded unless corresponding new revenues are available; he advocates an excise tax on alcoholic beverages to raise about \$10.5 million to beef up state alcoholism programs. Colletta, who opposes creation

of the excise tax, advocates increasing the amount committed to state alcohol programs by \$8.2 million and simply drawing the increase from the state's General Fund.

Both Colletta and Hammond have proposed a mechanism for local residents to block the issuance of renewal or liquor licenses in their area, effectively making a community dry. Hammond's legislation goes somewhat further in that it authorizes the state to reimburse communities for liquor revenues lost if they vote dry. The bills differ in designating areas, outside incorporated community boundaries, that may be considered impacted by a liquor establishment; Hammond calls for a ten-mile radius while Colletta stops at a five-mile radius.

Other important features of Colletta's package include:

--A bill adding to the powers of the state Office of Alcoholism, including accelerating the process of identifying organiza-

tions eligible for funding to fight alcoholism, developing alcoholism education materials, setting standards for training paraprofessional alcoholism workers, improving training for alcoholism workers. This bill would also create a revolving loan fund to support social

activities at which no alcohol is served or consumed. Hammond's bill addressing the powers of the Office of Alcoholism is less detailed; its chief feature is that it authorizes the Office to actually license treatment facilities under state guidelines.

--A bill regarding a grants-in-

aid program to funnel alcoholism monies to communities on the basis of need and with a view to setting up comprehensive treatment programs.

--A bill directing the state to develop separate standards for alcoholism facilities in rural areas.