

# Alaska's Poverty Programs Back in Business

The Alaska State Community Action Program (ASCAP) is in business again.

Gov. William Egan signed papers this week accepting a \$96,000 grant from the Office of Economic Opportunity.

The governor's action automatically removes control of the state's poverty programs from the governor's office and puts them under ASCAP which is administered by a board of trustees.

Acceptance of the grant

means that several war on poverty programs, including Head Start, can now get underway.

In the last several weeks pressure from villages all over the state has been brought to bear on the governor to accept the grant and start the poverty programs rolling again.

In order to obtain the grant Alaskan villages and towns raised over \$24,000 in cash and "in kind" services to

provide the 10 per cent matching funds required by OEO. The grant will be used to hire an administrative staff for ASCAP. The staff will assume fiscal responsibility for poverty programs while the board of trustees, composed of state and federal officials and representatives of Alaska's low income group, will have final say on recommending which poverty program funds to apply for. The 10 per cent matching

funds were raised on a private basis after it was discovered the state could not provide them without consent from the State Legislature which at this time is not in session.

The ASCAP grant controversy wasn't settled without some head-rolling.

Al Fothergill, director of the state Office of Economic Opportunity, and supporter of the move to make ASCAP an independent agency, resigned

his position this week in a blizzard of charges and counter-charges.

In his letter of resignation to Gov. Egan, Fothergill wrote, "there is little I can do on behalf of the economically disadvantaged people of Alaska as a member of your organization."

At the same time Egan blasted Fothergill for what he termed fiscal mismanagement. Egan told the Tundra

(Continued on Page 4)

# ASCAP to Administer War on Poverty Programs...

Times that Fothergill had actually been under suspension from his job for about a week previous to his resignation.

Charges were made that Fothergill over-spent his budget while in the state job. In answer, Fothergill said budget management was up to the Department of Administration and Floyd Guertin, director.

Fothergill also charged that Jeff Barry, Administrative assistant to the governor, had worked to prevent

ASCAP from taking over the OEO poverty programs in the state. Fothergill said Barry believed Native people, many of whom sit on the ASCAP board, "not capable of making policy decisions" in respect to anti-poverty programs.

Ralph Perdue, president of ASCAP's board of trustees since the program was formed, was replaced by Dan Lisbonie from Pt. Hope. Perdue, a prime mover in ASCAP's struggle for independence, will retain his position on

the board.

He told the Tundra Times today he was "pretty well satisfied" with the final outcome of the controversy. Perdue had charged a "power play" by Barry and named the executive assistant as the principal cause of confusion in the move toward independence.

Gov. Egan told the Tundra Times the state would still have an Office of Technical Assistance funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity to help poverty groups

throughout the state.

Egan said he would probably appoint a temporary director to administer the remaining funds in this office.

Perdue said the previous director, Fothergill, would be the "temporary" director of the now-independent ASCAP "until the board can send out application forms."

Egan said "one thing still concerns me. On many occasions we (the state) has had to advance funds to keep poverty programs going because of a delay in sending federal funds to us. At one time we had to take \$150,000 from the state general fund. This lag could be real bad. You probably couldn't expect a bank to do something like that. I hope it gets straightened out."

The governor also said he hoped "ASCAP would operate on a statewide basis" but did not elaborate on what he meant by the remark.