

Could Get Them Between 1971 and 1972—

Rural Areas to Get 1200 Houses

By JOHN SACKETT

In a large conference in Anchorage on Sunday afternoon, approximately 500 people learned that Alaska's rural areas will definitely receive 1200 houses within 1971-1972.

Don Wright, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives and Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) coordinated the conference by gathering the top officials of all interested federal agencies in Washington to formulate ideas and coordinate the basic plans for construction on the homes.

In an interview with Senator Stevens previous to the conference he stated that contrary to anything heard otherwise the money for Alaska's rural houses is approved and is in the budget so that initial planning and building by the native people can be-

gin soon.

Included in the conference as speakers were William Dockser of HUD in Washington, D.C.; Oscar Pedersen, regional director of HUD in Seattle; Robert Butler, executive director of Alaska State Housing Authority; Mr. Del Larson, Chief of Indian Health Facilities out of Washington; Dr. Jim Wilson, director of

OEO's Indian Programs in Washington, D.C.; Ronald Peak BIA Housing Program Director and Senator Ted Stevens.

Don Wright opened the conference by stressing the need for better housing and that poor housing had been the burden of the native people for centuries. He stressed the fact that we as

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Alaskans were starting from scratch and inadequate ground work because it had been a short time since Pres. Nixon had approved the 1200 units for Alaska.

He stated that the Nixon administration has repeatedly stressed the concept of total involvement of the native people in all the planning and building of their homes. This will include the design and selection of sites so as to make this a permanent part of the native community.

At a two hour work session previous to the conference Robert Butler, executive director of ASHA stated that they had agreed that the Alaska Federation of Natives and ASHA were forming a partnership in building and that he was "convinced that this new partnership will lead to the development of better

houses for all Alaskans."

ASHA will take over all aspects of the housing from HUD and the AFN will be the exclusive and prime consultant with authority to select the villages sites and the number of homes to be placed in each village.

They will also select the type of homes, the developers, and the type of work subject to the approval of HUD and ASHA. In addition Mr. Butler stated that AFN can be the consultant in the management of the homes after completion.

Dr. Wilson, who is the director of OEO's Indian Programs stressed to the other panelists and different agencies that the knowledge of the natives with regard to building is available and that this should be utilized.

He showed that the Navajos in the Western states, a group who had the lowest illiteracy and highest death rate, were able to manage and become the developer for housing in their area and even continue their operations into building other structures such as shopping centers.

Today they employ planners, consultants, and are reinvesting their profits to better their houses by making additions to them.

A note of caution was stressed by the Public Health Service as to their capabilities of gearing up in time to put in water and sewer systems. Mr Larsen, of the Indian Health Service stated that due to the beginning of the fiscal year in a few weeks and the red tape in Wash. the implementation of water and sewer systems may take a few years.

William Dockser, a member of HUD from Washington said that President Nixon has approved 8000 units of housing nationwide and that 6,000 units are planned for building during this year. Of this amount Alaska will receive 1200 homes.

This housing program is to be

on a loan to make available to the rural area the opportunity to build where few other existing programs are capable. In addition, the repayment will be scheduled on the basis of ability to pay so as not to further create hardships on the rural people.