

# **Native Housing Timetable Raises Doubts**

**KOTZEBUE**--Can a newly funded federal home building project for Alaskan natives get off the ground on schedule? George Ashby, head of the Nome area Bureau of Indian Affairs Housing Program, has his doubts.

"I'd hate to see the Alaska Federation of Natives get into something and have it backfire on them. Trying to get the thing off the ground in July like the report says may present some problems. I think Mr. Wright (Don Wright, federation president) has some ideas about the program that are not correct."

Early this month Ashby met

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# Housing Program...

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with representatives from AFN and the Alaskan State Housing Authority to consider the plan to build 1,200 homes for native people. According to the dictates of that meeting the BIA is supposed to provide technical assistance and funds for planning, but to date Ashby hasn't been approached on specifics.

"The AFN has a \$60,000 OEO grant to hire planning staff immediately," he reported. Three people at \$18,000. I think they're going to be the most important people they'll ever hire. They can make or break the program. I'm for it. But I'm afraid its moving too fast."

In 1969 Ashby's district was funded to build 20 homes in Kotzebue and more in Elim, Stevens Village, Brevig Mission, Shaktoolik and Stebbins. It's a self-help project by which welfare recipients can help construct their own homes. Buildings are 50 by 100 feet and cost in the neighborhood of \$11,500.

The bulk of construction is now done but Ashby readily

admits he still has things to learn about Arctic building.

"We're building three more homes in Stevens Village as kind of an experiment, trying to figure out how to do away with condensation problems," he said. "They will be basically the same floor plan but we're adding air space, varying side wall insulation, making one six inches, one four ... then keeping track to see if more or less heating is needed."

Condensation problems are by no means limited to BIA housing.

"I had a native in here the other day who had built himself a \$30,000 house and he asked me, 'How do I keep the water out? It's all over the floors and we can't stop it.'"

Planning also worries him on the federal program.

"I don't know how they can tell so quickly what they can do so soon. We spent more than a year planning with the villages to get their matching and machinery lined up. And we're still working on it."