

Notti Watches FAA Action at Hearing

By **EMIL NOTTI**
President

Alaska Federation of Natives

The state director for the Bureau of Land Management, Burton Silcock, deserves a round of applause for sending 320 native men to fight fires in the South 48. For years, men have been coming to Alaska to fight fires but this is the first time that any Alaska natives have gone south to fight fires.

Because of a disastrous fishing season and a poor construction season, the money these men bring back to the villages will mean a great deal this winter.

The reports coming back from the fire line is that these men are doing an outstanding job.

OVERPOPULATION?

There is a great deal of concern about overpopulation. Because there is worry of overpopulation, there are those who push for a solution to the problem. In the Western and Northern parts of Alaska, there is an estimated 30,000 people mostly Indian and Eskimo.

In an area where it is possible to travel hundreds of miles and never see a village, it seems strange that there is concern for overpopulation. But there are outsiders in the villages who are advising the use of the "pill" and in some areas there are many young women using the "pill" for no medical reason other than that they were told that they should.

Unless the person specifically asks for birth control help, I don't think it is anyone's privilege to advise for its use. For those who advocate its use and indiscriminately dispense these pills, I feel it is too bad that their parents did not feel the way they do.

\$21-PER-DAY WITNESSES

On August 19, I sat in all day on hearings and watched government machinery in action trying to grind up one

small independent operator. The air taxi operator was Billy Gregorioff. The government machine was the Federal Aviation Administration.

Billy was charged by the FAA with several counts of operating outside of established safety regulations.

The frightening thing about the proceedings was the expense the government went through to try to prove their point.

The FAA brought 15 witnesses to Anchorage at \$21 per day for five days. They brought a witness from as far away as California. To line up witnesses and obtain statements, the FAA chartered a twin engine Widgeon at \$105 per hour.

To bring their witnesses to Anchorage, they used a FAA DC3 and chartered a Cessna 402 which rents for \$135 per hour. The FAA sent a plane down on another trip to pick up Billy Gregorioff and his witnesses. There were six in the party.

The pilot stated that he carried more than four, he would be overloaded. After a radio call to Anchorage, he carried all six. An interesting question is—did the FAA fly out of Illiamna overloaded outside of established safety limits?

The FAA also remoted the Illiamna FSS to King Salmon for five days during the hearings while their people were in Anchorage. By not having people at the station, did they jeopardize air safety in the area? If not, maybe they don't need anyone there at all.

The question here seems to be where is the line between the FAA protecting the traveling public and to what expense will the FAA go to protect their employees who became involved in personal grudges in the bush.

From what I say, it appears that a personal grudge precipitated the unnecessary investigation and expense to the government.