

**888 Cases Per 100,000—**

# **Alaska Leads Nation in Venereal Diseases**

Alaska leads the nation in reported gonorrhea case-rate, with 888 cases reported per

100,000 population, according to Frederick McGinnis, Commissioner of Health & Welfare.

In the first six months of 1970, the number of reported cases of gonorrhea constituted over 4% of the young-adult pop-

ulation aged 20 to 24.

Since it is estimated that only one case in nine is reported, the true incidence may be as high as 36%.

The number of cases of infectious syphilis in Alaska has also jumped precipitously, said the Commissioner. During the first five months of 1971 there were 29 cases, nearly six times as many as in the equivalent period last year.

Untreated syphilis may cause permanent disability or insanity, while untreated or inadequately treated gonorrhea may lead to sterility, arthritis, or blindness, according to Dr. Elizabeth Price, Chief of the Com-

munity Health Section of the Department of Health & Welfare.

While syphilis has previously occurred in urban centers, recently cases have been found in small communities and more remote sections of the state.

About half the cases of gonorrhea have been reported in Anchorage but a high incidence has occurred also in Bethel, Nome, Kodiak, and Barrow.

A major attack on gonorrhea is being launched in Anchorage, which has recently contracted with the Federal Government for a \$153,000 impact campaign to try to cut the incidence of venereal disease in the Greater Anchorage Area Borough.