

When a thing is funny, search it for a hidden truth.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

COMSAT Urged to Operate Distance Communications

WASHINGTON—Senator E. L. (Bob) Bartlett announced that the Communications Satellite Corporation has launched a study of the Alaska Communication System. In a letter dated December 8, Senator Bartlett urged COMSAT to undertake an in-depth study to determine if it would be possible for COMSAT to operate long distance communication facilities in Alaska.

The request was made in connection with enactment of Bartlett's bill authorizing the sale of the government-owned long-lines communication facilities in the state.

James McCormack, chairman of the COMSAT board of directors, wrote the Senator on January 11 that a team of specialists was already reviewing inter- and intrastate commercial communications traffic and the facilities to be offered for sale.

The team is headed by Edwin J. Istvan, assistant to McCormack for special activities.

McCormack reported that the COMSAT team anticipated a visit to Alaska at an early date.

In making his suggestion that COMSAT study the Alaska communication problems, Senator Bartlett noted that satellites offered one way of providing badly-needed communication services at greatly reduced rates.

He said that it "would be extremely shortsighted if COMSAT were to help bring improved communications to an emerging nation without first having attempted to do the same for Alaska."

Senator Bartlett suggested that if the study demonstrated that it would be feasible for COMSAT to become involved in the Alaska communications industry, the corporation should become one of the firms bidding for the system.

Bartlett stressed that the public interest must be served in any sale of ACS and that interest could best be served by seeking bids and advice from as wide a segment of the communications industry as possible.

"What we need is the advice of the experts in the field on how best to bring the most modern communications technology to Alaska as soon as possible," he said.

Canada Indians Get Over \$1 Mil. Housing

(Special to the TUNDRA TIMES)
By BETZI WOODMAN

Nearly \$1½ million is being spent this year to assist Indians to build houses on Indian reserves (reservations) in Ontario, Canada, according to Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing.

"We are deeply concerned about the shortage of adequate housing on many of these reserves," Laing says, "and we have allocated \$600,000 more than we did last year to meet this need."

In a recent six-month period 138 houses were completed and another 208 are under construction. Many of the homes being built are part of an overall development plan designed to provide for future housing construction and the installation of water, sewage and hydro facilities on these reserves.

At the same time, home-making courses for the wives are being set up to help the people ensure proper maintenance of the homes once they are occupied.

Much still remains to be done, Laing admits, "but the progress which is being made is encouraging the bands (tribes) to participate more fully in the development of their reserves."

Six Ontario bands have decided to take advantage of the Capital Grants program recently launched by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

To meet the requirements of the program, these bands have developed the administrative and financial systems necessary to allow them to take over full responsibility for the housing needs of their reserves.

Branch grants supply the working capital for this program. With this money the band council on each reserve is constructing homes for sale or rent to the other band members.

This procedure gives the

bands, for the first time, access to the revenues from the housing program.

These bands will thus be in a position to build the homes they need when the funds requested from the Branch have been used up.

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