

Protests Hiring of Non-Alaskans

John Shively, Executive Director of Rural Alaska Community Action Program, has protested the hiring of non-Alaskans for work in Bristol Bay canneries in a letter to Governor William Egan.

Mr. Shively pointed out that his understanding is that the canneries plan to hire a number of people from Seattle and he was aware of at least thirty workers who had already been brought in to the Bristol Bay area.

The hiring of these non-Alaskans was to be at the expense of people from the Bristol Bay and Bethel area who tradi-

tionally have worked in the canneries. Governor Egan has been asked to do everything in his power to prevent the canneries from bringing in workers from outside the state.

Mr. Robert Willard, Director of the State Human Rights Commission, has also protested the bringing in of persons from outside the state to work in the canneries.

In telegrams to Governor Egan and Commissioner of Labor Benson, Mr. Willard has asked for immediate action to prevent the loss of jobs for Alaska residents.

Work in the canneries is one of the few forms of employment open to Native people living in the rural areas. Unemployment rates run between 80-90% in the villages in the winter time, and summer cannery work offers the one opportunity for Natives to obtain a cash income.

Mr. Shively stated that, "By depriving Alaskans of jobs in the canneries, the canned salmon industry is forcing Alaska Natives onto welfare. Alaska's Natives are being deprived of their livelihood and the state needs to do everything in its power to prevent this."