

# Barrow Welfare Service Installed

Barrow gained a new resident last week and, as a result, welfare services there should soon show improvements.

The resident—Miss Lois Conway—will open the first district welfare office for the Barrow area, where she will work full time in all areas of public assistance.

Previously, Barrow has been served by welfare workers from the northern regional office.

Headquartered in Fairbanks, they traveled to Barrow staying a week or two each visit.

Having been in Alaska about two years, Miss Conway first served as the district representative in Nome and later as a representative for Barrow.

The area that will be covered by the new office includes Wainwright and Barter Island in addition to Barrow. She estimated that in the area there are about 140 cases—a number which she expects to increase.

Housed in a two-bedroom pre-fab building across the street from the Polar Bear Theater, the

office will contain forms to handle public assistance and child welfare.

Miss Conway said that she was excited about getting to know the people and becoming a part of the village.

Her previous visits as a caseworker, she said, placed her in contact with particular cases but allowed little time for social services such as working with children in their own homes and counseling.

She hopes now to be able to do more work in these areas.

Also, she added, now the people will know whom to contact and where to go for assistance.

One of the main problems in Barrow, she said, is trying to stretch the public assistance payments because the cost of living there is extremely high.

A little more money is allowed for basic needs in the northern regions than in the southern parts of the state, she explained, and this allowance, along with other expenses such as fuel, determine the total grant to an individual or family.

But the maximum total grant possible, she added, does not vary from region to region and the people in northern Alaska sometimes have trouble making ends meet on this amount.

In Barrow, she added, food costs are extremely high and in Wainwright fuel is very expensive.

To assist in the work, Miss Conway will be appointing a Food Stamp agent to distribute and collect applications and will be hiring a clerk-typist.