

Croft tells plan for creating new jobs

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Chancy Croft says the next governor can reduce unemployment in the state by creating 7,000 jobs for Alaskans in the next fiscal year.

Using an unnoticed fund for capital improvement projects passed in the closing hours of the 1978 legislature, Croft said the state's unemployment rate could be reduced by as much as one-third over the next two years.

Originally part of legislation drafted by Senator George Hohman's (D-Bethel) Permanent Fund Committee, the "Capital Outlay Account" was tacked on to another bill in free conference committee and passed by the legislature as the session ended last June.

Croft said, "like the Permanent Fund, the account will start receiving 25 percent of the

state's oil, gas and mineral royalties as of October 23, 1978. Unlike the Permanent Fund, this money is to be channeled directly into the economy through the construction of capital projects ... such as airports, roads, schools and so forth."

Croft said a smaller fund was also established that will collect five percent of the state's royalties for building projects that generate electricity.

"Together these accounts will receive about \$150 million during the next fiscal year and will be receiving over \$200 million annually by fiscal year 1982. That money is to be used for capital improvements on a pay-as-you-go cash basis."

Croft said the legislation calls

for a six-year plan for capital improvements throughout the state. "I believe that a plan should have three main objectives," Croft said. "First, meeting the current and future needs for certain facilities in all areas of the state; secondly, short-term stimulation of the economy through the creation of temporary jobs; and thirdly, the creation of permanent jobs in the private sector."

Croft said hearings would have to be held at the local level in all areas of the state to properly determine the need and desirability of certain capital projects. "The first items up for discussion should be those capital projects the Governor cut from the budget."