

LAST WEEK IN ALASKA

A weekly summary of Alaska News prepared for
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NINETEEN PUBLIC HEARINGS WILL BE held throughout the state in the next 60 days to gather recommendations on the state selection of up to 30 million acres of land. Governor Hammond said the selections will come from a 45 million acre pool of Native over-selections. Hammond said the public hearings fulfill a commitment he made to include Alaskans in the land selection process.

PACIFIC WESTERN AIRLINES IN CANADA broke its agreement to train non-striking Wien pilots at their Vancouver, British Columbia test site. Air Line Pilots Association spokesman Gary Mercer said the deal was broken after striking Wien pilots protested. "As a result of our discussions with local labor leaders in Vancouver," said Mercer, "and with the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association, in addition to our intentions to picket Pacific Western's destinations in the United States, the company decided to withdraw its plans for training Wien's scabs."

THE HOUSE APPROVED A SUPPLEMENTAL appropriation to the Governor's Office of Telecommunications to fund the state's participation in the RCA Alascom's intrastate rate increase proceeding. G.O.T. Director Bob Walp said if they had not intervened in the case, the state would have had a much bigger supplemental just to pay its phone bill. "We are largely responsible for the fact that the Public Utilities Commission rejected the RCA application for an interim increase," explained Walp. "If that application had been approved, it would have cost the users of telephone services within Alaska."

STATE SENATOR FRANK FERGUSON OF Kotzebue has introduced two bills dealing with the bowhead whale issue. One measure would establish a board to conduct a study on the number of bowheads in existence. The second appropriates \$250,000 for the study. Ferguson said Eskimo whalers have told him they will observe the quota set by the International Whaling Commission while the study is being conducted.

STATE REPRESENTATIVE RED SWANSON OF Nenana has filed for the office of Lieutenant Governor. Swanson will be a candidate in the Democratic primary. "Make no mistake," Swanson commented, "the central issue of this campaign will be the Alaska economy and the role of the state government in providing expanding opportunity through the private sector for all Alaskans."

THREE TERM DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR BILL Egan will not be a candidate this year. This will be the first election in which Egan was not the Democratic candidate for governor. Egan endorsed State Senator Jalmar Kerttula of Palmer. Senator Chancy Croft of Anchorage, also a candidate for the Democratic nomination, let it be known, however, that Kerttula is in for a fight. Referring to Egan's decision not to run, Croft said, "The torch of leadership has been passed. The question is to whom."

REPUBLICAN GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE WALTER HICKEL has been touring the state. In Ketchikan, Hickel urged that action on d-2 lands be delayed until what he called the "fear, ignorance and emotionalism that is motivating decision makers" is removed. "Alaska's d-2 lands will not be lost if Congress doesn't act," said Hickel. "The lands will only be lost if Congress does act." Hickel's comments drew immediate response from environmentalists. Tom Rivell, spokesman for the Alaska Center for the Environment, replied, "It is...gross deception to claim that these lands will not be lost if Congress doesn't act. The truth of the matter is that they would revert to the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management and could be opened up to indiscriminate development."

THE NORTH PACIFIC MANAGEMENT COUNCIL has rejected a recommendation from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to increase the Japanese quota for Tanner crabs. Last year the Japanese took 12,500 metric tons. They had requested 20,000 tons this year. The council authorized 15,000.

THE U.S. SENATE HAS PASSED a bill by Senator Ted Stevens allowing early retirement by non-Indian employees of the B.I.A. and Indian Health Service. The bill will allow an easier and quicker transition under the 1974 Supreme Court decision upholding preferential hiring and promotion of Indians within the two agencies.

COMMISSIONER OF NATURAL RESOURCES BOB LeResche says there is no ready market in Japan for Alaska Petrochemical products. Alaska Petrochemical Company, one of the companies proposing to buy the state's royalty oil, has based its proposal on a Japanese market being available by 1980. But after visiting Japan and talking with government and industry leaders, LeResche said he doesn't think the idea is viable. "The Japanese industry is unutilized now," LeResche said, "and probably will be until about 1985...there are future possibilities for import from Alaska. But, in general, the time (is) too early to commit."