

# Edwardson Appointed Organization Specialist

Charles Edwardson, Jr. of Barrow was appointed last Monday as the Community Organization Specialist for the Office of Economic Opportunity by Al Fothergill, Director of OEO in Juneau.

Edwardson's job will be to organize village cooperatives in Northwestern Alaska and probably in Southwestern or the Kuskokwim Delta area.

He recently traveled to Canada along with Al Fothergill to attend the Canadian Eskimo cooperatives convention and to research on cooperative concept in that country.

"On the trip to Canada, we learned that we in Alaska are far behind in development of Native economy," said Edwardson. "They have been very successful in the cooperative movement back there. In establishing co-ops here in

Alaska, we hope to follow the Canadian concept."

For the last several years, Canadian cooperatives have been engaged in fisheries, logging, boat building, handicrafts, carvings, fur marketing, retail store operations, tourist operations, and other endeavors. The cooperative movement there has now become over a million dollar a year business in some 22 Eskimo communities.

Edwardson took exception to the operation of cooperatives by the Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association (ANICA).

"In ANICA for instance, the co-ops have been established without giving the Native people a clear picture of what the co-ops are all about," Edwardson said. "They have

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# *Specialist . . .*

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not schooled them nor did they give them the basic cooperative concept.

"ANICA cooperatives have existed in Alaska without success. The cooperative members and the Board of Directors do not know their duties to run successful co-ops. There are one or two successful ones because the people have gone out on their own and learned the cooperative principals."

Edwardson indicated that once cooperative managers are picked, they might be sent to cooperative management schools somewhere. He expects to travel extensively on his organizational efforts.

Edwardson is a graduate of Mt. Edgecumbe High School where he was active in student affairs and where he earned membership in the National Honor Society. He was editor of Channel Light, the school publication, when it won the Columbia Scholastic Award and Quill and Scroll Award for excellence.

He is married to Wilma, an Indian girl from Ketchikan. They have two children, a boy and a girl.

His headquarters are at Box 1152, Office of Economic Opportunity, Fairbanks, Alaska.