

Commission to Leave Wednesday On Pribilof Island Investigation

A five-member commission appointed by Governor William A. Egan will leave Anchorage Wednesday for a week-long investigation of conditions on the Pribilof Islands.

Willard Bowman, Executive Director of the State Human Rights Commission, visited St. Paul Island in March to determine if there is any basis to charges the residents are being mistreated and deprived of their rights. On his return, he recommended to the Governor that

a full review by a commission be made.

Secretary of State Hugh J. Wade was named by Governor Egan to head the commission and Bowman was appointed a member to represent the state.

Roy Peratrovich, tribal affairs officer for the Bureau of Indian Affairs at Juneau and a member of the State Human Rights Commission, and James C. Rettie, Office of the Secretary of the Interior, will represent the federal government.

Howard Rock, editor of the Tundra Times, of Fairbanks, Alaska, was named the fifth member of the commission to represent the public.

The Tundra Times in a series of articles beginning in November last year described how the Pribilofians, over the years had been institutionalized by the federal government. It contended the people were living in servitude since they worked for a common master (the federal government), could not own land, were subject to unduly restrictive and archaic regulations, and had been impaired in arriving at their own destiny. These characteristics were not those of free men, the paper contended.

The five advisers to the commission are:

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PRIBILOF ISLAND FUR SEALS being driven by Aleut workmen on St. Paul Island from "hauling ground" to "killing field." —Photo Courtesy Dept. of Interior

Pribilof...

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C. Doyle Innis, Chief of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries' Personnel Management Branch.

C. Howard Baltzo, Director of the Bureau's Marine Mammal Resources program.

State Senator Harold Hansen, Chairman of the Senate Local Government Committee.

State Representative Lucille Pinkerton, Chairman of House Health, Welfare and Education Committee.

James Matthews, State Leader, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska.

The group will visit both St. George and St. Paul islands. A vessel will be available to take the commission to St. George which does not have an airstrip.

All news media are invited to send representatives to the islands with the investigating group but must bear their own expenses.