

Benson Maintains--

State Inspection Practices Not Shoddy

Although Alaska's industrial death and accident rates are among the highest in the nation State Commissioner of Labor Henry Benson maintains that the cause is not, as two state labor leaders have maintained shoddy state inspection practices.

Last Thursday, Pat O'Malley president of the Western Alaska Building Trades Council, and James Moody, chairman of the Anchorage Joint Crafts Council, blasted the Department of Labor's enforcement division for "incompetence." They were joined in their charges by Chad Moore, director of the Division of Safety under the Hickel administration.

In a joint statement they said the death and accident rate on state inspected jobs was running three times above the national average due to the department "sluffing off safety jobs to political buddies."

Commissioner Henry Benson responded Sunday to the charges by denying all charges of incompetence in his department and labeling them a "contrived controversy."

The number of industrial accidents in Alaska is higher than the rest of the nation, Benson maintained, but for many reasons.

National Bureau of Labor statistics show a national frequency rate of 13.9 in on-site accidents in 1969 and 1970 compared with 21.9 in Alaska in 1969 and 16.42 in 1970. 1971 statistics are still being compiled.

The number of industrial accidents in Alaska is affected by the fact that most of the state's

Job Opening

The Anchorage area office of the U.S. Civil Service Commission has announced acceptance of applications for general maintenance positions.

Salaries range between \$5.67 and \$6.46 per hour. No written test is required.

Additional information about these positions may be obtained from the Anchorage Area Office, 632 Sixth Avenue; Anchorage, Alaska 99501 or from the Fairbanks Job Information Center, 529 Fifth Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

NAACP Backs Natives..

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as; (The state of mind of a bigot, also behavior or beliefs insuing from such a state of mind) Webster defines Bigot as (one obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his own church, party, belief, or opinion) or one that will not change his mind regardless of the facts confronting him.

We don't believe that our Native and part Native citizens have equal rights nor equal opportunities although they do hold public office in our local and State government by appointment as well as by election.

So the Natives have changed their minds in the last twenty years. This is no more that most intelligent people do with the knowledge of new developments. When we were all taught that the atom was the smallest part of anything, we all believed it until new knowledge proved that the atom could be split. We all changed our minds and accepted the fact.

It is a pity that some people think that the native leaders are sowing seeds which can only lead to division among Alaskans. (Although we believe that the natives feel that a division has always existed) by asking for what is rightfully theirs.

If the Land Claims had been settled back in 1951, or before, the natives would have probably asked for a lot less as a settlement and everyone would have been happy, because by the time Alaska became a State, the natives would have had all their lands selected, which probably would have been less than forty million acres, and a lot less than a Billion dollars.

We the Fairbanks Chapter of the NAACP urge all Alaskans who believe that the native and part native people have the right to any land claims, also have the right to make the first selection on lands due them, to write, or wire our representatives in the Congress of the United States insisting on the Natives right to make the first selection on lands due them.

industries are high hazard, Benson said.

"We don't have anything to offset it but retail trade."

Employees killed in the crash of an Alaska Airlines plane while returning to Juneau on official business are also included in the statistics, Benson said.

Under the 1971 Occupational Safety and Health Act, authored by U.S. Sen. Harrison Williams (D-NJ) and U.S. Rep. William Steiger (R-Wis) all states will now be required to record all accidents related to history not just on the job, Benson said.

In Fairbanks, a representative of the Department of Labor pointed out the high rate of air travel in Alaska's industries—with workers being shipped back and forth to and from oil fields, canneries, lumbering sites, etc.

This, he explained, and cold weather hazards tend to inflate the accident rate in Alaska.

Commissioner Benson released the names of 11 permanent inspectors and five temporary men. Nine of the permanent inspectors were hired before the Governor took office, pointed out Governor Egan's staff.

The others were required to possess the same extensive background in labor and industry, spokesmen maintained and temporary staffers are hired on the proviso they successfully complete a six month training program.

Oil Companies Oppose Borough...

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the oil wealth. Also, they claimed the proposed borough did not satisfy "the letter or the spirit of the state constitution."

The Alaska Oil and Gas Association already has filed an opinion with the State Local Affairs Agency flatly opposing creation of the North Slope Borough.

In the crowded multipurpose room of the Barrow BIA school the oil men stuck out as the only obvious opposition.

In the paper he delivered before Local Boundary Commissioners John Hedland of Anchorage, Bob Korn of Cordova, Gary Ackerman of Fairbanks and Al Shontz of Barrow, BP's F. Harlan Flint held that the formation of the North Slope Borough would deliver oil reve-

to provide his food," Hopson testified. "Our apples, our oranges and our potatoes were running around all over the country and we had to follow them if we wanted to eat."

"The struggle of survival is based on the fact that we needed the whole Arctic Slope to survive," he told the commission as he received the only ovation of the evening.

The four member commission began its hearing Thursday night and continued into the wee hours of Friday so that the commissioners would be able to travel to Fairbanks.

Five North Slope communities, comprising a mostly Eskimo population of less than 5,000 are seeking the vast borough north of the Brooks Range. Through this form of government, claims the Arctic Slope Native Association, the revenues of the region's vast mineral resources could be harnessed to provide much needed education, community services and land use planning.

Without a borough form of government, testified Barrow city manager Jack Chenoweth, a city such as Barrow faces a bleak future. Its budget of \$120,000—\$70,000 from sales tax and \$50,000 matching funds—per year is earmarked to the last cent. There is no room for expansion or for additional services, he said.

In 1970 Barrow sought control of liquor licenses in the city

nues to the five specified native villages to the exclusion of other equally poor rural areas.

"The tax inequity created by a North Slope Borough would be so great that by one means or another the State would ultimately be obliged to correct the situation. Such a course would be painful and disruptive of itself and would be likely to take the form of additional taxes to correct the inequity."

"They (the oil companies) are getting around to telling us they'll accept a state property tax in exchange for having no viable local governments," one Local Affairs Agency official commented on the oil company testimony.

"It's easier for them to deal with Juneau than with a strong local government."

Other hearing observers suggested that the oil companies do not want to have to deal with a local Eskimo government with strong powers.

In their testimony they claimed the Prudhoe Bay facilities have no contract with the other slope communities. Twenty five men, however, are flown from Barrow to Prudhoe Bay on a permanent basis to work on the oil fields. Local officials are trying to push the companies into more local hire.

According to city manager Jack Chenoweth, much of the economy of Barrow is based on cash, though there is extensive subsistence hunting. The city boasts an Arctic Research Institute, employment on the DEW line, Barrow utilities and other local industry.

The record of the North Slope Borough hearings will be kept open for 20 days after last Thursday. After that, the Local Boundary Commission will decide whether or not to approve the petition. If their decision is favorable, the Lt. Governor must set an election date within 30 days after he receives their support. If the people of the area vote to approve the borough will become an entity on the day the election results are certified.

Begging for Land...

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to obtain additional revenue, but the state legislature turned down that proposal. The city then voted to go "dry."

Meanwhile, the people of Barrow and neighboring Eskimo communities of Wainwright, Point Hope, Anaktuvuk Pass and Kaktovik live in conditions which are in stark contrast to urban Alaska.

Governmental agencies which move in complete with modern utilities, only serve to point out the deprivation of the local residents.

In their questioning of witnesses, the commissioners focused on the viability of communications in the North Slope area and on the possibilities of changing the proposed boundaries to encompass other native communities.

"The only concentrated opposition to the proposal appears to come from the oil companies," said Local Affairs Agency head Byron Mallott as the hearings concluded.

His agency's report, submitted to the Boundary Commission shortly before Thanksgiving states, he said, the proposed borough fulfilled all of the specified constitutional conditions for an organized first-class borough. The Local Affairs Agency report declined, however, to make any recommendations for or against the petition.

According to Title 7 of the State constitution a first class borough must fulfill several conditions.

"The population...shall be interrelated and integrated as to its social, cultural and economic activities..."

"The boundaries...shall include all areas necessary and proper for the full development

Land Provisions...

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the conference committee.

A resolution reaffirming the AFN position was presented to the conferees Friday. It stated, "Resolved; that the AFN Board of Directors encourages the Alaska Delegation to the conference on H.R. 10367 to continue meeting in order to reach agreement, but that they should not support any bill this session unless it contains a meaningful selections of non-contiguous lands ahead of the state as part of a 40 million acre settlement."

With the AFN maintaining a firm position, and the conferees deciding the land selection formula, all parties concerned now anticipate a statement from the State of Alaska.

Governor Egan, it is believed, arrived in Washington on Thursday afternoon. He has not made contact with the AFN nor the Alaska congressional delegation, and nor has he registered in any major Washington hotel.

The consensus among Alaskans here is that the Governor is "hiding out." Native spokesman fear that the Governor is unavailable for negotiations with any Alaska group.

Most observers agree that a compromise has already been engineered within the conference committee. Clearly, the only reason for a failure to achieve a bill this session would occur if the Governor chooses not to endorse the land formula.

If there is to be no bill this year, Natives and congressional sources indicate, the blame would rest upon the unwillingness of Governor Egan to accept that compromise.

"He said that his door would always be open," said one Native leader, "Now, we can't even find his door."

The conference committee

of integrated local government services, but shall exclude all areas such as military reservations, glaciers, icecaps and uninhabited and unused lands, unless such areas are necessary or desirable for integrated local government.

"The economy...shall encompass a trading area with the human and financial resources capable of providing an adequate level of governmental services."

"The transportation facilities in the area...shall be of such unified nature as to facilitate the communication and exchange necessary for the development of integrated local government and a community of interests."

The Arctic Slope Native Association, led by President Joseph Uppikson and legal counselor Frederick Paul sought to prove at the hearing that the North Slope met these conditions as well as any other borough in the state.

Transportation and communication, they claimed, are equally difficult in such large boroughs as Matanuska-Susitna, Juneau Fairbanks, etc. A borough on the North Slope, they held, must develop on unique lines, with the airplane as its chief form of transportation.

Even though the borough would assume control of local education the Bureau of Indian Affairs would not pull out immediately, testified BIA Superintendent Wallace Craig.

During the next five years there would be an orderly transition. The Bureau would probably go ahead with its plans to build a regional high school in Barrow and other facilities.

Afterwards, federal support would continue through Johnson O'Malley funds.

was in recess until last Monday, December 6.

The corporate structure provisions of the bill are yet to be determined. A 12 region concept is expected to be adopted. A statewide corporation, as well as national and urban corporations, are still under consideration.

The status of reservations remains undetermined by the conferees. Allotments filed by Natives since the implementation of the land freeze will probably be processed and issued. The revenue sharing provision of both the Senate and House bills will almost certainly be approved.

It appears unlikely that the conference committee will allow selections in Petroleum Reserve No. 4 or in wildlife refuges. In lieu selections will probably be provided for those villages affected from lands located elsewhere.

AFN president Don Wright predicted that the conference will be concluded and final approval by Congress of the claims legislation will occur before the week is out.

Wright has tentatively called for the AFN convention to reconvene during the week of December 13 through December 18.

"I want to see us take all the time that is necessary until everyone's input is satisfied and all the questions are answered," said Wright.

An AFN financial crisis was averted Friday when the Tlingit and Haida Central Council voted to guarantee an additional loan of \$150,000. The council surprised AFN board members by producing that resolution even before the request for additional funds was made by the AFN.