

STUDY DUBBED AS FIREWORKS

Government Programs In Section 2-C Cited

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ANCHORAGE — The study of government programs which effect Alaska Natives, as called for in section 2-c of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, was compared last week to a fireworks display by the head of the firm which conducted the study in Alaska.

A report on the study was made before the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission meeting held here Thursday and Friday. Lee Gorsuch, representing Roy Sampsel of the U.S. Department of Interior, explained that what began with a loud pop could now be compared to a janitor's report "complete with a note at the end saying to remember to turn out the lights."

The 2-c firecracker was a particular type of display which began with the lighting of a long fuse. That was done by Congress, according to Gorsuch, when it put the 2-c issue in the claims act.

Next there was a bang when Interior had discussions of the study as being a termination point for government programs to Alaska Natives, followed by a silent period when Alaska Native leaders and government representatives began meeting and attempting to put something together.

"In May the explosion occurred," Gorsuch explained. "That's when the meetings broke down and everybody walked out and said they needed more time."

Robert R. Nathan and Associates, with cooperation from other organizations, then came into the picture just as "the stars were falling and turning dark." Now they have completed the three-part survey and it will be available in mid-February.

The first part of the study considers the social-economic status of Alaska Natives. The second is a analyzation of programs which have impact on Alaska Natives, and the last part is a survey of what Native people feel about government services to them and their general situation.

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"There was a certain element of pessimism exhibited by most Native people regarding the continued existence of subsistence lifestyles," Gorsuch said.

Some 1,500 Alaska Native Adults were surveyed by the study. In addition, 188 village leaders are represented in the study as well as 36 statewide leaders.

While Native people living in rural areas of the state are generally worse off economically than they were in 1971, when the

claims act was settled, they seem to appreciate their lifestyle more than some might expect, according to Gorsuch. He indicated that because present economic systems hurt the person on the bottom of the scale, Alaska Natives will naturally suffer more as the general economic picture becomes more dim.

"However it became clear to us that Native village lifestyle will be a continuing phenomenon if the Native who lives there has anything to say about it," he said.