

ALSC Battles to Improve . . .

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Tok, near the Canadian border, as far north as Barrow.

These remote areas have high travel costs and high cost of living. The staff attorney in Nome, for example, has been working for almost 50 per cent lower salary than the Public Defender in Nome. Idealism can go a long way, but like bubblegum, eventually it gets stretched pretty thin.

While recognizing that there are other poor in the state of Alaska besides the Alaskan Native (whites, blacks, Spanish-American, and Philipinos) a large bulk of the work of Alaska Legal Services is within the Native community.

Alaska has a population of over 60,000 Natives; 80 per cent live in rural locations separated by immense distances; 80 to 90 per cent of the Natives are eligible for the services of Alaska Legal Services.

"One of the biggest myths that exists in Washington, D.C.," said one of the staff attorneys, "is that suddenly the Alaskan Land Claims has made every Native rich. This is hardly the case."

"Alaska is a developing state and the issue is development for whom and at what cost to whom. Will the poor of Alaska reap their share of development or will the poor pay the cost of development with no return?"

Harry Carter Resigns . . .

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served copies of Wright's suit, that Carter offered his resignation.

Carter has been associated with the native land claims movement in Alaska since the mid-1960's.

In addition to his work with the statewide organization his position has involved him in its several programs funded through grants and contracts.

He helped organize the Kodiak Area Native Association and has been a strong proponent of centralizing services of mutual need to the 12 regional corporations.

In a special land claims settlement issue of the Tundra Times, Dec. 17, 1971, Carter spoke out as executive director of the old A.F.N. asking native people for "continued patience and understanding as we continue to serve you."

"Each village and each region is faced with the awesome problem of planning and formulating management and development capabilities without duplicating efforts and unnecessarily wasting money through competition. There will be continuing attempts to divide us and thereby conjure us by elimination of our funds and forcing the sale of our remaining lands and removal of our human rights," Carter warned.

Almost immediately with the start of 1971 came the clouds of controversy as the AFN board attempted to rechart its goals and objectives for implementation of a bill they had fought for five years.

In the interim before the storm had passed Wright was ousted and several regions threatened verbally or through their continued absence at board meetings that they might pull out.

The first post-convention meeting of 1972 was by comparison smooth sailing, with Joseph Uppicksoun, president of the Arctic Slope Regional Corp., chairing the session.

By the end of the two day meeting, the board had elected Robert Nick, representative of the Calista Corp., as the new

"Alaska is a state whose land is being carved up by many interests," states Wolfe's proposal to the federal agency. "The poor must not be lost in the shuffle."

Few agencies seek involvement from the people they serve as zealously as Alaska Legal Services.

Through the mukluk telephone (word of mouth, up and down the rivers), through personal contact with Alaska Legal Service personnel as they travel into remote areas, through the assistance of Rural CAP, and through other means of publicity, more and more people in bush are becoming aware of the legal help available through the program.

This has produced a "client population up in arms demanding our services in hundreds of places at once."

Many of the items included in the new budget are the direct outcome of ideas contributed by the poor themselves. Seeking even greater input from their clients, Alaska Legal Services is asking for funds to set up client advisory boards in twenty villages.

Meeting four times a year, these boards would play a strong role in setting priorities and needs and in seeing that the program is people-oriented and not bureaucracy-oriented.

chairman of the board, Uppicksoun, the vice chairman, filled in the role in the absence of Nick.

Henry Eaton, of Kodiak representing Koniag, Inc., was elected secretary of the corporation. Frances Degnan of Unalakleet, now with the Alaska native enrollment office, served as secretary to the old AFN board.

In other action the board:

— Passed a resolution urging the Department of Housing and Urban Development to approve the bid packages of the Alaska Federation of Natives housing authority and authorization to begin advertising for developers.

The resolution asked HUD to waive the financial feasibility requirement for management for low rent housing programs in Alaska as previously agreed to by HUD.

— Instructed Hensley that his prime role as president would be directly with implementation of the land claims act.

— Further instructed Hensley to investigate the area of satellite communications and send his comments to Gov. William A. Egan and Alaska's congressional delegation.

— Agreed to continue operating present social service programs within AFN, including Health rights.

— Left standing for the next AFN, Inc. board meeting Dec. 16-17 action on an annual budget, as well as the dates for the 1973 AFN, Inc. convention.

Of these actions, the housing move was the most serious. Whether HUD will agree with the resolution, "is an open question," Hensley said.

"I think we'll have a better idea this week. We are hoping there will be a favorable decision on the part of region ten to go ahead with planning for the coming summer."

"We have to go to bid by early December to get anything built, some 14 native villages under the AFN housing program. Plus three separate regional groups are now working on housing construction plans for the summer of 1973."

Another direct link to people will be a program establishing eight community aides, bi-lingual para-legal personnel who will assist staff lawyers in gathering data, conducting interviews, preparing cases, and translating for clients who do not speak English.

There are five community aides now in training and staff attorneys are enthusiastic about the advantages of Native-born and Native-speaking para-legals. In time, a promising crop of full-fledged Native attorneys may develop out of this program.

The Alaska Legal Service Corporation has championed many causes which have benefited the poor in general and the Alaskan Native in particular.

In the last session of the Legislature, they fought for and won oil spill liability legislation which guarantees recovery for losses to persons using the land for subsistence purposes.

They have fought for important rights within the fishing industry and assisted villagers in forming co-ops.

They have intervened in public utility rate increases and in the administration of housing authorities to protect the consumer.

Just last month, Alaska Legal Services brought action in the Superior Court of Anchorage on behalf of all Native children in the state.

"Alaska," they stated, "is an education system which yanks children from their home villages and sends them thousands of miles away to BIA high schools or boarding schools in urban areas."

The case seeks to affirm the right to every child to receive a high-school education where he lives.

Alaska Legal Services has an impressive record of successes, both in the courts and in the legislature. Every Alaska Supreme Court decision in a case involving Alaska Legal Services except one has been decided in favor of ALSC's client.

Just as they are concerned with the schoolchild being transported long distances to school, Alaska Legal Services berates the similar plight of the citizen en route to trial.

One of their prime objectives is "to drag the justice system to the places that need justice rather than dragging the citizen to the justice system hundreds to thousands of miles away."

In an effort to improve conditions, Alaska Legal Services seeks to hold a new Bush Justice Conference. Such a conference was held a few years ago "with a dramatic increase in understanding and commitment to solving rural problems, particularly those relating to the justice system."

"The time is right for another such conference," states the proposal.

It commends the judiciary of Alaska as being "forward-looking and intelligent" and Alaska as being "a gigantic place where the legal structure and relationships are just being formed."

"Before they're cemented in precedent," it argues, "the poor must be heard."

The budget submitted in Washington was worked out by dedicated people who obviously, in the light of their pay scale, are not working for personal profit. They are people concerned with their clients, the poor of the state of Alaska.

Unless the increase in budget they request is granted, Alaska Legal Services will not be able to meet the urgent demands of their growing number of clients. The dedication will wane, the imagination will fail, and the bubblegum will finally break.

Begich's Office --

Statement Regarding Status

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The office of Alaska Congressman Nick Begich issued a formal statement regarding the status of the office and its continuing operation.

The statement was issued by Gene Kennedy, Administrative Assistant to Congressman Nick Begich and Guy Martin, Legislative Assistant to Congressman Begich to clarify the present situation and assure Alaskans of the continuing service of the office. Several specific points were made.

(1). The present situation, with the fate of the Congressman still unknown, is unique in the history of Congress, and creates some special problems, but the Congressional office is

continuing in full operation both in Washington, D.C. and through district offices in Alaska in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Ketchikan. The staff is virtually intact in all offices.

(2). The office has worked closely with the leadership and officers of the U.S. House, and has received not only legal and technical cooperation in resolving the situation, but also their warm cooperation and assistance in every possible way.

(3). Special working relationships have already been established between the office of Congressman Nick Begich and the other offices of the Alaska Congressional delegation, and the many Federal agencies which serve Alaska.

Senator Mike Gravel . . .

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Gravel did not anticipate that there would be more additional funding to the regional corporations until the enrollment was completed.

"The initial payments," he said, "were to pay the crank-up costs. And that's it. Once the enrollment is completed, then we've got to do some real funding."

When questioned about an alleged \$9 million dollar cutback in Health, Education, and Welfare funds ordered by Nixon on Dec. 8, Gravel said he had heard nothing about it, but that it should not come as a surprise.

"Richard Nixon," he said, "got a great mandate and he vetoed 11 pieces of legislative just before the election, and it didn't seem to bother any' dy, so now he's going to exercise his mandate."

Satellite . . .

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the lower 48.

The economy of rural Alaska cannot support even nominal carrying charges for a TV signal. Therefore, it is essential that a proposed national satellite system have the ability to deliver TV signals to Alaskans on the same basis as anywhere else in the U.S. — without additional cost.

Senator Stevens said he believes the technology is there but the understanding of Alaska's unique needs has not been considered in the early planning stages. The senator complimented Lockheed to provide for Alaska's needs when they refine their proposal for FCC action.

Considers Running . . .

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turn along with old friends Russ Brown, Congressman Boggs and pilot, Don Jonz.

"Our many friends in Alaska as well as Nick's colleagues have been in contact with me through letters, telegrams and telephone conversations. They have, without exception, urged me to continue the work of my husband."

"When I was in Alaska with my son, Nick, for the election, I received many pledges of personal support from Alaskans in all walks of life. To them and to all Alaskans I indicated I was interested in the continuation of Nick's work if and when a vacancy occurred. I know Nick would want it that way and those who know Nick would feel the same way."

"For that reason and after much thought I have decided to be a candidate at that time. This decision on my part at

Gravel hopefully predicts construction on the pipeline will begin between now and Christmas, or "in the spring, certainly within the next five months."

He declined to comment on possibilities for the House seat vacated by missing Congressman Nick Begich. "When the Democrats select their person," he promised, "I will be campaigning very hard to get him elected."

Gravel mentioned that Senator Ernest Gruening had campaigned very heavily for George McGovern all over the country. "The last time I saw Sen. Gruening, he was healthy as a bear, still out campaigning. He's indestructible."

this time is a pledge to continue Nick's public service and to indicate to the many concerned Democrats, Independents and Republicans my intention of being a candidate.

"I solicit their support and active interest in the political future of our state. In making this early decision we are fulfilling a pledge to the voters of Alaska to insure filling the vacancy as quickly as possible if and when it occurs."

"In the days and weeks ahead, I will continue my interest in the problems of Alaska and the Nation and continue to hear further from all Alaskans. Indeed, I welcome, as Nick always did, their ideas, suggestions, opinions and comments. The continuity of Nick's service to Alaska will remain uppermost in my mind and I pledge myself to that end."