

Affable Burl Ives Travels Bush Meeting Native People

When Burl Ives was contacted at his home in Ireland and asked to be opening week host at the Alaska 67 Centennial Exposition, he agreed to come without pay. "Just show me the country and let me talk to the people," he said.

And so, when Ives wasn't walking around the 40-acre Exposition site in Fairbanks, Alaska 67 directors made sure he was touring Alaska.

Last week he visited Unalakleet, Nome and Kotzebue.

In Unalakleet, Ives and his party were given the first-hand tour by Frank Degnan, mayor of Unalakleet, and operator of the little city's

one-cab taxi service.

Well-known throughout Alaska for his wit, legends and anecdotes, Degnan showed the group modern improvements of electricity, telephones, water and a new junior high school at Unalakleet.

Later, Ives found Nome "just about like I expected it to be." He saw the King Island Eskimo dancers, many of whom are now dancing in Fairbanks at A-67 and bought a sealskin cap.

In Kotzebue, snowdrifts were still piled high, and roads were like winding trenches from the airfield into the city center.

Flying back to Fairbanks, most of the party slept—

except Ives and the pilot. Hopping from ridge to ridge and flying at treetop level, Ives watched the wilderness country unroll before him and exclaimed anew, sometimes waking other passengers, as he spotted an animal or a forgotten prospector's cabin.

"Moose, caribou, reindeer, seal, just sittin' there watching us--and us right over their heads!", he said, as the party's twin-engine plane whipped over startled, curious animals.

Upon his return, the famed actor was presented with an Alaskan fur parka and a battered old prospector's hat that has obviously seen many a mile on Alaska gold trails.

The parka, designed by Laura Wright, of Fairbanks was given during a surprise ceremony in Bartlett Plaza at the Exposition just after Ives got off the plane from his trip.

The famed actor staged an impromptu show of his own, playing his guitar and singing to listeners who crowded into the plaza. Eskimo dancers in colorful costumes shared the stage with Ives.



BIG DADDY HIMSELF, burly Burl Ives, stands by the twin Beechcraft that took him and five other passengers representing the Alaska 67 Centennial Exposition in Fairbanks all over north-western Alaska on a low-flying bush trip last week. With him is Laura Bergt, Eskimo wife of pilot Neil Bergt. They are standing near the airport terminal of Nome.