

Late Equipment Crimps Completion—

Housing Project Stands Empty

A nearly complete 50-unit housing project in Nome will stand empty until late spring or early summer, according to Al Nakak, housing specialist from Nome.

Originally, the modern frame houses were slated for occupancy by late November. Financed by the Alaska State Housing Authority, they were to relieve the critical housing situation in Nome.

The seven or eight month delay centers on the fact that

the water and sewer system for the houses cannot be completed until next spring, Nakak said, due to the late arrival of equipment.

The construction work on the three and four bedroom-houses was completed on schedule by Ken Brady Construction Co. and was highly commended by Nakak.

But, as explained by Chuck Reader, the contractor for the sewer job, at a public hearing in Nome Oct. 30, 19 water and sewer hook-ups will be the limit for the winter. And, he added, 19 houses will not provide

enough water circulation to keep the system from freezing.

With this realization, the

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Housing Project . . .

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Housing Committee decided the next night not to move anyone into the project until next summer when all 50 homes can be occupied.

The committee is comprised of interested citizens, some of whom are potential occupants of the housing project. In conjunction with ASHA officials, its members have been making plans for what is to be a model project for the state since early 1970.

Concerning occupancy, both the City of Nome and the Alaska State Housing Authority took a stand similar to that of the committee.

Most of the future occupants now live in houses or "shacks" where the water and sewer system consists of a water tank and honey bucket.

The new homes, Nakak explained, are set up for running water and sewer, and the committee felt that it would not be a good idea to move the people in now and use the water tank-honey bucket method until the water and sewer system could be installed next spring.

Also, he added, if occupants were moved into the 19 homes that are hooked up, and if the system froze, the residents would probably become dissatisfied.

If this dissatisfaction were to permeate the rest of the community, the committee might

find it difficult to fill the remaining houses in the spring.

This is a model home-ownership project, he continued, and if something goes wrong, Nome's chances of getting more funds for low-income housing might be jeopardized.

Out of about 80 applications, 50 families had already been selected to move into the houses. They are now being notified that they must wait seven or eight months.

In addition to completing the water and sewer system, the three parallel roads on which the houses are located must be improved, and swampy, low-lying areas must be filled in before the homes can be occupied.

Occupancy was open to all low-income Nome residents—white or native. However, out of 82 applications, only a few were from white families and they were over-income, according to a member of the housing committee.

The attractive green, pink, and gray houses will have electricity, oil space heaters, gas stoves, and light wood paneling inside.

Nakak is currently participating in a Ford Foundation housing study and is on a six-month leave of absence as regional director of RurAL CAP. He was recently in Nome and attended the meeting of the Housing Committee while there.