

Finalaska?

By MARILYN RICHARDS

How, what and where to develop in Alaska is now a major problem but there are several interesting concepts which proved internationally successful comments an associate professor in geography at the University of Alaska.

Dr. Donald Lynch, who obtained his doctorate from Yale University, is also an expert on the cultural, economic and geographic developments of cold lands — including Russia, Scandinavia and Alaska.

If Russia still owned Alaska, we might now be known as the Soviet Socialist Republic of Alaska.

The S.S.R.A. would certainly have been structured differently socially, strategically and economically. Tanana would obviously be a capital choice says Lynch because it is a central location and "Fairbanks would be open to attack by Canada."

Alaska would have been more industrially developed. Rampart Dam would be providing hydroelectric power but also reducing the silt into the Yukon River

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from the glacial run-offs of the White River. By reducing this silt, Bethel would be more of a deep water port.

Railroads would be connecting northwestern, central and south central Alaska. The Arctic Coastal Plain, a more correct term for the North Slope, Lynch feels, would be exporting its oil and gas reserves.

Industrial centers would provide most of the jobs. Women would be utilized as geologists and would make up the majority of the enrollment in the S.S.R.A.'s medical college, "because they work cheaper."

Military training would begin in kindergarten.

"Natives," theorizes Lynch, "would be paid handsomely to guard the coastlines. The Natives would also be able to retain their own culture besides being educated in music, literature and other such admirable pursuits. They would also be the meat providers for this nation-state, raising reindeer and rebuilding that now small industry with great potential.

The few fertile areas in the state, like the Matanuska-Susitna and Tanana Valleys and possibly on the Kenai and Alaska Peninsulas, would be developed for major food production. A Stalin prototype dictator would rule the S.S.R.A. Under his control, there would be little soap, no toilet paper and coffee would be heavily taxed, like the original Joe preferred.

Another approach to the state's development is the way of the Finns. Lynch recalls when U.S.S.R.-Finland diplomatic relations were nil and to the point of war, and the Finn's resultant defeat. Someone suggested that the Finns be shipped to Alaska, since the state is at the same latitude as Finland, and Russia probably needed Finland more than the Finns did.

If that happened we would

probably be known as FinA, a nation of two million farmers who loved cucumbers and strawberries, not to mention cabbage.

The Finns, reasoned Lynch, did not like cold weather so would probably prefer the maritime climates and establish Anchorage as their university center. Much copper mining would be done.

Besides developing agriculturally, the Finns would be exporting literature, novels, and movies (such as "The Robe"). To enhance this image, the Finns would also be exporting clothing representative of this image.

Seemingly science fiction, but a dream to many is the one building plan. Lynch said one building to house 330,000 people would be perfect for water supply and sewage disposal.

With one building, there would not be any need for automobiles. It would be powered by a thermo-nuclear plant. Airports would be situated around the building. Uni-trains would be another automated form of transportation.

Each floor of the building would be specialized. One would be for entertainment, another for "hairdressers," another for construction, another for governments, and several for housing. The building would export and import raw materials and books. People would be shipped off for two weeks at a time to work in the fisheries, fields or whatever

for food production or mining.

Lynch feels there is much to learn from the industrially-developed countries on the same latitude as Alaska. Those countries have developed from east to west but Alaskans are trying, foolishly to develop north to south.

An alternative to the Finn or Russian or modern planning theories is the "American way" with needless freeways between Fairbanks and Anchorage with McDonaldses and Pizza Huts along the way, said Lynch.