

Groh Clarifies Our Article

State Senator Cliff Groh, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, informed the Tundra Times of several errors which were reported in the Times coverage of the 8th Alaska State Legislature.

"First" said Groh, "the article claimed that funds for rural education have plummeted from 15 million a couple of years ago to 9 million this year."

This comment was made by State Senator Willie Hensley at the close of the legislative session. Groh corrects Sen. Hensley, stating, "In truth, the budget for rural education in fiscal 1972 was 17.6 million; in 1973, the authorized figure was \$20.3 million and for 1974, the figure is \$22.9 . . . or an

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Senator Cliff Groh . . .

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increase over three years of \$5.3 million.

Commenting on the \$1.5 million cutback in funds needed to correct fireinspection and and safety checks in SOS schools Groh claims the reduction was made by the Governor's budget review staff, "long before the legislators ever saw the figures."

Groh also pointed out that the Yukon River Ferry System study did not die as stated, but that it was funded in the amount of \$50,000.

The senator mentioned the House Bill 1, an act relating to guides, and C.S.H.B. 90 appropriating \$76,679 to the Reindeer Affairs Board as two pieces of "hunting legislation" which was not mentioned.

Groh felt that statement made regarding Alaska State Housing Authority were misleading, and stated that housing for rural areas does not fall under this agency, which is federally funded.

"Telling your readers that the State provided nothing for bush housing is like comparing

an eagle's nest with a colonial mansion: the concept is that of a home but the building methods are completely opposed."

Although Robert Butler of ASHA could not be contacted this week his office confirmed that a proposal is still pending in the governor's office which does relate to state funding for rural housing.

In 1969 the State voted to appropriate funds by the sale of state bonds to assume the Bartlett plan for rural housing abandoned by the U.S. Congress.

The bonds have apparently been sold and there was an attempt by House Leader Tom Fink to return that money to the general treasury. Fink's proposal was defeated and the ASHA proposal is still pending.

Since the death of the federal Indian Housing Program under HUD, the state funds voted for the Bartlett Plan are the only money currently available for Native housing in the State.

Tundra Times assumed that since the State had once before involved itself in the funding of rural housing, the 8th Alaska State Legislature could have also done so if it had been of a mind.

The Alaska Native by and large has neither an eagle's nest nor a colonial mansion, and if action is not taken on rural housing in the near future and the pipeline permit should be granted, the state will face an acute housing shortage.