

HUMAN RIGHTS LAW PASSES

Commission Gets Sole Enforcement In Three Areas

The new Human Rights Commission law that was passed by the State Legislature just before it adjourned will give the commission sole enforcement powers in discrimination cases in housing, public accommodations and employment.

"We felt it was important to get the measure passed this session because 80 per cent of housing in Alaska is federally financed," said Willard Bowman, executive director of the commission.

Bowman was in Juneau for the last three days of the session and worked furiously to get the bill passed.

Previously the Fair Employment Act was under the Department of Labor and laws against discrimination in housing and public hotels and restaurants were in the criminal code.

The new Human Rights law in conforming with the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, will give the commission jurisdiction in these matters.

The commission has filed agreements with the Housing and Home Finance agency and its subsidiaries as FHA, Public Administration and Community Facilities Administration that the Human Rights Commission will be the compliance agency in discrimination cases.

When a case comes up, the commission will try to resolve it. If it does not, the federal government is empowered to come in.

"When the case comes up we will try first for volunteer compliance. We will try to show the person or company that compliance is the best way," Bowman said.

"If the case still cannot be resolved, then the case will go before the full commission at a hearing," he said. The commission would be sitting in as a quasi-legal body.

Members of the State Human Rights Commission include: Barney Gottstein, Anchorage; Roy Peratrovich, of Juneau; Ernest Griffin, Fairbanks; Leslie (Kiwi) Callan, Anchorage; Fred Seikregg, Anchorage; and Bowman.

Bowman and his secretary, Miss Barbara Trigg, formerly of Nome, are the only two full-time employees of the commission with headquarters at Anchorage.

The budget of the commission this year has been increased to \$37,000, of which \$7,000 was allocated for a full review of conditions on the Pribilof Islands.