

Philemonof Visits Remote Aleut Communities

Dimitri Philemonof, Director of Rural CAP's newly formed Aleutian Planning Commission, made his first official trip to that region to evaluate the existing situations and to set up an office.

Philemonof spent three weeks in St. Paul, St. George, and Unalaska. He stated that he chose this particular time to visit St. George as it was the last time this year the vessel PRIBILOF was scheduled into St. George.

Without the aid of a charter plane (which is very costly), the next scheduled transportation is due sometime in March or April. The inhabitants of St. George Island have constructed an airstrip 3,500 by 62 feet.

However, the expansion of the strip for improved service has been curtailed by the National Marine Fisheries.

Philemonof has written a letter to the Regional Director of the Fisheries for the Pribilofs and is now awaiting an answer.

"Whether the problem lies in insufficient equipment, drainage systems, leveling, etc., the Aleutian Planning Commission will make every effort to resolve this problem," he said.

"The people are trying to develop their community and I think every assistance should be given to villagers who are simply trying to help themselves."

In a letter to Father Gromoff from Reeve Aleutian Airways, Robert Reeve stated that if the airstrip is suitably expanded, Reeve Airways will extend regu-



ST. GEORGE — The village of St. George, located on the Pribilof Islands, is one of the villages which will be served by the Aleutian Planning Commission.

lar air service to the Island.

Of the many requests that were made by the residents of St. George, in the immediate future they are asking Philemonof's assistance in getting an additional mail delivery via plane into the Island during the Christmas season.

Their mail is flown to St. Paul Island where it awaits transportation to St. George via the vessel PRIBILOF which arrives only five times a year.

The next scheduled mail delivery, which will include Christmas cards, presents, etc., will arrive in March or April.

The new director also noted the problem of shipping fresh fruits and vegetables via the ves-

sel. A good deal of the fresh produce spoils before it ever reaches the people of the small island.

The water system in the village has a high content of salt in the water which makes it unsuitable for drinking. Distilled water is available from the hospital facility but must be hand carried to the individuals' homes.

Philemonof also spend time in St. Paul and Unalaska, deeming their No. 1 priority as housing. The housing in St. Paul and St. George is good compared to the rest of the Chain, but there is not enough to adequately fit the needs of the people.

The housing in Unalaska is poor and must be acted on as the first priority, he emphasized.

The new director stated that, "A welfare or social worker is greatly needed in that area to make the people aware of programs that are available to them."

One social worker from the Department of Family and Children Services, Mary Tetzlaff, did make a visit as far as St. Paul and St. George but limited funding kept her from traveling to the other villages in the Chain.

"I would like to praise Mary for her dedicated efforts on the peoples' behalf," Philemonof

said. "If more dedication of this type were shown, it would be much easier to get things accomplished."

Mrs. Tetzlaff stated that she would be willing to visit the other villages if travel monies could be provided. However, a limited budget keeps her in Anchorage the majority of the time.

The new director met with the Village Councils of St. Paul and St. George and was extended their full support. He also met the people on an individual basis. Philemonof exclaimed his trip was very fruitful and beneficial.

"I did not promise them the world," he said. "These things take time and I will keep them informed of what I am doing at all times."