

# CSC-ACS Discuss Satellite Hookup

Sen. E. L. Bartlett has been informed that the Communications Satellite Corporation met this week with prospective purchasers of the Alaska Communication System to discuss COMSAT's proposal to bring satellite communications to Alaska.

At the suggestion of Senator Bartlett, COMSAT has drawn up plans for construction of a satellite ground station between Anchorage and Fairbanks and of a microwave ground link connecting Alaska's two largest cities with the station.

Bartlett reported that the plan has the general approval of the COMSAT board of directors and that a draft of an application for Federal Communications Commission approval to construct the facilities has been prepared.

Also in response to Senator Bartlett's suggestion, COMSAT officials are nearing completion of a study on the feasibility of the corporation bidding to purchase ACS and of a study on developing intra-state satellite service for Alaska, including rural areas.

Bartlett, in a statement prepared before he went to Chicago for the Democratic National Convention, said that under-

standably ACS officials might be concerned about the effect the COMSAT plan might have on the sale of the system.

The Senator explained that while COMSAT officials had discussed the general plan to bring satellite communications to Alaska with individual firms which have expressed an interest in purchasing ACS, the joint meeting would provide a forum for prospective bidders to comment on a specific proposal.

"I believe that this meeting should clear up any concern that ACS officials might have about the impact of COMSAT's plan on the sale of the system," Bartlett said.

"Reports have reached me that some persons contend that for the immediate future it might be cheaper to expand existing facilities connecting Alaska with other states than to construct a satellite ground station. That contention is not widely accepted, but even if it were I do not believe Alaska should saddle itself with an outdated communications system just to secure some very small short-range rate reductions," he continued.

"Looking to the future, and I am talking in terms of as little as five years, satellite service will not only offer cheaper and better communications, but also provide a potential for transmitting television broadcasts direct from the other states," Bartlett said.

"In terms of news and special event broadcasts alone, such service would do a lot to bridge the communications gap which separates Alaska from other states.

"Looking ahead to the not too distant day when there is a satellite system serving the entire United States, and when there will be a channel or channels in that system dedicated to public broadcasting of news, public service, instructional and cultural programs, it would be short-sighted indeed to delay bringing satellite communications to Alaska in return for short-term rate reductions with little or no improvement in service," Bartlett stated.