

# Barrow Feels Pinch Of Closed Airports

The big Eskimo village of Barrow, the farthest north settlement on North American mainland, is beginning to feel the pinch because modern means of service it has learned to depend on has been stopped, or nearly stopped.

The Wiley Post airfield near the village of Barrow has been closed down for the summer for improvements in paving and lengthening for future jet service.

At the same time, the military airfield three and half miles to the east has been closed, also for improvements.

A week ago, the State Division of Aviation started work on the Wiley Post Field and the operation stopped the incoming and outgoing air-

craft.

"We haven't had any mail now for six days and probably won't get any, unless an arrangement is made, until the airport is completed sometime in late September," Eben Hopson said in his letter to Gov. Walter Hickel this week.

Hopson blamed lack of coordination between the state and military for the closing down of the two airfields almost simultaneously stopping the movement of supplies.

"Perhaps with a little communication between the state and the contractor the Barrow airport could be kept open on a limited basis without hampering the actual work being done," said

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# Closed Airports Hurt Barrow . . .

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Hopson.

"The economy and the welfare of this community is not geared to survive without air service," Eben Hopson continued. "Twenty years ago perhaps it could have."

Hopson also wrote to Senators E. L. Bartlett and Ernest Gruening in Washington.

"There has been an unwarranted lack of communication between the state and federal government in handling the improvements at both airports at Barrow," he told the senators.

He thought the military airfield was supposed to be completed last fall so that it would be open when the state airfield (Wiley Post) was being improved.

"In any event, both are closed down leaving no air service for some 2,500 people in Barrow and vicinity," said Hopson.

Last week, Harry Wakefield, director of aviation for the state, said the military airfield would be ready for

partial service by June 5 and the entire field would be ready by July 5.

He also said the Wiley Post Field would be closed for the summer. He has also made an agreement with Wien Air Alaska to have the field closed for the summer.

Outside of the big village of Barrow, those affected by the closed airports are: Wien / Northern Consolidated Air Alaska, Arctic Research Laboratory, Federal Electric, Vennell Corporation, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the contractors working on the Wiley Post Field.

How did Eben Hopson's letters come out of Barrow?

A five-seater Cessna 185 piloted by Bobby Fisher is now making shuttle trips between Barrow and Fairbanks. The little plane is making the trip of about 475 miles in something like four hours each way.

It was not immediately known where Bobby Fisher was landing and taking off at Barrow.