

LAST WEEK IN ALASKA

A weekly summary of Alaska News prepared for
the TUNDRA TIMES by ALASKA RADIO NEWS.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR LOWELL THOMAS SAYS he will inform sponsors of the bottle bill initiative that they are more than 1,000 signatures short of qualifying for the fall ballot. He will instruct them that they have 30 days to make up the difference. Thomas was urged by the Industry Environmental Council to disqualify the initiative petitions completely. The initiative would place a ten cent deposit on all beer and soft drink bottles and cans.

THE TEAMSTERS UNION AND THE Alaska Transportation Employers Association have reached agreement on safety conditions on the North Slope Haul Road. Traffic on the road had been sporadic as Teamsters attended safety meetings and voiced their complaints.

GOVERNOR JAY HAMMOND PRESENTED HIS budget to a joint session of the legislature. It calls for \$915 million in State spending. The governor proposed that \$10 million in addition to the percentage of royalty and bonus money already dedicated be placed in the permanent fund. State Representative Clark Gruening of Anchorage, chairman of the House Permanent Fund Committee, said the additional money would cut into the Alaska renewable resources fund. He said the governor's proposal wouldn't provide additional funds for the state. According to Gruening, it would only reallocate existing funds.

SEVERE POWER SHORTAGES COULD OCCUR in the railbelt area of Alaska by the year 2,000 according to a study presented to the Alaska Power Authority. State officials say there are, however, ways to avoid a crisis. Hydroelectric energy, specifically the Susitna project, is now being discussed by the Alaska Power Authority.

CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG HAS ASKED that further work on d-2 legislation be stopped until information on the mineral content of d-2 lands previously withheld by the Interior Department is disseminated. Young's request has met with resistance in Congress. And in Alaska, State Representative Steve Cowper of Fairbanks, chairman of the legislature's d-2 steering council, says he still fears that delay could adversely affect state and Native land selections.

HIGH WINDS AND SEAS CREATED havoc in the Kodiak Island community of Karluk. Some storehouses and a footbridge were destroyed. A portion of the spit was washed away and there was erosion along the bank of the Karluk River. Two to three thousand gallons of fuel from a damaged tank leaked into the Karluk Lagoon.

FORMER ANCHORAGE LEGISLATOR HELEN BEIRNE has been sworn in as commissioner of Health and Social Services. She succeeds Frank Williamson who left to take a federal job.

IN HIS STATE OF THE STATE message, Governor Jay Hammond said the economy of Alaska is in good condition. And he said the people of Alaska are beginning to accept his economic standards. He also proposed a single six-year term for the governor. State Representative Nels Anderson of Dillingham, a candidate for governor on the Democratic ticket, said, however, the state of the state was a "highly charged political statement." Anderson said the governor neglected to discuss the state's general fund balance. He said the governor also failed to give the legislature direction. Republican State Senator Mike Colletta of Anchorage supported the governor's message. Colletta said, "He's continued to have the courage of his convictions that he's stated for the past two years. Most Alaskans are desirous, at least in his opinion, of the line of operation of government that he enumerated on." The governor's opposition in his own party, former Governor Walter Hickel, said Hammond's speech indicated he is too complacent about the economy. Hickel said the state can't afford to do nothing while unemployment is at 13 percent. "The philosophy of the administration," Hickel said, "is still anti-growth. We need growth just to take care of the people here."

OFFICIALS OF THE STATE AND Northwest Alaska Pipeline are meeting to discuss possible state participation in financing the gas pipeline project. Discussions center around a state guarantee for cost overruns. State Senator John Sackett of Galena, Senate Finance chairman, said he "...would be receptive to the concept of the state participating in the investment of the gas pipeline. I think it's an investment that, while it does have some risk, it also will assist the state with unemployment and the economy."

REPORTS WERE RECEIVED FROM THE Iliamna area that the semi-mythical creature Big Foot has been spotted. Alaska outdoors writer Jim Repine has offered \$1,000 to anyone who can produce a clear photograph of the creature provided he is not harmed. Repine is in the Iliamna area with a photographer and cameraman investigating the reports.

SOME 50 VALDEZ RESIDENTS, ANGERED because they don't have jobs and believing that Alyeska is allowing its contractors to hire outsiders, have organized a committee to meet with Alyeska. Committee Chairman Tom McIntyre, an announced candidate for governor, said, "We'll try this way...and see if they will have any meeting with us at all. If not, then we'll take our other courses of action." McIntyre said those other courses of action would mean peaceful protest.

VOTERS IN CORDOVA APPROVED OVERWHELMINGLY a proposal to convert the municipal utilities into cooperatives. The switch will mean the utilities will qualify for low interest loans to buy new power generating equipment.

THE OMBUDSMAN HAS ISSUED A report criticizing the State Marine Highway System for nepotism and improper handling of personnel and job applications as well as abuse of the free pass procedures. Ombudsman Frank Flavin said, "We found that an assistant port steward had destroyed some of the applications that had been submitted timely...we also found that a port steward had hired a person that had not applied...that listed him as a personal reference. We also found three instances of fathers in official positions hiring their sons." The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee also released details of a report which closely paralleled Flavin's study. Marine Highway Director William Hudson said the improprieties mentioned in both reports have been adjusted.

THE SECOND SESSION OF THE TENTH Alaska Legislature is in session. As the session opened, legislators were listing oil and gas taxation, royalty oil and gas, the capital move, permanent fund and the University of Alaska as priority issues.