

BARROW TO GET FOOD STUFF

North Star's Failure To Arrive at Top of the World Brings Problems

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Bureau of Indian Affairs area director Charles Richmond assured the Barrow City Council Monday night that, one way or another, the city will receive its yearly shipment of food and perishable items, according to Barrow city councilman Irving Igtanloc.

The food and other supplies are now at Shismaref headed south on the BIA operated ship North Star III. The 10,000 ton World War II Victory ship which annually carries supplies to villages along the coast of Alaska was unable to unload at Barrow due to ice moving into shore.

Igtanloc, also president of the local chapter of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, said that the city council endorsed efforts of the BIA to deliver all the supplies to the city.

"We feel that the BIA is doing everything possible to get all the goods up to Barrow," he added.

In a telephone interview Monday, Richmond said that all of the goods that have to do with the health and survival of the community will go up.

"We are going to get them there any way we can," he added.

And herein seems to lie the major problem: how to get the goods to Barrow in an economical manner.

The plan according to Richmond, calls for the North Star to complete its deliveries to about 16 villages along the coast. Then the ship would discharge the Barrow goods at an Alaskan port, either Anchorage, Seward, or Whittier before continuing to its home port of Seattle.

Hopefully, Richmond said, if the ship does not run into difficult weather conditions or o-

(Continued on Page 6.)

Barrow Problem . . .

(Continued from page 1)

ther problems. the deliveries to all of the remaining villages will be made and one of the three ports reached the first part of November.

Emphasizing that he was making no promises, Richmond said that the bureau hoped to then deliver the bulk of the freight to Barrow the last of November.

How the goods will move from the Alaskan port to Barrow is still in the air.

Although the cost of various transportation methods is still under investigation, the area director speculated that the goods might go by rail or truck to Fairbanks and by air to Barrow.

If the freight must be flown commercially, then the amount will largely depend on funds that the BIA is able to secure for that purpose.

Igtanloc said that Richmond made it clear at the meeting that the Bureau wants to airlift the materials at no additional cost to the individuals who have orders on the ship.

The Barrow residents could not bear any additional cost, he added.

The councilman added that the North Star is self-supporting with the revenue made on the freight shipments paying for the operation.

Reportedly the Governor has been asked to make the Air National Guard available for airlifting the freight north.

Richmond said he had heard the reports but that he was not counting on such assistance until he saw the planes on the runway.

The Barrow council is hoping, Igtanloc said, that the guard will help out because then possibly all of the goods could be shipped up, not just the perishable items.

The BIA has said, he added, that it will get the perishable goods there but that if done commercially, delivery of the freight will depend on money available.

The city feels that all of the freight is essential, Igtanloc said, not just the food.

In addition to food and other individual orders, materials for additional classrooms, two water trucks, school supplies, and goods for two of Barrow's three general stores are on the ship.

The classrooms, Igtanloc said, are needed for kindergarten classes. These classes are now meeting in three shifts in an education building of a church.

Also, he added, the town needs the additional employment that construction of the classrooms would have provided. Some 30 to 50 men would have been employed for about two months on the job—previously scheduled to commence in September.

Richmond told the council that it would be up to the BIA Division of Plant Design and Construction in Albuquerque, N. M. to decide whether to airlift the building materials up and that he is awaiting an answer from there.

The water trucks, Igtanloc stressed, are needed so that Barrow Utilities can deliver water from the treatment plant to the townspeople.

In the past people have hauled ice from a lake $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles away, but water obtained from melting this ice must be boiled before use.

"The water trucks would mean that we could have clean, pure water and would also generate a little employment," Igtanloc said.

To the people of Barrow all the supplies on the ship are critical, he stressed, with the exception of a crane needed to unload the goods from the barge.

The people of the town need the supplies, such as individual food orders and food for the school lunch program, even before the tentative delivery date of late November but "we understand that the other villages must have their goods also" and that the ship cannot skip them and proceed immediately to an unloading port for the Barrow goods, he added.

In the 67 years the BIA has been delivering, this is the only one in which the North Star has not made it to Barrow, he said.

Richmond explained that the ship, which usually arrives in Barrow the last of August or the first of September, was a little behind schedule this year.

But, he added, I don't think that it would have mattered if we had been two weeks earlier. Even earlier, the risks were extremely high that ice might blow in and block the ship at Barrow.

"Our operation is different from that of the barges which unload at Prudhoe Bay under such conditions, Richmond explained. "We cannot run the risk of getting frozen in because that would leave 32 villages without supplies." The barges don't have these worries.