

## ***Native Housing Tops—***

# **Achievements of Bush Legislators**

Bush legislators agree a bill establishing a regional native housing authority was the most important one passed this legislative session.

"It is the result of the U. S. Senate bill through which we're getting 1,200 homes," explained Sen. Willie Hensley, D-Kotzebue. "It will be used to implement the housing program which will eventually be funded for about \$20 million. It gives the regional authority the same power as the Alaska State Housing Authority."

The law established 12 regions in the state recognizing Native associations in each. It also gave power to the Alaska Federation of Natives in areas where problems were broader than local jurisdiction.

Legislators believe if the agency succeeds, it might be considered a prototype for management of a land claims settlement.

"Suddenly the magic day will come along and if we don't have a quasi-public institution to parallel the Native associations, we'll be in trouble," observes Rep. Mike Bradner, D-Fairbanks, who backed the bill although he doesn't exactly represent the bush.

"The rural areas put out an excellent group of legislators," he added. "Another good example of their work was the Nome school which is in the midst of a city school district. They got \$1.5 million for an addition which (except for the Nenana flood legislation) is unprecedented. Willie Hensley and Chuck Degnan (D-Unalakleet) worked together on that with a great deal of skill."

Also the credit of the Bush Bloc was a bill granting state road funds for use in building local service roads and trails.

The legislation (followed closely by Hensley, Sen. Jay Hammond, R-Naknek, and Sen. Rey Christiansen, D-Bethel) allows rural areas to contract for building or to work through the state.

A law passed which allows a special permit for any qualified guide with a language barrier. A communications network in the Bethel area was funded for about \$600,000 to the joy of Rep. George Hohman, D-Bethel, and Rep. Martin Moore, D-Emmonak. Sen. Don Young, R-Ft. Yukon, came up with \$250,000 for a Detox center for

alcoholics.

Rep. Frank Ferguson, D-Kotzebue, shepherded through a bill that allows towns to go in to the liquor or bar business which should be of interest to residents of Barrow. A bill passed providing for trial in a man's home region. This was a result of the Bush Justice Conference.

Revenue sharing in rural areas was indirectly established through the Fairbanks Hospital bill. Rural authorities were also given some power to take land by eminent domain.

And that's just a small part of what the Bush Bloc accomplished this session. Your area representative should be more than happy to list his progress in 1971.