

# CONSUMER PROTECTION INFORMATION ON TV

## Bush Native Folks Get Short End of the Stick

"Countless stories of people in rural Alaska getting the 'short end of the stick' have cropped up in areas of mail order frauds, air carrier unfair practices, and the financing of rural housing projects," stated Mike Harper, who appeared as a guest on the Alaska Native Magazine show on November 5, 1974 at the studios of KUAC in Fairbanks.

Harper, Executive Director of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, along with Stan Howitt, Assistant Attorney General, and Jane Windsor, Home Economist with the USDA Extension Service at the University of Alaska, were guests of Moses Wassilie on a TV show that is beamed via ATS-6 satellite to some 20 villages in the Interior Southwestern and Southeastern portions of the State.

The Consumer Protection Agency has produced an informational package that is more applicable to the urban areas, and which hopefully will be adapted by those agencies with rural responsibilities to bush circumstances.

"For years, rural Alaska has been served through mail order retail outfits that might or might not have provided the best and most timely service to these residents," Harper reported.

"There have been problems with fresh produce, ice cream, and meat spoiling, prior to receipt by the consumer.

"The Bethel region had many of these same air carrier problems, and as a result had region-wide air transportation hearings at which members of the regulatory agencies, Civil Aeronautics Board, and the Alaska Transportation Commission, were present to hear complaints from the 56 Village Council Presidents."

Both Howitt and Harper com-

mented that the best way to obtain results was to make sure the complaint was made in writing and sent to either the ATC or the CAB, with copies also being mailed to the Governor, and/or the Congressional Delegation.

Howitt noted that the Alaska Land Claims money that is in the villages now has attracted many would-be dealers who are offering their services to people and boards of directors of villages that might not have the proper experience to deal with these people.

Mrs. Windsor commented that some rural residents have joined together in a co-operative effort to send into urban areas for groceries, thus saving many dollars, rather than buying from a local high-priced grocery store.

Questions were received from Minto, Tanana, Petersburg, and Fairbanks during the hour-long broadcast from the KUAC college-based studios and Harper said that he believed this was the 'wave of the future in communications'.

He continued, "We are very glad to see that although the ATS-6 channel that is currently used for Alaska will be moved to India this summer, the State of Alaska will, hopefully, have benefit of another satellite in the not-too-distant future that will beam to every rural community so that such a great medium can be utilized for educational or informational type productions."