

Report from the Legislature

by Senator Ferguson

One of the most important issues during this session of the State Legislature will be the enactment of major drug legislation.

I will be co-sponsoring a bill this year which enacts revisions in Alaska's Criminal Code which should more effectively combat illegal buying and selling of drugs. Two of my major concerns in co-sponsoring this legislation are the detrimental effect on public safety and public health in our villages which is created through the illicit trafficking and abuse of drugs.

I have also co-sponsored legislation which establishes the Alaska Native Child Welfare Task Force which would study and make recommendations on the implementation of the Federal Indian Child Welfare Act on Alaska Natives.

I have introduced a bill which eliminates some of the

red-tape for applicants of delayed birth certificates. A delayed birth certificate is issued possibly many years after birth, when there is no actual record of the birth. The present regulations which make it difficult to get delayed birth certificates are a hardship to the State's rural residents.

The Northwest Mayor's Conference suggested that the minimum grant be increased to \$50 thousand dollars under the revenue sharing program. I have made this request to the Senate Finance Committee Chairman, and I believe this figure will be included in any revenue sharing program, if not the figure may be raised.

I met with the Department of Transportation the first week in January to get information as to the 60 million dollar appropriation for airports. All indications are that the Department is going to have a number of Airport improvements out to bid

next spring. This goes for airport lighting, warm up buildings, navigational aids, and new construction. They indicate that they are having land problems in different villages and trying to work out the problem with the State, Federal Government,

ground to air communication, Regional and Village Corporations. I have asked that the Department notify my office as to what villages are having the problems and those not receiving enough money. I will then request the legislature to reap-

propriate those funds from the problem areas to the projects that can be done right away. I will then introduce a new appropriation bill for those communities that have to take care of their land problems.