

FAIRBANKS CENTENNIAL IS ORPHANED BY STATE

Ninety-nine years ago Russia traded Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million. Next year—1967—Alaskans will celebrate 100 years under the U.S. flag with the Alaska Purchase Centennial.

Fairbanks was chosen as the official Centennial exposition site by Governor William Egan. The governor selected Fairbanks on the recommendation of the Alaska Centennial Commission, a 16-member body that represents all areas of the state.

What has the State done to help in the Centennial celebration? Not much for Fairbanks, the central site for the celebration. And more needs to be done soon—this legislative session—or the Alaska Purchase Centennial may look like a series of little community celebrations or village potlatches.

True, a per capita payment has gone to communities in the state where Centennial festivities are planned. Fairbanks, the central site, has received something like \$27,000. Anchorage, a bigger town with many more people, has received much, much more than \$27,000. And other communities have received their share based on their populations.

But the focal point of the Centennial needs more state assistance. Governor Egan in October pledged his support for more aid to the Fairbanks central Centennial site. But his budget came out without a dime in it for that purpose. The State Centennial Commission just last month re-affirmed its belief that more state money should be appropriated to help out.

House Speaker Mike Gravel recently said on television in Fairbanks that he would support more state funds for the Centennial.

Other legislators pledge support for the Centennial. But about all the Legislature has done this year is to change the name from the Alaska Centennial to the "Alaska Purchase Centennial."

The 100th birthday of Alaska deserves more than a date marked on the calendar. The 100th birthday of Alaska should be a first class celebration.

The people of Fairbanks are putting up almost \$1 million dollars for the occasion. The Alaska Legislature should do its share and appropriate monies to help the Fairbanks people put on a first class celebration for the Alaska Purchase Centennial.