

House, Senate Fling Accusations to the Wire

In what promises to be a record 90 day-plus session of the Alaska legislature, the House and

the Senate are still accusing each other of inaction.

Senator Brad Phillips, Speaker of the Senate, claims that the major delay has been in the House Finance Committee with its leisurely review of the budget.

The House Finance Committee completed its recommendations and presented the budget to the House on Wednesday. It is still being considered by that body today, the 89th day of the session.

House members feel that little has been accomplished during the session. This is especially true, they feel, of the legislation concerning the bush areas. They blame this inaction on the Senate, which is claimed to have locked up all the major legislation in committees.

Representative Willie Hensley, D-Kotzebue and chairman of the House Committee on Health, Education, and Welfare, cited

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legislation still in the Senate.

Legislation on such proposed programs as "alcoholism, child care, increased AFDC benefits, revenue sharing for bush areas, and the ethics bill" were still "holed up in the Senate," said Hensley.

He also referred to the hot-lunch program, a public defender bill, and employment compensation for seasonal workers as legislation which the Senate will not release.

"The sum total," said Hensley, "is that nothing has been accomplished."

It does not appear likely that any major legislation for the bush areas will be considered before the session ends. Any action on major legislation may have to come from the Legislative Council, which will tour the rural areas of the bush this summer.

The Legislative Council is the interim body of the legislature which functions between sessions.

Representative Gene Guess, Democrat of Anchorage and Chairman of the Legislative Council, stated that he wants the council to be "exposed to the problems of the bush." He continued, saying that the areas most explored would be educa-

tion and employment.

Guess indicated that he would wish to pool information and establish a "rapport with the Kennedy subcommittee" which toured Alaskan villages in early April.

Guess added that the ten-man council would have an additional responsibility since, "after reapportionment, the majority of the legislators in both houses are from the urban areas."

He stated that the Council would also conduct an "oil impact interim study on all aspects of the state's social, economical and political structure."

A tour of the North Slope area, including Barrow, would be necessary, because of rapid changes and new developments in the region.

"On the North Slope things are changing so rapidly," Guess said, "and here we sit having to make decisions and a lot of us feel as though we would be much better off if we could see how things are going first hand."

Aside from the North Slope, the Legislative Council itinerary tentatively calls for visits to the Bethel and Dillingham areas. The Council will investigate and make recommendations to the legislature when it reconvenes.