

# Alcoholism Abuse Committee Asked

A resolution requesting the mayor of Fairbanks to set up a committee to begin work immediately on the problem of alcohol abuse was adopted at a regional seminar in Fairbanks last week.

Held at the University of Alaska, the three-day session drew sociologists, policemen, lawyers, nurses, doctors, community leaders, and interested citizens together for a discussion on "Alco-

hol Use, Abuse and Addiction—A Community Problem."

Several specialists in the area of solving alcohol problems were called in.

At an evening session the second night of the seminar on "Alcohol Problems viewed from the 'Front Line'," there seemed to be a general agreement among panelists that Fairbanks currently has no means of adequately coping with the problem.

Sgt. Robert E. Nearing of the Fairbanks City Police said that all the police department is doing is "babysitting society's problem."

An average of 20 arrests every 24 hours for intoxication consumes enormous amounts of valuable time that the policemen could use in fighting the city's serious crimes, he stressed.

District Judge of Fairbanks,

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# ALCOHOLISM COMMITTEE ASKED HERE . . .

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Arthur Robson, said that the large number of cases of intoxication in the city is not only close to breaking the Police Department, but is also close to making the courts inoperative.

He noted that the courts can do nothing with the problem. Putting an intoxicated person in jail merely builds up frustrations, and, when he is released, he will probably get drunk again to relieve these frustrations, the judge

said.

Other panelists were Stella Muckenthaler, director of Nursing, Fairbanks Community Hospital, Robert Hanek, Fairbanks Medical and Surgical Clinic, and Pete Aiken of the local NAACP.

Following the panel presentation, the group discussed the possibility of a detoxification center in Fairbanks where the intoxicated would be treated by a specially trained staff rather than

thrown in jail or placed in a hospital incapable of adequately treating their problem.

The discussion also centered on whether the alcohol problem in Fairbanks was primarily a native problem or whether it dipped into all races and classes.

Some seemed to think that it was basically a native problem and that thus the main thrust of any program ought to be directed at bettering the native's situation.

Others, however, stressed that alcohol problems among minority members are merely more evident because when drunk, they do not have a friend to take them home or to put them in a cab.

Instead they are thrown out on the street or in jail. Alcoholism is not a native problem, they said, but strikes all classes in Fairbanks, including housewives, construction workers, and businessmen.