

# HUD Seeks Way to Meet Alaska's Housing Needs

Representatives of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development were recently in Alaska to discuss ways of meeting Alaska's special housing needs through on-going HUD programs.

A \$10 million special housing program for Alaska, which was introduced by the late Sen. Bob Bartlett, and authorized by Congress in 1966 was eliminated from President Nixon's 1970 Fiscal Year Budget. The first \$1 million was actually appropriated by Congress in 1968. This money was used in 1969 to begin the construction of about 160 homes in 10 villages. Approximately the same number of houses in eight additional villages are slated for construction in 1970.

According to Sen. Ted Stevens of Alaska, the special housing program, known as the Remote Housing Program, was eliminated with assurances that

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HUD's new housing programs, unlike their earlier ones, could meet Alaska's unique housing situation. If this is the case, the Senator said, Alaska's rural areas could have more housing than the Remote Housing Program could provide.

Pushing toward this end, Stevens arranged the meeting in Anchorage between HUD and State officials.

According to Robert Schenker, the Executive Director of the ASHA, "the HUD officials left Alaska with a much greater appreciation of our housing problems."

The representatives, he said, visited Nome, Kotzebue, and Shismaref and studied deplorable housing conditions. In Shismarif, 22 houses had been com-

pleted during the winter under the Remote Housing Program.

As mentioned by Sen. Stevens, special housing problems found in Alaska are poverty-level incomes and thus no viable private housing market, the high risk for the investor, and a dearth of building materials along with the high cost of transporting them to Alaska's remote areas.

As a result of the meeting, ASHA hopes not only that Alaska's housing program in the remote areas will be continued at its present level of \$1 million a year but also that it will be expanded to at least \$3 million a year. Schenker stressed that the ASHA's current plans for remote areas will reach only 18 villages out of a total of 127 village applications.