

COMMISSIONER BENNETT HALTS RENT INCREASE OF MT. EDGE CUMBE EMPLOYEES

WASHINGTON, D. C.—In the face of vigorous protest from Senator Ernest Gruening regarding the exorbitant rent increases for government quarters in Alaska, a slight concession appears to have been made in the case of Bureau of Indian Affairs employees at Mt. Edgecumbe.

The rent increase went into effect through Alaska on February 1 as a result of rent surveys ordered by the Bureau of the Budget.

The Bureau claimed that these surveys indicated a need to raise rents of government employees in certain areas of all states to equalize government rents with rents charged locally.

The senator was informed last weekend by BIA Commissioner Robert Bennett that he has ordered postponement until March 1 of an increase which will affect BIA employees at Mt. Edgecumbe and a refunding of any deductions which have already been made in the employees' salaries to cover the rent increase.

As Gruening's newsletter went to press, the question of whether the Public Health Service would follow suit was unresolved, although Senator Gruening has requested similar action at the very least.

The rent increase was first brought to Senator Gruening's attention when employees at Mt. Edgecumbe notified him that many of them had received little or no notice of rent increases of up to 400 percent and that as a result they lacked the time to make

arrangements to meet other financial obligations.

Senator Gruening immediately sent the following telegram to Charles J. Zick, director, Bureau of the Budget, and a copy to the White House:

"Many federal employees in Alaska face extreme hardship and in my view unreasonable hardship because of rent increases for government quarters which went into effect last week as a result of implementation of Bureau of the Budget Circular A-45. Employees of the Department of the Interior's school for Alaskan Indians and Eskimos at Mt. Edgecumbe were advised only a day before the increases."

Lack of warning means that many employees will be hardpressed to supply them-

selves with the necessities of life because they did not have time to make arrangements to meet other financial obligations such as installment payments.

"To give these employees no adequate warning strikes me as an outrageously arbitrary action and totally without justification. This is apart from the question as to whether these rent increases were, in themselves, justified.

"I strongly urge immediate reconsideration of rent structure of government quarters in Alaska. At the very least you should permit the agencies involved to defer the rent increases for a reasonable period of time to allow employees to make necessary adjustments."

Smog, Pollution, and Predators On ACS Directors Agenda

Oil pollution in Cook Inlet, Fairbank's smog problem, plans for development in Mt. McKinley National Park, and predator control will be on the agenda of the annual Board of Directors meeting of the Alaska Conservation Society.

Scheduled for Sunday afternoon and evening, February 18, at the Virginia Wood residence in Dogpatch in the College area, plans for the meeting include a pot luck supper served midway through the proceedings.

Three newly-elected members of the Board of Directors

will be seated at the meeting. These include Mrs. Jane Williams, Fairbanks, serving her second consecutive term; Dr. David Klein, College, also serving a second term; and Ludwig Rowinski, College, a newcomer to the Board.

Other members of the Board are Sig Olson, Jr., of Juneau; David Spencer, of Kenai; and Mrs. Dixie Baade, of Ketchikan. President Robert B. Weeden, of College, will preside at the session. Other officers of the Society are Daniel W. Swift, College, vice-president; Mrs. Judith Henshaw, College, treasurer; and Miss Celia M. Hunter, College, Executive Secretary.

Meetings of the ACS Board of Directors are open to all interested Society members. Those planning to attend should contact the Secretary at 479-2754 or Mrs. Fred Dean at 479-6607. Out of town members can write the Society at Box 192, College, Alaska.

school, and college students in Anchorage before the final choice was selected."

After the visual test, Byer stated about the final color selection, "It puts the eyes and stomach in harmony."

The Ah-Ah Soft Drink Company is also getting national attention. Byer told his interviewers that the Varig Airlines wants to serve Ah-Ha on its New York-South American flights as soon as the drink is available in quantity.

The Mexicana Airlines, Alitalia Airlines and Caribari are also interested. American Airlines has indicated interest in adding Ah-Ha to its menus.

Inside Industry, a magazine published in New York, stated in its November issue, "Ah-Ha Soft Drink Company is a firm to watch. It's going places!"

George Byer feels that he can sell Ah-Ha nationally.

"I think I can," he told The Eagle's Cry. "After all, Ah-Ha spelled backwards spells Ah-Ha. Who can lose?"

Byer is marketing his Ah-Ha in vending machines, Drive-Ins and other businesses in Anchorage.

He is now perfecting his next soft drink that will be known as Ah-Ho. He has also developed certain taste images on ice cream flavors for the kids. He is also working on a "surprise package" for the youngsters.

Anchorage Man Marketing New Soft Drink Beverage

A steady chorus of "Ah-Ha's and "Ah-Ho's" throughout Alaska, possibly all over the United States and, perhaps elsewhere, may be heard at the counters of soda fountains in cities and towns.

In fact, the youngsters and older youngsters are already Ah-Ha-ing in the Achorag

Ah-Ha-ing in the Anchorage area but they will have to wait awhile before they start to Ah-Ho because the latter is not on the market as yet.

George Byer, former Mayor of Anchorage who has an experimental bug in his system, five years ago began to experiment in his kitchen after experiencing a "certain taste image."

According to West Anchorage High School's, The Eagle's Cry, a student publication, Byer had a difficult time to put together just the right ingredients and the experiment took a lot of time.

What was George Byer so diligently laboring to perfect? You guessed it—Ah-Ha, a new, pinkish-red soft drink for the youngsters and for young-minded oldsters for that matter.

Byer was very thorough in his experimentation and testing.

"The color," reported The Eagle's Cry, "which resembles a southern watermelon or an exotic fruit from the South Seas was eye-tested or hundreds of elementary, high

Task Force Passes...

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George A. Moerlein, chairman of the miners "Land Use Committee," had said in a release that the government was not legally obligated to give any of Alaska to the Natives and that the sale of Alaska by Russia had given "guaranteed title" to the U. S. against all claims.

Moerlein said "that neither the United States Government, the State of Alaska, nor any of us owe the Natives one acre of ground or one cent of the taxpayers money."

Moerlein also said the Natives' demand for 40 million acres of land to be held in trust by the "Bureau of Indian Affairs" would put a damper on future minerals development in Alaska.

Ralph Perdue stated that the Native people were after "Full Title" if lands were awarded and that BIA was not going to hold any trust.

"He's someone who's talking out of his hat," Perdue said. "Who's calling the kettle black? The Miners Association has been calling for government subsidy on newly mined gold. What is it but a sophisticated form of welfare?"

State Rep. Willie Hensley of Kotzebue and chairman of the Land Claims Task Force, said he had invited Moerlein to the meeting of the body last Monday afternoon after the article appeared in the Press.

It was said that Moerlein had been taken "down a nub or two" and that he might have learned a bit about the land situation after the session with the group.

Rep. Hensley said that what had gone on at his committee sessions had gone along well.

Concerning the land situation, he said:

"This problem has been ignored for many years and, finally, a group with some authority to settle the problem have come to Alaska to attempt to do something about it.

"Furthermore, this is a historic occasion in that the Alaska Native peoples have

had a great deal to do with the drafting of legislation and have made a major contribution in solving a major statewide issue.

"Without alienating major areas of support, I think that the proposed federal and state legislations are the best we can do. This effort has the concurrence of a majority of regional groups, the State, and the Interior Department.

"We will not know what will finally materialize after congressional action, but we will, at least, have a united effort in pushing the legislation.

Sen. Lee Metcalf of Montana, opened the land hearings at 8:00 a.m. Wednesday. Sen. Henry Jackson was not able to attend the first session. He is the chairman of the committee on Interior and Insular Affairs. He took over the chairmanship of the land hearings this morning.

He had prior commitments to attend a presidential function at the White House in honor of the Prime Minister of England that delayed his trip to Alaska.

Hospital Group Meets

Representatives of 12 Alaska hospitals completed a day-long regional meeting of the Alaska State Hospital Association at Alaska Psychiatric Institute on Jan. 25.

Presided over by Sister Mary Angelus of Juneau, ASHA president, the Anchorage meeting included presentations by representatives of Blue Cross, Social Security Administration, Aetna Life and Casualty and the State Department of Health and Welfare.

A similar meeting for southeastern Alaska Hospitals was conducted at St. Ann's Hospital in Juneau on January 23.

Honest vulgarity is far preferable to phony sophistication.
BRIAN O'DOHERTY



RALPH KOTONGAN
Unalakleet



MARK HARRISON
Mekoryuk



ERNEST M. STEPETIN
St. Paul Island



ANDREY MANDREGAN, JR.
St. Paul Island



WILLIAM PITKA
Russian Mission

FIVE YOUNG ALASKANS—Are now at the U. S. Navy boot camp in San Diego, California, as recent enlistees under a program in which they choose the fields in which they will receive training.