

LBJ Lights Tree

(Continued from page 1)

fication in Alaska.

Rhodes said that Richard Birchell, area superintendent of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Bethel, had worked hard to have the Christmas tree lit in Hooper Bay by the President.

A telephone hookup was established between Bethel and Hooper Bay and from Bethel to Washington, D.C.

When the President made his appropriate ceremonial remarks over long distance phone, the Christmas tree in Hooper Bay was switched on at the same moment when LBJ switched on the White House tree.

Hooper Bay, a village near the mouth of the Yukon River in southwest Alaska, became the first community to utilize electricity installed by AVEC.

The tree was transported from 125 miles away for Hooper Bay. The location of the village has no trees.

When President Lyndon B. Johnson pushed the button to light the national Christmas tree on the ellipse in Washington, D.C. at 5:30 p.m. (EST) Monday, December 16, 1968, he also lit a Christmas tree in the remote village of Hooper Bay on the far western Bering sea coast of Alaska.

The President's action also initiated the switching on of electric power throughout Hooper Bay for the first time in history.

This small, isolated settlement of approximately 500 Eskimos is the first of fifty-nine such Aleut, Eskimo and Indian villages which will receive central station electric service under a unique project involving the co-operation of the Rural Electrification Administration in the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, The Office of Economic Opportunity, the U.S. Department of Labor, the State of Alaska and the villages.

The purpose of the project is to improve the living conditions and health of the natives and to stimulate economic development in the area.

Wiring of the buildings, most of which was done by the citizens of Hooper Bay under the direction of officials of the recently formed Alaska Village Electric Cooperative and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, was completed last weekend.

Receiving service are all residences of the community, in addition to two churches, a mission house, a native store and an elementary school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Headed by Mayor Nile Smith, an Eskimo, residents of Hooper Bay participated in the decoration of the Christmas tree, which was flown to the barren seacoast settlement from 125 miles inland.

In addition to traditional lights, the Eskimos decorated the tree with their own handmade crafts in preparation for the President's action lighting the tree from the nation's capitol nearly 5,000 miles away.

While it surprises most people unfamiliar with Alaska, the first electric appliance sought in this Eskimo village is refrigeration. All native subsistence foods can be stored in freezer chests to contribute to a better year-around diet for the Alaskan native.

The cooperative will ultimately be owned and controlled by the native villages it serves. William L. Hensley, an Eskimo native of the Kotzebue area is president of the cooperative until he is replaced at annual meetings yet to be held.

Manager W.C. Rhodes heads the cooperative staff charged with coordinating and building the small electric systems all over the State of Alaska.

For Excellent Performance—

Arctic Health Research Employees Awarded

Three employees of the Arctic Health Research Center received recognition Friday at a special awards ceremony. One step increases in pay were awarded to Mrs. Merle Hughes, administrative librarian, and to Miss Betsy Williams, geneticist, for sustained high quality performance.

Mrs. Carol Norton, biological aid in the Virology laboratory, received a seventy-five dollar cash award for a suggestion made by her contributing to safety and efficiency in the laboratory.

Mrs. Hughes was cited for the library's excellent support service to AHRC scientists and for

her assistance to other government agencies, libraries, and scientists, and to graduate students.

Mrs. Hughes has been responsible for the direction and development of the center's library since 1959, during which time acquisitions to the library have trebled and its interlibrary loan service vastly extended.

Grateful users have commented that it is one of the most complete libraries on arctic science and history. Design and services of AHRC's modern library, completed in 1967, reflect her imagination and understanding of the needs of today's research personnel.

Cruiseliners . . .

(Continued from page 4)

The M/V Wickersham, the state's luxurious new Norwegian-built ferryliner, departs Seattle and Vancouver on Saturdays and calls at Prince Rupert, Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Juneau, Haines, and Skagway.

Come mid-May, the Wickersham will begin a summertime schedule from Prince Rupert north while a Malaspina-class vessel continues to sail from Seattle each Friday.

Total cruiseship and ferryliner sailings this summer—a whopping 125 departures from California, Seattle, or Vancouver, with accommodations for 22,893 passengers.

It will be, Alaskans note, the biggest seaborne rush to the North since 1897 when Robert Henderson picked up a heavy bright rock in the Klondike, examined it closely, and yelled "Gold!"

Quinhagak Kids Organize 4-H Club

By PAULINE KUKU
Quinhagak, Alaska

Quinhagak, Alaska, following the visit of Mr. Virgil Severns, a 4-H Club has been formed at Quinhagak.

The name of our club is Quinhagak 4-H Club.

Our officers are: president Paul Cleveland, vice president Linda Moore, recorder Pauline Kuku, song leader Sally Cleveland.

Mr. Severns worked with the 5th and 6th grade boys on an electric project.

The girls will have a cooking project. The 4th grade boys will do wood working.

Our leaders are Mr. and Mrs. Raasina. Sally Carter and Fannie Simon will help with cooking. Peter Williams will help with wood working.

Calendar of Events of Native Land Problems . . .

(Continued from page 1)

dians . . . shall not be disturbed in the possession of lands actually in their use or occupation or now claimed by them, but the terms under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for future legislation by Congress."

1906—Alaska Native Allotment Act (34 Stat. 197) Secretary of the Interior authorized to allot up to 160 acres of non-mineral lands to Indian and Eskimo family heads (In the first 50 years following passage of this Act, fewer than 100 grants of title were made pursuant thereto.)

1926—Alaska Native Townsite Act (44 Stat. 629). Provided individual Indians and Eskimos and opportunity to gain trust title to lands within villages upon which their homes were located. This authority has also been little used partially because of confusion covering its intent and implementation.

1935—Tlingit-Haida Act (49 Stat. 388) passed by Congress. Authorized Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Southeast Alaska to sue in Court of Claims for payment for lands taken from them by the Federal Government.

1936—Act providing authority for creating Indian reservations in Alaska (49 Stat. 1250). (Only six reservations were validly created pursuant to this authority.)

1946—Indian Claims Commission created by Act of Congress. Provided for compensation to Indian and Eskimo bands and tribes not paid or not paid adequately for lands taken from them. Alaskan groups not affected to any great degree since most are still occupying land held prior to U.S. purchase of area.

1958—Alaska Statehood Act. Provided that the State must disclaim right and title to lands or other property, the right or title to which is held by Natives or by the United States in trust for them. (Alaska Constitution provides that the Natives' right or title to land would be defined in the Statehood Act, but Congress did not do so, except as above.) Act permitted the State to select approximately 103 million acres from the public domain. Most of the lands selected thus far by the State are claimed by the Natives.

1962—Department, because of conflicts between State selections and Native protests, placed a "freeze" on the processing of additional State land selections. By that time the State had received patent or management authority over approximately 13 million acres.

Secretary's Alaska Native Affairs Task Force recommended that additional lands around the Native villages be withdrawn for their benefit, and also that a tribunal be set up to adjudicate the Native Claims.

1967—June—Interior submitted proposed legislation (S. 1964) to settle the Natives' land claims. Bill authorized the Secretary to grant in trust to the Natives title to the village sites they occupy and such additional lands around the village as would significantly contribute to the Natives' livelihood. No group would receive more than 50,000 acres. To obtain compensation for additional lands claimed the State of Alaska would initiate an action on behalf of the Natives in the Court of Claims, recovery to be based on the value of the lands on March 30, 1867, the date Alaska was purchased by U.S.

Miss Williams was cited for her work in karyotyping. Dr. Richard Lyons, cytogeneticist, noted that in addition to sustained superior performance Miss

Williams demonstrated, in eight months, skills that "would not generally be expected before a year or two in this type of position."

Land Withdrawal . . .

(Continued from page 1)

There is strong bipartisan support for prompt and equitable settlement and I am hopeful that legislation will be passed by the next Congress.

"In view of the impending action I believe that it is important for this initial step to be taken now to preserve the status quo during the time when the Congress is actively considering the matter."

"This action" he noted, "will give opportunity for Congress to consider how the legislative commitment that the Natives shall not be disturbed in their traditional use and occupancy of lands in Alaska should be implemented."

Udall said he does not believe this action will adversely affect the State of Alaska. Under existing law, the State will lose its right to select lands now under mineral lease on January 3, 1969.

"I do not want to nullify this right," the Secretary said. But he added that any selections the State does make will be held in suspense, pending the outcome of the Government's appeal from a recent court decision which would require patenting of State land selections regardless of Native protests.

Secretary Udall's letter to the committee chairmen and Governor Hickel said:

"The State contends that it is losing several millions of dollars

in rental income because of the Department's refusal to issue oil and gas leases due to Native protests. Under present law, virtually all of these leases, which would cover millions of acres that are believed to possess enormously rich deposits, would have to be issued on a non-competitive basis.

"It is just not good management for the Federal Government to lease these lands non-competitively at this time when they would undoubtedly bring bonuses running into hundreds of millions of dollars if leased competitively. Any short-run return the State would obtain from the issuance of leases would be dwarfed by the future revenues it would be foregoing," Secretary Udall said.

He said the withdrawal order honors the commitment that Congress has long maintained that the Natives shall not be disturbed in their traditional use and occupancy of lands in Alaska.

"To allow these lands to pass into other ownership in the face of the Natives' claim would, in my opinion, preclude a fair and equitable settlement of the matter by Congress. It would also deny the Natives of Alaska the opportunity to acquire title to lands which they admittedly have used and occupied for centuries," Secretary Udall said.

At the request of the Alaska Federation of Natives S.2690 was introduced to give the U.S. Court of Claims jurisdiction to adjudicate any claims of the Natives against the United States and to render judgment in the form of either land or money.

November—At news conference in Anchorage Secretary Udall suggested possibility that provision for the Natives to share in revenues from the Outer Continental Shelf off of Alaska might be included in a settlement of Native claims. Governor Walter J. Hickel of Alaska then established a Land Claims Task Force consisting of representatives of the Alaska Federation of Natives to develop a legislative proposal in cooperation with the State. Secretary Udall sent a personal representative to work with the Governor's Land Claims Task Force.

1968—January—Court of Claims awarded Tlingit and Haida Indians \$7.5 million under the 1935 Act for lands taken from them in Southeastern Alaska. The Task Force bill was introduced as S.2906. It provided that Natives would receive 10 percent of Alaskan OCS revenues and 40 million acres of public land.

February 8-10—Hearings held in Anchorage by Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

March 6—In Message to the Congress on the Forgotten American President Johnson urged Congress to take prompt action on legislation to:

- (1) "Give the native people of Alaska title to the lands they occupy and need to sustain their villages.
- (2) "Give them rights to use additional lands and water for hunting, trapping and fishing to maintain their traditional way of life, if they so choose.
- (3) "Award them compensation commensurate with the value of any lands taken from them."

April 30—Secretary Udall transmitted to the Congress a revised Administration proposal which generally adhered to the land provisions of the previous Interior bill, but in lieu of the Court of Claims' provision substituted a payment of \$3,000 per person up to a maximum of \$180 million. (There are an estimated 54,000 Alaska Natives.)

April—The State of Alaska enacted legislation requested by the Governor which provided for payment of the Natives annually of 5 percent of the revenues derived by the State from lands to be selected by the State under the Statehood Act, up to a maximum of \$50 million. (This legislation, however, is no longer effective because payment was made contingent upon a lifting of the "freeze" by the Secretary in early October.)

July 11-12—Hearings were held by Senate and House Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs at which the Natives, with the endorsement of the State, modified their position by substituting a \$500 million cash payment for the OCS revenue provision.

September—U.S. District Court for Alaska entered summary judgment in favor of State in its suit to force Secretary to lift "land freeze."

November—United States entered notice of appeal to the Circuit Court of District Court decision.