

Villages to Subcontract . . .

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tions. The BIA officer, who is in Alaska this week from Washington, D.C., will fly to Barrow, Kotzebue and Unalakleet during the next few days to explain the contract proposal and how it will effect each village in Alaska.

"From now on, if a community wants to run their own school," he explained to the AFN Board, "they can do it with BIA money, for as long as a subsidy is necessary."

The community will have options on personnel, curriculum and school policies.

Lekanof also announced a planned expansion of the bilingual program presently operating in the Bethel area to include 18 communities.

Presently, he explained, the BIA is committed to turn its schools in Alaska over to the State Operated Schools. Under the new contract policy, however, communities will first be offered the option of running their own school.

One of the purposes of Lekanof's attendance at the AFN meeting last weekend was to explain recent policy changes and reorganization in the BIA to Alaskan Native leaders.

He referred them to last week's Tundra Times which outlined the changes developed by BIA Commissioner Louis R. Bruce which are presently being enacted.

About 20 Field Administrator positions, out of the 63 available, have opened up due to the change in this job from that of Superintendent and the policy of rotating Superintendents who have been in office over two

years, he said.

He explained the policy of rotating of Field Administrators and how it will effect local Native groups.

Some of the questions asked how to retain present Superintendents in the new job, a question which concerns at least one area which fears disruption of promising new programs if a new man comes in.

At the present time, about 75 per cent of the higher echelon BIA administrative staff in Washington is Indian, for the first time in the Bureau's history.

According to Lekanof, Commissioner Bruce has support from the White House staff. This should insure his permanence and the success of his changes after the firing of Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel who strongly advocated the Bureau's "new look".

AFN officials were encouraged Sunday to take advantage of the contract provisions of the BIA change.

"Beginning immediately," announces a recent statement by Commissioner Bruce, "all vacancies at all levels of BIA operations will be held open and monitored by Mr. Billy Mills (head of a new Washington office to negotiate contracts with Indian groups) and his staff so that tribes first are offered the fullest opportunity to assume these positions under contract."

Reaction to the new BIA changes was generally favorable among AFN Board members, most of whom asked specific questions as to how the policies would affect their home regions.

Tanacross Decides to Relocate . . .

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the State, west of the village.

High school students must cross the river to meet the bus which takes them to school in Tok.

During the breakup and freezeup of the river, the children cannot attend school. Also, accidents with the boats which carry village residents across the river have resulted in near tragedies.

Villagers fear a boat accident in the future might cost the lives of some of their children.

With the village located on the South side of the river, all of the village children could be bussed to school in Tok.

Those residents of Tanacross who hold jobs at the present time work in Tok. Moving the village will enable more residents to work in Tok, and perhaps enable the village to open a gas station or other roadside facility on the highway.

This would provide more jobs for the villagers, most of whom now live off the land. They would also have access to the large airport located on the highway side of the river.

Most of the buildings in Tanacross are in need of repair or rebuilding in the very near future. A move at this time, villagers assume, will enable all of the work to be done at once.

"Moving a village is not something which can be done overnight," explained Bureau of Indian Affairs Field Administrator Wally Craig, who will travel to Tanacross later this month to discuss the move with the village council.

"There are many factors which have to be considered," he said. "Land, water, sewage, education, transportation (both air and land), housing, economic opportunities, and power are all considerations which must be planned for."

Mr. Craig expected to use the experience the Bureau and other agencies had gained in Minto to plan the Tanacross

move. Some time early in 1971, the village will probably invite representatives of the many federal and state agencies which would be involved in their move to Tanacross—to discuss the plans necessary to make the move a reality.

To start, the village will probably apply to the Alaska State Housing Authority (ASHA) and the BIA for housing funds.

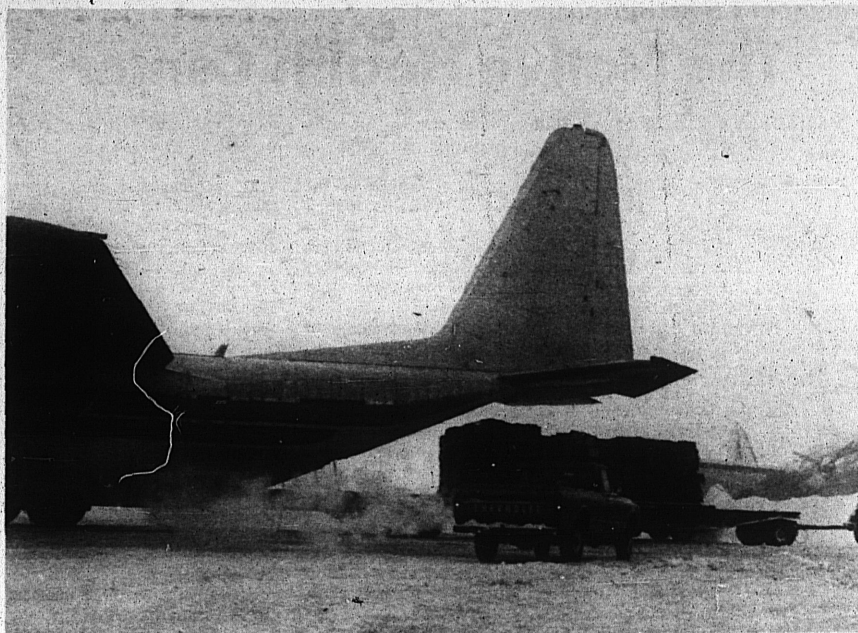
The land the village expects to move to is presently claimed by the State, but has been under dispute by the village for many years. The village council of Tanacross has received assurance from the State that the land would either be turned over to the village or returned to the Bureau of Land Management for Tanacross to register as a townsite.

Other agencies have already been consulted for their aid in the village move.

Four active cases of tuberculosis among the 135 to 140 residents of the village are said to have resulted from the crowded conditions and inadequate sewage facilities.

The Public Health Service is considering funding a joint water and sewage project for the new village. The planned location for the new village of Tanacross includes some old sewage lines, which might be reopened if they are usable. If the village moves, the State Operated School will be closed. Mr. Craig, who still retains title to the school building for the BIA, plans to turn the title for the old building over to the village of Tanacross. It would be available then, for use as a hunting lodge or other facility.

"This is an opportunity to show how state and federal agencies can work with a community in helping them to accomplish their aims," said Mr. Craig. "We hope it can be accomplished with more cooperation and more positively than it was in Minto."



BARROW SUPPLIES—Alaska Airlines Hercules aircraft is being loaded with bundles of Barrow supplies that North Star III was not able to

unload at Barrow due to unseasonal heavy ice formations. Note partial icefog conditions. —MADELYN SHULMAN Photograph

Barrow Supply Airlift Completed

Unfavorable weather conditions in Fairbanks which kept its planes grounded for days at a time delayed Alaska Airlines' completion of the massive airlift to Barrow till Tuesday morning.

The company obtained a four day extension from the Bureau of Indian Affairs on its two week contract to deliver the supplies the BIA supply ship North Star III was unable to deliver to the far north community last fall.

Days of heavy snowfall, followed by two days of high wind which closed the airport and drifted four feet of snow over cargo piled in the loading area delayed the airlift.

By last week, however, the airlift had resumed its round-the-clock operations—with three massive Hercules 4 engine turboprop cargo planes making three round trips each to the village on the top of the world.

Then ice fog again closed the Fairbanks airport, causing further delays.

In a massive hangar at Fairbanks International, foodstuffs which would suffer by freezing were unloaded from trucks which brought them from the railroad and loaded on sleds which could be moved quickly into the planes.

Other goods, which could survive freezing were loaded and waiting in the yard outside. Two days of snowfall and high winds buried many of the supplies under drifts, which had to be dug out before the aircraft could finish. Cargo crews loaded

each plane in 20 to 40 minutes. Unloading at Barrow and Wainwright took less time.

"I was on one of the flights to Barrow," said Jack Pierce, sales representative for Alaska Airlines who is in Fairbanks

from Seattle to work on the airlift. "We were on the ground in Barrow for 11 minutes."

At the end, airline officials expected 60 trips to be made to the isolated towns of Barrow and Wainwright.

Land Distribution . . .

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law firm representing the ASNA, the Slope group argued Bill ST830 was unacceptable to the House Subcommittee.

The Senate bill was attacked as cumbersome, lengthy, with mechanics which would be unworkable in practice. Members of the House subcommittee on the Interior, including chairman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado, were said to want a simpler, more direct claims bill.

The Arctic Slope Native Association claims use and occupancy for the 4,000 Eskimos north of the Brooks Range of 55 million acres of land. This includes, of course, land which is potentially oil rich, eagerly sought by oil companies in the lower 48.

"House members don't want a settlement of claims which will be subject to jurisdictional disputes among Native groups," commented AFN president Don Wright. "We should be wise enough to realize there will be plenty for everybody."

Many Board members stressed the value of the land to their people, many of whom derive their subsistence from the land they claim.

"We have to realize that if there is a depression, many people will return to live off the land."

"What you need is unity now. Your population is going to explode. We need our reservations and we need the right to run our own reservations."

One possible compromise was suggested to mend the split between those groups with large amounts of land and those whose land has already been lost to government and other development. The compromise would divide the State at the Alaska Range, asking for most of the acreage awarded above the Range, where more land is presently under Native dominion.

The argument for this compromise, which was explained by AFN attorney Clifford Groh, was the Native groups from the Southeast and Southcentral part of Alaska would be able to obtain little land in these populated areas.

However, others argued, land obtained south of the Alaska Range is valuable residential and commercial property, land that will increase in value as Alaska develops. Its certain monetary value was compared to the Arctic Slope lands which, except for mineral production, are barren and worth little on the commercial real estate market, though of inestimable value to the people of the Slope.

David Hickok, co-author of the extensive Federal Field Commission Report, "Alaska Natives and the Land" was invited to the Board meeting by State Senator Willie Hensley to explain how his Commission divided the Native peoples into five regional groups.

Hickok explained the patterns of use and occupancy which his group studied in their analysis of the Alaskan lands.

"Use and occupancy varies in time," he explained. "For example, the Tlingit use of land hasn't changed since the early 1800's. They use the sea. Other groups have migrated at various times to follow the game."

He explained that a relatively small acreage of land, if chosen carefully with first preference, could give the Native groups control of the economic development of their areas, especially in the Arctic Slope.

For example, he said, land chosen to include access routes and areas of proven mineral wealth, seaports and other strategic areas would give the Eskimos effective control of the area.

Whether the AFN can reach an agreement with the militant ASNA is a question which may not be resolved for several days.

"We realize each of you has pride in his own land," ASNA head Joe Upicksoun told the group. "By an accident of nature, right now the eyes of the Nation and the World are centered on the North Slope..."

"Without intending to belittle your lands, the real reason for the entire settlement is the oil, which by accident is on our land, not yours."