

Barrow Eyes Its Drunkards

Former state legislator John Nusunginya of Barrow, told Tundra Times today that the people of Barrow may be getting ready to deal with alcoholism in the big Eskimo village at the Top of the World.

He said the village had a general meeting last Friday but that he had to leave before any vote might have been taken. He said, however, that the people at Barrow were viewing the liquor problem from a new angle.

Nusunginya said there seems to be a drift toward establishing liquor dispensing places in the village.

"The way it is now," Nusunginya commented, "It is too hard to control the people who drink too much."

"If the liquor was handled by

Barrow," he continued, "the money would be coming in to the city—even though it's against my religion. Let us, hopefully and seriously, think of settling the problem—the big problem we're faced with now."

He said that if the city had the income from the liquor sales, Barrow would be much cleaner "and our city firehall would be kept up." He said the firehall has gone without maintenance or repair because the city coffers were empty of money.

Nusunginya noted that under the present system of getting liquor by airfreight from Fairbanks, the people tend to drink too much at the same time of the liquor arrival. He said this

could be due to the sudden arrival of shipment after going without for a time.

He pointed out that if the City of Barrow established liquor dispensing centers, the people would have a continuous supply and knowing that it is readily available would tend to stabilize drinking and might even lower the average.

"The way it is now," Nusunginya said, "they get the liquor all at once and they want to drink it—three or four bottles all at once. This is bad. And, too, some individuals in Fairbanks are getting rich out of Barrow money which could be used in Barrow."

Anchorage City Council Snubs 'Drunk in Public' Issue...

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dations regarding the elimination of simple drunkenness as a criminal offense and that simple drunkenness should be distinct from disorderly or other criminal conduct accompanied by drunkenness," the Committee said.

"There is no doubt that the present system of arrest, court, jail, and back again is a destructive failure as a deterrent and/or treatment...every investigation and study observes the fundamental flaw that the threat of fines and jail sentences does not deter repeated drunkenness offense; in most cases, jail fails as a constructive method of treatment."

The DIP Committee also discussed possible racial selectivity in enforcing the Drunk in Public Statute.

"Alaska Native individuals were 52.6 per cent of all individuals arrested for Drunk-in-Public but are only 4.0 per cent of all individuals in the Greater Anchorage Metropolitan Area... Alaska Native people are disproportionately arrested for being "Drunk-In-Public" in comparison to their proportion of the total population of the Greater Anchorage Metropolitan Area," the Committee stated.

The disproportionate figures are attributed to several factors:

—"Selective geographic enforcement of the Drunk-In-Public statutes by the City of Anchorage." The geographic enforcement referred to is Fourth Avenue, several blocks of which are often termed the "native strip" by Anchorageites.

—"Tendency toward racial enforcement of the Drunk-In-Public statutes by the City of Anchorage."

This conclusion concurs with what the Indian Health Service Task Force on Alcoholism reported in preliminary findings.

"An Indian usually runs a far greater risk of being arrested and being locked up for drunkenness than a non-Indian would under similar circumstances," the Health Service reported.

—"Irregular or lax enforcement by the City of Anchorage, of the ordinances concerned with the sale of alcoholic beverages to intoxicated individuals."

On the other hand, state laws are considered by many to be so overprotective of liquor licenses to practically require the presence of a police officer during the actual criminal act in order to obtain a conviction.

The alleged selective geographic and racial enforcement of the Drunk-In-Public Statute by the Anchorage Police Department is further substantiated in a preliminary statistical summary of individuals arrested in Anchorage prepared through the University of Alaska Institute of Social, Economic and Govern-

ment Research.

The summary revealed that, out of a projected 1,300 DIP arrests, 684 of these were Alaskan natives. These 684 native arrests amounted to 52.6 per cent of all individuals arrested on the charge.

Of those arrested two or more times on the DIP charge, it was found that Alaska Natives comprised 66.3 per cent. For those having five or more arrests, Alaska natives represent 83.3 per cent of the total.

The figures, based on arrests, made during the 1968 calendar year, become more disproportionate with increased numbers of arrests.

In its own findings that Anchorage DIP Committee concluded that, "The present system of arrest-fine, or incarceration has not proven to be an effective deterrent in preventing subsequent DIP arrests."

Only 35.4 per cent had no previous DIP record although 62.2 per cent had only one DIP arrest in 1968; and only 24.6 per cent of Alaskan Natives arrested for DIP had no previous record although 53.0 per cent had only one DIP arrest in 1968."

To resolve the problem within the City of Anchorage, the Ad Hoc Committee on Drunk-In-Public urged the adoption of a comprehensive approach including a waiver-referral system, a program of professional counsel, a good range of treatment and helping services, and the abolition of drunk in public as a criminal offense.

"It is recommended the city should adopt a procedure by

which an individual arrested for being drunk in public no more than two times within the previous 12-month period would have the charges against him dismissed," the Committee recommended.

This aspect of the approach is very much similar to one adopted by the City of Fairbanks in May of 1965. Under this approach, as in the Anchorage proposal, persons found drunk in public are warned first to go home.

If this warning is ignored, the individual is incarcerated in the City Jail until which time he is sober enough to care for himself. He is then given an opportunity to sign a waiver, rather than going to court.

When the waiver is signed, the individual is released with no criminal charges filed against him.

The Anchorage proposal, as the current Fairbanks program, allows for two waivers during each calendar year.

If adopted, the DIP committee proposal would become one of the most sophisticated programs created to solve the alcoholism dilemma.

Involving more than simply the creation of another agency, it would require complete cooperation of professional counselors and multitude of agencies.

"After the individual arrested for drunk in public is sober...he would be given an opportunity to talk to a referral aide.

The referral aide would be stationed at the jail and would conduct an interview with the individual arrested. The purpose of this interview is to identify

Fbnks. Rights Group to Meet At C of C Bldg.

The Fairbanks Human Rights Commission will be holding a public meeting on August 7 at the conference room in the basement of the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Building near First and Cushman streets.

The commission set up by the City of Fairbanks was created primarily to investigate any discrimination in housing, employment and other matters that might be classed under discrimination.

"We would like the public to know that the commission is set up to take care of any complaints of Fairbanks citizens," stated Frank Peratrovich, member of the commission.

Other members are: Frank Fleeks, chairman; Ralph Perdue, Nels Anderson, Jr., Forbes Baker, J. P. Jones, Charles Parr, Willie Radcliff and Irene Reed.

Bethel Fish Co-op Says Thanks to Gov.

JUNEAU— Seventy-three members of the Kuskokwim Fishermen Cooperative in Bethel, Alaska, signed their names to two letters received by Governor Keith H. Miller last Friday in the wake of a successful king salmon season in that Western Alaska delta region.

The successful season and resultant letters were, in large measure, products of an agreement reached during March and April of this year which involved the Cooperative and the Governor's Office.

The effect of the agreement was to allow sale of Alaskan Salmon to foreign processors provided that the processing work be done by Alaskan workers and that the majority of it be done aboard the Cooperative's work barge.

Effective for only this season,

RurALCAP Personnel Board Favors Mallott

The Personnel Committee of the Alaska Rural Community Action Program (RurALCAP) last Tuesday voted to recommend Byron Mallott to replace Larry Brayton, who resigned, as the executive director of the agency. The vote was 5-2 in favor of Mallott.

The personnel committee member Duane Carlson of the Anchorage Carpenter's Union, nominated Mallott.

The vote in favor of him was made in the following manner: Marlene Johnson, Hoonah, chairman of the RurALCAP Board of Directors; Al Ketzler, Committee chairman, Nenana; Lucien Poussard of the Public Health Service in Anchorage; and Sh-

walter Smith, representative of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Those who opposed Mallott were Frank Cox and Ben Gurke of the Bristol Bay Borough.

The affirmative result of the personnel committee in recommending the young 25 year old Yakutat man is not binding however. The 22-member board of RurALCAP is expected to consider Mallott formally when it meets on August 12-13.

Although Byron Mallott had virtually unanimous backing of the native leaders, he has been meeting active opposition from Congressman Howard Pollock who said that the Yakutat man was playing partisan politics.

any of the basic needs of the individual.

"The individual would then be referred to the appropriate agency for service needed. A person needing a job would be sent to the State Employment Service.

"The referral of those individuals who need assistance before the individual becomes trapped in the cycle of arrest, release, drunk and arrest because of frustration originating in the lack of meeting his basic needs: job, housing, medical, food, money.

"The Committee recommends the establishment of (a) a comprehensive evaluation and referral center for problem drinkers, alcoholics, and persons with other related social-economic-emotional problems, and (b) development of a community health program that not only coordinates existing services but fills present gaps in services."

When this proposal was placed before the Anchorage City Council, the City fathers felt that such a weighty problem should be considered by the state, or at least the Greater Anchorage Borough. Fearing such responsibilities, the City Council sent the report and committee to the Borough.

In presenting the proposal to the Borough Assembly, Dr. Martin Wilson of the Public Health Service pressed the urgency of the situation in terming it "a really tough problem and all of us have been ducking it."

The Ad Hoc Committee proposal, Anchorage attorney Martin Friedman said, affords "an

alternative to Fourth Avenue."

Several assemblymen were concerned and attentive, some were indifferent, and some viewed the proposal as laughable. One man, with a kind of a "drunk is a drunk" flavored perspective, said that any such "ding-a-ling" survey would result in a "ding-a-ling conclusion."

A motion placed before the Assembly asked the acceptance of the DIP Committee findings and proposal and funding from the borough's contingency fund. It died for lack of a second.

Another motion was entertained which would refer the proposal to the Borough Health Committee for the recommendations of that body. It passed unanimously.

Anchorage has long been deaf to the pleas of those with the alcoholic illness, and has been mute on discussing solutions. Some observers suggested that if solutions are ignored now, they may be more easily dismissed in the future.

At least one man has made his plea known. In describing his disease, he states, "There are no words to describe the anxiety, fear, loneliness, and torture that one experiences. One is in the depth of hell and can do nothing about it alone."

"All my life I have had will power, pride, and self respect—as much or more than the average person, but, you would have to experience this complete helplessness to understand."

"...We are the only ones that have been in mortal living hell and were able, through help and a supreme power, to be returned to sanity and reality. Alcohol has no respect for anyone. Skid row is not an address; it is a state of mind."

"I was a patient for different lengths of time in each institution (he mentioned six); but to my knowledge, never received correct treatment any therapy."

He urged facilities be established for the alcoholic "so he can and will get the correct treatment instead of being locked in a cell to go into delirium tremens, convulsions, and other affects of alcoholism."

"A great many men in this position have died due to being ignored in jail."

The few counseling centers, hard-core treatment facilities, half-way houses, and other agencies are acknowledged by all to be under-financed and understaffed.

A plan such as the one proposed for Anchorage requires the fullest cooperation from the community, the courts, the police department, and a great number of agencies. It represents a challenge—one which has not been met.