

# Indian and Eskimo Women Firefighters Praised by Boss ...

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the advance of a 35,000 acre fire, No. 8668. In the crew that responded, 75 of the total 142 were women.

"We used the night attack system," said Huntington, "cooling the fire with retardant and following up with crews." They cut a 50 foot wide trench, along a five mile line.

"Kenneth Sam's crew led the way, cutting the line with chain saws, while other crews followed cleaning and trenching. At noon on the second day, we could see that we were not going to hold the fire much longer."

Two crews of 42 fighters, mostly women, were pulled back

to set a back fire along a three mile line.

"Anyone who has back-fired before," said Huntington, "knows the terrible heat and smoke that you have to go through to contain the back-fire. Four hours later anyone would have been proud."

"The women's faces were black and streaked with sweat. They were tired and hungry, but they still watched the line and carried the tree taps that they used to fight the blaze with."

Airplanes flying near the area reported a blow-up at Fire 8668 with smoke reaching 3000 feet. When word came that two

loads of retardant had, been ordered ten miles south, it

looked as if they had lost the fire.

## Toksook Bay Pottery ...

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applications of Arctic materials. He stated that the glaciation and permafrost action has combined to make an unusually pliable clay that he would like to experiment with.

Having grown up in Ningpo, China and traveled extensively in Mexico and Europe, he was drawn to the project in the remote southwestern Alaska village.

Toksook Bay is located between the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers on Nelson Island. Cannery jobs during the summer months complement the subsistence economy of the village.

Only six people of the 270 villagers in Toksook Bay have permanent jobs. The average annual income is \$2,000.

Like most rural areas of Alaska, Toksook Bay must send its children out to boarding schools after the eighth grade for further education. Many do not return because of the lack of employment opportunities in the village.

The idea of a ceramics project is based on a project started by BIA teachers at Nighmute, a neighboring village from which the villagers in Toksook Bay moved in the early 1960's.

With the kiln and other supplies that the school provided, the villagers were able to derive a source of income from the ceramic figures and pottery utensils that they made and sold in the Anchorage area.

This project, although it showed surprisingly large profit, was discontinued when the teachers left.

The idea was reintroduced when the villagers were investigating ways to improve their standard of living.

The village council, headed by Mr. Paul John, reasoned that such a project would not only educate the young in the old ways but also provide more incentive for them to stay in the village.

In 1970, the village wrote to the Economic Development Administration and asked for assistance in establishing the ceramics venture.

Unable to assist the cooperative, the letter was referred to Community Enterprise Development Corporation of Alaska.

CEDC engaged the services of Mrs. Carol Kampert, a potter-weaver and graduate from the University of California in Berkeley, for initial investigations and recommendations.

From these findings, Mr. Skip Deegans, business manage-

ment consultant for CEDC, was assigned to help the villagers obtain the necessary financial and technical assistance required to undergo a ceramics project.

Because of refusal to specify the type of product that will be made (and thereby limit the creative possibilities of such a venture) by the cooperative and subsequent lack of qualified purchasing commitments, "conventional funding sources could not fund the project for its initial year of operations."

Through grants from the Methodist and Catholic Churches, CEDC, Whitney Fidalgo Corporation, Irwin-Sweeney-Miller Foundation, Freedom From Hunger Foundation, and private donors, the project will be starting its first year of operations.

Because the cooperative will utilize local materials in the construction of their ceramic products, a bit of the traditional motif will be reintroduced.

The first year of operations will be a period of learning and experimenting for the Toksook Bay Arts and Crafts Cooperative. Stannard will teach them the fundamentals of shaping pottery and will experiment in the use of indigenous materials such as bones and shells in glazes.

From these experiments, the Toksook Bay cooperative expects to develop their unique line of ceramic products and a stable market.

Eventually, the ceramics project will be a permanent cottage industry in the area that is wholly owned by the people in the area.

Mosley jumped in an airplane to see for himself. When he got over the fire, he could hardly believe his eyes. Looking down through the smoke, he could see the black line along the trenches. The fire had been contained.

Later that evening, Huntington showed Mosley a "job well done" on the ground and introduced him to the fire-fighters, both men and women who had worked without stopping to beat this fire.

"I have been in the fire-fighting game for over 25 years," said Huntington, "and I see nothing wrong with women fire-fighters, as long as they are willing to work on the same basis as the men."

There was a new look of respect for Native women fire-fighters with their blackened, smoke-smudged faces, standing side by side with men, to protect the land from fire.

## Tanacross to Get Fifteen Dwelling Units

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has earmarked federal funds for 15 family dwelling units in Tanacross, Alaska, according to an announcement from the office of Senator Ted Stevens in Washington.

HUD is reserving funds for low-rent housing in a program called Turnkey III from the fiscal 1973 budget.

Recipient will be the Alaska Federation of Natives housing authority in Tanacross, the Stevens announcement said.

## Land Use Planning...

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precedented. At no other time has attention been given to all spheres of influence as they relate to land use planning."

Alaska is the first state to have a planning commission for the total land masses within its borders. It is expected that other states will have similar commissions in the very near future.

Speaking on behalf of Carter, Brewer reminded those present that the commission came into being as a result of the Native Claims Settlement, and that settlement of that claim was and is the primary objective of the act, not the classification of lands in Alaska.

"The Commission is dealing principally with land disposal," said Tom Davis, "what agency or group shall become the proprietor of what lands. It has no police power and no authority over the private use of land, no management authority over public lands."

Since its formation, this criticism has been leveled at the Commission, that it has no "teeth" and can only act as a recommending body.

Davis outlined the past history of land use in Alaska. The status of lands in 1968, he said, was that of the least settled and most undeveloped in the United States.

"Four-fifths of the entire land in the state was unreserved, unclassified public domain, under the management of the Bureau of Land Management."

"There was no statutory framework for land use. Private, state, federal, or mining interests could withdraw lands on a first come, first serve basis. The state selections were subject to private homesteading and mining claims."

It boiled down, said Davis to a question of "who was really there first? What lands were owned by the Natives? No matter which lands were granted to the Natives, a free-for-all would ensue."

The withdrawals made by the Secretary of the Interior must be examined toward incorporation into one or more of the several systems, state, federal, Native, or private. He compared Alaska at the present time to Africa in the 19th century, when various imperial and industrial powers struggled to establish claims to that rich continent.

Davis predicted that the biggest area of conflict "may be over use for mining, whether lands will be open for mining use."

The 1872 Mining laws which still by and large prevail give virtually no control over the initiative of the miner.

William Roscoe, director of the state Division of Lands, said that the state's mining law has in it the potential for management, not fully exercised

in the past.

"Why do we really want mining?" asked one participant. "Look at Eastern Kentucky, Pennsylvania, West Virginia. Do we really want to create that kind of society? Do we want Alaska to become another Appalachia?"

Davis recommended that the "whole system be analyzed, the total state. To superimpose over the old system," he said, "could lock in to dead ideas. We must be open to innovative ideas, we must have a more responsible attitude toward the state's resources and growing population."

In the past Alaska was described as having crisis-planning.

"We had a crisis, we solved it. There was no anticipatory planning."

The new Land Use Planning Commission has the opportunity to consider the state as a whole each affecting the other.

It is the process now of developing strategies, policies, objectives, and goals for the state.

"The strategy," said Davis "should be dynamic, open to change, but not be constantly changing objectives."

Brewer reinforced this concept of flexibility. "There is no use," he said "in maintaining mistakes in perpetuity."

Brewer asked that people begin to look at the land first "as the land, and only secondly as ownership, to look at the best use of the land, whether it is federal, state, or other land."

It would be possible for Native corporations to effect trade-offs with the state where this would be advantageous to both, in order to create larger blocs of land in the same area.

Art Davis stressed the need to develop lines of communication between the various interest groups.

"If you can communicate," he said, "you can get the decision-making on a higher level. The Land Use Planning Commission will be making decisions with long-range effects for years to come. I hate to see these decisions made with the polarization that now exists."

"Government," he added, "has a responsibility to disseminate information, so that people can make informed decisions. Not only in rural Alaska, but also in urban Alaska, people do not really know what the areas out there are like."

One the Land Use Planning Commission makes its recommendations, said one participant, "it becomes a political decision."

Another observer said he was reminded of two analogies: the albatross and Pandora's box.

"The land policies of the state are the albatross," he said, "and mining is Pandora's box."

## Eskimos Report UFO's..

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west of St. Michael on Norton Sound, some 20 residents - including Gabriel Bighead and Eskimo Scout Sgt. Pius Mike - saw an object in flight they couldn't identify.

Sgt. Mike filed a sighting report to the Guard's First Scout Battalion headquarters in Nome, and as soon as the weather cleared - last Monday - Capt. Tom Williams, an Army advisor to the Scouts stationed in Nome, flew to St. Michael.

Williams reported that he saw a depression in the ground which Cheemuk said was made by the saucer, Aiken said. He described the spot as three feet in diameter, two inches deep and full of water, as it had been raining.

Burned grass was at the bottom of the hole, Williams said, adding that he had an "eerie feeling" when he left the site after taking photographs and samples of the soil, grass and water.

The samples were sent to the Army Corps of Engineers for testing. While waiting for the results, the Army is studying a sketch of the UFO made by Cheemuk.

The last time mysterious sightings were made in Alaska was about five years ago, according to informed sources.

At the time a saucer with red and white flashing lights was reported maneuvering over Barrow during a power failure and several Anchorage residents also reported seeing strange flying shapes in the sky over the Chugach Mountains.

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