

\$6 Million, 3-yr. Rural Electrification ...

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project grant to the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, Incorporated, of Anchorage.

This is the first phase of a proposed three-year \$750,000 program. Senator Gruening quoted Shriver as saying that the grant launches the project which is expected to revolutionize life in villages throughout the state and to bring residents in remote areas—Eskimos, Aleuts and Indians—abreast of their contemporaries living in the larger centers where electric power is more readily available.

The independent cooperative, developed through the unique partnership of OEO, the Rural Electrification Administration of the Department of Agriculture, the U. S. Department of Labor, the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior and the State of Alaska, will have a membership consisting entirely of people in the villages receiving the services.

Its board of directors will be made up of representatives of the recipient villages.

REA Administrator Norman M. Clapp said that the work of the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative will be statewide in scope and "directed primarily to bringing electricity to isolated Native villages where the need is great. Experience shows that where rural

Macaluso ..

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of discussion and talks with management and labor," said Macaluso in Anchorage. "I told both that very soon there must be effective statewide Affirmative Action Programs.

"I hope the industry will develop an acceptable one of its own. If not, the federal government will have to prescribe a program which will do the job whichever way it must be done."

One of the prime reasons for Macaluso's trip was to gain a firsthand knowledge of the unemployment problems of the Alaska native peoples.

The dire unemployment situation among the native people was pinpointed last fall when Robert D. Arnold and Esther G. Wunnicke authored a Staff Study for the Federal Field Committee for Development and Planning in Alaska entitled, Alaska Natives and Federal Hire.

"Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts," the Study pointed out, "make up more than one-fifth of Alaska's civilian population, but they hold fewer than one-tenth of the jobs in the state. Their unemployment rate—based upon a labor force estimated at about 16,500—is a staggering 60 per cent. Being jobless, these Alaska natives live in poverty and suffer its consequences."

The situation was brought to the attention of top federal officials recently in testimony presented by Senator E. L. (Bob) Bartlett, Robert D. Arnold of the Federal Field Committee, and Willard Bowman, director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights.

Vincent Macaluso also held a series of meetings with representatives of federal agencies and discussed programs of affirmative action "to assure meaningful employment opportunity for all minority groups in Alaska."

electric lines go, progress follows."

The project will cost approximately \$6 million and the breakdown is as follows: \$750,000 CAP pilot project money to be given over a three-year period. This will be used for central administration, special technical assistance, program development and village organization and education.

CAP money is the catalyst and makes possible the participation of the other agencies who can come in with their special resources.

Financing actual construction of the electric systems is proposed under the Rural Electrification Loan Program. Approximately \$3 million to \$4 million will be required for the installation of the plant facilities, engineering, and all other expenses connected with the installation and operation of the electric system.

For a number of years now REA has been eager to get electricity to isolated rural

Alaskans. However, they are limited by law to approving loans only where repayment could be reasonably assured. With OEO and the other agencies assisting in closing the gaps the project has become a feasible one.

It is anticipated that the Department of Labor's Manpower Development and Training Act will provide \$660,000 for an institutional six-month training program of the village electric system operators. By the end of the year 40 generator operators will have been selected by their respective villages and trained.

The state government of Alaska and the Bureau of Indian Affairs will supply the supplementary services needed to complete the project.

An estimated ten villages, each having its own generator, will be served by electrical power by Dec. 1968; an additional 30 by the end of 1969, and the remainder during 1970.

During March of this year

the first training program for the first 20 generator operators will begin while simultaneously an additional program for co-op members will be undertaken in the villages.

The 67 villages will be chosen by the board of AVEC with the approval of OEO and will be selected on the basis of adequate population size, human and natural resources for economic development and assurance that the cooperative will have the support from the villagers with in-kind contributions.

Control of the organization will be in the hands of Native Alaskans. The president of the cooperative is William F. Hensley of Kotzebue, vice president Diane S. Carpenter of Stony River, wife of a dentist, and the secretary-treasurer is Morris Thompson, Juneau.

Directors are James Hoffman of Anchorage and David L. Peterson of Auke Bay.

Leaders See Land Hearing as Prevue ...

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the Department of the Interior.

It was introduced by Sen. Gruening on February 1 by request before the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

Immediately after the land hearing, Land Claims Task Force members met in Anchorage and expressed that work was just beginning.

"This is a milestone but it's just the beginning," Barry Jackson, one of the land claims attorneys told the group. "Task Force job is not over. It has just begun but things are rolling."

There was also an air of urgency that support on behalf of the native people and the bill was needed to be organized; that ways be found to raise money to finance services like lobbying in Washington, D. C. and public relations.

"I strongly urge that you get professional help along these lines," Fred Paul, claims attorney from Seattle said. "The more professional help we have, the better. I'm an old hand in trying to raise funds among the Indians and if you don't get professional help, you won't raise 25 cents."

It was generally agreed that a budget of about \$100,000 would be needed to provide adequate means of assistance toward the passage of the bill.

The Anchorage land hearing had a general effect of cautious optimism among the native leaders as well as awareness of the opposition that can develop.

Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives made the following statement:

"I think the Senators agree that something has to be done as soon as possible. These hearings are the beginning of the long legislative process. I'm sure there'll be hearings in Washington.

"The earliest we can expect to see a bill passage, I would think, would be six months to a year. Realistically, I don't expect action on it possibly in three years.

"The time for the native people to make a determined stand on our land is here. There has been no greater need for unified effort on the

part of the native people. The longer we wait to solve the problem, the tougher it's going to be.

"I think we can expect opposition to come from sportsmen's groups, mining groups and conservation groups. I think they'll oppose the granting of land to the natives."

"Opposition heard at the hearings is an indication of what we can expect. I think the opposition will become more refined and it has to be offset by letting the public know that a fair settlement for the native people will benefit every citizen in Alaska and will mark the beginning of true development in rural Alaska."

Testimonies at the hearings were predominantly and heavily pro-native but there were a few men who opposed the proposed land legislation and these were geologists and a representative of the Alaska Miners' Association George A. Moerlein. Moerlein made the following plea to the Senate committee:

"...We urge you to do your utmost to quickly legislate against these native land claims and to prevent them from recurring again in the future..."

Sen. Metcalf, who was chairing the hearing at the moment, remarked:

"You're the first witness to say that we should do nothing!"

Moerlein, during his testimony, had also remarked that the native people had no moral right or legal right to a land settlement.

Phil R. Holdsworth, former commissioner of Natural Resources for the state, apparently laid his job on the line when he refuted Moerlein. Holdsworth had been hired by the Alaska Miners' Association as a lobbyist.

In his testimony before the Senate committee, Phil Holdsworth said that the miners did recognize a moral obligation.

Holdsworth's remarks were contrary to the position of the miners.

"Holdsworth did the natives a tremendous service and we're really disappointed at his firing," said Hugh Nicholls, first vice president of the Arctic Slope Native Association, as Holdsworth saw him off at the Anchorage airport.

"The Eskimos won't forget it," Nicholls promised.

Some testimonies may have produced some possible changes in the bill.

The provision in the bill to appoint seven land claims commissioners with salaries of \$25,000 per year met with some opposition from Sen. Gruening who said that Congress would not buy it. He thought that they should serve on a per diem basis.

William Paul, Sr., attorney from Seattle had the following to say about some of the possible changes:

"In the words of Mr. Morken (Owen Morken, Area Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Alaska), 'this is a great step forward.' I think Congress will modify. First they'll do something about those seven commissioners, four of whom must be of native descent, either putting them on per diem or reducing the number.

"My personal view is that there should be some approval of this commission by the native people so that the intent of control might be assured. Another probable change will be to strike the judicial functions of this commission.

"It is obvious that the manner of appointing the commission will not assure it for the semi-judicial functions imposed on them.

"I see some difficulty for the Arctic Slope people, for already I hear some delegations speculating on obtaining lieu lands for their interior areas for its limited grounds.

"Another disappointment for the Barrow people will be the Naval Reserve No. 4 whose withdrawal seems to be protected, and while the Barrow people have the right to select (in lieu lands) elsewhere, just where is that

Land Education

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"Majority of the people are not very well informed about the land situation, even out in the bush," said Richard Frank this week.

Plans are being made by the local group to travel the Tanana Chiefs Conference area to inform the native people about the land situation. Bordering the area are the following villages: Kaltag, Bettles, Arctic Village, Northway, Cantwell. There about 36 villages within the area.

The initial meeting with a local group was made last Wednesday and this was with the Soroptimist Club.

Barry Jackson of Fairbanks, one of the claims attorneys, and Richard Frank were the speakers.

The meeting was considered a fine success in which the club members expressed that the talks had been enlightening and informational.

The next meeting of the local group will be with the THEATA Club of the University of Alaska, a native students group.

land located?

"The price of this legislation is the offer of 40 million acres to be selected after the state select its 103 million acres.

"Another disturbing item in the state's insistence that its tentative selection of 18 million acres be confirmed. When you take all of these withdrawals into consideration and add to that the University of Alaska and Mental Health withdrawals, we are wondering just what is left for the natives.

"After hearing Mr. Kelly's (Thomas Kelly, commissioner of State Natural Resources) glowing description of the vast amount of land already withdrawn, I'm more disturbed than ever as to the value of our bargain.

"However, we have filled the incubator with a sufficient number of eggs said to be fertilized by the state, I join with others in hoping that they all hatch."

Sen Ernest Gruening was asked by Tundra Times what the Bureau of the Budget would play in the land legislation and in connection with Outer Continental Shelf revenues proposed for compensatory awards for land settlement.

"That's the Public Enemy No. 1," Gruening quickly answered.

He thought that Interior Secretary Stewart Udall being the President's cabinet member, might be one man to approach the Bureau to make way for discussions on land legislation and the proposed revenues.

After the first day of hearings, Sen. Lee Metcalf was asked what he thought of the testimonies he heard so far.

"I thought the testimony on background history of the native people was a bit superfluous but when that testimony by the miners was given, I could see the importance of it," he said.

In all, 75 witnesses testified at the land claims hearings in Anchorage.

(NEXT WEEK: Excerpts from testimonies pro and con.)