#### Legal Services for Low Income Folks-

# Conference Committee Approves Relief Act

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Senate approved a Confer-ence Committee Report on the Disaster Relief Act of 1970 that contains a provision, introduced by Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alas-ka), authorizing needed legal services for low-income individuals.

Senator Gravel hailed the bill's passage as "a significant and important action that will provide greatly improved aid to the victims of future natural disasters, such as the 1964 Alas-kan earthquake."

The Senator said the primary objective of the new legislation is to coordinate disaster relief

and recovery efforts of all appropriate Federal, state and local authorities, and relief and dis-aster assistance organizations, so that, when disaster strikes any where in the country, the full resources of both public and private sectors may be brought to bear to meet the immediate emergency and undertake the difficult and costly task of repair

and rehabilitation.

Senator Gravel said he was "especially pleased" the bill, as finally approved, retains the special provision he introduced authorizing needed legal service to low-income individuals. to low-income individuals.

"Many disaster victims cannot

### **Egan Names Ryan Commissioner**

JUNEAU-Mrs. Irene Ryan, an Anchorage consulting engineer and geologist, was named by Governor William A. Egan as Commissioner of the Department

Commissioner of the Department of Development last week.

For Mrs. Ryan, the appointment was another in a list of firsts. She was the first woman to graduate from the New Mexico School of Mines (now the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology)—in 1940 with a bachelor of science degree in geological engineering with a mining antion.

mining option.

Now, she becomes the first woman to fill a commissioner's

post in Alaska government.
"I'm walking this high off
the ground," she said last week,
waving her hand in a waist-high
gesture. "It's a great honor

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## for a woman to be entrusted

th such a high post."

Might not women's lib, someone jokingly cautioned, take her statement as excessively humble

to the cause?

"I've been breaking barriers for quite a few years," she replied. "Just not in the way it's being done today."

Mrs. Ryan, a former territorial

and state legislator, had operated an Anchorage consulting service

an Anchorage consulting service in civil, mining, and petroleum engineering since 1947.

She ended her present consulting association—with Lyon Associates, Inc., of Baltimore and Anchorage—upon accepting the state commission post.

The new commissioner said she wanted to review the work-

she wanted to review the workings of the Department of Economic Development "a little more before I would say what it should accomplish."

She said a "boomer approach" to development "obviously is not the one that should be taken. But on the other hand, people have to live and eat and economic development is the only way to provide jobs to accomplish that. Sometimes, people overlook this."

Mrs. Ryan said it is of top

Mrs. Ryan said it is of top importance "to diversify our economy as much as possible so that the play of market forces on any one sector of the economy does?" omy doesn't damage our overall

"Seattle is an example of what can happen from being too dependent on one industry.

"Next, it is important that our industry be diversified as much as possible by area, throughout the state so we won't have rich areas on one end of the scale and very poor areas on the

afford legal guidance and counsel when negotiating with insurance adjustors or making application for Federal loans and assistance," he noted. "Under my provision, however, qualified needy persons in the future will be entitled to free legal advice."

Much of the input for the Omnibus bill resulted from Sen-

the 1969 Ketchikan mud slides.

ator Gravel's personal experience gained from past Alaska disasters, including the 1964 earthquake, the 1967 Fairbanks flood and

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