

Kuskokwim-Yukon Canal Possible

A study of the feasibility of connecting the Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers by canal to make the rich resources of interior Alaska and the Yukon territory available to world markets through the port of Bethel was endorsed by unanimous vote of the house at Juneau recently.

The vote came on house joint resolution 75, sponsored by Rep. Milo H. Fritz, R-Anchorage, whose proposal for a ferry on the Yukon has already won wide support around the 49th state.

Rep. Fritz read to the house excerpts from a lengthy Wall Street Journal report of Feb. 19, indicating Japan is investing billions of its own capital to develop mineral and petroleum resources of Siberia, to be used in Japan. Rep. Fritz said Japan, which is already Alaska's best overseas customer, will divert some of that capital to interior Alaska if its resources are made available by such a canal.

"The Yukon has an estuary rather than a seaport at its mouth, but Bethel can take ships of 6,000 tons," the Anchorage lawmaker told the

house.

He said the corps of engineers has surveyed the route of 30 miles and installed a small tramway which has been used for decades for transporting small boats.

The land is mostly swamp land and lakes, easy to remove, and the project probably would be economically feasible. Fritz said he has assurance from the corps of engineers that the job can be done, and he feels it would fit nicely into the entire NORTH project sponsored by the state administration for development of northern Alaska.

"Lt. Lavrenty Zagoskin of the Russian imperial navy made such a proposal before we bought Alaska," Fritz told the house. "His book foretells the development of this area."

Jalmar Kerttula, D-Palmer, house minority leader, spoke for the proposal, indicating bi-partisan support.

They contended Alaska may have more easily accessible timber, mineral and petroleum resources, available at lower cost, than Siberia's.



RICHARD ATUK receives the congratulations of Dr. William R. Wood, University of Alaska president, following his commissioning as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. With them is Agnes Ivanoff, UA student who pinned bars on the new officer. Lieutenant Atuk was a mid-semester graduate of UA's Reserve Officer Training Program and College of

Earth Sciences and Mineral Industry where he earned a degree in geological engineering. He was born in Wales, on the tip of the Seward Peninsula, and lived in Nome prior to enrolling at the university. He is presently working in Anchorage awaiting orders to active duty.

(UA PHOTO)

Byron Mallott Announces Candidacy for State House

Byron Mallott has announced that he is running for the State House of Representatives from District 5.

Mallott will be opposing the incumbent, Frank See of Hoonah. Mallott is the resident of Yakutat.

During 1966 until late last year, he served in the Office of the Governor as a Local

Government Specialist.

He is also the grand vice president of the Alaska Native Brotherhood and is also first vice president of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Byron Mallott writes a column for the Tundra Times under the title of, "One View."

St. Paul Islanders Form Health Committee To Deal with Alcoholism and Other Problems

Permanent residents of the Aleut community on St. Paul Island in the Pribilofs have set up a program to deal with

their various health problems including those associated with alcohol.

At the villagers' request,

they are being assisted by Dr. Holm Neumann, the U.S. Public Health Service physician assigned there.

Initial steps by the St. Paul Community Council to form a health committee were prompted by difficulties affecting individuals with severe drinking problems.

A workable program was developed, admittedly feasible because of the unique circumstances of the remoteness of the Bering Sea Island community of some 400 persons.

The village operates the local bar and canteen, the only source of alcoholic beverages on the island and thus has total control of how the facilities are used.

Under the village program, persons with serious drinking problems may approach Dr. Neumann for an assessment of their situation.

If applicable, the doctor will sign a statement to the effect that the drinking problem for any such individual is developing into one which is significantly affecting their health—mental, social or physical.

Subsequently, these same persons voluntarily sign a statement placing themselves on "probation at the bar" for a one year period. "Probation" means they will totally abstain from drinking any alcoholic beverages and

will be unable to purchase any alcohol from the community facilities.

These statements are then presented to and passed upon by the village council. If accepted, the council initiates the probation at the bar and canteen.

Any villager who would contribute alcohol to these patients on probation is liable to disciplinary probation by the council.

"This program is a step in the right direction," says Dr. Neumann. "It shows mature judgment on the part of the community council since the bar is one of their largest sources of revenue."

In addition to the council's action, Dr. Neumann makes supportive psycho-therapy available to the probationers.

Meanwhile, the health committee meets periodically with Dr. Neumann to discuss various health problems in the community and to assist with future program planning and with any environmental health or preventive medicine programs such as poison contr.l., well child conferences and cancer detection program.

The health committee is composed of Tikhon Stepetin, community council president; Mrs. Sophia Stepetin, head nursing assistant; and Mrs. Perfenia Pletnikoff, council member.

Fund Shortage


JUNEAU—Gov. Walter J. Hickel today called for "immediate and vigorous action" on the part of Alaska's congressional Delegation to remedy what the governor called "A forthcoming shortage of funds for unemployment compensation payments to former federal employees and servicemen now living in Alaska."

In wires to Alaska Sens. E. L. Bartlett and Ernest Gruening, and Rep. Howard W. Pollock, Hickel said: "Persons in these categories receive unemployment benefits from a special fund that is separate from the main portion of Alaska's unemployment compensation fund. However, these funds are due to be depleted today, March 15, and at that time no further federal funds have been allocated for this purpose."

Hickel noted that a bill authorizing a supplemental appropriation for unemployment compensation payments is presently in the U.S. Senate. He urged Bartlett and Gruening to work for rapid passage of the measure.

"If the proper federal funds are not available in time," Hickel continued in his wires, "then state employment service offices will have to accumulate and hold in abeyance all benefit claims from former federal employees and servicemen, until such time as Congress provides these funds."

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