

EDA's No'west Planning Board on the Fadeout

As March ends, the Northwest Economic Planning and Development Board, as well as other regional planning boards funded by an EDA technical assistance grant, fades out of existence.

At the end of the month, the technical assistance grant which funds the board terminates, and has not been renewed by AFN.

The villagers who compose this board, which comprises the small as well as the large villages of the Arctic Slope, Kobuk, Norton Sound and Seward Peninsula areas, fear nothing will arise to take its place.

At the beginning of the 2 year pilot program, the board members faltered. What was the purpose of a technical assistance grant? What do we need? Noorvik, Barrow and other villages thought of a hundred projects, then listed a few priorities.

They needed many things—housing, electricity, plumbing, and most important, economic development to bring jobs, cash income.

Thus, the board set planning priorities.

Chief among its endorsed priorities is the proposed Barrow Air Terminal, a project which is moving into its last stages of obtaining funding and contracts.

If enough money is obtained in time to order supplies upon the North Star III for this summer, the terminal will be a reality—along with almost 200 full time and seasonal jobs for Barrow residents.

The terminal facility will probably expand the Barrow tourist industry—already substantial despite the fact there are no overnight tourist accommodations as yet.

At its February 24-26 meeting in Fairbanks, attended by Commissioner of Economic Development Irene Ryan, the board voted some way to continue its work after the present EDA grant ends.

The members from smaller villages feel no other agency will develop industry in their villages, seek funding, develop economic programs.

As of now, no one has provided a source of funding to continue their work. Commissioner Ryan has no applicable funds in her department. The AFN will not serve as grantee for the technical assistance grant, which has become a sore spot among its board members.

Also, it is pushing for consolidation of planning rather than proliferation of local boards.

With no municipal or borough government capable of regional planning, smaller villages feel they will be lost while programs proliferate in the larger villages of Kotzebue and Barrow.

Barrow Terminal, the No. 1 priority project of the board, will file its final written proposal for funding from the EDA Indian Desk shortly. First, they must qualify themselves as a "reservation" for eligibility purposes.

During various pre-planning and proposal meetings, they have been advised they can receive close to \$3 million in grant and loan funds from the Indian Desk of EDA—plus a grant to pay for utilities. Letters were written by ASNA president Joe Upickson and Barrow Mayor Lester Suvlu requesting reservation designation.

On January 30, NWP & D Board director Hugh Nicholls went to Washington, D.C. along with Joe Upickson, Charlie Edwardsen, and BIA and EDA representatives for a pre planning

conference. If the project is not stopped by an administrative tangle, the funds will go through.

If they are not received in time to book passage on the North Star III for materials, the project will default the leases it has signed with the federal government, state government, and Wien Airlines for space in the new terminal.

The planning board also considers and is working on over a dozen projects in small villages—sawmills, canneries, reindeer industry, cottage industry, freezing facilities, etc.

At their February meeting, director Nicholls presented Commissioner Ryan with a seven page outline of proposed economic and development projects in the northwest Alaska region. Many of these provisions comprise an overall development plan for the Northwest area.

One village is never considered in isolation. A sawmill development project in Noorvik in the Kobuk valley can provide materials for the ASHA homes to be built in nearby villages.

The village could provide lumber for less than it costs to ship in. The money would further develop a local industry—providing more jobs.

Other important development projects the board proposes are: creation of a Native banking and trust company—holding native funds in trust to serve native enterprise.

—creation of a Native trade union to bargain with companies desiring to do business within "Indian country."

—a native controlled general construction country;

—a native controlled geophysical-seismo exploratory corporation;

—a planned wildlife hunting and preserving company with retail outlets, cannery, contracts with hunters and whalers and with epicurean specialty markets as well as local outlets;

—cold storage facilities could be developed in many villages to preserve meat and fish. Women could make and market parkas in the Barrow area, and develop native handicrafts commercially.

The development board also concentrates on creating tourist facilities—places for hunting, skiing, fishing employing Native guides and managers.

Some of the resources the planning and development board has researched are far in the future. At their February 25 meeting, the board invited a BLM engineer to speak on the possibilities for geothermal energy use in the Northwest region. This uses the heat of the earth's core, where it is close to the surface, as an energy source for electrical power.

In Los Angeles, geothermal energy is already being used to provide electric power as it has been used in Rome, Italy for many years. Alaska has the same possibilities, he concluded, though perhaps not enough population to make generation worthwhile at the geothermal sites in the near future.

In all, the future of the board looks dim. Commissioner Ryan has volunteered her staff of economic and development specialists for the use of any village contemplating projects.

When asked by Tom Eccles of the EDA regional office, she has said she will look into using the department as a possible grantee for EDA funds. However, a state agency cannot set up a private industry without risking the charge of overstepping governmental authority.

Fairbanks Gets Record Snowfall, Snowfall, Snowfall

All winter, as record snowfalls piled up in November and December and the snow just kept coming, Fairbanks residents have been getting more fearful.

Last week, after an additional 5.2 inches of snow, the city surpassed the record winter's snowfall set in the winter of 1936-37—with a snowfall for the season of 142.2 inches. The record set in that year was 134.5 inches of snow.

With the first week of March

Writer's Rebuttal on Rothman Testimony

323 Farewell Avenue
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
March 8, 1971

Dear Mr. Rock:

Last week you printed one of Stu Rothman's uninformed statements from the Pipeline Hearings. This was the one where he said that the Natives have no land rights because Russia sold Alaska to the United States. He suggested that the Natives look to Russia for payment of the land that was taken from them.

Mr. Rothman overlooks first that Russia never bought Alaska from the Natives and, therefore, did not sell the United States anything. If it is argued that Russia conquered Alaska and therefore owned it, then Russia only sold the few isolated outposts it held—such as Sitka and other small tracts of land.

The situation is similar to the following example: White man number 1 owns a piece of land. White man number 2 gives a Native a deed to white man number 1's land, and the Native pays number 2 for it. Then the Native tries to move onto white man number 1's land. Needless to say, white man number 1 does not lose his land. If the Native wants the land, he will still have to pay the real owner for it.

In other words, since the Russians did not own most of Alaska when the United States bought it, the United States does not yet own most of what it claims in Alaska. The United States must now buy Alaska from the Natives.

The land claims bills in Congress are an attempt to do that.

Sincerely,
David Wolf

Senator McGovern...

(Continued from page 1)

of Alaska's population, they now request 16 per cent of Alaska territory even though they have "arguable claims" to 90 per cent of the state.

He stated that S. 835, which contains provisions sought by the AFN, is "eminently reasonable," while S. 35, the bill which passed the Senate last year, "is unsound for the Alaska Native people and for the Nation."

As a cash supplement to subsistence living, he added, S.35 would provide an initial and unlivable annual income of \$53.00 per capita.

Perhaps, the most significant accomplishment of the grant has been in training village people to understand the complexities of planning and development. The board's members are trained to see possibilities, look for funding, see the faults and weaknesses in proposals.

Such men as Lester Suvlu of Barrow, the board's chairman, are now sophisticated enough to deal with the complicated maze of federal and state funding proposals and programs. In two years, the grant has created a trained group of planners capable of assessing needs and growth in their villages.

barely past, Fairbanks residents expect a bit more snow before the spring thaw—and that thaw promises a more pressing problem—the problem of flood.

The National Weather Service estimates there is 9.4 inches of water in the snow cover but unofficial reports from University of Alaska observers estimate the snow contains more than a foot of moisture.

The massive problem of where all that water will go in the spring thaw has prompted a series of scheduled flood control meetings and planning sessions for this month.

Fairbanks borough and city officials have already held at least one flood control briefing. The Alaska Disaster Office plans a briefing and flood control practice exercise for March 16 and 17. On March 18, the University of Alaska Water Resources In-

stitute plans a symposium on flood threat.

Flood warning systems are another concern. In Washington, Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) in a letter to Agriculture Secretary Clifford M. Hardin urged the Secretary to be sure that enough funds are available to read rain gauges as part of a flood warning system.

The Senator had been informed that only \$600 had been budgeted for the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service to use for reading these rain gauges.

Record snowfalls (the seasonal average for the area is about 65 inches) have also been estimated in the Upper Chena River area, above the city of Fairbanks.

Only the narrow Chena River, surrounded on both sides by populated areas, is available to disperse this water potential.

Wright Asks Agnew...

(Continued from page 1)

Morton, would cut back land title to between 80,000 and 500,000 acres and pay \$500 million for extinguishment of remaining title, he continued.

"Not only is the administration cutting back on an already unjust position, it is doing so against the clear wishes of the Native people," Wright said.

The AFN president noted that, as guardian and trustee for the natives, the Interior Secretary is legally bound to act on behalf of natives.

"Yet today he stands ready to propose a bill confirming title in less than one-twelfth the land we have decided we must retain. Our guardian is stealing 55,000,000 acres of our land," added Wright.

Should the administration support the "confiscatory" proposal advocated by Secretary Morton, he remarked, it will have failed in its new policy of dealing fairly with native people and the nation will have failed a test of justice.

Wright explained that the AFN had requested a fair hearing for "full and open consultation with our people."

"We urge that you see that he grants us the fair hearing requested...We urge you to see that our President isn't betrayed by men who do not believe in

his policy of justice for the Native people.

"We are outraged over Secretary Morton's recent statements. Unless there is visible proof that this Administration means what it says about dealing fairly with natives, I fear that our people might not continue to pursue the peaceful path of negotiation," Wright stated.

He added that Alaska Natives were "near the breaking point."

Concluded Wright, "Your intervention and assistance could be the single most important step in maintaining peace and insuring that this President and his Administration go down in history as having dealt honestly with Native people and given them true justice."

The AFN position on the administration proposal received support from John Rainer, Chief Indian Member of the National Council on Indian Opportunity, a Presidential council which is chaired by Mr. Agnew.

Presenting the AFN position to the Vice President, Rainer offered remarks in support of the Alaska Natives.

"I write you as Chief Indian Member of the National Council on Indian Opportunity asking that you take a personal interest in the serious problems facing the Alaska Natives with regard to their land claims bill," Rainer stated.

"The Indian members of the Council feel just as strongly as the Alaska Natives that under the policies cited by the President in his July 8, 1970 message that equitable treatment of this critical issue bears directly upon meaningful Indian self-determination," he added.

"We the Indian members of this Council want to reiterate and reinforce and recommendation on this matter which was given to you by the former Indian members of this Council in the meeting you held at the White House in January 1970. We strongly support the Alaska Federation of Natives' proposal now before the Congress," Rainer said.

Announcement has been made that the Alaska Native land claim's settlement will be of significant concern to the delegates attending the Conference on Indian Self-Determination of the National Congress of American Indians which is convened this week in Kansas City. Mr. Agnew is scheduled to speak at that meeting.

AFN President Wright indicated that he hopes to rally strong support for Alaska Natives in order to further influence the Vice President and set the stage for an expanded lobbying effort for the AFN bill.

"But it will reflect on our national honor for centuries."

Senator McGovern is one of ten Senators who co-sponsored S. 835, and is one of fourteen who have pledged support for the AFN position.