

in their area in order to carry out case findings, health supervision, chronic disease followup, and health education. The hospitals maintain daily radio contact with the remote villages of their areas, communicating with the native health aid who is trained to report symptoms and to dispense medication and first aid under medical advice.

Native housing in Alaska is totally inadequate, with severe overcrowding and no sanitation facilities, and is closely related to adverse health conditions.

The typical Alaskan native home is small—about 12 by 24 feet, on the average. It is dark, cold, and poorly ventilated during the long winter. There are often 10 to 12 persons, mostly children, living in that one room. Fuel is costly, water is scarce, and usually hard to come by. Except in a few villages where wells have recently been dug by USPHS, the people must go great distances for water, which is too often contaminated from rivers, sloughs, and ponds. During the winter, ice and snow are melted and consumed without prior boiling or chlorination.

In most of the homes, a "honey bucket," as it is generally known, is used for human waste disposal. Garbage and other refuse are often deposited just outside the homes, to be strewn about by children and dogs.

The high death rate due to respiratory disease is a direct result of overcrowding. Many of those recovering from severe respiratory infections have been left with very severe damage that will handicap them for the rest of their lives, according to Dr. Martha Wilson, Service Director of Alaska's Public Health Service. Too frequently, those cured of respiratory diseases return home to conditions favoring reinfection or some other disease.

The Alaskan native's average age at death is 34.7 years in contrast to the national average of about 70. The high incidence of infant mortality—more than twice the rate than in the United States—is one of the contributing causes, and of all deaths of Alaskan natives in 1964, 25 percent were infants, in contrast to 6 percent for the Nation. Contamination, infection, and contagion are a constant problem for the Alaskan native; it is little wonder that the native's lifespan is half that of other American citizens.

The preceding is only a brief sketch of the health problems facing the Alaskan native.

A generous settlement of the Alaska native land claims would have a side effect of relieving many of the native health problems, since the basic living environment would be improved. This is an example of how the benefits under this legislation complement numerous Government programs which have already been in operation for the betterment of Alaskan natives, the goals of which have not been reached.

Mr. HALEY. Does that complete your statement, young lady?

Mrs. BERGT. Yes; it does.

Mr. HALEY. It is a very good statement.

The gentleman from Colorado.

Mr. ASPINALL. I, too, want to welcome Mrs. Bergt before the committee. I did not mean to imply that I did not want to hear about the health situation and social advancement and educational advancement I just wanted to let the witnesses know that this was largely outside the jurisdiction of this committee.