

Naturally, it will help us directly, but the more people we get in Alaska and the more people we can keep up there, we are willing to sacrifice and to live under those conditions.

It is better for everybody involved.

Again, on behalf of the city of Fairbanks and the young families who are in partnership with the banks, buying their home, we do not want a third SBA because all of us will go into bankruptcy and many of us will leave if we have another flood.

I urge, from the point of view of my six children and other young couples in Fairbanks who want to stay there, to authorize this because you will be not only doing a physical thing but a very humane thing.

Again, I want to thank you very much for your time, because I understand you are busy and you have many other things in the United States to consider besides Alaska.

In our own way, I think we will help you out, too, if you help us; and we thank you very much for the time you have given us.

Mr. JONES. We are just as anxious to help your community as you are, sir; and we will consider the project in that light.

We have a rollover vote now.

When is your time of departure?

Mr. MERDES. We are completely available, solely in town for this committee hearing.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Merdes I will place your prepared statement in the record at this point.

(The statement follows:)

STATEMENT OF EDWARD A. MERDES

Mr. Chairman and committee members, my name is Edward A. Merdes. I am the senior partner in the law firm of Merdes, Schaible, Staley & DeLisio, which firm is the retained counsel for the City of Fairbanks. In addition, I am Past President of Junior Chamber International, an organization of young men throughout the world, existing in 81 countries and dedicated to service to our communities and leadership training. I have resided continuously in Alaska since the winter of 1951-1952, going there shortly after graduating from Cornell University Law School. I am married and have six children, all of whom were born in Alaska.

My residence at 504 Monroe Street was severely damaged by the flood—as were over 95% of the other homes in Fairbanks—having suffered in excess of \$22,000.00 in damages and loss of many personal items which are irreplaceable.

As the legal advisors to the City of Fairbanks I can assure you that the North Star Borough has flood control authority and can legally cooperate and enter into contracts with the United States Government for flood control in the Tanana River Basin area.

However, the main reason I am appearing before you is to endeavor to articulate the concern and feeling of the younger families who reside in the North Star Borough and who have suffered adverse economic and personal effects from the August 1967 flood.

The average age of our residents is 22 years and everybody in our area, other than the military, is residing here of their own free volition as a result of a voluntary personal decision to live in a pioneering country. We have climatic and high cost of living disadvantages but these are more than offset by the friendly attitude that almost everybody has toward the other.

However, I believe in considering whether or not to authorize the Tanana River Basin Flood Control Project, the Congress would appreciate some down to earth statistics on the high cost of living to an average young couple with a family in the Fairbanks area and how the flood has affected them and their attitude toward living in Central Alaska.