1967

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

STATE COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

to the

GOVERNOR AND STATE LEGISLATURE

of

ALASKA

December 31, 1967
STATE OF ALASKA
Office of the Governor
Commission for Human Rights
520 MacKay Building
338 Denali Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
272-1478

December 31, 1967

The Honorable Walter J. Hickel
Governor
Honorable Members
Alaska State Legislature

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to Alaska Statutes, Section 18.80.150, we have the honor to submit the following report of the Commission's activities during 1967. It also includes our recommendations on how the State of Alaska can further implement its anti-discrimination policy.

Respectfully,

Roy Peratrovich, Chairman

Lisa S. Rudd, Secretary

Ernest W. Griffin, Member

Barney J. Gottstein, Member

Thomas Johnson, Member
### Commission Members

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### Staff

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<td>Larmont V. Stennis</td>
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INTRODUCTION

This is the fifth annual report of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights, which is charged with enforcing the State Laws Against Discrimination and fostering equality of opportunity for all Alaskans. It is submitted pursuant to a statutory requirement that an annual report be submitted to the Governor and to the Legislature.

The year 1967 saw an increase in concern with the position of the minorities in America and led some groups, together with many white allies of good will, to very strong verbal and at times physical protest against the many years of ill treatment which minorities have received. We are happy to report that Alaska remained relatively free of violence and appeals to hatred. Nevertheless, the conditions which underlie such protests -- lack of opportunity for education, poverty, discrimination, and widespread unemployment -- are present in Alaska.

It is these underlying conditions which are of increasing concern to the Human Rights Commission, and with which the State of Alaska must be determined to deal effectively.

Alaska has a good record in the field of human rights. Its first anti-discrimination legislation was passed in 1945. The Chairman of the Human Rights Commission, Roy Peratrovich, was instrumental in the passage of this bill. He was at that time President of the Grand Camp, Alaska Native Brotherhood. Since then the Territorial and State Legislatures have passed a series of laws designed to increase the effectiveness of the State Government in dealing with the problems which beset minority groups. Some of the experiences of the Commission have been very rewarding, and we believe we have a "healthy" State Government. It is a government which has proved it fully intends to meet the needs of our citizens and search effectively for solutions to their problems.

This report will attempt to show the accomplishments in 1967, the present and future needs of the Commission, and will suggest some of the challenges that lie ahead of the Commission as it seeks to insure that the State of Alaska does not fail in its commitment to its citizens.
PURPOSES OF COMMISSION

The State Commission for Human Rights, as created by the State Legislature (SLA 1963, Chapter 15) consists of five Commissioners appointed by the Governor for staggered terms of five years, and confirmed by the Legislature.

The purpose and aim of the Commission is to create, throughout the State of Alaska, at the community level, a climate of understanding and mutual respect in which all Alaskans of whatever racial, religious, or cultural background can and will be made to feel that all are equal in dignity and in rights.

To promote this purpose, it is the responsibility of the Commission to:

(a) Work to bring about intergroup understanding and good will by a broad-range educational program designed to eliminate and prevent discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and housing based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, or sex.

(b) Enforce the laws of the State of Alaska against discrimination by receiving, initiating, and resolving complaints of discrimination in employment, public accommodations and housing when based on race, creed, color, national origin, age, or sex.

(c) Study the problems of discrimination and foster through community effort or good will, cooperation and conciliation among the groups and elements of the population of the State, and publish results of investigations and research as in its judgment will tend to eliminate discrimination because of race, religion, color or national origin.

POWERS OF COMMISSION

Section 18.80 (030-.070, Chapter 117 SLA 1965) states both the powers and duties of the Commission as follows:

It shall:

(1) Elect one of its members as chairman.
(2) Hold a regular annual meeting and shall hold special meetings as are found necessary.
(3) Adopt procedural and substantive rules and regulations necessary to implement this chapter.
(4) Appoint an executive director approved by the Governor and hire other administrative staff as may be necessary to the Commission's function.
(5) Receive, initiate, and investigate complaints of alleged discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations.
(6) Hold hearings, subpoena witnesses, take testimony under oath and issue orders based on its findings.

(7) Call upon the departments and agencies of the State for cooperation and assistance in carrying out its duties and report to the Governor of Alaska, and to the State Legislature on its activities annually and recommend legislative action.

(8) Be authorized per diem and travel allowances allowable to members of other boards and commissions.

REPORT OF THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

COMMISSION MEETINGS

It is the policy of the Commission to hold business meetings at least every three months in various parts of the State. The purposes of these meetings are to bring the Commissioners into direct contact with the people in different geographic areas with the variety of problems they face, and to make the citizens of these areas aware of the Commission and what its role in State Government is. Over the years, the Commission has found such meetings extremely helpful in appraising the problems which face the State and its people in the human rights field.

During the current reporting year (Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 1967), the Commission met in Anchorage, Nome, Juneau, and Sitka. While meeting in Nome, one evening was spent talking with and listening to members of the Arctic Native Brotherhood. It was at this meeting that the Commission became aware of the almost complete lack of employment in the Northwest (at times 80%), and the pattern of discrimination by omission which had been practiced by construction contractors on Federal projects in the past.

On the second day of the Nome meeting the Commissioners visited villages around Nome via bush plane, and witnessed the deplorable living conditions which far too many of Alaska's Eskimo and Aleut people live under.

In Sitka the Commissioners met with the Sitka Camp of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, where problems were aired concerning hiring, promotion practices, and education at Mt. Edgecumbe School. Because these allegations involved a Federal agency over which we have no jurisdiction, the Commission made a report to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Bureau has promised a complete investigation into personnel matters at the School.

The Anchorage meeting March 14 was held just prior to and during the State-wide Equal Employment Opportunity Seminar co-sponsored by the Anchorage Federal Executive Association and the Human Rights Commission. As co-sponsors, all Commissioners and staff personnel were called upon as speakers or resource persons.
In the coming year, the Commission hopes to plan meetings in Juneau, Kodiak, Fairbanks, and Point Hope or Point Barrow.

EMPLOYMENT

It can be stated without question that economic and employment development of Alaska's natural and human resources is by far the most pressing need and problem facing the State today. So much so that Governor Hickel has pledged this development as his administration's primary goal. The Commission in 1967 directed most of its efforts to programs of investigation, education, and affirmative action in the field of fair employment opportunities.

To bring the need for the sharing of available jobs and the present plight of minority job seekers to the attention of employers, the Commission co-sponsored with the Federal Executive Association a Statewide Equal Employment Opportunity Seminar in March 1967.

Commissioner Lisa Rudd, in her keynote speech to the 350 delegates, stated "If we want our State and its people to thrive, organized labor must recognize its responsibility to our resident labor force and demonstrate this responsibility by fully opening the doors of its hiring halls and apprenticeship training programs. The business community must develop communication with minority groups and maintain a positive program of seeking, employing, and promoting qualified minorities in a realistic manner. Builders, investors, realtors, and public officials must engage in a serious appraisal of how unfair housing practices contribute to the economic deprivation of our workers. Similarly, teachers, administrators, school boards, and the State Department of Education must show a greater concern for preparing our minority children to take their places in our society."

We believe that the seminar was a success. It brought together 350 persons concerned with employment throughout the State. Programs for eliminating discrimination in employment were outlined and lines of communication between employers and minority groups were established. The success of this conference, together with our knowledge of the desperate lack of employment in the Northwest, led us to assist the Arctic Native Brotherhood in Nome in planning an employment development conference there.

Employment Development Conference

On November 30-December 1, 1967, the Arctic Native Brotherhood and the Alaska State Community Action Program, Inc. (ASCAP) co-sponsored a two-day conference on employment development in Nome.
Working with Miss Barbara Trigg of ASCAP, the Commission helped to coordinate plans for the meeting. In his welcome address to the more than 150 delegates, Mr. Jerome Trigg, President of the Arctic Native Brotherhood, said "If new or changed methods of mining and mineral extraction are to come to us because of natural deposits in our traditional lands, we, the native people of Alaska, want to be a part of both the labor and the local operations that will surely come. It is toward this kind of future we must lay our plans for continued and permanent employment of Alaskan natives in the North. Now, today, it's vital and important to our bellies and our dignity that we earn a decent and honorable living. It is impossible to over-emphasize the desperate need we face to develop a secure and integrated role for the Alaskan natives in the development and expansion of the economy of the State in every region. Not just in a few oil-rich or fish-rich pockets."

At the closing session, Mr. Robert Arnold summarized and the delegates passed 15 recommendations which would help to relieve the 80% unemployment in the Northwest.

Equal Employment Committee, Federal Executive Association

During the early part of 1967, because of the interest of many persons in the work of the Atomic Energy Commission on Amchitka Island in the Aleutians, an Ad Hoc Committee was formed, under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert Arnold. While originally created to seek employment for minority workers on Amchitka, the committee's work expanded to include all Federal construction projects and hiring within the Federal agencies themselves. In December the Committee was officially incorporated into the Federal Executive Association. The Executive Director of the Commission, Mr. Willard Bowman, is a member of this Committee.

In mid-year the Federal Field Committee issued an important study titled Alaskan Natives and Federal Hire. One of the most telling statistics in this study shows that though Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts comprise more than 20% of Alaska's population, their unemployment rate is a staggering 60%. Further, that out of more than 14,000 employees working for the Federal government throughout the State, only 1,125 are natives, or less than one in every ten workers. Because of the widespread interest created by the study, Senator Bartlett called a meeting in Washington, D.C. on November 8, 1967, with heads of departments of various Federal agencies. The purpose was to develop programs and ways which will bring about higher levels of native employment.

After addressing himself to the question of why he had called the meeting, the Senator gave the Commission's Executive Director, Willard Bowman, and Mr. Robert Arnold of the Federal Field Committee opportunity to make their statements. At the close of the meeting Senator Bartlett
reaffirmed his support for an all-out effort by each Federal agency to change the employment picture for Alaska's natives within their respective departments. In conclusion he asked for the following steps:

1. The establishment of an area coordinator in Alaska from the Office of Federal Contract Compliance.

2. Each agency to review its equal employment opportunity program and submit a copy to him by January 15, 1968. This plan should include a detailed account of ways the department proposes to increase their totals of native workers, and the number of natives presently employed.

3. A follow-up report to be made by July 1, 1968, of the results of this program which should include the number of natives hired within the six-month period by grade, job title, and location.

In closing the Senator said "If every agency and department active in Alaska were to follow the recommendations of the Field Committee, and there is no reason why this cannot be done, we can move far toward the esteemable goal of equal employment opportunity for Federal jobs in Alaska."

The Commission continues to believe that affirmative action in the field of employment is one of the most important needs in our society. In our investigation of complaints, we have found very few cases wherein management has given specific instructions to employees not to hire or upgrade qualified minorities. Although these cases still do occur from time to time, the typical company, agency, or department manager, when confronted by an allegation of discrimination, is surprised and distressed that such an allegation has been made. Yet when a careful analysis is made, it is often discovered that management has made very little effort to inform its employees of its non-discriminatory policy. Management must become aware that minorities have been conditioned to expect discrimination and to underestimate their own capacities and responsibilities. They must become aware that communication, both within the native and Negro population, and between the natives, Negroes and whites is grossly under-developed and can be easily overestimated. Finally they must be aware that the employment services which refer individuals to them, and the people within their own establishment who are links in the chain of the firm's hiring process, are often very cautious about hiring, referring, or upgrading minorities; and that these attitudes may, in spite of the best intentions on the part of management, influence the overall employment practices of the firm.

The Commission for Human Rights urges management to act positively and specifically to remove old discriminatory patterns. We urge them to issue instructions, to maintain vigilant supervision over employment practices, to see that communication channels are open and that they remain open, and to make sure that there is a continuous review of performance to assure compliance with the goal of equal opportunity. Experience indicates that the principal differences between companies, agencies, and departments which have made little or no progress in integrating their work force and those that are making significant gains is the attention which top-level managers give to these vital questions.
This year we prepared for all labor unions and employers covered by the State statutes against discrimination a copy of the statute and a poster outlining it. We also intend to supply to all unions and employers a merit employment checklist and a fair union practices checklist against which they can evaluate their firm's practices.

HOUSING

In March the Anchorage League of Women Voters issued a study the League had compiled entitled Local Housing Study, an Evaluation of Policies and Practices in the Greater Anchorage Area Borough Relating to Equality of Opportunity in Housing.

This study was undertaken after the Commission had conducted a study and issued its findings in December 1965. The League study and the Commission's study both gave ample proof that discrimination in housing does exist in Anchorage.

Following the publishing of the housing study, a group of interested citizens formed themselves into an organization called Anchorage Housing Opportunities Made Equal (A-HOME) which will work to eliminate discrimination in housing. The Commission's staff assisted in the formation of this group. The staff also assisted in drawing up a fair housing ordinance for presentation to the City Council. On the evening of the passage of this ordinance, the Commission's director, the League of Women Voters, A-HOME, and the Anchorage Human Relations Commission all appeared before the City Council to urge the passage of this fair housing ordinance. Our concern, as always, is to assure fully open access to any housing on the market to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, or national origin.

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

The Commission and its staff have spoken during the course of the year to a large number of civic, social, and church groups, as well as lecturing in the high schools. These engagements help to keep open our lines of communication with the people of Alaska, and they lead to a widening commitment on the part of our citizens to equal opportunity for all people.
ADVERTISEMENTS

The Commission has found, in its meetings throughout the State, that there is often complete lack of knowledge of the Commission and its functions. This despite the fact that we distribute copies of Alaska's Laws Against Discrimination and of our Annual Report widely. In the hope of reaching more of the people who may be able to use our services, we decided to place a classified advertisement in selected State newspapers. The ad states:

Discrimination because of race, color, national origin or age is against State law. If you have been denied an equal opportunity in employment, housing, or public accommodations, please contact the State Commission for Human Rights, 520 MacKay Building, 338 Denali Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

FILMS

This year the Commission purchased a copy of the outstanding human relations film "A Time for Burning." It has been shown to a number of civic, social, and church groups and plans are in process to show it on all Alaska TV stations. We have ordered, for use in Alaska's schools, three short films on human relations.

We have found that there is one subject of major concern in Alaska which is not dealt with in any existing film. This is the tremendous problem of cultural adjustment now facing the Alaska native. We feel that a film on this subject could help the non-native population of the State to understand why the assimilation of the native into our society is sometimes difficult. Such a film might also help our natives to see their problem more clearly.

The Commission is very interested in producing such a film. We are at present interviewing possible writers and directors. We hope to receive a foundation grant to finance the making of the film.

COMPLAINTS

During 1967 the Commission continued to fulfill its function of receiving and resolving complaints of discrimination. We have received and resolved 49 complaints this year. See the attached breakdown of the complaints we have received since 1963. (page 13).

We also continue to receive and resolve informal complaints of discrimination.
COMMUNITY AND POLICE RELATIONS

The Commission for Human Rights regards its program of liaison with other agencies in our communities as a fundamental part of its effort. Cooperative relationships have been maintained as much as possible with all public and private agencies; with citizen, civil rights, religious and civic groups; and with leaders of the business community and labor unions. With each of these groups, the Commission seeks to promote intergroup understanding.

While the relationships between ethnic groups within the communities in the State, and the relationship between the Statewide community and the police (State and cities) have not been the Commission's major problem areas, the Commission is concerned about events which led to a tense situation in Anchorage last summer.

Following the flood of violence that shocked many of our major cities in other states this past summer, Anchorage fell prey to vicious rumors which forecast a wave of rioting by the Negro community of Anchorage. Within the space of a few hours, respected leaders of the business, civic, medical, and enforcement communities of that city were hurriedly planning ways to meet this threat.

Fortunately nothing happened that might have set off a chain reaction which could have culminated in hysterical acts of violence, but the Commission remains vitally concerned that this explosive situation did develop unchecked within the white community of our largest city. After it was over, only one voice, an editorial in the Anchorage Daily News, was heard raised against this act of mass fear and hysteria.

We cannot allow this to happen. We must not allow it to be repeated. The Commission is seeking to increase its community and police relations efforts in the months ahead.

RECOMMENDATIONS

COMMUNITY AND POLICE RELATIONS:

1. THE STATE SHOULD INITIATE A POSITIVE AND AGGRESSIVE CAMPAIGN TO RECRUIT QUALIFIED MINORITY GROUP PERSONNEL FOR THE STATE TROOPER AND OTHER LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

a. We realize that finding qualified minority personnel may seem to present a problem due to the lack of opportunities given to minorities in the past. We therefore recommend that law enforcement bodies make an effort to learn about the different types of funding available to train law enforcement personnel.
b. A careful re-examination of entry level requirements should be made with an eye toward in-service training for new personnel, leading toward permanent positions as troopers and patrolmen, and provisions for continuing training programs in both skills and attitudes.

2. A PROGRAM WHICH ENCOURAGES POLICE OFFICERS TO CONTINUE THEIR FORMAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE INSTITUTED.

3. THE STATE SHOULD INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITY OF ASSISTING COMMUNITIES IN DEVELOPING BETTER POLICE FORCES, THIS COULD INCLUDE GUIDANCE IN TRAINING PROGRAMS, IN TAKING ADVANTAGE OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS, AND IN HELPING PERSONNEL PREPARE TO PASS STATE TESTS.

The State should not overlook the possibility of using the resources of the University of Alaska (and its community colleges) in developing these suggested programs.

STAFFING:

THE STAFF AND BUDGET OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION SHOULD BE INCREASED.

Since its inception over four years ago, the Alaska Commission for Human Rights has never been properly staffed. Up to April of 1966, the staff consisted of two persons, the executive director and a secretary. Since then, a field representative has been added to the staff.

The Commission, with an annual budget of $53,000, a director, field representative, and one secretary, is called upon to administer an enforceable human rights law in a State one-fifth the size of the rest of the United States.

In human rights work, it is absolutely necessary that lines of communication with all the various ethnic groups and geographical areas of the State be kept open and functioning. The distances involved in Alaska, the enormous variety of peoples and problems which are evident here, and the diffidence we sometimes encounter in willingness to use our services all point to our need for a larger staff, and a staff which lives and works in several different areas of the State.

We, the Commissioners, seriously believe that the first priority facing the State Legislature in the area of human rights is to adequately finance and staff the agency, thus demonstrating that there is no ambiguity on the question of whether our State is willing to work full time and with all its efforts to secure equal opportunities for all its citizens,
The State must provide the Commission with a budget adequate to the task assigned to it, so that the Commission will be able to assemble a staff of skilled and trained individuals dedicated to securing justice for all citizens with favor for none.

EDUCATION:

Education is at the heart of every problem which comes before the Commission. Not all of our citizens are receiving the education they deserve. The State of Alaska must realize that, whether academic or vocational, the availability and quality of any education has a lifetime effect. A man is only as productive as the education he receives, and it is lamentable but true that many Alaskans are not able to be productive citizens.

1. SOME WAY OF ENDING LOW-QUALITY, SEGREGATED SCHOOLING MUST BE FOUND.

The Commission is increasingly concerned about the low-quality and segregated nature of the schooling which is offered to most of our native citizens. We realize that the State of Alaska is in the process of taking over from the BIA responsibility for many schools in the State, but such a transference of responsibility will not in itself solve the problems of education which face us.

Both the low quality of the education offered our natives, and the fact that many of our schools have a student body which is entirely native are attributable to the isolation of our native citizen. Some way must be found to integrate our native citizens in the mainstream of Alaskan life during their formative years -- when they can learn the language skills and habits of work which it is necessary to live by in our economy.

We urge the State of Alaska to find a way of insuring an opportunity for a good education to all its citizens. We believe that a plan for regional high schools must be implemented at once. NO OTHER ACTION BY THE STATE OF ALASKA IS OF GREATER IMPORTANCE.

2. THE STATE LEGISLATURE SHOULD ENACT A MUCH-NEEDED VOCATIONAL EDUCATION LAW, WHICH SHOULD INCLUDE PROGRAMS FOR ADULT BASIC AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING.

   a. A college education is not the chief aim or immediate goal of every high school student for various reasons. Regardless of the reasons, it is an established fact that far too many students upon leaving high school are totally unequipped to join our labor force. We must, therefore, provide these students not only with a basic academic curriculum, but must give them the opportunity to acquire rudimentary skills in vocational
or technical training. Also the State must find a way to provide people long out of school with opportunities in vocational retraining.

The Commission believes that the lack of vocational education in our school system is the chief reason Alaska has not kept pace with the rapid changes in technology. The hopes inspired by the Federal Vocational Education Act of 1963 have not been realized except in a limited way.

b. New Statewide educational plans should be developed, or old ones reviewed and restructured to meet the following needs:

(1) Curriculum offerings in cooperation with local business and industry which would increase pre-employment training in the retail and distributive fields, health services, electronics, etc.

(2) Broader technical training be made available in communities where affected individuals live and job sources are.

(3) Minority representation on councils, boards of educational institutions, and manpower or apprenticeship programs.

(4) New ideas and models for students with educational or socio-economic handicaps.

3. THE LEGISLATURE SHOULD DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO INSTITUTE A PROGRAM OF HUMAN RELATIONS STUDIES TO START IN THE FIRST GRADE AND RUN THROUGH ALL GRADES OF EVERY SCHOOL IN THE STATE.

Alaska has a magnificent resource in its many ethnic groups, but the value of this resource is not being taught to our young people. An understanding and appreciation of the diversity of our peoples should be taught to our students at all levels.

To sum up the Commission's feelings on education, our goals must be to guarantee to every child equal access to the best that our society knows how to provide, by raising the investment of human and financial resources in every school to higher standards.

4. THE STATE OF ALASKA SHOULD STRIVE TO CORRECT THE RACIAL IMBALANCES OF FACULTY AND STAFF IN SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

We think it is important that the State realize that teachers of their own race are a source of pride and inspiration to native and Negro students, and that lack of such pride and inspiration may be a determining factor in their later lives.

We also, of course, wish to re-emphasize the importance of the State's policy of non-discrimination in its hiring of teachers and staff,
EMPLOYMENT:

THE COMMISSION URGES THAT THE LEGISLATURE APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO UNDERTAKE A STUDY OF "ALASKA NATIVES AND STATE HIRE."

The Employment Development Conference at Nome, Alaska, Nov. 30-Dec. 1, 1967, made the following recommendation:

"The State Legislature make an appropriation to support a study of Alaska native hire in State Government along the lines of the Alaska Natives and Federal Hire recently produced by the Federal Field Committee."

There is no question that such a study will prove of immense value to all State agencies and departments as they seek to bring more native and other minority persons into State employment. As the Federal Field Committee report pointed out, "Too little information exists about individual Alaska natives who are employed to carry out the detailed planning necessary to significantly reduce levels of unemployment." Such a study would help to correct this gap.
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