

by Walter J. Hickel, former governor of Alaska and now Secretary of the Interior, a visitor can pay as much as \$31 a night, and the summer rates become effective long before the arrival of picnic weather. Workers on "de-bushing" leaves from the slope can find topless entertainment at downtown bars and saloons.

A bumpy highway and short-line railroad lead from Fairbanks to Anchorage, some 265 air miles to the south. They pass through thousands of square miles of rugged mountains, alpine meadows, and vast stands of spindly spruce trees. The wilderness is broken only here and there by roadside villages and lonely cabins, often displaying moose antlers above the door. Anchorage, having an area population upward of 100,000 and serving as the focal point of most of the state's business activity, has lost the frontier flavor and is Alaska's only real city. The oil companies have their Alaska headquarters here, and, as representatives of a dominant species in the political ecology, their executives mix comfortably with the state's business and political leaders at spots like the Petroleum Club, atop the Anchorage Westward Hotel.

By offering a large new source of public revenue, the North Slope oil is giving Alaskans hope of attaining greater prosperity, better state services, and a solution to one of their most vexing problems—the native land-claims controversy. This controversy has led to a freeze on all further state withdrawals of land from the federal domain and has been a major source of tension between the state and federal governments. In recent years, as a reaction to the state's ignoring their interests in incidents such as the North Slope land withdrawals and lease sales, the Alaskan natives—Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts—have come alive politically. As a minority representing a fifth of Alaska's total population, they are now a potent force in state affairs.

Not only do the natives hold the balance of power in close statewide elections, but also they are pressing claims for over 80 percent of the land in Alaska. Former Secretary of the Interior, Stewart L. Udall, initiated the land freeze in 1967, pending a settlement of their claims. "The natives are using the land as their weapon, just as the Negroes in the ghetto have used violence as theirs," George W. Rogers, an Alaskan economist and social critic, told *Science*.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ● VIETNAM MORATORIUM DRAWS FACULTY SUPPORT:

A faculty call for a student moratorium of classes on 15 October as a demonstration against the war in Vietnam has been signed by two dozen of the nations' leading professors, including MIT linguist Noam Chomsky, Harvard biologist George Wald, MIT biologist S. E. Luria, Yale psychologist Kenneth Kenniston, and Harvard biologist James Watson. The call urges faculty participation in the student moratorium to provide "massive evidence" that the majority of Americans want to end the Vietnam War and that President Nixon's "gradual partial displacement" of American troops is not "the substantive change in policy" needed to end the war. The Vietnam Moratorium Committee, a nationwide effort to organize students, faculty, and others to spend one class day in October campaigning door to door in their communities about ending the war, is organized and financed by former supporters of the McCarthy and Kennedy presidential campaigns. Also among those signing the call are Berkeley physicist Charles Schwartz, a co-founder of Scientists and Engineers for Social and Political Action, and Jay Orear, past president of the Federation of American Scientists.

### ● NERVE GAS TESTING IN HAWAII:

The Pentagon acknowledged on 20 September that the Army in 1966 and 1967 tested GB and BZ nerve gases at a site on the side of Hawaii's second highest volcano, Mauna Loa. In a letter to Rep. Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii), a Pentagon spokesman said the tests, conducted 7 miles from inhabited areas, were made to determine the effectiveness of the gas in a tropical environment. The Army has a 5-year lease for the site, which expires in 1971 and stipulates that the land be used only "as a site to conduct classified meteorological and related tests."

### ● NIXON BACKS SST:

The Nixon Administration has sent a proposal to Congress to continue development of the Supersonic Transport (SST). The White House has requested \$96 million for the current fiscal year to work on two prototype models, and authority to use \$99 million in carry-over funds from previous years for further re-

search and development. The decision to go ahead with the SST, which has been delayed until now by the new administration, would call for a total of \$662 million more in federal outlays during the next 5 years to complete the prototype. To date the federal government has invested more than \$500 million in the SST. Officials estimate that if the Nixon proposal is adopted, the plan will cost a total of about \$1.3 billion in federal funds before flight tests are completed in 1974. Congressional opponents in both Houses are expected to rally support against Nixon's proposal.

### ● AEC OPPOSES DEATH PENALTY FOR SPYING:

The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) has urged Congress to remove the death penalty for nuclear espionage so that an accused person may be assured a jury trial. Under the present AEC act, if an accused spy asks for a jury trial, he may risk the death penalty, whereas if he stands before a single judge, he cannot be sentenced to death.

### ● NIH SPECTROMETERS AVAILABLE FOR USE:

High-resolution mass spectrometers may be available for use free of charge under contract to interested scientists engaged in timely biomedical research. The Division of Research Resources of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) has established a high-resolution mass spectrometry service program. In providing scientists with this service, NIH officials say that primary consideration will be given to projects supported by NIH funds, but that all interested scientists are eligible to apply for contracts. Scientists may address inquiries to Michael Oxman, Division of Research Resources, Building 31, Room 5B13, NIH, Bethesda, Maryland 20014.

### ● AMERICANS ELECTED TO ROYAL SOCIETY:

Two American scientists—Alfred Romer, professor of zoology at Harvard, and Kenneth Thimann, professor of biological sciences and provost, Crown College, University of California—have been chosen this year as foreign members of The Royal Society of England. The Royal Society, regarded as the first modern scientific society in the world, was officially organized in 1660.