

WALKER'S WEEKLY



Special Edition

VALDEZ, ALASKA

Sunday, April 26, 1964

TRAGEDY STRIKES AGAIN

Major General Thomas Carroll, Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard and three other officers lost their lives Saturday night when a large, Air National Guard plane crashed and apparently sank in waters of Valdez Arm.

The accident happened about 7:40 p.m., just minutes after Governor William A. Egan and a party of 15 had left the plane at the Valdez airport. The plane crashed minutes later after take-off.

Besides Gen. Carroll, others lost were Lt. Col. Thomas Norris, pilot; Major James Rowe, co-pilot and Sgt. Ayers, navigator. All were experienced flyers with thousands of hours to their credit, the governor said. This was the plane that had taken him on countless trips in Alaska. The Governor was visibly shaken.

The falling plane was spotted by Henry W. Coulter and Ralph Migliaccio, who immediately notified State Police by short wave radio.

Small boats and the Chilkat aided in the search. The Coast Guard Cutter Sedge came from Cordova during the night.

MRS. MARGARET HARRAIS PASSED AWAY

Mrs. Margaret Keenan Harrais, 91, "Grand Lady" of Valdez and Alaska, passed away at 1:08 Sunday morning at Faith Hospital, Glennallen. This ended her 50 year span in Alaska.

In September 1962, when Mrs. Harrais observed her 90th birthday and also resigned as Deputy Magistrate for Valdez, she was flooded with congratulatory letters and messages. She was tremendously pleased with a personal note from the late President John F. Kennedy. She was honored with a plaque of Appreciation from Governor Egan and personal letters and telegrams from the entire Alaskan Congressional Delegation.

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RECONSTRUCTION

Like the Phoenix, earth quake shattered Valdez shall rise again! This was the optimistic note struck by Dwight Ink, Alaskan Reconstruction Chairman for the Anderson Committee, who sat down last night with Valdez City Council members and others for a master planning session. A distinguished group of national and state officials was present.

Alaska's sorrowing Governor, the Honorable William A. Egan, fresh from an evening of personal tragedy, took his place at the conference table.

Opportunity

"You people", pointed out Chairman Ink, "have an unusual opportunity, even though it grew out

of tragedy, that practically no one ever has - the opportunity to build a really fine community."

Chairman Ink had come from Washington, D.C., for a brief stay in earth quake stricken Alaskan communities. He had scheduled the Valdez conference ahead of the Sunday afternoon arrival in Anchorage of Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico.

In the Governor's party besides Chairman Ink, were Burke Riley, the Alaskan State Reconstruction Chairman; Alaska State Commissioner of Commerce, A. Romig and a number of news media, radio and television representatives from Anchorage and elsewhere.

The "Guiding Hand" delegation from Fairbanks was headed by Jerald McMahon, city manager; Harris Bullerwell, city attorney, and Harold Gillam, newly named Valdez consulting engineer. Also from Fairbanks was Jack Murphy, assistant director of Civil Defense.

Council

Mayor Bruce Woodford was supported by City Councilmen Jim Bedingfield, Bill McIlroy and Nels Kjellstad, while John Kelsey, president of the (Page 2)

APPRECIATION

All stencils, paper and ink for publication of the Valdez Earth Quake Bugle and this issue of Walker's Weekly have been furnished gratuitously by Mr. and Mrs. Dean Ayers, owners of Tripp Office Supply, Fairbanks.

A new drum was lent by them so that the Walker's Weekly mimeograph might be used for whatever emergency publications might be needed in Valdez.

Walker's Weekly is NOT in competition with any other publication in the area. It is printed today as a special courtesy to the community.

PHOENIX (From Page 1) RECONSTRUCTION

Alaska Development board, stood by for consultation.

The lengthy meeting got under way at 10:30 p.m., following the ill-fated plane crash. Copies of the "Preliminary Geological report were distributed to everybody present. This report incorporated information supplied by R.M. Chapman, Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Fairbanks; and Ralph R. Migliaccio, District Geologist and E.O. Bracken, Geologist, State Department of Highways, Valdez.

Henry W. Coulter, Geologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Washington, D.C., concluded the report with this statement:

"In view of the foregoing, it is strongly recommended that serious consideration be given to relocation of the dock facilities and ultimately the entire town at the old townsite."

Land

Mr. Owen Meals, spokesman for a family-owned land holding company that holds title to the old town site, was invited to join the conference group to discuss acquisition possibilities.

Attorney Bullerwell made it clear that the City of Valdez must receive title to the old town site before any planning monies could be spent. Furthermore, processes of law are too intricate and time consuming to allow for normal annexation. He therefore suggested that the land should be deeded to the City of Valdez, and that the State of Alaska should deed the road bed connecting the two sites to the City of Valdez, to form the needed connecting link. The land in between could then be annexed through normal processes. Annexation requires three to four months.

Deed

The "deed" method would be fast, the Fairbanks city attorney assured. Mr. Meals' generous offer will allow for a small, compact city within an estimated 73 acres, according to the planning discussion.

Fair Treatment

Mr. Bullerwell pointed out that Mr. Meals is treating the City of Valdez with fairness without asking for property return or compensation. "The City of Valdez must treat Mr. Meals with fairness."

Mr. Meals and his family group have asked that the land not contained within the matching area of the new city should be tax free so that the burden of a land tax would not be added to them.

Mr. Bullerwell felt that this could be amply cared for through a contract, rather than through omitting this portion from the deed. The reasoning was that the larger land area would allow for a better planned city, even though planned in a compact manner.

Mr. Meals agreed to contact his brother in Seattle to discuss the matter. The Fairbanks City Attorney offered to draw up the deed and subsequent contract, if that is the method to be used.

Meanwhile, it was stated that the U.S. Corps of Engineers is proceeding with plans for a dock, whether it be privately owned or city owned.

Planning

As soon as the property is acquired, Mr. Bullerwell said, the Alaska State Housing Authority may begin a planning program immediately.

The lengthy planning session was "on stage" for radio, TV and newspaper representatives. It came to a close after 1 a.m., after touching informally on many problems of community interest. No definite action was taken but all those present felt that a "giant step forward" had been accomplished.

THE URBAN RENEWAL TEAM is scheduled to arrive in Valdez this week. Watch for them.

Notices will be posted should a public meeting be planned.

A BARBERSHOP has been opened in Ray Shough's garage.

HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

Supt. Merrill Hatcher has announced that diplomas for Valdez High School Seniors will be issued by the Valdez High School. These will be awarded during regular graduation ceremonies of the various Alaskan high schools the students are now attending.

JANE SONTAG, Valdez High School Senior, has just been notified that she has been accepted by the University of The Seven Seas for the fall "cruise" term.

SMALL BUSINESS LOANS

All persons planning to take advantage of the Small Business Disaster Loans should make application immediately with Mr. Shoemaker, SBA Disaster Representative. He is in Valdez for "as long as we need him" up to about 90 days. He may be contacted in the High School.

If Valdez folks do NOT apply for Disaster Loans, Mr. Shoemaker will leave.

Anyone who holds a mortgage with the First Bank of Valdez, or owes any money at all to the bank may pay this mortgage or note and other indebtedness with an SBA Disaster Loan on an individual basis.

In order that utmost possible assistance to Alaska Disaster victims may be provided by SBA, Administrator Eugene P. Foley has departed from past SBA policy.

Persons considering a loan or loans through SBA should contact Mr. Shoemaker immediately for conference.

Mr. Shoemaker came from Dallas, Texas to join other similarly transferred SBA experts to staff the Alaskan Disaster Team.

Although Disaster Loans may not exceed the statutory twenty year maturity, amortization may be established on a 30 year basis.

(It is this writer's understanding that ALL DISASTER LOANS must be applied for within six months from the date of said disaster.)

FAIRBANKS FRIENDS HOST VALDEZ "CHEER-UP" CELEBRATION

Good neighbors in Fairbanks came down to Valdez Saturday to embrace earth-quake stricken Valdez folks with a "cheering-up" barbeque and show. Had these neighbors come from a distance of about 100 miles, this would not have been so unusual. Instead, approximately 50 people traveled by car and by bus a distance of 365 miles to make this good will gesture possible. They brought their own food, all the fixings for the barbecue, their own sleeping bags and all of the entertainment.

Overwhelmed with this kindness, Valdez folks flocked to the High School Gymn area where festivities took place. With Chef Louis Bianchi presiding over the charcoal grill and the Fairbanks women handling the kitchen details, a whopping 450 pounds of T-Bone, New York cut and Sirloin steaks were served with all the trimmings to some 300 people. Good cheer marked the occasion until news of the plane crash stopped the merriment, but not the eating. Food was served until 10 p.m., when an exhausted chef's crew called it a day.

Entertainment

Harry Quest and His Dixie Land Band capped the festivities with a program of danceable music mixed with vocal solos and novelty numbers. Many Valdez folks took advantage of the excellent music to dance away the evening.

AWARDS

During a special awards ceremony, Mayor Bruce Woodford presented plaques in appreciation for services rendered following the earth quake. They were presented to Lt. Col. Ward on behalf of Eielson Air Force Base; to Major James M. Bowers on behalf of Fort Wainwright and to Mrs. Mary (John) Gilson of Valdez for her many services.

Tables were turned when Harold Gillam of Fairbanks presented a handsome plaque to Mayor Woodford on behalf of the citizens of Valdez in recognition of their own bravery and spirit following the earth quake. Mayor Woodford rightly stated it when he felt that the plaque should have been given to Fairbanks from Valdez in appreciation of the Big Sister City's protective help.

APPRECIATION

The following business concerns, civic organizations and countless individuals (not named) made the "cheering-up party" possible. They were Harry Quest and His Dixie Land Band (Musicians Union), Fraternal Order of Eagles, Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks, Loyal Order of Moose, Emblem Club of the Elks, Fairbanks Lions Club, Alaska Distributors, H & S Warehouse, Kiwanis Club, Town Club and Aurora Borealis Club; Odom & Company, K & L Distributors, Alaska Overland Inc., George Hupprich Distributors, Inc.; First National Bank, Club 11, Alaska Beverage Company, Coopers Hardware (Tom Jensen) and Quality Meat Company.

Others were National Defense Transportation Association, Fairbanks Garbage Disposal (Louis Bianchi), Denali Grocery, Sanfair Bakery, Tice Center Bakery, Fairbanks Office Supply, Bud Hilton Pumping and Thawing, Mecca Bar, McKinley Paint Company, R.K. Lavery, Sourdough Express, Aurora Motors, Polaris Lounge, Cottage Bar, Randall & Cox, Captain Gaspard and Gordon Lilly Electrical.

LOUIS M. BIANCHI of the Fairbanks Lions Club presented a check for \$500 to the Valdez Lions Club Sunday afternoon. The presentation was made during a steak sandwich brunch at the barbeque pit that wound up the "cheering-up" party.

"VALDEZ FOLKS APPRECIATE FOLKS LIKE YOU, FAIRBANKS!"

MARGARET HARRAIS (From Page 1)

Senator E.L. (Bob) Bartlett honored Mrs. Harrais on her 90th birthday with a fitting tribute on the floor of the United States Senate, September 6, 1962.

"During her 48 years in Alaska, Mrs. Margaret Keenan Harrais of Valdez has devoted herself to community and public service. She has possessed always a young spirit in a pioneer land. Her inspiring friendship has meant much to Mrs. Bartlett and me, as it has to countless Alaskans and all Alaska salutes her. Her life has been a model of all that is good and decent and constructive."

The faded U.S. Commissioner's sign still hangs on the doorway of Mrs. Harrais yellow house in Valdez where she presided as a "public servant" from 1934 until 1962. Prior to that, she had lived in the McCarthy district, and taught school in several Alaskan communities. She was superintendent of schools in Fairbanks from 1916 until 1919. She was a member of the Territorial Board of Education for 18 years.

On her 90th birthday Mrs. Harrais was knitting her 91st afghan for veterans hospitals. She had soared well over the hundred mark before the earth quake.

Mrs. Harrais, reared in Ohio, graduated from Valparaiso University, and had engaged in a teaching career in Idaho before coming to Alaska 50 years ago. She was the widow of Martin Harrais, an early day miner whom she succeeded as U.S. Commissioner on his death.

Mrs. Harrais is survived by a dozen nieces and nephews across the nation, including a namesake, Mrs. Margaret Helen Frazier, Barnesville, Ohio, and a brother, Robert Keenan, Durham, N.C.

Mrs. Harrais was a devoted member of the Baptist Church in Valdez, across from her home. Funeral services are pending.

VALDEZ IS NOW ONE OF VERY FEW CHIEFS OF VERY FEW CHIEFS. They are scattered across Alaska and the nation. Valdez is the last of its kind. Letter writing between family and friends helps.