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THREE-MAN TASK FORCE TO VISIT ALASKA AND STUDY INDIAN BUREAU OPERATIONS IN JUNE

Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall and Alaska's Governor William A. Egan today jointly announced plans for a three-man task force to visit native villages in Alaska and study Indian Bureau operations there during June.

Named as chairman of the group was W. W. Keeler, Bartlesville, Okla., oil company executive and Principal Chief of the Cherokee tribal organization, who headed a similar task force that studied Bureau of Indian Affairs operations in other States during the spring of 1961. The other members are Hugh J. Wade, Secretary of State for Alaska, and James E. Officer, Associate Commissioner of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, who served with Chairman Keeler on the earlier task force. Robert L. Bennett, the Bureau's Area Director at Juneau, and Burke Riley, chairman of the Interior Department's Alaska Field Committee, will accompany the task force members on their Alaskan travels.

The Alaska study, Secretary Udall explained, is in a sense a continuation of the earlier task force's examination of Bureau policies and operations. It will be concerned with such matters as native land rights, problems of native fisheries in the southeastern part of the State, educational needs of the natives, and many other related topics.

The itinerary of the task force has not yet been determined in full detail. Present plans, however, call for a series of meetings with the native people starting at Anchorage on June 11. Subsequent meetings are scheduled to be held over a period of three weeks at Bethel, Unalakleet, Nome, Kotzebue, Point Hope, Barrow, Fort Yukon, Fairbanks, Juneau and Ketchikan.

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