

Government At Its Best

THE STAFF WORK performed by the federal Alaska Reconstruction Commission has been a display of government at its very best.

Too often those holding responsible positions at all levels of government permit the constant stream of complaints and problems that come their way to freeze their thoughts and actions to a point where "no" is the first answer that comes to mind and "it can't be done" is the initial response to every suggestion.

But the operation headed by Dwight A. Ink, executive director of the commission, has demonstrated no inclination to such administrative escapism. And their performance is all the more remarkable considering that none had had experience with either Alaska or earthquakes before taking on their new assignments. They were handed a job without guidelines, without precedent.

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IN MANY CASES the normal rules followed by federal agencies were sprung completely out of shape to fit the post-earthquake needs of Alaska. Tight time schedules, established for construction work became even tighter under the staff's constant prodding and watchful eye.

Together with Frank DiLuzio of Sen. Clinton Anderson's personal staff, Ink had to glean the possible from the mass of urgent needs and proposed solutions that came his way. A list of priorities had to be organized. Legislation had to be developed. The personal feelings of count-

less agency heads both in Washington and Alaska had to be soothed, or failing this, heads had to be knocked to make certain that plans were translated into results.

It was a rare day when a problem was posed without being accompanied by a solution. The soils studies are the most obvious reflection of this type of positive approach.

In addition to the planning, and field work and inter-agency coordination, and cooperation with the state and municipal governments. Ink and DiLuzio fought the battle of the Omnibus Bill.

Their original proposal for legislation was expanded in the U.S. House. But instead of standing rigidly against the changing of a comma, they helped work out a compromise settlement that they perhaps did not agree with but which was necessary to secure any action at all.

Passage of the Omnibus Bill Saturday did not end their work. But it represented a milestone in their efforts. The job should be downhill from here on out.

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THE FORM OF reconstruction is becoming apparent now. And while it will not permit everyone who lost to recover all their losses, there can be little doubt that the results are satisfactory.

If more government officials functioned with the same type of positive outlook and attention to needs and details, that word "bureaucrat" would fast disappear from popular dictionaries.—J.R.