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B-171856, Mar 3, 1971

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B-171856, MAR 3, 1971

ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES - FIRE FIGHTING AUTHORIZING FOR PAYMENT THE COST OF PURCHASE AND AIR FREIGHT DELIVERY OF COPIES OF THE WENATCHEE DAILY WORLD SENT TO ALASKA TO KEEP ALASKAN INDIAN AND ESKIMOS FAMILIES INFORMED ABOUT FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS ON THE WENATCHEE FIRE IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON TO WHICH FAMILY MEMBERS HAD BEEN SENT.

TO MRS. MARY M. RYDQUIST:

YOUR LETTER OF FEBRUARY 3, 1971, WITH ENCLOSURES, REQUESTS AN ADVANCE DECISION AS TO WHETHER PAYMENT MAY BE APPROVED FOR GOVERNMENT PURCHASE OF 306 COPIES OF DAILY NEWSPAPERS AND 33 SUNDAY EDITIONS OF THE WENATCHEE DAILY WORLD AT A COST OF $37.20, PLUS AIR FREIGHT OF $177.30.

ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION IN THE ALASKA DIRECTOR'S COMMUNICATION OF DECEMBER 22, 1970, AND OTHER ENCLOSURES, THE NEWSPAPERS WERE NOT FURNISHED TO INDIVIDUAL PERSONS FOR RECREATIONAL OR GENERAL READING. RATHER THEY PROVIDED BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT OFFICES AND INTERESTED PUBLIC GROUPS IN ALASKA WITH CURRENT NEWS OF FIREFIGHTING OPERATIONS ON THE WENATCHEE FIRE IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON. EVIDENTLY ALASKAN INDIANS AND ESKIMOS HAD BEEN TRANSPORTED FROM THEIR VILLAGES TO CONTAIN THIS FIRE. THE PURPOSE OF DISTRIBUTING THE WENATCHEE, WASHINGTON, NEWSPAPERS IN ALASKA WAS TO KEEP THE FAMILIES IN THE VILLAGES INFORMED OF THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THE NATIVE FIREFIGHTERS IN WASHINGTON. COSTLY INQUIRIES AND TELEGRAMS BETWEEN THE VILLAGES AND THE CREWS WERE THEREBY REDUCED AT A SAVINGS TO THE GOVERNMENT. A SECONDARY BENEFIT WAS THE EXPECTATION THAT THE INTEREST AND ENTHUSIASM GENERATED IN THE VILLAGES BY THE NEWSPAPER REPORTS WOULD PROMOTE THE FUTURE ENLISTMENT OF FIRE CREWS.

IF IT IS ADMINISTRATIVELY DETERMINED BY THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT UPON THE BASIS OF THE FOREGOING JUSTIFICATION THAT THE PURCHASE OF THE NEWSPAPERS WAS NECESSARY IN CARRYING OUT ITS FIREFIGHTING FUNCTIONS THE INVOICE, WHICH IS RETURNED HEREWITH, MAY BE APPROVED FOR PAYMENT. SEE 39 COMP. GEN. 320 (1959).