

Senators' Air Tour Includes Kiska

By John D. Beaufort

*Staff Correspondent of
The Christian Science Monitor
Accredited to the United States Naval
Forces in the North Pacific*

ADAK, Alaska, Sept. 9.—Accompanied by Army and Navy officials, Truman Committee members Homer Ferguson (R) of Michigan and Harley M. Kilgore (D) of West Virginia left Adak Sept. 8 after spending slightly less than 48 hours in the Western Aleutians.

Before flying east on the afternoon of Sept. 7, Mr. Ferguson and Mr. Kilgore said they had been tremendously impressed by the extent of United States installations in this area and by the rapid progress that has been made. This is the third Alaskan visit by a Truman subcommittee, but the first time any Senator or Congressman has made the tour to the end of the Aleutian chain.

Flying Visit

It was a flying visit in every sense of the word. The Senatorial party—including press correspondents and photographers as well as officials—traveled in three Navy PBVs. They spent a night each on Adak and Amchitka, dropped in very briefly on Attu and Kiska.

Talking informally to reporters in the course of hops from one outpost to another, Senators Ferguson and Kilgore made it clear that Truman committeemen do not tackle strategy questions. Their job is checking whether material deemed necessary by the High Command's strategy is being delivered on time where it is needed and is of good quality. Both Senators, however, expressed the conviction which has been held here for sometime: that with the westward movement of the war everything in Eastern Alaska

should be reduced to a minimum to maintain bases out here.

Senator Kilgore told us he was pleased to find that much of the equipment and supplies originally sent to Kidiak is now being catalogued and sent west as fast as shipping is available.

See Need of Bases

"Washington and the United States public at large must not think the war is over up here just because the Japanese have been driven off Kiska," Senator Kilgore added. Both Senators said they were impressed with the need for strong North Pacific bases, both as jumping-off places for attack on Japan and for the enduring importance as a Northern defense barrier.

"I think everything is being done that can be done," said Senator Kilgore. "I believe we should begin as soon as shipping is available to relieve men who have been out here two or three years.

Situation Clearing

"The difficulty so far has not been sending troops back to the United States in returning ships. But all space coming north has been required for bringing supplies, munitions, houses and other necessary equipment. But it looks to me as if the situation is clearing up now."

The visitors had what every Aleutian soldier here calls "senatorial weather" for their tour. It is an ironic fact that North Pacific fogs and storms invariably seem to make way for visiting bigwigs. Blue skies and sun greeted the Truman subcommittee when it arrived late Sunday afternoon and

there have been no weather interruptions of their trip.

It was a flying visit in every sense of the word. The Senators landed Sunday in a big DC-4 known hereabouts as "the klunk," and took off the next morning for Attu. For nearly four hours they were jeeped across the rugged island on roads which are rapidly connecting various areas of the outermost base. To the extent possible in the briefest of visits, they were shown impressive installations rising within sight of battlefields of the grim Attu campaign.

Souvenir Hunters

At Kiska, the solons and military officials proved themselves as determined souvenir hunters as the lowliest GI soldier. They spent the better part of the hour's visit scavenging through Japanese gun emplacements and former Japanese living quarters. In view of insistence on the necessity of haste such diversions as this left some of us rather nonplussed.

Arriving with investigators were Vice-Admiral Frank Jack Flacher, Commander of the Northwest Sea Frontier, and Rear Admiral J. W. Reeves, Jr. The party included Brig. Gen. Frank E. Lowe, Lieut. Col. Miles Knowles, representing the Secretary of War; Rudolph Halley, Truman Committee counsel; Commander J. A. Kennedy, Naval aide, and Commander D. L. Patton.

The Senatorial party left Washington on Aug. 28 and have stopped at Annette Island, Juneau, and Sitka. They intend making several stops on the mainland before returning to Washington about mid-September.