

MEMORANDUM TO COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE, SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN EDUCATION, RE NATIVE EDUCATION IN ALASKA

(From Gary H. Holthaus, development office, Alaska Methodist University, Anchorage, Alaska)

BACKGROUND I. THE INTER-CULTURE CONFLICT AND GEOGRAPHY

The people of Alaska find themselves surrounded by a series of influences that have an unusual effect on the educational processes in the area. Alaska is geographically isolated from the rest of the United States. Communication does exist, but contacts between many villages and the outside world are limited in ways that they are not limited in most other sections of the country. The people themselves are of many backgrounds. There are natives who have been born and raised in the area, representing vestigial remnants of a former culture that subsisted on the products of the sea or tundra, spoke unique languages and adapted to their Northern environment with consummate skill. There are also representatives of a white culture of Anglo-European origins that has intruded upon Alaska since the eighteenth century. The white culture has focused its attention primarily upon the exploitation of the natural resources afforded by the state. The coming of the Russians marked the beginning of the end of the native culture in this part of the United States. Geographical isolation, and the clash between the two cultures, native and white, have left their mark upon students in Alaskan schools.

Native young people reflect the pull between two varying cultures in several ways. Caught between the white and native cultures, they feel the attractiveness of white ways, but cannot totally escape the old ways, even though much of their heritage has been denied them by ignorance. They do not write their old language. Transmission of their heritage in the past depended upon oral tradition, but many of the young people now do not speak the language of their fathers and grandfathers.

The result is that in a peculiar way they are lost. Education does not mean much, for they have no more sense of orientation toward the future than they have toward the past. They do not realize that education will be a benefit. It will not help them catch more fish, for you do not learn fishing techniques studying verbs and subjects, world history, Spanish, typing, chemistry and algebra. Therefore education does not seem to have any valid purpose. A survey of Alaskan native secondary school dropouts revealed that, "If the curriculum taught in the schools does not have a realistic function in the students' society (i.e., is not geared to his future economic potential), it is likely that there will be little motivation to endure the sacrifice associated with the pursuit of an education."¹ In villages where fishing is the primary occupation, education does not seem to "have a realistic function." In the local community there is little or no opportunity to better one's economic status because of an education.

There is no pride in their native heritage. Many seem to be ashamed of the fact that they are native and try to hide it. On the other hand they are not considered by others of their group to be white. They are trapped; suspended between a past that is remote, and a future that is only a vague puzzle. The findings of anthropologist Seymour Parker about the students at Kotzebue would also apply in many other areas of Alaska.

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Students of all ages are aware of the problem they face in regard to identification with one another of the two cultures present. Sometimes there is a division within a family in attitudes toward this problem. One boy, conversing with his teacher, made the comment that he couldn't see why some kids seemed ashamed of being native. He added that he was part native himself and it didn't make any difference to him. The boy's sister was also in the classroom and heard the discussion. She shouted, "——, you ain't native!" A student caught this way cannot assert his native quality without risk of disapproval from his peers; neither can he deny it with honesty and integrity. He knows he is native. Telling him to forget it does not make him white.

The problems caused by this cultural and geographical isolation have been recognized in many areas of the state of Alaska.

The native student is removed from the native way of life, but he has not fully entered the white culture and so is unprepared for much that assaults him in the strange atmosphere of school. Lee H. Salisbury, of the University of Alaska, describes the native student as he attempts to learn from a standard grade school text:

"(the student) enters a completely foreign setting—the western classroom situation. His teacher is likely to be a Caucasian who knows little or nothing about his cultural background. He is taught to read the 'Dick and Jane' series.

"Many things confuse him: Dick and Jane are two white children who play together constantly. Yet he knows that boys and girls do not play together and do not share toys. They have a dog named Spot who runs around yapping and does not work. They have a father who leaves for some mysterious place called 'office' each day and never brings any food home with him. He drives a machine called an automobile on a hard covered road called a street which has a policeman on each corner. These policemen always smile, wear funny clothing and spend their time helping children across the street. Why do these children need this help?

"Dick and Jane's mother spend a lot of time in the kitchen cooking a strange food called 'cookies' on a stove which has no flame. But the most bewildering part is yet to come. One day they drive out to the country which is a place where Dick and Jane's grandparents are kept. They do not live with the family and they are so glad to see Dick and Jane that one is certain they have been ostracized from the rest of the family for some terrible reason.

"The old people live on something called a 'farm' which is a place where many strange animals are kept—a peculiar beast called a 'cow', some odd looking birds called 'chickens', which don't seem to fly, and a 'horse', which looks like a deformed moose.

"And so on. For the next twelve years the process goes on. The native child continues to learn this new language which is of no earthly use to him at home and which seems completely unrelated to the world of sky, birds, snow, ice and tundra which he sees around him."

There are some who say that the Alaska native should not be encouraged to join the white culture which he sees about him. Schools and other institutions should forego their efforts to make something other than primitive natives of these people. But this is not possible, and hardly fair.

"The Alaska native is also a living, breathing human being who has been touched by Western civilization. And like people from Sarawak to the edge of the Sahara—people who have lagged behind the advancement of human knowledge—he is increasingly anxious to share in the wealth and opportunity he sees about him.

"Some Alaska natives successfully have made the transition from the old culture to the new. Most have not, despite the tens of millions of dollars spent annually by the federal and state governments in their behalf. Many live in conditions that match or surpass urban U.S. slums. Their educational progress remains well below that of non-natives who share Alaska with them. Jobs are scarce in the villages and job opportunities are not much better if they move to a larger settlement. The welfare check, in many cases, is a way of life.

"But since the first whaling vessel reached the Alaska coast, the native has been increasingly unable to retain the purity of his culture. The past is fast closing in behind him. The future is not rapidly opening before him."

³Lee H. Salisbury, "Communication and the Native Student," *The Alaska Review* (Anchorage, Alaska: Alaska Methodist University, Vol. II, No. 2, 1966), p. 15.

⁴Staff of the Anchorage Daily News, *The Village People* (Anchorage, Alaska: The Daily News, 1966), p. 43.

Regardless of the difficulties, native people have a right not only to desire a place in the majority culture of their country; they have a right to active participation in that culture so they may find a place that has meaning for them. This will require the sacrifice of many long-cherished values and many of the traditional ways of their older society. "Such a process must be a voluntary one; still there are myriad evidences to support the claim that the people themselves desire the change."⁶

BACKGROUND II. EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

The impact of these circumstances on the average student can be marked by a low level of aspiration. His whole situation conspires to defeat him before his life is well begun. He has little hope of bettering himself in the future. In fact his old cultural pattern tells him that he should be as good as—but no better than—his father in the various masculine skills. Therefore he hopes to be as good a fisherman, as good a hunter or trapper, as well-educated as his father; but he often has little desire beyond this. Educators need to be aware of this cultural force on the formation of the students' attitudes, and levels of aspiration. Children from differing socio-economic levels in a community differ in eagerness and aptitude for learning pursuits, according to Bernard. "Much as we dislike the notion of social class in a democratically oriented America, the fact is that membership in a given social class provides privilege for some and imposes deprivation for others . . . lower class pupils absorb from parents a skepticism about education that imposes the double problem of adjusting to another culture and adjusting to the curriculum . . ."⁷

In some areas of Alaska, particularly where fishing is the major resource, economics also may work against the educator. What education offers does not seem as remunerative as the mythological remuneration afforded by the red salmon runs. Young men of high school age may occasionally catch enough fish to make their income higher than their teachers. When a teacher labors for \$8,000 for 9 months and his student may earn \$10,000 or more in one summer month, education does not seem either desirable or necessary. In a private conversation one school superintendent in Bristol Bay put this fact into words: "You will never educate these kids until you dry up the bay!" But the reality of the fishery as an economic resource is that the average income earned through fishing is much less than teachers' except for once every five years when the runs are large. A more apt description of the fisheries as an economic resource expressed by one resident is that "fishing is like playing Russian roulette with a revolver only one cylinder of which is empty." Economic factors inhibit normal school progress not only through their negative effect on motivation of students, but because the fishing and hunting endeavors are considered (sometimes justifiably in this economy), as sufficient reason to miss school.

In the Alaskan research on dropouts, interviews showed that inferiority feelings may bring an end to education altogether, and that the negative effects of the way we have put these people down through our educational programs may cause early dropout from school.

" . . . self-images of these students were imbued with deep feelings of inadequacy and inferiority. Such a devalued student image was very prevalent, and its existence was confirmed by many teachers. Both teachers and native students noted that one of the important reasons for school dropouts and the lack of motivation to enter high school stemmed from students feelings of inadequacy in dealing with the difficulties of the curriculum. This deep-seated, negative attitude is often transmitted to the student early in his educational career while he is trying to learn strange and often meaningless facts in a language over which he has little command."⁸

The negative self-image is reinforced by both the promotion system in the schools and by attitudes, both conscious and unconscious, of the teachers. A study of 760 elementary school dropouts by Overstreet revealed that "49 per cent of these students had been retarded five or more years and that only one per cent were at normal grade placement."⁹ Another seven per cent were nine or more years retarded.⁹

⁶ Ray, Ryan, Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 269.

⁷ Harold W. Bernard, *Psychology of Learning and Teaching* (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1965), p. 379.

⁸ Ray, Ryan, Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

⁹ *Ibid.*

The teacher, too, often reinforces the feelings of inadequacy, Racism, overt or unconscious, within both the state system and the B.I.A. schools, is a plaque that crects barriers between many teachers and their students. An inherent belief that our culture is better than the pupils is expressed in differing ways every day. Expressions such as "dumb native" are too common to be other than tragic. Often the teacher is led to believe this stereotyped image by the results achieved on standardized tests which are designed to be given to middle-class, American, white children in the lower states. One example of this will suffice. A reading readiness test shows some automobile tires and asks students to identify what kind of vehicle they belong on. All the members of one first grade class in Bristol Bay answered that they belong on a boat. Any child in the lower states knows that tires belong on cars, so according to the test answer, these students were wrong. A teacher who does not have an understanding of local cultures may feel that the students were not only wrong but that a mistake on such a simple problem indicates that the students are "dumb." But it is the test, and the teacher, that do not know the correct answer to the test question. In Bristol Bay the most common use of tires is to hang them over the side of a fishing boat for use as "fenders" or cushions to keep the boats from being scarred by contact with docks, scows, and other boats. Even the youngest children are smart enough to know this and are mystified by the ignorance of the test's "correct" answer.

Another way in which teachers reinforce feelings of inadequacy and inferiority was revealed in the dropout research from the University of Alaska. Teachers expressed the idea that "the only hope" for the native student was for him to go to boarding school and thus be removed from the influence of home and community.¹⁰ The implication of this idea is that home and community must therefore be a bad influence and that the sooner the old village ways are gone the better for young people. "Results of such beliefs when stated implicitly—and in some cases explicitly—led to feelings in the community that there was something 'wrong' with being native. Subsequent attitudes of defensiveness and inferiority established barriers between the teacher and the child which will not easily be overcome."¹¹

This is perhaps the saddest school failure of all. Indeed, some critics of Indian school policies have said that the "most damaging of all . . . is not the educational failure, but the psychological impact of years of nation-wide effort--in which the schools played a key part—to convince the Indian, however subtly, of the irrelevance of his culture . . . and to press him, however unwillingly and unsuccessfully, into the American urban-industrial-middle-class mold."¹²

The Bureau of Indian Affairs educational policy seems bent on cultural genocide, and involves a kind of psychological murder. The insidious and subtle goal of Indian education is reflected in this statement from a Bureau of Indian Affairs publication.

"If Indians are to become mature in the white man's culture, it is essential that schools expose Indian children to experiences, situations and ideas that are basic to our cultural assumptions.

"A more rapid means by which to accomplish the same goal would be to marry off all the Indians to non-Indians, so that the children of the mixed marriages would actually live with aspects of non-Indian culture. As we will continue to have full-bloods with us for many generations, the school must serve as the culture spreading medium."¹³

This apparently benign concern implies the ultimate destruction of Indian ways and peoples. It raises many questions. Why shouldn't we plan to have full-bloods forever instead of for many generations? Why should the school be a "culture spreading medium" in only one direction, from white to Indian? Why not let the school be a true culture spreading medium with a mutual sharing of cultural identities? As Byler points out, "the impact of what has been called 'acculturation by alienation' has been disastrous."¹⁴ The extent of the impact, according to Byler, can be measured by the statistics of Indian alcoholism, unemployment, divorce, child abandonment, suicides, assaults, delinquency and emotional disturbance. The Indian student confronting this kind of basically

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹² William Byler, "The Disaster of Indian Schools," in *Education News* (New York: Vol 2, No. 7, April 8, 1968), p. 14.

¹³ Willard W. Beatty, *Education for Cultural Change* (Chilocco, Oklahoma: Chilocco Indian Agricultural School, 1953), p. 238.

¹⁴ Byler, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

destructive attitude in the school must "choose between contradictory sets of values and attitudes."¹⁵

"He is placed, in Dr. Saslow's words, in the 'ambivalent situation of having to make a choice between the middle-class values of the school system and the traditional values of his family and tribal heritage; and whatever his choice, facing negative consequences and/or alienation from the discarded source.'

"Many simply make no choice at all and make what amounts to a psychological retreat, thereby acquiring the characteristics so many teachers and principals complain marks so many Indian students: passivity, inaction, apathy, low achievement."¹⁶

The immediate problem facing a teacher who is new to Alaska and confronted with a class in which the students are mostly native is communication. The teacher, because of his training and years on a college campus, is apt to have a blasé attitude toward culture. To talk knowingly about art, science, world events, is normal. But this is a world about which the student has only the most limited knowledge. Words may not trigger the same reaction in a student that they do in a teacher. Thus, when "Peter Pan" is mentioned in Naknek Village, the teacher's mind begins to associate with James Barrie, a little boy who never grew up, the English theatre, and whatever else may come to his mind from that point. But the student's mind immediately begins to think of a cannery. "Peter Pan," is the name of an old cannery, well-known throughout the bay. Thus his mind moves in the direction of fish, boats, nets, and the sea, while his teacher is thinking of something involved with the other side of the earth and totally foreign to his student. The breakdown in communications in this situation is complete.

Since the teacher is the stranger in town, and in the minority group in the village, much of the burden and effort required to develop understanding falls on him. His training and background should make the task easier for him. "Since teachers are in the position of authority and control and possess key professional training, it would seem reasonable to hope that school personnel would become familiar with community traditions in the hope of achieving better understanding of the people among whom they work."¹⁷ Many teachers don't accomplish this understanding simply because material is not available in a usable package.

In addition, "new teachers are often too isolated or too busy with adjustments to a new location to be able to locate informative source materials."¹⁸

BACKGROUND III. STATISTICS

This general Alaskan Cultural problem works hardships that are reflected in statistics. "Of the 5,368 native students who were of secondary school age in 1960, 1,832 or only 34.10 percent were actually enrolled in high school."¹⁹ Drop out rates as high as sixty percent of total enrollment were found in B.I.A. schools in grades one through eight. "While transfers from Bureau of Indian Affairs school might account for a fractional portion of the loss, the major cause is simply early dropout."²⁰ Surveys have disclosed that of the students who manage to stay in school through the high school years, half will not complete their freshman year of college and less than two percent are likely to continue till they receive a Bachelor's Degree.²¹ The University of Alaska study also showed that, "Of 19,447 non-white adults twenty-five years of age and older residing in Alaska in 1960, 7,503 had received fewer than five years of formal schooling. 3,415 non-white adults had no formal schooling; and the median number of years of schooling completed by these Alaskan citizens is a disturbing six and six-tenths years."²²

The evidence for the greater remunerative rewards for education is reflected in statistics compiled for an area study of Bristol Bay by the Alaska State Housing Authority. King Salmon, of three villages in the region that were com-

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Ray, Ryan, Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

¹⁸ Arnold Granville, "Objectives for a Teaching Resource Unit on Alaska," a paper presented to the Eighth Alaskan Science Conference, Anchorage, Alaska, 1957, from *Science in Alaska 1957*, pp. 154-155.

¹⁹ Ray, Ryan, Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²¹ Anchorage Daily News, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²² Ray, Ryan, Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-4.

pared, has the highest grade-level of completed education, and also the highest income. Heads of households in King Salmon averaged 12.7 years of education. Income averaged \$11,150.00. In Naknek, 18 miles away, the head of a household averages 9.5 years of education and earns an average of \$6,520. In South Naknek, just across the river, the education completed by the average head of a household is 6.5. The average income is \$3,210. The per capita incomes in the same villages reveals an even more radical drop in income. King Salmon's average per capita income is \$3,266; Naknek's average per capita is \$1,388; but South Naknek with an educational average approximately one-third that of King Salmon shows an average per capita income of \$683 or about one-fifth the amount earned in King Salmon.²³ The above statistics reflect averages compiled of both natives and non-natives. Only Naknek and South Naknek report native heads of households, but in both villages native families reflect educational levels little more than one-half that of non-natives. Naknek shows 11.7 years of education for whites, but only 7.5 for natives, while South Naknek shows a level of 10.3 years for whites, and only 5.15 for native heads of households.²⁴ Yet prestige in the community has no connection with education. Prestige is awarded to fishing skill. The man who is respected is the "high-liner", the man who catches the most salmon during the summer run. Young people, however, need to be helped to understand that education has value in and of itself, and that in the long run it is also more remunerative.

RECOMMENDATIONS I. SOME POSSIBLE PROGRAMS

It is believed that two major steps could be taken to deal with the problems described to this point:

1. Develop a social studies curriculum for the elementary grades that would be geared to teaching the native youngster about his own culture. This would include units on language, cultural characteristics, customs, history and folklore. It would require the writing of our own textbooks and reading materials, drawing up a list of suggested activities for individual students and the class as a whole, listing resources available and developing a course outline to be used as a study guide.

2. Develop a social studies unit that could be incorporated into an Alaska history course, or, better, be taught as an elective semester course at the secondary level. This would help meet the need of our older students in a remedial, short-range approach.

The purpose of these programs would be to involve the native student in his own "nativity" in such a way that he would come to know and appreciate his own cultural heritage. This would make him better able to adapt wisely to other cultures. The instilling of pride in his heritage would serve to undergird and support the student psychologically and combat the expectancy of failure. The heritage of the Alaska native is one of highly successful adaptation to a difficult and hostile environment. The student needs to become aware of the prowess and adaptability of his people. It is believed that this would help change the self-image of many of the students in Alaska. That it is important for persons to hold an estimable self-image is a fact attested by psychologists. "From birth to death the defense of the phenomenal self is the most pressing, most crucial, if not the only task of existence. Moreover, since human beings are conscious of the future, their needs extend into the future as well, and they strive to preserve not only the self as it exists but to build it up and to strengthen it against the future of which they are aware."²⁵ This may account for the fact that many students who are disinterested in normal academic subjects in Alaska are intensely interested in discovering more about their own cultural backgrounds and heritage.

Other programs might include the following:

1. A comprehensive vocational program that would lead to the trades or semi-professional occupations such as forestry, typing, office practices, commercial cooking. As a correlative program develop shorter courses leading directly to employment in Alaskan communities—garage work, construction, carpentry. Perhaps a program like that at the Opportunity School in Denver or in the Northland Schools of Alberta, Canada, would be a good guide for this attempt.

²³ Bristol Bay Borough Comprehensive Development Plan (Juneau, Alaska: Alaska State Housing Authority, 1966), pp. 51 and 83.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

²⁵ Donald Snygg and Arthur W. Combs, *Individual Behavior* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1949), p. 58.

2. A first year course in oral English, based on a linguistic approach, for grade one, so that a fair proficiency in speech could be attained by those native students whose homes still use native languages. Then the reading program could be tackled.

3. A series of readers for the elementary grades which are realistically related to the way of life of the pupils and refer to economic, social and cultural activities with which the pupils can identify themselves.

4. A museum of artifacts could be developed in many villages. Village people often have examples of old crafts, artifacts, and historical documents and items that are suitable for display. Because they are dispersed throughout the community they have little impact. But if a display case (even a discarded one from the local store, or one made especially for the purpose at the school shop) could be set in a hallway at the school, the material collected could have a decided impact on native pride and concern for their heritage. Credit could be given to the owners of the items.

6. Library development is important. A simple project would be to set aside a special area in the school library that is reserved for good books about Alaska history, culture, geography, art, anthropology.

7. Develop lists of resource people in the villages who could assist teachers in preparing materials; teach units on language; relate the "old ways" to students; share insights on local history. These teachers' aides should receive appropriate remuneration for these important educational tasks. They should *not* be used only to crank the mimeograph, help take off children's boots and coats, or exclusively to do those other non-educational tasks that are an annoyance to the regular teacher.

The final three suggestions could be implemented in local situations by teachers or administrators. These programs do not necessarily require massive doses of federal monies, nor should they put great strain on local budgets.

RECOMMENDATIONS II. SOME NEW GOALS FOR NATIVE EDUCATION

The following are goals for classroom work in Alaskan villages. They do not include certain traditional educational goals such as a list of historical concepts or mathematical concepts which ought to be learned. They deal rather with a more personalized change in student attitudes.

1. The self-image of native students must be enhanced through the relationship between teacher and pupil.

2. Student self-image should be enhanced through the materials used in the classroom. That is, appreciation for and understanding of local culture and geography should be expressed in both curriculum and materials.

3. Understanding and appreciation for cultures indigenous to Alaska should be increased.

4. A psychological foundation of pride in one's cultural heritage and in one's own personhood should be fostered.

5. The options available to native students should be realistically discussed and the alternatives explored thoroughly. For instance: What is a man to do with his life? What does his own heritage expect or demand? What does the white culture expect? Are there ways in which expectations of both cultures can be met? What programs—local, federal, BIA—are available?

6. Serious attention should be given to the ways in which culture works. The methods by which one can function and maneuver within a strange culture ought to be pointed out explicitly.

7. While learning about one's heritage is crucial, it should also be pointed out that the purpose of studying the past is never to keep students harnessed in the old ways. Knowledge of one's heritage is necessary for pride, for self-orientation, for intellectual interest. But present and future years will make demands which are radically different from those made on parents or grandparents. The most aggressively adaptable people, who are flexible enough to retain the best wisdom from their heritage, and yet willing to try new ways and experiment with new forms of social structure and personal life, will have best chance of dealing with the culture that is emerging in Alaska.

RECOMMENDATION III. SOME CURRENT PROPOSALS AND ACTIVITIES

Present activities known to the writer include the following. There may be others.

1. The Rural Teacher Program at the University of Alaska seeks to train teachers specifically for service in Alaskan bush schools.

2. The Northwest Regional Educational Research Laboratory has been developing a series of readers for elementary students which will reflect the characteristics of Alaskan culture. These are being used on a trial basis this year.

3. The same organization is conducting seminars in sensitivity training and higher-level thinking processes for Alaskan teachers and administrators.

4. Alaska Methodist University is currently training teachers and assistants for Head-Start work in Alaskan villages. Child-rearing procedures, child psychology, early childhood education are topics covered in sequences of from one to four years.

5. Guidelines have been laid down for development of an experimental program at the Beltz School in Nome. This would provide for a special social studies class dealing with Eskimo culture.

Alaska Methodist University has two Educational Personnel Development proposals that deal directly with important problem areas in native education.

1. Teaching Disadvantaged Alaskan Eskimo and Indian Youth. This program is designed to retrain teachers and aides in isolated rural Alaskan schools with special emphasis on the teaching of English as a second language and development of supplementary curriculum materials utilizing regional cultural resources.

2. Inter-Cultural Curricula in the Pacific Basin: A Project in Inter-Cultural Educational Personnel Development. The program seeks to design and experiment with inter-cultural curricula for use in the public schools in Alaska, American Samoa, and the Pacific Slope. The purpose of such curricula would be to make the educational processes relevant to these isolated areas; to promote achievement of native students; to develop cultural pride and democratic participation among the peoples of these areas.

Both of the above proposals depend on funding by the Office of Education, but no word has been received as yet.

The University of Alaska has three proposals pending funding.

1. A pilot inservice workshop for pupil personnel workers, teachers and administrators for schools in Alaska. This is a program to upgrade skills of present workers and develop communications skills.

2. A planning, pilot and operating project for the training of administrators, supervisors and guidance personnel for the culturally-disadvantaged rural schools of Alaska. This is a training program to improve education for rural schools.

3. The Improvement of Reading Instruction in Alaskan Rural Schools. This seems self-explanatory.

Status of these proposals is unknown to the writer. There are no doubt other activities and proposed activities through the State Department of Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs or other agencies, but they are not programs with which I have any contact.

TERWILLIGER'S GENERAL MERCHANDISE,

Tok, Alaska, April 1, 1969.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: We Kennedy fans spoke to you at the Sitka convention asking for help in getting an Indian boarding house here so the children from local villages could go to high school.

We sent our material to Senator Robert as you told us. Alas that was not to be.

Senator Gruening got us the use of two duplex apts. that were standing idle belonging to the Alaska Communications System (A.A.F.).

The kids are jammed in like sardines but it is very successful.

Fairbanks is no place to send young kids away from home, always a boom town now it is going to be more so on account of oil.

They are able here to go home weekends, their parents attend the local basketball games in the school gym, we all mix up together on the bleachers and yell for OUR TEAM. In fact two boys who were in Fairbanks from Eagles screamed until they brought them out here.

We have a fine school, good teachers who are interested in the kids.

If the government sells the ACS as they are trying to we need a building for a boarding school, or the use of the two we now use.

Also Fairbanks now has a big drive on in the paper claim 50% kids on dope. Concerned parents organization etc. No place for our kids.

The villages who come here are Tetlin, Northway, Eagle, Tanacross, Mentasta and Dot Lake. We all know each other; it is a good setup.

Yours,

MELLIE TERWILLIGER.

P.S.—I am keeping my supply of Kennedy buttons. Couldn't bear to throw them away.

We gals who went to Sitka to see Robert would love to go to Anchorage or Fairbanks to see you, but only if there will be an occasion. We want you to take care of yourself and keep rested up.

A friend just phoned a young Indian boy 18 found frozen to death between a bar and a house. He should have been in school. Was a dropout.

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH,
St. Marys, Alaska, May 30, 1969.

Senator TED STEVENS,
U.S. Senator for Alaska,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR STEVENS: In a recent news letter you stated that Congress was publishing a book containing the eulogies in memory of the late E. L. "Bob" Bartlett. I admired the late Senator as a man dedicated to, always ready to listen to the people of Alaska, and would like to have a copy of this book if it is still available.

As an Alaskan, I, for one, thank you and especially Senator Edward Kennedy for visiting the villages of Alaska. And, I am grateful that you did not let party politics effect your visit. I have been a missionary for over a decade among the native people of Alaska—in fact I had spent the Easter holidays at Pilot Station and left snow machine just the day before you arrived there—and it is so seldom that the influential people of Washington, D.C. actually visit and see what conditions in "the bush" are really like. I think it is unfortunate that there are those that would like to turn such occasions into a political football.

May I be so bold as to mention some of the poor conditions that you may have seen or heard about.

For example, when you were at Pilot Station you could not have helped but notice that the people have no running water in their homes, not even into the village. Yet the B.I.A. must have spent thousands of dollars for a water system there. Some seven years ago, a well was driven but it turned out to be bad water. Then they put in a small dam. In the "lower 48" it would undoubtedly work well, but here, where every particle or moisture freezes, expands and thaws again, anything can happen. And it did! Each year the dam has had to be repaired. Meanwhile, up the valley about a quarter-of-a-mile, is a beautiful spring that runs the year around. It must be good water as I and others have carried water from there at different times, for a number of years, and we are still alive. With a minimum of cost, and engineering, I'm confident that a gravity flow system of good water could be provided for the village and the B.I.A.

Or, perhaps you may have noticed, that despite the quite complete B.I.A. plant, there is not a shower for the women and children of the village. The men do take sweat baths, but the women and children seldom bathe the year around. Where there is a tremendous need for sanitation and cleanliness for the health of the people, even a single shower for women and children would be a help.

Perhaps also, you may have heard of the request of the Eskimo parents, of the villages, back in 1962, for the use of the vacated Air Force buildings at Bethel to be used as a boarding High School for their High School aged children. The B.I.A. took it over and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in remodeling a building—for their purposes—which was already excellently designed for boarding facilities.

The people see these things but seem to have little recourse. I have spoken, for some, to various visiting local officials, but the usual response is that no money has been allocated for that purpose or that Washington, D.C. dictates a certain policy should be followed, e.g. drilling a deep well.

Meanwhile, alcoholism is becoming more and more of a problem. Perhaps it is an escape for them from the harsh living conditions they experience, and the ideal which they can see, but alone cannot achieve.

Enclosed (thermofaxed letters) is an incident of the past, which shows what happened on an official basis. The Eskimo gentlemen involved, resigned after becoming confused and frustrated. After complying with all the directives of the first letter, and the said District Judge appearing at St. Marys and swearing in Mr. Tyson, on, or about, August 8 (of that year), the second letter arrived! Who wouldn't be confused!

No doubt you heard much more, but it is on such occasions when you visit us that the people have an opportunity of speaking with you.

In August, Senator, we have been annually holding a convention at St. Marys. Though the primary purpose of this convention is an atmosphere of spiritual and moral renewal, it is aimed also at providing an opportunity for the people to visit one another, socialize, and share cultural ideas. In the past years Eskimo people from some 10 to 12 villages up and down the Lower Yukon River have been attending. This year it will begin on the evening of August 12 and continue through the 15th. Usually August 15 is the big day. You are cordially invited to attend.

Sincerely and respectfully yours,

REV. PAUL B. MUELLER, S.J.

Attachments.

SUPERIOR COURT, STATE OF ALASKA,
Nome, Alaska, August 1, 1967.

Mr. WILLIAM TYSON,
St. Mary's, Alaska.

DEAR MR. TYSON: I have your letter of July 27. I will do my best to answer the questions as fairly as I can.

I believe under the circumstances you should resign from the City Board of Trustees at the time you are appointed magistrate. I intend to appoint you magistrate effective August 15, 1967.

You will be receiving a safe and books from Ludvig Ost, the former magistrate who lives at Fortuna Ledge. You are to take this State property, secure it, protect it, and place it in a place where it will not be destroyed or damaged and utilize it as magistrate.

I will endeavor to come to St. Marys and help train you for a few days or District Judge Maurice Kelliher will come down and assist you.

The City Council should: 1. as soon as possible pass city laws; 2. appoint a city policeman and 3. have a place of confinement or jail for any persons who violate the law who come before you.

I am sending to the City Council the things that they should do in order to keep the magistrate there. If I can be of further assistance to you please so advise.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM H. SANDERS.

SUPERIOR COURT, STATE OF ALASKA,
Nome, Alaska, August 25, 1967.

Mr. WILLIAM TYSON,
St. Mary's, Alaska.

DEAR MR. TYSON: I have received your application for magistrate for the Wade Hampton District and am considering it along with other applications.

Judge Kelliher mentioned to me that you may be building a building or doing other things thinking perhaps that you were the only applicant for the job. This letter is to notify you that your name will be given every consideration for the position but that you should not make any commitments depending upon the position until I have actually appointed you.

This letter is written in the hope that you will not commit yourself to any expenses or resign from the City Council until after you have received an appointment.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM H. SANDERS.

"ARCTIC NATIVE BROTHERHOOD," SUMMARY BY JEROME TRIGG, NOME, ALASKA

Majority of the people both native and white that I talk to feel that Nome Public School should not be built by Beltz School.

There seems to one or two problems, Nome School kids may or would be set back in assignment to compare with Beltz students, or Beltz students that are taking special teaching to catch up grades to their ages would have to be lowered in grades.

Nome public school should be built in different town area.

That Beltz be a good vocational training high school along with high school curriculum. That Nome public school students that want to take vocational training could take courses at Beltz according to teaching space. Also Beltz students that just want to take academic with plans of going to college be able to attend Nome Public School full time. This exchange system would be most beneficial to our native children also would leave free the availability of student housing at Beltz for village children.

The natives feel that all high school students are not college material, therefore good vocational training should be available.

But "good advisor" should be in school system to encourage student with good ability to go to college.

Along with plans for a Beltz School gym and swimming pool should be included. Though we live near the sea very few natives know how to swim. Several children drown every year because they don't know how to stay afloat. We would like a swimming pool at Beltz School area for all kids to learn to swim and for recreation, as recreation is very limited in the short days of winter.

Grade school children are divided into two or three groups of the same grade and are taught accordingly. They do not compete with better students so they do not do their best. These are the thinking of many parents. These children are given test at beginning of school and placed in different rooms according to their test. Usually it looks like they are just separating the natives from other races. Although they claim this will change and use an Alphabet system.

No school bus is provided and should be for King Island area and FAA area located near airport.

One of the most important factors is that some text books should be used throughout the state. By State BIA school and others different text books in different schools creates a hardship among our Nomadic natives as they move to other areas in search of work.

Any plan to teach native children near home is welcomed. We hope with high schools there will also be a Junior College in our area soon.

Most of talented natives are lured away to other area and other states because lack of jobs and lack of proper job placement officers. Thus leaving up with very little talent to work with.

To be a good student one must have comfortable home. I am not speaking of elaborate homes, but a home that comfortable with adequate room. Most of the natives are living in kitchen and living room with no bedroom or toilet facilities. Many as 10 persons live in one room. This is a problem one cannot study at home, or take a bath. Much skin sore are predominant on native children. Being crowded at home the kids are playing in street till late at night and leave home at an early age.

Nome being one of the many places with poorest housing is always shot down. They say we can go to Bank and borrow to build houses. But the bank won't lend money to these poor natives. They say Bartlett housing Bill does not fit Nome but only to villages. But these same people are moving to Nome in hopes of bettering themselves.

There is very little poverty program in Nome and Nome area. All proposals are not funded and the local cap board has given up after three years of trying. Headstart, child area centers, bath houses for King Islanders and other natives, help yourself home repair, all these have never been funded—they say there is no money.

One Vista worker is doing wonders for church kindergarten is doing wonders but this is for very few. If these something like Vista workers to help school student in certain location of the town this would be good.

As I stated there are no bath house facilities this creates a health problem also creates a personality problem as a native child will have a strong odor. Thus making a native an unwelcome in the white society. This is not just in King Island village, but exists all over Nome which is made up of many villages.

Very little is being done to preserve the Native culture, both by natives or others.

It is hoped by native leaders that natives of Alaska will get a substantial land settlement. Through Native Development Corporation we will put some of our miserable homes aside and live in warm and clean homes, upgrade our standards of living schooling and improve our health and education standard.

**Tlingit and Haida Indians of Anchorage,
Anchorage, Alaska, April 10, 1969.**

Senator Edward M. Kennedy,
Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: Enclosed is a deposition submitted in lieu of our appearance before your subcommittee during your recent tour of Alaska Native villages.

Although the members of this organization now live in the urban area of Anchorage, we all came from villages and we still have relatives there. We feel that we have, perhaps, some insights as to the problems of growing up in the villages and then moving into the competitive atmosphere of an Alaskan city. We have made the so-called transition, often in spite of tremendous odds, but we also recognise that there are many pitfalls yet in our way. We also recognise the immense difficulty facing the Native people, young and old, when they are required to give up an old and familiar culture without being adequately trained in the ways of the new one that will take its place.

At any rate, we hope that you will consider these views as a part of the total picture of Native educational needs in Alaska.

We wish your subcommittee, and you, every success in your attempts to alleviate conditions that can only get worse with the passage of time—if something isn't done soon.

Most sincerely,

LOUIS F. JACQUOT,
President.

THE EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF THE ALASKA NATIVE PEOPLE

(By the Tlingit & Haida Indians of Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska)

Although education, in and of itself, is not a panacea for the ills of society, the American Experiment has shown that education is the most effective vehicle available in the acculturative process. Historically, wave after wave of peoples with a wide variety of cultural backgrounds have settled in the New World—French, Dutch, Germans, Jews, Irish, Italians, Slavs, Chinese and Japanese. At first, they tended to form sub-communities within the cities and remained relatively aloof from the larger society around them. By the second generation, however, the young began to move into the larger society and soon became an integral part of it. This process was considerably accelerated in the latter half of the nineteenth and the first part of the twentieth centuries as the nation embarked on the great experiment with mass education.

Acculturation has always been a two-way street—more so in America than anywhere else. For while the minority was being educated in the ways of the majority culture, they were also able to exert a considerable influence, by way of the democratic process, on the makeup of the overall society that emerged. (In a word, the process was one of amalgamation rather than of absorption.) As a result, American society has never been static—it is eclectic, ever changing and flexible. Problems and intolerable conditions that afflicted the Old World were more often than not resolved in the New.

To take into its bosom a diverse peoples, to change them, and in the process to be changed by them has long been an American trait much admired the world over. And in the end, this will have been America's greatest contribution to Civilization.

(It appears that a major contributing factor to the racial and ethnic unrest sweeping our nation today has been a breakdown in this amalgamative process. For while the Negro has been told to join the society, he has been hemmed in and his talents and creative energies have been diverted.)

The Tlingit and Haida people, along with Alaska's other Native peoples, propose to use education in the same manner. They know that the old ways are fast disappearing, and that they and their children must change with the times if they are to survive. They also know that education is one method of becoming acculturated within a short period of time—for they have seen sons and daughters go through the process in one generation. Yet they also desire to retain that which they know is right and has value. Therefore, they propose that they will become so much a part of the culture that will emerge, that many of their ideas and ways will be accepted and that many of the problems now afflicting the state and nation may be ameliorated. However, the Native people are not able

to gain this new education by themselves at this time—they need massive help from the society at large. The scale of the assistance required may be surmised from the following facts:

After 100 years under the American Flag the illiteracy rate in the Southwest and Northwest regions (almost wholly Native) runs between 22 and 12%. (For the U.S. 2.2%; for the state 3.5%.)

The vast bulk of the Native people who have attended school have received less than an eighth grade education.

Less than 200 of the state's 54,000 Natives have graduated from college.

Native unemployment figures, even in the cities, indicate a rate three times that of the general population.

Per capita income in predominantly Native regions remains half that of the other regions.

Prospective and projective population figures indicate that a mass movement of Natives from the villages to the urban centers of the state will take place within the next three decades.

Alcoholism, disease and mental health problems are most acute among those Natives who have moved to urban areas without adequate education, and who thus cannot compete on an even footing either for jobs or training programs.

Yet those Natives who have had an opportunity to receive full-scope education (i.e., first grade through college) do as well or better than immigrants to the state.

In other words, a specter of massive dislocations of one-fifth of this state's population portends tremendous problems for the society in the near future. If these people were properly educated and had the tools to compete in an industrial society, they would be contributors to that society rather than a potential threat. A crisis is approaching, and it is plainly written for all to see.

The Congress has before it now, or will in this session, a bill that proposes to extinguish Native claims to the land for a large cash settlement. A multi-million dollar Native Development Corporation is to be set up that will, in ten years, be controlled by the Natives themselves. The reasoning is that the settlement monies will not be dissipated, but will be invested for the benefit of the people in perpetuity. But the basic problem still remains: where are these trained Native leaders to come from?

In order to prepare the people for the immediate future, various Native groups in Anchorage have, during this past winter, been encouraging those with potential skills to return to school either for retraining programs, college, or graduate work in crucial areas. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and other agencies were contacted in hopes of locating funding programs. (Many of the people with high skill potential are justifiably reluctant to leave their jobs when, in addition to loss of salary, they must contemplate spending \$15,000 for a BA degree and another \$15,000 for the Ph.D.) Some help was obtained, but by and large many excellent programs remained mere paper programs because they were not properly funded. For example, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has a very good grant-in-aid program for Native undergraduates, but has great difficulty in providing meaningful help for all those who are interested and eligible. Furthermore, the program does not include graduate students because of the lack of funds.

The state has established a system of State Operated Schools throughout the rural areas, and is in the process of absorbing Bureau of Indian Affairs schools whenever feasible. The State Constitution requires that the state provide an equal education to all of the children of the state, but again this is not always the case because of funding problems. For one thing, federal aid funds are placed directly in the state's General Fund and thence appropriated by the Legislature. Too often, urban legislators, in control of finance committees, disregard rural needs and appropriate these funds as if they came from the state treasury alone. In addition, the state has not wholeheartedly shouldered the burden of rural education—studies often remain in that stage; time schedules speak of decades rather than years; innovative programs are poorly coordinated, inadequately funded, and urban oriented. As a result, rural education in Alaska appears to be stop-gap at best.

What is needed then, is a massive educational effort by both the state and federal governments. One that is fully financed, realistically coordinated, and aimed specifically at the rural areas of this state. The needs are obvious, immediate, and increasingly critical. The time for long drawn out and detailed

studies is past. (There are drawers full of educational studies tucked away in various offices around the state.)

If the Human Resources of this state are to be developed to their fullest potential, if the Native people are to be realistically acculturated in the shortest possible time and if the mistakes that created the ghetto conditions in the other states are to be avoided, then immediate steps must be forthcoming that would establish and fully fund a *total concept* educational program for the Native peoples. The program must provide training from kindergarten through college or trade school in order to wipe out the 100 years of human blight that now exists among the people.

The Native people know and love this land. They are willing to learn. They have much to offer.

PROBLEMS OF ESKIMO PEOPLE TODAY

(By Edith Commons, Principal Teacher, BIA, Newtok, Alaska)

PART I. PRIMARY PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN TEACHING ESKIMO STUDENTS IN BIA SCHOOLS

- I. Language barrier:
 - A. Eskimo spoken at home
 - B. Child learns English at school
 - C. English used only at school
 - D. Little reason or occasion to practice speaking English
- II. Hunger factor:
 - A. Children hop out of bed and come right to school without eating, combing hair, or washing:
 - a. Juice and graham crackers, although served regularly, are not adequate
 - B. School cook often too ill-trained, lazy, or apathetic to cook the food which is available for the children's school lunches
 - a. Bureau backs up the cook against the principal supervisor in a dispute about whether or not the children are being fed enough
 - b. Warmed-up soup, pilot bread, milk, and dry raisins was a typical menu of a \$4.50 per hour cook who had had eight years experience
 - C. Children beg food at teacher's house on Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - a. Tuesdays and Thursdays are Bingo Playing Days for the parents
 - III. Fatigue factor:
 - A. Children decide their own bedtimes
 - B. Council passed a law saying all children were to be in their houses by 9:00 p.m.
 - a. Children play around school house until 10:00 or later
 1. The lights are here at the school
 - C. Village movies at Armory begin after 8:00 p.m. on school nights
 - a. School teachers are considered bad if they refuse permission to use school for movies that start after 8:00
 1. The teachers are judged bad even when they postpone it to the following evening beginning at 7:00
 - D. With such small houses, when one family member is sick, drunk, or having a late party, the other members do not sleep so well
 - E. Houses so small that there must be wall-to-wall sleepers
 - IV. Hearing problems:
 - A. Ten to forty percent of school population has draining ears or other hearing problems in one ear or both
 - a. Ears damaged before child ever reaches school
 - b. Doctor gives directions over radio for ear care, medical aide relates directions, the mother does it one day, skips two, does it once again and then neglects it completely
 - c. Two different parents seen in two different communities slapping their child in the ear in a public place
 - B. With hearing problems, it is doubly hard for child to learn a second language
 - a. Child needs more individual attention than teacher can give in a regular classroom environment
 - b. Hearing aids and auditory trainers are slowly acquired through proper channels

1. Too often child breaks hearing aids
 2. Child must wait until he is older before he is trusted with hearing aids
- C. Nurses check ears, recommendations are made, nothing happens
- a. One special speech and hearing teacher in Kotzebue teaches fifty students
 1. That teacher may be a superior teacher who is very conscientious but, I think, it is impossible for her to do the job adequately with that number
- V. Slight problems:
- A. Eyes were checked this year with a device which looked to be similar to Snellen Chart
 - a. Snellen Chart indicates myopia only
 1. Myopic children are generally among the better readers
 - B. Glasses provided at minimal fees or perhaps free
 - a. Plastic frames break easily and must be replaced by owners
 1. Parents frequently delay or refuse to send \$1.75 for new frames and at the same time buy a \$1100 snow mobile
 - C. Public Health doctor would not fit less than age ten students with glasses
 - a. Reason given was that he was not well enough trained to fit them properly

PART 2. UNFORTUNATE RESULTS CREATED BY PRIMARY PROBLEMS

I. Overagedness

- A. Students two or more years behind their counterparts in lower forty-eight
- B. Reasons for overagedness
 - a. Bilingual students taught in second language
 - b. Child hungry and comes to school only for food
 - c. Child frequently too tired to study in school
 - d. Many children have hearing and sight problems

Parents pull underage and other children out of school whenever they have some work for him to do at home

D. Children at Newtok miss approximately two months of school each year because parents move to another village where the fishing is better during the summer

II. Older student with negative feelings toward school can adversely affect the younger students' attitudes

- A. Sense of failure felt by older student can be used as whiplash on a younger, more successful, student
- B. Unsuccessful students call younger successful students "gussuk" (white man) to shame the younger students for showing them up
- C. With so many groups of children who have so many special problems, the teacher cannot spend the time needed to win their respect and admiration
 - a. Instead of having thirty-one students on an achievement span of four or five levels, the teacher should have less than ten students on one achievement level, if possible, to be most effective
 1. Children require special education techniques

III. Children are special education problems

- A. Do not fit mental maturity or achievement test norms
- B. Retarded two years behind normal grade level
- C. Bilingual
- D. Different culture
- E. High prevalence of health problems
- F. Isolated
- G. Without TV

IV. Schools conducted as regular type classrooms

- A. Trained personnel difficult to obtain and retain
- B. Buildings do not keep pace with the growing school enrollments
- C. Instructional aides not even required to be high school graduates because there are so few Eskimo high school graduates living in the villages
- D. Possible financial problems in hiring adequate teaching staff for other than "token" regular classes
- E. Public unaware of problems in Eskimo schools

PART 3. POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS TO HELP THE PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES

I. Electricity made available

A. Would eliminate much of the need for fuel oil or gasoline for heating, cooking, and lights

a. Fuel oil and gasoline are expensive to have shipped so far

b. People always run short of fuel oil and gasoline every spring and borrow from the BIA

B. TV would be possible by satellite

a. Children and adults would be able to practice English

II. Better mail service

A. Weather is too determining a factor in mail delivery

B. People often wait for months for food, ski-doo's, and other ordered items to be delivered

C. No landing strip

a. Village mail service shut off during break-up and freeze-up because mail plane cannot land

D. People forced to send telegrams to order supplies because mail service delayed for a month at a time

a. Telegrams are expensive to send

III. More jobs

A. Most people in Newtok are welfare recipients

B. Alaska needs roads

a. Would it be possible to hire and haul untrained, uneducated, and poor people to road building jobs?

C. Alaska schools need more teachers

a. Would it be possible for one well-trained teacher to supervise several untrained, but willing, instructional aides to help with the teaching?

IV. Major decisions left up to whole village votes rather than to village councils

A. Village council presidents in both villages where I have taught have been the shaman or the son of a shaman

B. BIA working to increase the influence or power of councils possibly are indirectly playing into the hands of the shaman

C. Although village council members are elected by open village elections, they often do not act responsibly for the village as a whole, but rather for the good of their own family or clan

a. Too often villagers better qualified avoid responsibility of public service

V. Better communications systems

A. Radio. There is one commercial station usually

B. Newspapers and magazines arrive two weeks or more late

VI. Improving education

A. Providing for special education class sizes

B. Making local high schools available

C. Providing auditory trainers for students who are hard of hearing

D. Making glasses more readily available for those students who need them

E. Put language labs in each school

VII. Better health care

A. Medical aides not adequately trained

a. More extended training programs are needed

B. Doctors and nurses need to visit the village more often than once per year

a. Native health hospital facilities need expanding

LARSEN BAY SCHOOL,
Larsen Bay, Alaska, April 7, 1969.

Senator TED KENNEDY,
Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Education,
Juneau, Alaska.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: Dolores Padilla, representing Kodiak Rural CAP, requested letters concerning village problems to take to the hearings, but the letter reached us late so I'm hoping this reaches you.

Kodiak City is trying to secede from the borough. As a village teacher I am concerned about the future of their schools. Recently Kodiak proposed dropping

the villages that were beyond reach of the road system. The villages were asked to respond to the idea. I wrote to Cliff Hartman, Commissioner of Education, who advised me to advise Larsen Bay residents to request retention. Apparently the Alaska Department of Education does not want control of the village schools and neither does Kodiak. The B.I.A. did not answer my letter. The educational future in such villages as Larsen Bay is sadly insecure.

This school does not or has not ever had educational opportunities comparable to those offered in urban areas. Yet these students are expected to compete successfully when they move to Kodiak High School. Larsen Bay School consists of two rooms, twenty-six students in eight grades, and one teacher, without even so much as a closet for storage. Supplies that are considered essential in the Kodiak City schools are non-existent here. In many cases gas boxes must serve for equipment storage shelves and tables.

Larsen Bay has no roads or streets. At high tide it is impossible for students to walk to school from certain parts of the village. Some houses are in danger of falling into the ocean because of the subsidence after the 1964 earthquake. There is only one public water source besides the school well which is not polluted. At high tide it is impossible for many people to reach either of these sources.

All winter I have written to one organization after another in quest of solutions to these problems and have an impressive file of correspondence. However, to date nothing definite has been accomplished. Mrs. Padilla requested that we suggest solutions to the problems. I wish I had some. So do the people of Larsen Bay.

Much of my correspondence represents agencies who direct me to other agencies. I have followed up all suggestions. Only the district sanitarian, Mr. Kieser, has visited Larsen Bay in the past year, and I learned recently he has been transferred to the Keni Peninsula.

Possible solutions:

1. Gather under a central head the numerous agencies which purport to assist the villages and establish a coordinated workable program reaching over a period of years. The budget should be carefully worked out and the money appropriated in advance.

2. Decide what organization will operate the village schools. At present we have three.

3. Provide rural supervisors and teachers who are sincerely interested in working in villages and with villagers.

Examples: In several years of teaching in Alaskan villages, no supervisor has taken the time to discuss problems on any other than a rush-to-get-the-plane basis, meaning that the total village visitation amounted to a couple hours while school was in session, time which belongs to the students.

In my opinion, the Rural Supervisor's position should be one of guide and supporter of the rural teachers in his area. The Supervisor is the vital link between village and the urban center, between teacher and supplies, current innovations in other places, etc. At present this appears not true.

4. Improved training programs for the teachers of rural teachers.

Example: I have visited schools and attended conferences where the majority of teachers felt the natives naturally inferior and acted accordingly, a detriment to the education of those natives. In many classrooms almost no real attempt was being made to teach. Improved instruction at the college level could help to alleviate this condition. Also, adequate teacher counseling would help.

5. The dedicated, innovating rural teachers should be made known so those who wish to improve could get in contact with them. We have many excellent rural school teachers who work year after year with virtually no encouragement or recognition.

6. Promote closer cooperation among the schools and other agencies such as the Health Services, University of Alaska, etc. At present, it is far too often that the bush teacher has no way of knowing of available services until they have been staked out for the entire term by larger urban schools. Perhaps Larsen Bay is in a unique position in that it has not been able to secure film service from the Kodiak Borough School District of which it is a part and that because of its belonging to this district, it is unable to borrow recordings, films, etc., from the University of Alaska. However, other villages may have similar difficulties.

Another means of increasing cohesion and pride among villages would be the getting together periodically for play days, discussions, etc., by students, teachers and parents in villages which can be reached by water, by weasel, or by air charter. Many villages could be connected by highways also.

As to the various health services, this village school has no records concerning the health status of its students. We have had a doctor only once this school year, the dentist once (2 days each). No eye examinations by a qualified optician have been made in at least two years. No audiometer tests have been administered for several years.

When through testing urged by me the water sources proved polluted, and on another occasion when I requested vitamins for dietary supplement, I was advised by the supervisor that the children's health was not my concern. At that time at least three-fourths of the villagers were sick.

7. Equip the villages with schools which are adequate to modern instruction and see that they have text books, teaching machines, science equipment, etc., comparable to that used in urban schools.

Example: The big dictionary we have is older than I am. We have no globes, not even one microscope, no Bunsen burner. This list could be expanded over several pages, but the above indicates what I mean.

8. Compensate rural teachers through living facilities and salaries which reflect the untold hours of service they must give in order to be effective in a foreign environment.

I will be most interested in learning the results of your hearings. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

MISS DOROTHEA M. TAYLOR,
Teacher in Charge.

AKHIOK RURAL STATION,
Akhiok, Alaska, March 8, 1969.

Senator EDWARD KENNEDY,
U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY. I have just learned that you will be coming to Alaska in April to attend hearings on the education of the Alaskan native. My wife and I are serving as Vista Volunteers in Akhiok, Alaska, a small village located on the southeastern end of Kodiak Island. We have lived in Akhiok for almost seven months and, in that time, we feel that we have developed some insights into the problem of education in Alaska.

There are, in fact, approximately 120 Vista Volunteers in Alaska, all of whom have been in their villages since midsummer and have information concerning BIA, State, and Borough schools in Alaska. I urge you to consider Vista as a resource while you are studying the education systems which serve Alaskan natives.

I would like to relate to you the experiences we have had with education in Alaska. The school in Akhiok is run by the Kodiak Island Borough. The Borough operates six such schools in the village around the island with a total enrollment of approximately 250 Aleut children. The administrators who run the Borough School District are definitely prejudiced against the village schools. A financial report just issued shows that the Borough is spending only part of the money it receives from the Federal Government for the village schools in the villages. There is no lunch program of any kind in the village schools despite the fact that free surplus foods are available for such a program from the Department of Agriculture.

The disregard for the needs of the village schools reaches fantastic proportions. The school in Akhiok was without paper and pencils for two months because an administrator "forgot" to send them down here, even though he was asked again and again to do so. Akhiok has no record player, no tape recorder, no duplicating machine, and there have been no bulbs for the film projector for over three months, despite the pleas of the teachers. The school has not had running water for three months although the threat of the State Health Department to close it may finally bring some action.

In my opinion, the attitude of the Borough has seriously retarded the education of the Aleut children on Kodiak Island. In the last few months I have watched four high school students drop out and return to Akhiok. They constitute roughly half of the group which left Akhiok in the fall to attend high school. I asked why they dropped out—I asked their guidance counselors in Kodiak, I asked the village teachers, and I asked the students themselves. The guidance counselors did not know why the boys had left. There are so few counselors in Kodiak and

they are so overworked that they rarely get to know any students well. The village teachers were able to give me more of an answer. Dedicated and spending their first year in Alaska, they were appalled to report that the reading level of these boys was roughly fourth or fifth grade when they started high school. Yet they were expected to do ninth or tenth grade work at the Kodiak High School. When I spoke with the boys I was told that the work was too difficult in Kodiak and that it was hard to adjust to their new surroundings.

I could go on in this vein, but these are only the symptoms of a more basic problem which exists throughout Alaska. The various education systems which serve the Alaskan native are insensitive to his needs. The children receive their first eight years of schooling in their villages and need special programs designed to overcome the limitations imposed by this isolation. Yet instead of advanced programs designed to deal with this problem, one often finds mediocrity and sometimes even neglect.

Because of the small isolated character of the villages there are usually only two or three teachers in each village. In the course of his first eight years of education a child may have only two different teachers. One poor teacher, one eccentric, prejudiced individual, can conceivably cripple the chances of 20 to 30 or 100 Eskimo, Indian, or Aleut children of ever receiving a good education. As teachers are not properly screened and rarely fired up here, there are many such teachers in the bush right now dooming children to future educational failure.

I ask you to consider these things carefully. Much needs to be done in Alaska to put the education of the Alaskan native on a par with that received by his white counterpart in Alaskan cities and the lower 48. The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the State of Alaska simply cannot do the job unless they are given more resources and drastically revamped to bring in dedicated and capable individuals.

Please do what you can for these people.

Sincerely,

DAVID P. CLUCHEY.

GAMBELL, ALASKA,
January 28, 1969.

Dr. CLIFFORD HARTMAN,
Commissioner of Education,
Juneau, Alaska

DEAR SIR: At the January 7th meeting of the Gambell Advisory School Board the rural education proposal was discussed at length, and we would like to express our opinions on this subject.

1. The proposal to build facilities in five cities in Alaska to provide high school education for the students from the villages leaves much to be desired. We do not see this limited type of program as what we had anticipated when the possibility of regional high schools was proposed.

In the lower 48 states high school students have the privilege of attending schools near their homes, even in areas of widely-scattered population. It is not uncommon in such areas to have high schools with as few as 50 or 60 students enrolled. Why can't such a plan be considered for Alaska as well?

For instance, this year there are approximately 70 students from St. Lawrence Is. who are attending high schools as far away as Okla. There are also others in the village who could attend if there were a high school located on the island.

2. Two parents on the board expressed their satisfaction with their children's education and the experience gained at Mt. Edgecumbe and Chegawa, thereby expressing the gratitude of the majority of parents.

3. Although recognizing the value of travel as being educational, most parents would like their children to get their high school education closer to home. There would be an opportunity for travel when they leave for college, etc.

4. We believe that there is a decided benefit to the villages to have a high school in the community.

(a) There would be an increase in activities for the community (social, cultural, spectator sports, etc.), centering around the educational institution.

(b) There would be an opportunity for the parents to participate and take pride in their children's achievements, benefitting both the student and the parent, and hence the community.

(c) There would be a greater stimulation to the adults as they witness the benefits of learning.

(d) It would tend to unify the lives and interests of the parents and their high school-age youth, rather than to intensify the cultural and generation "gap", as the present system of education is doing.

5. We would like to urge that careful consideration be given to the development of a larger number of high schools situated nearer to the communities from which the students originate.

Sincerely,

VICTOR CAMPBELL,
GRACE SLWOKO,
MARILENE AHINEN,
NANCY WALUNGA,
ABRAHAM KANINGRK,

Members of the Advisory School Board, Gambell.

PAUL T. DIXON & ASSOCIATES,
Anchorage, Alaska, May 15, 1969.

HON. EDWARD KENNEDY,
Senator, State of Massachusetts, United States Senate, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR: We are transmitting herewith, for your information and follow up as you see fit, Resolution No. 16 of the Association of Village Council Presidents.

Respectfully yours,

PAUL T. DIXON.

[Attachment]

ASSOCIATION OF THE VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS RESOLUTION No. 16

Whereas, the Native people of Alaska lack the knowledge of the history of their people and;

Whereas, the culture of the Native people is disappearing rapidly due to the transition of the Native people; and

Whereas, the younger generation is in danger of losing their true identity, Now therefore be it resolved that the Association of Village Council Presidents request an accurate history of the native people of Alaska be written; and

Be is further resolved that the Association recognizes the value of the title III, ESEA, Project which begins this program and is proposed by the State for the Bethel and St. Mary's high schools and requests approval of that program.

PIA THOMPSON,
Secretary.
MOSES PAUKAN,
President.

SHELDON JACKSON COLLEGE,
Sitka, Alaska, November 25, 1968.

Senator WAYNE MORSE,
Committee on Labor and Public Welfare,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR MORSE: I have just read in the Tundra Times of the hearing which you plan to hold the first week of December on Indian Education in Alaska. I am President of Sheldon Jackson College, an institution owned and operated by the Board of National Missions of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Sheldon Jackson schools have for 90 years been meeting the changing educational needs of native Alaskans, beginning with a training school, an elementary school, an accredited boarding high school for 50 years, and now an accredited two year college. Sheldon Jackson schools are the oldest continuing series of educational institutions in Alaska that have been predominately concerned with native education. It is for these reasons that I would request you to include representatives of Sheldon Jackson College in your hearing in December. The personnel of Sheldon Jackson can provide a dimension as a private institution that other agencies cannot supply.

Senator Bartlett, Senator Gruening, and Representative Pollock, all three are familiar with the program and work of Sheldon Jackson schools. Yearly these

men visit our campus and speak to the student body. You might wish to contact them as to the advisability of including us in your December meeting.

I offer to you the facilities and hospitality of the Sheldon Jackson campus in which to hold your sub-committee hearing. There might be some importance in the fact that this important hearing could be held on the campus of the oldest institution in the state that has historically dealt with native education. Also, Mt. Edgecumbe High School, the largest B.I.A. secondary institution in the state, is located in Sitka and this would provide the committee with ready access to two significant institutions that are involved in native education.

Enclosed are answers to questions which were specified by the Sub-committee in the article in the Tundra Times. The answers are predominately from a higher educational viewpoint which is now the major educational concern of Sheldon Jackson College.

Let me know if I can be of service to you and your Sub-committee as you develop plans for the hearing in December. I hope that you will seriously consider including representatives from Sheldon Jackson College to participate in the hearings.

Most cordially yours,

ORIN R. STRATTON, *President.*

A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF ALASKA NATIVE EDUCATION PROBLEM AREAS
SUGGESTED BY SENATOR MORSE'S SUBCOMMITTEE

A. What are Goals of an Educational Program for Alaskan Natives?

1. As evidenced by present BIA and State programs?

Answer. In the simplest terms, an educational program for Alaskan natives should provide a quality educational experience at all levels which is at least equivalent to the quality of education which is provided for predominately Caucasian students at the large school districts in the major cities of Alaska.

2. What do you and your organization believe the goals should be?

Answer. Sheldon Jackson College agrees wholeheartedly with the previous statement and goals in that the state of Alaska should provide equal opportunity and equal quality for all the children of the state, including the disadvantaged minority of the native population. Emphasis should be placed on special education, particularly for the mentally retarded and handicapped child. Although not documented, it would seem that there would be a higher proportion of mentally retarded and handicapped children among the native population than among the Caucasian group.

Our goals as a two year accredited college are to provide an overall quality educational experience that will equip particularly Alaskan natives to succeed in higher education. Currently we are offering two year terminal technical courses in Business Education, Business Administration, Forestry, Fisheries, and Logging Management. These technical courses are designed to provide native Alaskans with knowledge and skills that will equip them to work in the major natural resource industries in Alaska. In addition to the technical curricula we offer liberal arts courses which parallel the course offerings typically offered by four year colleges and universities. Our unique purpose as a two year college particularly dedicated to the education of the Alaska native is to provide a cultural, academic, social, and emotional transition from the small village and high school into the contemporary higher educational system.

B. What are the educational problems of Indian and Native students that are of concern to you and your organization?

Answer. As indicated in question A, Sheldon Jackson College considers its major role in higher education in Alaska to provide an educational and social environment in which the acculturation of the Alaskan native can take place. This acculturation process includes the acquisition of marketable skills as well as increased academic competence so the Alaskan native can compete in the competitive higher educational enterprise. The major problem is to convince more native Alaskans of the necessity for post high school education. If the Alaskan native is to compete on an equal basis in the future for jobs and is to provide the kind of creative and productive leadership which his community needs, he must be convinced of the importance of higher education. Related to this problem is the difficulty to convince the Alaskan native to attend a higher educational institution where he has a reasonable chance of success. Currently less than one percent of the Alaska natives succeed in the larger institutions like the

University of Alaska or four year colleges and universities in the "South 48". They need a transitional experience that will provide them with an academic, social, and emotional stability in order to achieve ultimate success.

C. What are the Causes of the Problems Identified Above?

Answer. The causes of the minimal participation and lack of success in higher education can be attributed to three basic causes:

1. The large majority of Alaska native youth have not been exposed to the contemporary technological world of a rapidly developing urban society. Consequently, they do not see the need for further education that will equip them to compete with more highly educated individuals for jobs in the modern contemporary world.

2. They receive little or no parental support or encouragement to pursue higher education. The parents face the same problem as is indicated in No. 1 and consequently they do not encourage their children to seek post high school education.

3. The quality of educational experience that the native community is currently receiving by and large does not equip them academically for success in higher education. This problem will ultimately be solved when they have a quality education in the elementary and secondary schools which is equal to the Caucasian middle-class.

D. What is being done to solve these problems and to meet the Educational Goals of the Native Student?

Answer. Again, speaking from the higher educational viewpoint, Sheldon Jackson College is doing everything possible to develop not only educational programs that are particularly adapted to Alaska and the Alaskan native, but is currently involved in an intensive recruiting effort to attract native Alaskans to Sheldon Jackson to begin their higher educational training. Every agency which is listed, Federal government, B.I.A., U.S. Public Health Service, U.S. Office of Education, Office of Economic Opportunity (Head Start and Upward Bound), state and local educational agencies and Indian and native associations are all involved in one way or another in trying to upgrade Alaska native education.

E. What should be done that is not now being done to assure the Indian and Native students the education to which they are entitled?

Answer. I think the most important task at the present time, in order to deal with the problems of Alaska native education, is to get the Alaska State Department of Education, the B.I.A., and the appropriate Federal agencies together to develop a long range, comprehensive plan that will provide a quality education at all levels for *all* Alaskans. At the present time there are many groups trying to deal with the problem but there is no overall coordination or direction in accomplishing these goals. The development of a comprehensive educational plan for the state by the B.I.A., the State educational officials, and the Federal government would channel the energies, ideas, and funds in a coordinated direction.

MARBLEHEAD, MASS., April 14, 1969.

HON. EDWARD M. KENNEDY,
Chairman, U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on Indian Education, Washington, D.C.

DEAR SENATOR KENNEDY: Attached to this letter is written testimony which I would like to have introduced into the record of your committee investigating Indian education. I spent two years as psychiatrist with the United States Public Health Service in Alaska, and met Mr. Adrian Parmeter last year during his trip to Alaska.

I hope that this testimony will be of some help. I feel that your committee is extremely timely and hope that some positive action will come from your deliberations. Please let me know if any further information or clarification of what I have written might be helpful.

I wish you well in this venture.

Sincerely,

JOSEPH D. BLOOM, M.D.