

# TEACHERS ON INTERNSHIP IN ALASKA SCHOOLS

OREGON COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, Monmouth, Oregon—An intern program will bring teachers who have on-the-job training in rural schools to native Alaskans.

Ten Oregon College practice

teachers will go to widely scattered Alaskan schools for a three-month internship in the plan. The ten, including two married couples, left Portland Saturday, March 15, on the first leg of an airplane journey that will take them to five remote Alaskan schools of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

They hope to return again this fall as full-time, experienced teachers to the northmost state.

"I fully believe in an equal

educational opportunity for all Americans," Dr. Paul Jensen, Professor of Education at OCE and a student and writer of Eskimo life and anthropology, explained. "We owe to all Alaskan natives the opportunity to have the best education possible, the kind to enable them to make a free and wise choice of the kind of occupation in which they wish to be involved."

The project has been made possible through a grant of funds by the BIA to Oregon College of Education. Dr. Jensen expressed great enthusiasm for this an-

Studies in the history and anthropology of native Alaskans have prepared the group for preventing problems arising from the different Alaskan environment. During their three month stay, the interns will have an opportunity to get to know the people in the community, the children in school and the philosophy of the educational program.

Clothing and food advice has been given by two Alaskan Education specialists of the BIA, Charles Perry of Juneau and Horace Schnare of Nome. In the

the Eskimo culture of the present and past.

The school at Pt. Barrow is a day school for 585 children staffed with 32 teachers. Approximately seven per cent of the pupils in the kindergarten through tenth grade school are white.

At Kotzebue, on Alaska's west coast north of Nome and inside the Arctic Circle, a town of 2,200 has a school of 560 pupils and 30 teachers from the kindergarten through tenth grade.

At Uanlakleet there is a school of 18 teachers. Two of the in-

tern in obtaining competent and effective teachers in the future.

He pointed out that the present period of on-the-job training will permit the teachers, when they return to take their own classrooms this fall, to be able to perform their duties effectively, right from the beginning of the school year.

During the internship, the student teachers will work under the supervision of experienced teachers of Alaskan natives. It has been difficult to get qualified teachers for the Alaskan classrooms, Dr. Jensen explained, because of the lack of communication between the remote schools and the main stream of education in the other 49 states.

The teachers going to schools teaching natives must have special training for children who are different in culture and temperament and who are restricted by factors of environment, isolation and economics, Jensen pointed out.

Among the ten student teachers is a native Alaskan, Bertha Thomas, who was born at Buckland. A full Eskimo, she will do her student teaching at Akiachak. All have had some training in Oregon schools as student teachers to prove their competence in dealing with typical classroom problems.

They have also had the opportunity to work with the fourteen Eskimo children from St. Lawrence Island who just completed six weeks of schooling at the Campus Elementary School on the OCE campus in another BIA project.

for the teachers are connected to the school buildings or at least located on school grounds.

The interns plan to sample thoroughly the native customs and foods. One has stated his intent to live on native meats during his stay: moose, caribou, seal and walrus.

Another member of the group, an arts and crafts teacher, who will be at Point Barrow, Alaska's northernmost settlement of over 2,000 persons, plans to encourage his pupils to draw and describe the artifacts which their ancestors were skilled in producing.

By this means, he hopes to develop the children's pride in

others will have assignments at two-teacher schools for grades one through eight at Kaltag and Akiachak.

The interns, as they gathered for briefings in their last week at OCE, seemed cheerful and excited about the prospect of going to their northern posts, and eager to start for what will be an entirely new environment for most.

Dr. Jensen, who has acted for Oregon College in initiating the program with the BIA, is well-known for his anthropological studies of Alaska, and is considered a friend by Alaskan natives with whom he has come in contact.

