

# Readers to Be Field Tested At Athabascan Schools Next Fall

Special materials are being developed to teach children with different cultural backgrounds to read.

Content of the first reading materials being prepared will be keyed to the experiences of Indian and Alaskan native children. Included are Alaskan Readers and supplemental materials for a three-year primary reading program.

The reading materials are being developed during 1967-68 and will be field tested next fall at Athabascan and Kuskokwim Indian Schools in central Alaska.

The activity is a joint effort of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and the Alaska Rural School Project.

Developing the Alaskan Readers, supplemental materials, workbooks and teachers' guides is a team including Frank Darnell, director, and Mrs. Winifred Lande, acting director, Alaska Rural School Project; William Marsh, Alaska State Department of Education; Dr. Charles Ray, Dean of the College of Behavioral Sciences and Education, University of Alaska.

Dr. William Loyens, anthropologist, University of Alaska; Warren Tiffany, assistant area director, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Mrs. Virginia Jones, State University of New York (Oswego); and eight teachers from isolated schools enrolling Indian children. Mrs. Jones is author of the Alaskan Readers, and Alaskan teachers are develop-

ing supplemental materials.

Many of the elements and concepts involved may be applied to production of new materials for other culturally different groups in the region.

Indian children in rural Alaska enter school with a vocabulary, language patterns, cultural background and skills different from children in the lower forty-eight. The school bus, zoo and city traffic are unfamiliar to these children. As typical subjects of beginning reading materials, they cause the children unnecessary difficulties in learning to read.

Content of the new materials first emphasizes children engaged in activities familiar to rural Alaskan Indian children. It then leads them gradually to an awareness of the world outside their experience.

The readers are organized into 12 reading levels. The semi-programed material will make it possible for students to progress at their own speed and free the teacher to give additional attention to individual students.

The activity is part of the Laboratory's program to Improve Education for Culturally Different Children.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, a nonprofit organization with administrative offices in Portland, is working with schools and other agencies in the region to improve classroom teaching and learning by applying the findings of new research and technology.