

Instructional Aides

By BETZI WOODMAN

Fifteen young women and one young man are now working in the BIA schools in their villages as Instructional Aides after completing a unique course of study for the work.

From widely separated communities, the students gathered in Anchorage early this summer to participate in the first such program. Conducted under the Manpower Development and Training Act, the project was assisted by Anchorage Community College which provided the instructors, Alaska Employment Service of the Department of Labor, the Division of Vocational Education of the Department of Education and the personnel of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The experimental program was a "tremendous challenge for both the Native students and the instructors," said Dr. Troy Sullivan, co-ordinator for the program. "These graduates of the first experimental program set examples of high performance for others to follow. Each was a wonderful individual with whom to work.

"Besides learning how to help their home-town teachers, the students had their first experience and exposure to the profession of teaching. Many of them may have a chance to encourage others from their villages to enter and endure schooling leading to a degree and a teaching certificate."

The class had a full schedule with mornings the first portion of the term devoted to observing and auditing elementary school classes and courses for teaching of reading and science. They studied basic education with Miss Sally Monserud afternoons

and teaching methods with Dr. Sullivan in the evening.

In addition to the full program of studies, the schedule was enriched with field trips to events and activities which provided new experiences for most of the young people.

Final get-together of the students was a simple graduation dinner and ceremony in a restaurant near the school. Certificates, gifts, speeches and other parts of a graduation made the evening memorable for these students.

Some students were high school graduates, others had had much less formal education. A few were wives and mothers who endured leaving children with others in order to complete the course. This particular pang of separation is particularly poignant to an Eskimo mother.

Members of the historic class and their home villages are: Cora Adams, Tetlin; Katherine Alexie, Kwethluk; Mary Jane Anaver, Kipnuk; Frances Ballot, Noorvik; Nora Billy, Beaver; Andrew Chikoyak, Tununak; Beulah Geffe, Noorvik;

Susan Greene, Pilot Station; Hannah Hanson, Alakanuk; Sophie Hootch, Emmonak; Martha Peterson, Chevak; Velma Pungewiyi, Savoonga; Thelma Saunders, Kaltag; Dora Semaken, Kaltag; Doreen Simmonds, Barrow; and Annie Snyder, Togiak.

Dept. of Labor persons involved in the course plan both a critique of this first one and an evaluation in terms of both the students' achievement in the work locale and the value of such work on the school scene. These studies will aid in making the next class of even more help in the Native education program.