

Letters to the Editor

Fire Spurs Equipment Need

Kwigillingok, Alaska
March 1, 1970

Editor: Slight Was Never Thought of

McGrath, Alaska
Feb. 25/Mar. 9, 1970

The Editor
Tundra Times
Box 1287 Fairbanks 99701

Dear Sir:

The "Editor's Note" to Judge Goldberg's article in your March 4th issue mentions "religious media...Protestant, Catholic and Jewish." Come now! Can our own Tundra Times slight the Russian Orthodox Church which is so important to our native people?

The Federal Government and most of the States have explicitly recognized Orthodoxy as the fourth Major faith. Most editors these days specify, "Orthodox, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish." After all, we are second only to the Catholic Church in world membership, in spite of 50 years of bloody communist persecution, and we number 6 million in America.

Around here it is called "the Native Church," Please don't let our native newspaper slight it again.

Thank you,
Elias J. Armistead, priest
of the Russian Orthodox
Church Outside Russia

Peratrovich Credited

Box 1125
Ketchikan, Alaska
10 March 1970

Dear Sir:

A recent Tundra Times article related how Governor Miller was concerned about the burning of the Metlakatla High School and was going to see that it was replaced.

What you should have reported, in addition, was that representative Frank Peratrovich of Klawock, upon hearing that the school had burned, realized that time, not talk, was of the essence and had a bill drafted appropriating \$1 million to rebuild the school—so that this building season would not be partially lost. The bill was introduced, at his request, and was being pushed through the legislative process while Governor Miller was still sending teams of people to investigate the situation at Metlakatla!

Sincerely,
Russel L. Brown

Dear Governor Miller, Senators, Representatives, Bureau of Indian Affairs, People of Alaska:

Early this morning here in Kwigillingok, the people were awakened by a very excited young man who came charging into Jesse Igkurak's house. He shouted, "Fire! Fire!" and screamed for us to get out of the house as fast as we could. Alarmed and frightened, the people grabbed their children and ran out the door. As they ran outside, they were greeted by flames leaping 50 feet or more into the air. The flames were coming from exploding, burning fuel tanks which were only 18 yards from Jesse's house.

The fire was caused by a short circuit in one of the wires coming from the generator. The sparks set fire to the wooden shack that housed the generator, and the burning shack set fire to the fuel tanks which were right outside the shack.

The men tried to move the fuel tanks that weren't burning yet, but they were beaten back by the roaring flames and the scorching oil. By some miracle or other, they did manage to save a few tanks from the flames, and prevented Jesse's house from going up in flames. Thank heaven the wind wasn't blowing or a great disaster would have visited this village early this morning. After the fuel tanks had burned down a bit, the men smothered the remaining flames with snow.

We don't have any kind of fire-fighting equipment in this village and we can't take the chance of another fire occurring like the one this morning. We want to know where we can get low cost fire-fighting equipment—especially fire extinguishers—so we will have some way to protect ourselves. This village has no well and the people haul ice in winter and catch rain in the summer, so water hoses won't do us much good here. We are sure this is not the only village that is without some kind of fire protection, so we want to know for our sake and the sake of the other villages where we can get low cost fire-fighting equipment. Our lives and our homes depend on it.

Kwigillingok Village Council
/s/Jesse K. Igkural, Secretary
/s/Charles Phillip, President
/s/Joe David, Vice President
/s/Roland Phillip, Treasurer
/s/Edward George, Sr., Marshal