

Independence Has Its Rewards—

School Board Runs Its Own Show

By MARY JANE FATE
 "It's a great responsibility," said Beverly J. Huhndorf, president of the Galena City School Board.

The Galena school actually became independent July 1, 1973, having formerly been under the State-Operated School System.

Beverly has for many years been involved in civic and organizational activities in Fairbanks and Anchorage. She has also worked on jobs which demanded a great deal of responsibility and direction on her part.

Overseeing an operation of approximately \$500,000.00 per year is "big business." With funds from several sources, such as: State, federal and local, there are many regulations pertaining to expenditures and accountability and budgeting is therefore a large part of the board's responsibility. The local City of Galena contributes 3% sales tax to the operation of the school, which was about \$5,520.00 last year.

Curriculum planning is another concern of the board, and funds from Johnson-O'Malley, the Indian Education Act and others are sought.

In the curriculum will be programs in special education, vocational education, bilingual classes and, of course, cultural classes.

In one of the classes, the students have been constructing a miniature house, which can easily be done 'right at home.'

The Independent School of Galena is being looked at by many interested people of the state. The school program gets full attention from the community. Involvement and motiva-

tion of the real parents is needed. It's a tremendous challenge.

Other Board members are Sidney Huntington, the clerk-secretary; Cecelia Burgett, treasurer and Dave Baker and Nick Grimaldi.

Sidney Huntington has been involved with School Boards for about 16 years. He is a local businessman of Galena and through his experience has much to offer the Galena School. Many, many dedicated hours are spent in policy-making, directing and on the over-all program of the school.

One meeting lasted nearly 13 hours and the meetings are quite frequent, for this is the formation period of everything.

Sidney said, "We are doing all of this just for the students. They are the important ones. We have to live and develop our own communities."

"We started a high school three years ago. I am proud to say that the graduating class of Galena 1974 were the students who voted to have a four-year high school.

"So we went to work to get it. You know you are rewarded when you finally accomplish something like this. Being independent, the people of the village have a lot to say.

"It's important to have a good administration. Galena High School graduates have to complete 21 credits to graduate. Involvement will help us get away from welfare and food stamps. Presently there are about 75 high school students and 70 grade school students."

Sidney ordered and paid for a permanent plaque to be housed in the Galena School. It has the

names of the first graduating class of 1974 and a memo written by Sidney as follows:

"It is with pride and sincere appreciation that this trophy is presented to the graduating class of 1974 and 1975, the Pioneer Students of Galena City School. The named graduates deserve the name of true champions for voting 100% in favor to completing their high school in Galena, making this a credit school and the first to become independent since Alaska Statehood.

"I proudly express my gratitude to you graduates for so unselfishly making this a better school to learn in and a better city to live in."

Margaret Aloysius
 Ralph Bifelt
 Gloria Demientieff
 John Demoski
 Clarence Demoski
 Gilbert Huntington
 Orville Huntington
 Wayne Huntington
 Paulina Pitka
 Charlene Strassburg

Sincerely,
 Sidney Huntington

The Tanana Chiefs Education Committee felt they had learned much having had the opportunity to meet with the school board all evening and also with the administration.

Attending the meeting were TCC Education Committee members as follows: Sidney Huntington, Galena; Rose Isaacs, Tanacross; Peter Demoski, Nulato; Nancy James, Ft. Yukon and Mary Jane Fate, Fairbanks.

Many thanks to the Galena people for their wonderful hospitality they extended.

Gravel's TT Report

By Mike Gravel
 U.S. Senator, Alaska

Last week in this column, I reported on the dire plight of Alaska fishing, and the need for immediate federal assistance. Today, regrettably, I must report a drastic worsening of the situation.

As a result, I have asked President Nixon to designate Bristol Bay as a national disaster area.

BRISTOL BAY SALMON FISHERY CLOSED

Because of insufficient salmon runs in the Bay area, the State's Department of Fish and Game had to close down all commercial salmon fishing activities there. Alaska Gov. William A. Egan has now declared Bristol Bay an official state disaster area.

It's the first time in 80 years that an Alaska fishery has been closed to commercial fishing.

FOREIGN ENCROACHMENT

A large part of the problem is due to the invasion of Alaska fishing stocks by foreign vessels. With the new technology that has resulted in bigger and bigger catches by foreign distant-water fishing boats, the salmon simply cannot be replaced through the normal reproductive cycle.

The Japanese in particular have depleted our salmon resource, leaving the Natives to fend for themselves. And the situation has been growing steadily worse in recent years.

ECONOMIC DISASTER

For the 5,000 persons — mostly Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos — who live in the 29 villages along the Bay waters and who depend on the salmon run for their very livelihood, the necessary closing of the waters is a personal catastrophe.

The families who depend on the fishery are in desperate need of economic aid. In many cases, they depend on subsistence fishing as their means of survival. And 3,000 individuals hold commercial fishing licenses in the areas. The only economic base for these Natives is built on fishing and cannery work.

PRESIDENT MUST ACT

The state alone does not have the needed resources to protect the 5,000 residents; the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act has only just begun to benefit the people.

Realizing the need for quick federal action, both Governor Egan and I have requested President Nixon to declare the Bristol Bay region a national disaster area. It's been done before — back in 1953, when President Eisenhower reacted to a poor salmon run in Southeast Alaska.

POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FEDERAL ASSISTANCE

There are a number of federal disaster programs which should be used by the government, if Mr. Nixon will declare the area eligible. The Office of Federal Disaster Assistance, through its Regional Council, can mobilize a number of agencies to provide grants, low-interest loans, and other forms of economic aid.

NOAA PROGRAMS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) might be able to provide assistance. Last week, I wrote to the head of the NOAA, explained the situation, and asked whether an exception can be made in the case of the hard-pressed Bristol Bay Natives. The Commercial Fisheries Disaster Program, for instance, which is administered by NOAA, has the authority to make grants to restore depleted fish resources.

And the Commercial Fisheries Research and Development programs run by NOAA control certain funds. What is urgently needed is to make a humanitarian exception to the usual rules and guidelines, so that these programs can be mobilized in behalf of the residents of Bristol Bay.

Our nation has been more than generous in its outpouring of foreign aid and trade benefits to the Japanese and others. Surely we can afford to extend a hand to the residents of the greatest salmon fishing area in the United States.



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