

'It's Never Happened Before'—

Villages of Napaskiak and Aniak Thank Red Cross for Flood Assistance

"It's never happened before. We've never gotten a thank-you," marveled Mrs. Dorothy Englund, executive director of the Tanana Chapter of the American Red Cross. "This year we got two; one from Napaskiak and one from Aniak. Napaskiak even sent a free will donation!"

During the spring floods women and children from both villages were evacuated to Bethel by the Red Cross which housed them and fed them for nine days.

The Red Cross helped bring them home, too, after a hassle. According to the report filed by Bryce Torrence, director of the Disaster Service, "A problem arose in returning evacuees to Aniak after the flood waters subsided in that village.

"The State Disaster Office refused to use its resources to assist the villagers return, claiming they had no funds to provide transportation and the Guard and Air Force advised they could participate only in

evacuation.

As it would be more costly to continue the shelter operation until such time as the Natives could find the means to travel the 100 miles up river to their village, we mutually agreed with Bureau of Indian Affairs to share the cost of air transportation to people to their village so that they could clean up and restore their homes and family life."

The BIA wasn't too anxious to pay air fare, either, until the Red Cross pointed out that once flood waters subsided, the villagers were no longer (technically) their responsibility and that they'd hand the food bill over to the Bureau, a Red Cross worker noted.

After the people returned to their homes, the Red Cross followed up with a visit to offer

financial assistance for home repair.

"They were very glad to see us again. Welcomed us and invited us back any time," Mrs. Englund reports. "But they turned down further assistance. They said they appreciated the offer but they wouldn't need it."

Then came the thank-you notes and the donation. The people of Napaskiak raised \$106 among themselves for the Red Cross to pass on to some less fortunate.

Bill Budd, from Disaster Services San Francisco Office was as flabbergasted as Mrs. Englund.

"He's been working up here a long time...through the Anchorage quake, and he can't recall it's ever happening before," Mrs. Englund said. "It's just wonderful."