



Selawik Jr. High P.E. Class with No Gym to Practice.

JOM FUNDS HELP VILLAGE RUN OWN EDUCATION

Selawik, an Arctic Circle community of nearly 500 people has decided that self-determination is their right and have chosen to run their school at the local level. Most people in Selawik have never heard the term local autonomy but they could give lessons in its meaning.

Anthropologists studies show that large groups of Eskimos have lived in this rich caribou winter grounds along the equally rich river and lakes full of sheefish for at least 8,000 years. The Bureau of Indian Affairs started a school at the present site of Selawik in 1909. This school has grown from 34 students to over 200 at present. The school was controlled by the BIA until 1969 when the people of Selawik voted to become a State-Operated School in the hope of more local control.

The leaders of this up and coming Arctic Circle community have steadily been seeking more local control. When the village requested a high school in 1971, the SOS school system agreed they could have ninth grade only, but the already crowded school squeezed in both ninth and tenth graders whose parents were tired of sending their children miles away for an education. SOS reluctantly provided the additional teacher.

On the other hand letters to the commissioner and others promised the people of Selawik a million dollar school for their high school students. This building is scheduled for completion in December 1974.

Meanwhile, SOS determined that Selawik could add no new grades for the 1973-74 school year and must then send their eleventh graders away who had attended school at home the year before.

Boarding Home Programs did not take these students be-

lieving a program existed in Selawik. With over 20 eleventh and twelfth graders facing no prospects for education, as the necessity to once again leave home against their wishes did not appeal to them, last August, the local advisory school board President, Jonas Ramoth, took action.

The year before the school board had formed a Selawik Cultural and Educational Foundation which is a legal corporation under Alaska State law. This enabled them to apply for funds. A proposal was written and presented to the Johnson-O'Malley Review Committee representing the added funds needed for providing a quality education at home.

In response the JOM Review Committee approved a \$50,000 grant to hire additional personnel and buy supplies and materials to run a unique program especially for the Selawik High School eleventh and twelfth grades. Gordon Jackson, Alaska Federation of Natives Program Director for JOM funds is extremely pleased with the program.

In an annual meeting of the Selawik Educational and Cultural Foundation on Dec. 10 in the Selawik School Jonas Ramoth, Oran Walton, Nellie Sheldon, Laura Davis and Lawrence Larkin were elected to the SECF Board. Jonas Ramoth is president; Oran Walton, vice president and Lawrence Larkin, an 18-year-old high school senior is the secretary-treasurer.

Thus a high school student sits on the board for hiring and policy making for the education of Selawik young people. As the eleventh and twelfth graders are not officially recognized by the SOS system which refused to fund the program, the board has applied for status as a private high school to graduate its seniors.