

To Replace Burned-Out Facility—

Mekoryuk Men Build New Temporary BIA School

(From the TUNDRA DRUMS)

A new temporary school building in Mekoryuk should be ready for occupation early next week after a hectic building campaign this summer to replace the B.I.A. school there which burned to the ground last April 16.

The new school measures 54 feet by 80 feet, including kitchen, dining hall, teachers' office, storage area, restrooms, and a large classroom area with movable partitions to be added as needed.

Next to the new building, a pre-existing play deck has also been covered with a metal and fiberglass enclosure for all-weather use. B.I.A. estimates total cost of the project at \$600,000.

Between 10 and 20 Mekoryuk men were employed on the building project as carpenters, painters, electrician helpers and plumbing helpers. Four professional builders from Niedermeyer-Martin company of Portland, Oregon supervised the work.

Typical of bush construction projects, supplies were late in arriving and winter threatened to come early. The supplies barge left Bethel early in July, but breakdowns stalled its arrival in Mekoryuk until Aug. 2.

Then began an intensive, seven-day-a-week building effort that completed the school in 30 days.

"I can't say enough for these people," commented B.I.A. Agency Superintendent Peter Three Stars, after a brief ceremony Sept. 2 when the key was turned over to the Mekoryuk School Board.

Mr. Neidermeyer, head of the

construction firm came from Oregon to present the community a plaque for its efforts in getting the building done in record time.

Most of the villagers stood by for the brief ceremony, very near the site where they stood in the early morning hours of April 16, when they watched the crashing collapse of their original B.I.A. school and loss of all its contents. Since the fire, the 60 village children have attended classes in the National Guard Armory and the Village Community Hall.

The Bering Sea Reindeer Products Plant rented out their kitchen facility for school lunches. But now, within a few days at least, inspection of the new temporary school building should be completed by B.I.A. Plant Management Staff, and classes will commence under a new roof for Mekoryuk children.