

# Inupiat Workshop Set Up In Nome

"This should have happened twenty years ago," was the comment made by Governor William Egan concerning the first Inupiat bilingual workshop;

Native language instructors were greeted warmly by Governor Egan during an early Fourth of July picnic which was held July third in his honor in Nome.

The governor listened intently to a progress report of history in the making as the first Inupiat bilingual workshop got under way. Both the participants and staff were gratified and encouraged as he pledged his full support to the program.

In the world today there are about 95,000 Eskimos residing under four flags. Eleven thousand of these are Alaskan Inupiat, but only six thousand are fluent speakers.

In Greenland, Canada, and Siberia, bilingual education and Inupiat literacy have been a reality for years. However, this is a first for the Alaskan Inupiat.

On June 9, 1972, the Alaskan

State legislature in Juneau passed a series of bills concerning Alaska Native Languages. One pair of bills appropriated funds to the Alaska State-Operated Schools System for bilingual education.

The bilingual department was established and is under the direction of John Kito. Since September of 1972, when Bertha Lowe was selected as the co-ordinator, the Inupiat program has made unbelievable progress.

A new alphabet has been selected and materials have been developed which emphasize the language and the culture. At present, a training program for Native language instructors is being conducted and is in its fourth week.

The training session is being held at the Nome-Beltz Regional High School apartments and will continue until July 27.

Arrangements for use of the facilities were made by Kawerak, Inc., a non-profit branch of the Bering Straits Native Association, with Jim Harper, former director of the Regional Schools and Boarding Home program.

The workshop has the use of the Nome-Beltz apartments, gym and cafeteria.

Thirty participants from fourteen villages are attending classes in Inupiat literacy and methods of teaching. These Native language instructors will begin instructing Inupiat as a part of the regular school curriculum in September.

Elementary methods consultants are Hana Kangas, an Inupiat elementary teacher now of Copper Center, and Maree Hamblin, Elementary consultant for the Alaska State-Operated School System.

Recently Tupou Pulu, from

Tonga, joined the bilingual staff as the linguist for this workshop.

Alaska State-Operated School System has contracted Kawerak, Inc., to furnish the supporting staff such as kitchen, custodial,

secretarial and the recreational personnel.

Bertha Lowe states that, "Without the fine support of Kawerak, Inc., Bering Strait Native Association, ANB, Nor-

ton Sound Health Corp., the Nome Chamber of Commerce, the Nome Rotary Club, and concerned citizens of Nome, the bilingual workshop would not be as successful."

---