

letters

Shaktoolik asks where is new school?

Shaktoolik, Alaska 99771
May 16, 1977

Senator Stevens
Senate Building
Washington, D.C.

Honorable Ted Stevens;

Shaktoolik is a small Eskimo village on the coast of the Bering Sea. Due to our village being in a dangerous location during flooding season, the village relocated three miles up the coast.

For over ten years, the people of Shaktoolik, have negotiated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs for new school facilities but yet we have not received the school BIA promised us so many years ago. Due to political maneuvering for other places, Shaktoolik is overlooked and receives nothing.

It now appears that Shaktool-

ik will not get a completed structure until 1980 or 1981 due to the injustice of the Bureau of Indian Affairs--that is too long to wait. BIA says that the used, unfit modular units they put in at Shaktoolik are good enough for us and that we don't deserve emergency funding. Yet, Mt. Edgecumbe qualifies for emergency funding due to flooding (Why can't they use somebody's used trailers?). Mekoryuk has over a million dollar new structure, but they are receiving emergency funding (just for a community center). Barrow has obtained emergency status and it is not even a BIA structure.

Over fifty percent of Shaktooliks students traveled in an open pick-up truck, 3 miles one way, during sub-zero weather with 70 miles per hour winds to attend school, but yet they don't qualify for emergency funding. You have got to be kidding. Why didn't they receive emergency funding? Can this question be answered truthful and fairly? It appears somebody was not doing their job.

Shaktoolik is a very windy place with high snow drifts and the temporary facilities are not sufficient and will not suffice. They are not good for our children's physical and mental health.

Senator Stevens, you promised last year that you would

help Shaktoolik get a new school. What happened to that promise? Where is our new school? We know, that you can obtain the essential funds for Shaktoolik's school. Are you playing games with the people of Shaktoolik like BIA or are you going to help us get our school? We want a new school like the ones at Stebbins and Mekoryuk--a complete facility.

Where is the school that the Bureau of Indian Affairs told Shaktoolik that they would receive during the summer of 1976. Did it vanish? No it is over at St. Michaels. Doesn't this constitute emergency funding?

Perhaps, the priority ratings and the method of funding by the Bureau of Indian Affairs needs to be investigated.

Unless immediate emergency funding action is taken, Shaktoolik is being left with no other alternative but to seek legal assistance and complete nation wide news coverage. Thus far, you and the Bureau of Indian Affairs have not helped us.

We, the people of Shaktoolik, Alaska, petition you, Senator Ted Stevens, to proceed with immediate emergency funding for Shaktoolik a complete school facility this summer of 1977.