

# Wrangell Closure. . . Young Predicts. . .

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position because of possible closure. Some things such as the play area have been initially approved since the 1960s, but constantly pushed down the list until now," they said.

Antioquia, on the other hand, cites not only the high costs of operation and renovation, but the trend toward regional and local schools.

Wrangell was founded over 40 years ago, initially as a vocational-industrial school. It later expanded into an elementary boarding school and then a combination high school, he said. Several years ago it moved to an ungraded system, serving mostly 13-16 year-old students.

"But now the trend is pretty obvious," Antioquia said. "Statistics indicate that the school should be closed."

Not wanting to make the decision on statistics alone, the BIA leader last week went to Wrangell, met for two days with representatives not only of the Institute, but the local Chamber of Commerce, local Democrats who had asked to discuss it and a joint meeting of the Alaska Native Brotherhood/Alaska Native Sisterhood.

"Once they recognized the economic situation - costs going up and enrollment down, they recognized the validity of possible closure," he said.

"There is very definitely more personal attention given the students at Wrangell (with a staff of 51 and 109 students), but

the type of student is not unique," Antioquia said. This is not a special type of student being served only by Wrangell, he said. The students primarily are one to two years behind educationally, in comparison to the national norm, but there are others like them in other educational situations around the state, he said.

Yet, Antioquia feels optimistic that the concerted effort to provide education closer to home has paid off, and that the decline in the number of young people wanting to go to Wrangell reflects this. Those students now at Wrangell will have among their future options Mt. Edgecumbe High School at Sitka and the Wildwood School at Kenai, in addition to other boarding home programs, he said.

Just five to eight years ago, well over 1,000 Alaska Native students were forced to leave the state for a high school education, going as far away as Chilocco, Okla. and Chemawa, Ore., because there just wasn't enough room at home. By the coming academic year Antioquia anticipates there will be only 150 Alaskans at the Chemawa Indian School in Oregon and that they will be there by choice.

Despite all this, the BIA area leader insists, closing Wrangell after more than 40 years in operation "isn't any easy decision and we are not taking it lightly," he said.

The Republican legislator, who is married to a full-blood Athabaskan from Fort Yukon, added: "I have to see people in Fairbanks and Anchorage (Alaska's largest population centers) lumping our Native residents together and speaking of 'those Natives.' I think the bias will level off and that the initial resentment will disappear."

The 40-year-old Alaska representative, who began his political career by winning a seat in the state legislature in 1966 from a district comprised of a number of Athabaskan Indian leader Emil Nott, an Athabaskan, in a special congressional election following the death of Rep. Nick Begich.

Young may face another race against an Alaska Native leader in the November general election this fall. Alaska State Sen. Willie Hensley, an Eskimo legislator from Kotzebue, has announced that he will file in May to run in the August primary against fellow Democrat and former Alaska Attorney General John Havelock. If Hensley is victorious in the August primary he will oppose Young in the runoff election.

Young acknowledges that Natives are "politically conscious" and greatly admires the effort which led to the 1971 claims settlement. "I think that it was one of the greatest coups in the world," he said.

He regards himself as a "producer" and hopes that Natives will evaluate other politicians on the basis of productivity on behalf of Native interests. Giving some insight into a develop-

ing campaign issue, Young said that he is responsive to Native problems and went on record with a statement on the sensitive issue of taxation of Native holdings.

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Young described the proceeds of the settlement as "an inheritance which is non-taxable" and added that "it is morally wrong to tax them." Young also commented on two other areas of concern to Alaska Natives:

The 12 regional Native corporations created by the settlement act have spent many thousands of dollars in defense of village and regional land selections because of challenges from federal and state agencies: "The Native corporations have spent a large amount of money so far in defending what was already given to Native people because the agencies are jealous. They should be able to get some of that money back."

An attitude becoming more noticeable among state and federal officials is that the settlement of Alaska Native claims has diminished the responsibility of government to provide services to Natives and rural Alaska villages: "I am scared to death (about reduction in funds for education, health, and other ser-

vices) . . . Congress will make certain that the state doesn't abuse that act."

Young showed obvious respect for the voting power of Natives. He said it was "absolutely" inevitable that the Native vote would be diluted because of the influx of people created by upcoming construction of the Alaska pipeline.

Formidable political power would remain, he added, because of the emergence of powerful Native-owned corporations.

The Alaska congressman was displeased with the activities of groups of Indian militants. "Seizure of the BIA," he observed, "was an unfortunate thing and bothered the people of Alaska. When Alaska Natives agitate for change, they do it within the rules and do it successfully."

Young said he was aware of national Indian problems, as a member of the House Indian Affairs Subcommittee, which would require attention during the second session of the 93rd Congress. He expressed interest in dealing with them. "The biggest concerns we have are in health first, and then education," he said.

The Alaska congressman can sympathize with Indians and Alaska Natives who complain about frequent and tiring trips to the capital for meetings and to lobby the Congress.

For Don Young, a round-trip between Washington and his home district in Alaska is a distance of 10,000 miles and, with 1974 being an election year, November for him is over 230,000 miles away.

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## YRS Film

A film sponsored by the Year-Round School (YRS) group will be shown on KFAR-TV Channel 2 tomorrow at 10 a.m. The new film was financed by North American Van Lines Co. and shows the feasibility of year-round operation of schools.



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## Finalaska? . . .

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from the glacial run-offs of the White River. By reducing this silt, Bethel would be more of a deep water port.

Railroads would be connecting northwestern, central and south central Alaska. The Arctic Coastal Plain, a more correct term for the North Slope, Lynch feels, would be exporting its oil and gas reserves.

Industrial centers would provide most of the jobs. Women would be utilized as geologists and would make up the majority of the enrollment in the S.S.R.A.'s medical college, "because they work cheaper."

Military training would begin in kindergarten.

"Natives," theorizes Lynch, "would be paid handsomely to guard the coastlines. The Natives would also be able to retain their own culture besides being educated in music, literature and other such admirable pursuits. They would also be the meat providers for this nation-state, raising reindeer and rebuilding that now small industry with great potential."

The few fertile areas in the state, like the Matanuska-Susitna and Tanana Valleys and possibly on the Kenai and Alaska Peninsulas, would be developed for major food production. A Stalin prototype dictator would rule the S.S.R.A. Under his control, there would be little soap, no toilet paper and coffee would be heavily taxed, like the original Joe preferred.

Another approach to the state's development is the way of the Finns. Lynch recalls when U.S.S.R.-Finland diplomatic relations were nil and to the point of war, and the Finn's resultant defeat. Someone suggested that the Finns be shipped to Alaska, since the state is at the same latitude as Finland, and Russia probably needed Finland more than the Finns did.

If that happened we would

probably be known as FinA, a nation of two million farmers who loved cucumbers and strawberries, not to mention cabbage.

The Finns, reasoned Lynch, did not like cold weather so would probably prefer the maritime climates and establish Anchorage as their university center. Much copper mining would be done.

Besides developing agriculturally, the Finns would be exporting literature, novels, and movies (such as "The Robe"). To enhance this image, the Finns would also be exporting clothing representative of this image.

Seemingly science fiction, but a dream to many is the one building plan. Lynch said one building to house 330,000 people would be perfect for water supply and sewage disposal.

With one building, there would not be any need for automobiles. It would be powered by a thermo-nuclear plant. Airports would be situated around the building. Uni-trains would be another automated form of transportation.

Each floor of the building would be specialized. One would be for entertainment, another for "hairdressers," another for construction, another for governments, and several for housing. The building would export and import raw materials and books. People would be shipped off for two weeks at a time to work in the fisheries, fields or whatever

for food production or mining.

Lynch feels there is much to learn from the industrially-developed countries on the same latitude as Alaska. Those countries have developed from east to west but Alaskans are trying, foolishly to develop north to south.

An alternative to the Finn or Russian or modern planning theories is the "American way" with needless freeways between Fairbanks and Anchorage with McDonaldses and Pizza Huts along the way, said Lynch.

## Gravel Dinners

Alaska buffet dinners, marking Sen. Mike Gravel's 44th birthday, are scheduled for this coming weekend in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Juneau.

The first event will be in Fairbanks on Friday evening, May 17 at the Silver Spur in Fairbanks. Co-chairmen for the Fairbanks birthday dinner are Nancy LeFevre and Bill Culpepper.

The dinner in Anchorage will be at the Captain Cook Hotel on Saturday evening. Anchorage co-chairmen are Larry Gage and Lydia Selkregg.

The Juneau event will be in the Baranof Hotel on Sunday, May 19. The chairman for the capital city is Tom Cashen.

Tickets are \$25 per person and may be purchased from Birthday Dinner Committee members in each city.

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