

URGENT!—

Villagers Urged To Write, Wire On School Bill

Those in favor of regional high schools for Alaska were urged today to write or wire the representatives in Juneau supporting the Mike Gravel regional high school package.

Ralph Perdue, Jules Wright, and Dr. Hugh Fate of the Fairbanks Native Association have urged the action as well as native leaders from Barrow, Nome and elsewhere.

The legislative package is expected to come to the floor of the house next week and expression of Alaskans in favor of it would aid considerably in its passage.

Representatives Barry Jackson and Ed Orbeck as well as

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Villagers Urged .

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Harold Strandberg of Anchorage, were reported less than enthusiastic over the bill.

Statistics brought out in recent hearings in Juneau demonstrate the need for regional high schools in the state:

The median numbers of years completed in the state as a whole are 12.1; for Juneau, 12.5; for Anchorage, 12.4; for Fairbanks, 12.3; for Bethel, 3.1; for Nome, 7.5; for the Wade-Hampton district (poorest community in the U.S.), 2.1; for the Upper Yukon, 5.8; for the Kuskokwim, 6.4.

William T. Zahradnicek, Commissioner of Education, has given unqualified support of the Gravel package.

In written testimony to the Health, Education and Welfare Committee of the House, Zahradnicek said,

"As a consequence of the discussion and direction given to the department during the legislative hearings of the Gravel package, the Department of Education wishes to submit the following statement as a summary of the attached material relating to planning of regional high schools.

"It is the considered judgment of the staff of the Department of Education that all available evidence written and verbal resulting from interaction between the state of Alaska and the Department of Interior at all levels assures that the Bureau of Indian Affairs will participate in the development of regional high school facilities within the guidelines of over-all education planning for rural Alaska and will give its support and cooperation.

"Further, that this evidence has been fully documented to a degree that would justify the state's taking initial steps now in further development of the regional high school concept without waiting for additional evidence to be produced."

Ice Block, representatives have shown great enthusiasm for the legislation while Southeastern Representatives have been lukewarm in their support.

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