



STUDENTS FROM the Eskimo village of Koliganek pet Holstein calves at the state experimental farm near Palmer. A group of 17 students from the village saw cows and horses for the first time during a recent field trip to the Anchorage area.

Village children view city life

School children from the Eskimo village of Koliganek saw horses and cows for the first time recently and reacted about the same way as farm children might have if they spotted a caribou.

"Wowee," the 17 children yelled when they saw a horse along the roadside as the chartered school bus rolled through the farm country of the Matanuska Valley. "Wowee" was reserved for the most exciting features of their six-day field trip to the Anchorage area.

Only one of the children—the fifth through eighth grades of the Koliganek school—had visited Anchorage before. Several of the youngsters had come into the city previously for ear surgery, but saw nothing but the airport and the hospital.

The children raised some \$2,500 for the trip in their village of 125, which is about 90 air miles north of Dillingham. They rented movies from Anchorage and showed them once or twice a week, sold popcorn and juice to the villagers who attended and undertook various other fund-raising projects.

The fund raising went on for the entire school year, and \$1,600 in Indian education money, along with help from various business concerns in Anchorage, made the field trip a reality.

Koliganek teachers Dave and Joyce Schutt came up with the idea of a field trip to Anchorage so students could see some of the things they had studied.

"It's one thing to read about city life," Schutt said, "but they can't really understand until they've had some of these experiences."

The Schutts contacted RCA Alascom's public affairs department, which helped arrange an itinerary based on what the students said they would most like to see.

The children and their eight chaperones spent six days in almost nonstop activity, ranging from a trip to the beauty shop for the girls, to a visit to the experimental farm near Palmer.

The farm, along with a riding stable nearby, proved among the most popular among the students. The swimming pool at their motel also was a favorite, even though it wiped out their new hairdos.

The children spent a morning at Lake Otis Elementary School, with a group of 90 fifth graders. The Koliganek students sang and danced Eskimo favorites and the Lake Otis students reciprocated with their favorite songs.

Chaperone Gregory Kapatak fascinated everybody with his Eskimo string tricks: a much

more intricate version of the familiar "cat's cradle." Gregory made a ptarmigan, a fox and a rabbit that moved across the string, along with a dog team and sled that he called "Dr. Lombard," after musher Dr. Roland Lombard.

"We made friends," Koliganek sixth grader George Nelson shouted after coming back from recess. "We made friends right away." Cultural barriers had dropped during a game of "King of the Mountain."

Each experience was something new: even the traffic lights were fascinating.

So was the idea of being able to travel more than 100 miles by road.

When asked what they liked best about their trip, the children gave excited responses that covered just about everything. "I liked the cows," said Anna Marie Kapatak. "I like to swim," said George Nelson.

Elevators, hamburgers, cows, horses, "different food" at a Polynesian restaurant: six days of new experiences to share with the village when they got home from the city.