

Letters from Here and There

Concerning impasse between NSB and BEA

May 6, 1976.

Acting Editor, Sue Gamache,
Tundra Times,
510 2nd Avenue
Room 220,
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

Dear Ms. Gamache,

I am writing with respect to an article published April 30th in the Tundra Times regarding impasse between the North Slope Borough School Board and the Barrow Education Association. Your article certainly does not meet the usual standards of quality and fairness people have become accustomed to expect from the Tundra Times.

I feel obligated to set the records straight regarding several of the inaccuracies printed in the article. The Board has never objected to a teacher raise for those aspects of the cost of living increase which have actually effected North Slope Borough teachers.

The teachers' Association, however, wants a cost of living raise without a corresponding rent increase. In other words, they want to be paid as if their housing costs have gone up significantly and yet not have a significant rent increase.

In the article David Jaynes, President of BEA, implies that workloads and class size are also involved in impasse. This is a typical maneuver of teacher groups trying to win public support for their position, by implying that, they are not really after more money; only better working conditions. The fact is, the only disputed items causing our impasse are money matters. Workloads, class size, and all other non-money matters were resolved prior to deadlock.

Tundra Times reports Mr. Jaynes' assertion that under the Board's final proposal a beginning teacher would earn \$2,583 less than the present rate. This is simply untrue. The Board has never suggested a pay schedule which would require any teacher to suffer an paycheck pay cut. It is true that the Board wants teachers to pay a more equitable amount of rent for their apartments.

The Teachers' Association would like to pay only \$200 a month for furnished, two and three bedroom apartments with all utilities paid. It costs the District almost twice that much to pay for the utilities alone on teacher apartments.

In accordance with State Law, the Board suggested several local Native citizens to serve as mediator for the dispute, but the Teachers' Association refused to accept any local citizen to serve as mediator and thereby forced the Board to request the U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to provide a mediator.

One could rightfully ask why the Teachers' Association was afraid to allow local citizens to serve as mediator. A conclusion one might draw is that the Teachers' Association feels that they would loose in mediation if

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letters

*anyone with a first-hand
knowledge and understanding of
the unique conditions on the
North Slope served as mediator.*

*Very truly yours,
Dr. John Anttonen
Supt. of Schools*