

Hooper Bay Council Commended By Priest

THE JESUITS
P.O. Box 4408
Portland, Oregon 97208
February 24, 1967

Dear Sir:

I was most happy to see the sensible, sane and solid thinking of the Hooper Bay village council with regard to smaller regional high schools. All wisdom is on the side of the close-to-home, smaller set-up. Like the village council mentions---they are people, not like the caribou to be driven here and there.

The other system of large urban-centered schools has wisdom only when economic values are placed ahead of personal, human values, and even economically the larger schools in the end will be more expensive.

Boarding schools are by their very nature only second best; they are a necessary evil---hence, the fewer the better. They are at times and in certain places necessary.

(Continued on Page 2)

Hooper Bay Council . .

(continued from page 1)

They provide the only type of school for some peoples. In this sense they were and are very necessary. But anyone who has had anything to do with boarding schools also knows their shortcomings. Separation from environment, total lack of parental contact and influence, endless weeks of total living in the same place (how would we like having to live and work in our offices?), these are some of the problems. And no one will argue that a prefect or counsellor, or any teacher can be an adequate substitute for parents in a normal home. No one is as capable as the parent for transferring cultural values, inserting inner discipline and dignity into the heart and mind of a youngster.

Sensible Whites instinctively want their youth around them during the critical teen years. Only in times of great stress or difficulty, or for some unique values, will they send their youth to boarding schools, yet some casually determine that to separate Eskimo and Indian youth from their home environment is alright.

What about the economics of the thing? The large urban concept will no doubt be cheaper to operate, but look at the larger picture. The away-from-home set-up will cause a far higher rate of drop-out, a far higher incidence of cultural alienation, greater teen-age confusion and loss of respect for the ways of their past. This in the end cannot but cause a greater number and intensity of social problems, and welfare monies.

One real problem already existing is that our young ladies leave the village for school. They either get jobs in the city or marry. The male has it harder. He comes back to the village to find himself another of the disproportionate male sex--there simply are not enough females of eligible marriage age. This is a real problem in some villages. I maintain that large urban-centered schools would intensify this problem.

Every healthy society is a balanced one. It provides us with a sensible proportion of young and old, male and female, etc. Just imagine a huge boarding school at Bethel. The poor place would develop a teen-age culture--and to the detriment of the average native adult and particularly to the aged. How does one keep a horde of younger people occupied in constructive ways? An "at home" school is so far superior! The school has its function, and the home another and complimentary function. There we find a sensible balance.

Before any grand decisions are made in this school business I would hope that more village councils would express their views; and that those who will be leaders in the decision will put economic values where they belong----after personal, human values.

Sincerely yours,

Father John Morris, S.J.