

ESKIMO LANGUAGE ASKED FOR INCLUSION WITHIN BILL

Nicholls Asks Senator Yarborough to Include Language in Measure

Hugh Nicholls, first vice president of the Arctic Slope Native Association, is seeking to have the Eskimo Language as part of study aid in classroom lessons in the Arctic and that English be taught as a second language.

In his letter to Senator E. L. Bartlett last week, Nicholls strongly urged that the idea be included in a bill that would allow Spanish to be used in classrooms, where that language is of common usage, and that English be taught as a second but mandatory language.

The bill in question, Nicholls said this week, is either under preparation or that it may have been introduced in Congress. In either case, he is making an effort

to have the Eskimo language included or as an amendment if the bill has already been introduced.

The bill was drawn up by Senator Ralph W. Yarborough of Texas with Senator Robert F. Kennedy of New York co-sponsoring.

The measure calls for approximately \$50 million to be utilized over a period of three years.

"We strongly urge all concerned with the bill to include the Eskimo people in this bill as our people still work with, converse in, and think in our own native language," Nicholls wrote.

He said that few Eskimo children can speak even a rudimentary bit of English when they start school and

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that the areas where the Eskimo resides is as fully as economically and culturally deprived as the areas of the Spanish speaking people of California and the South-western United States.

"That even in the areas of comparative advancement, such as Barrow, the people cling tenaciously to the customs and language is in itself a criteria of the pride in our culture and heritage that we feel.

"Without this pride of heritage, no group or race of people can endure. Pride in ancestry is the stepping stone to the future," Nicholls stated.

He pointed out that when groups, such as the Eskimos, lose faith in their own culture, they are surely on the road to becoming people without identity.

This pride, he said, in the past has allowed the Eskimo to endure innumerable hardships brought on by contact with the Western civilization without losing courage in his own destiny, and to overcome burdens which have decimated peoples of lesser strength.

"From a prediction of extinction not too many years past, the Eskimo has brought himself to a position of account, especially in Alaska," Nicholls continued, "and far from becoming extinct, he is assuming a position of increasing responsibility in the affairs of the State in which we live.

"The political presence of the Eskimo can no longer be discounted in any political party within the State."

He concluded that therefore the true potential of the Eskimo people may be developed to the fullest extent for general betterment, "we respectfully request that our people be fully included in the proposed bill which Senator Yarborough is drawing up."