

Statewide Native Organization Urges Equal Education, Opportunity

The assimilation of Natives into public educational programs and equal educational for all Alaskan Natives were among recommendations made by the Statewide Native Conference held in Anchorage recently.

The resolutions were drawn up by the Education Committee, headed by Robert Peratrovich Jr.

The first resolution deals with counseling and guidance services.

"Qualified counseling and guidance services have become an important part of the educational system in the U. S. and in the independent public schools of Alaska they have demonstrated a positive and constructive use in the development of our young people.

"These needed facilities are not provided by the secondary schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"Therefore, be it resolved that this conference urges the BIA to provide qualified counseling and guidance personnel to guide, assist and encourage Native students in preparing for advanced education."

The second resolution urges the means for advanced education and asks that the BIA "be urged to grant assistance to graduate college students and to work for necessary changes in the present laws and regulations that may be needed to provide such assistance."

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Equal Education Urged . . .

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A resolution submitted by the Tlingit-Haida Indians concerns the presently segregated Native BIA schools.

"We feel our Native students should be attending competitive public schools and universities whenever this is possible...we feel that equal educational standards and equal opportunities should be provided for our Native people by the BIA, local, state and federal governments.

"Therefore resolve that it is the purpose of this meeting to express our wish that the BIA support and aid the Native students to attend public schools, colleges and universities whenever possible.

"Resolved that we desire the BIA to cooperate with educational institutions, local, state and federal governments in seeking a goal of quality education for our Native students.

"Resolved that this State-wide Native Conference urge that the BIA do immediately institute a program aimed at the eventual assimilation of Native education from the federal Indian schools to public and state educational institutions.

The transferring of Native students to schools outside the state was the subject of the fourth resolution.

"Resolved that the BIA be urged to establish additional schools to provide educational facilities to prevent the delay in attending primary and secondary schools of the Native peoples of Alaska and that

various educational facilities be established in or near major cities in the State of Alaska so as to enable the Native people to be trained, educated and advised in schools operated for the other peoples of Alaska.

"...That the BIA be urged that children in primary and secondary schools not be transferred outside the state of Alaska to attend BIA schools but instead establish additional schools or housing facilities in Alaska so as to adequately provide the educational benefits to Native peoples as enjoyed by the other people of Alaska."

The final resolution urged that "the BIA change existing regulations to permit Alaskan Native students to attend the colleges and universities which maintain an affiliation with an organized religion."

Arguing for such a change in regulation, the resolution asserts that "the attendance of these institutions by Native students receiving scholarships from the BIA would not constitute federal support of an organized religion."