

Native Catalog Models Maybe

Lacking large department stores, or any variety of specialty shops, Alaskan Natives have for decades past been largely dependent on mail order firms.

In passing through pages of catalogs published by the firms, natives have shopped for clothing and other merchandise modeled by non-natives.

Recognizing this, Mrs. Rosita F. Rodriguez, of Juneau, Chairman of the Alaska Native Brotherhood Heritage Committee, petitioned Sears, Roebuck and Co. to include Indian and Eskimo models in their catalogs.

"I could safely say that your catalog appears in every Alaskan Indian home in Southeast Alaska. It has served more than a customer service, but for many countless hours of enjoyment," Mrs. Rodriguez told the firm.

"You are more aware than I of the business our 55,000 Indians, Eskimos, and Aleuts have given you over the past decade, and how especially our outlying villages are dependent on your service," she added.

"We now have an education program aimed at our Indian student. The ANB, Grand Camp feels it would enhance this image of the Indian and Eskimos if you had at least several models of Indian and Eskimos appear in your catalog.

"I congratulate you on the Negro and Oriental models you have used," she concluded.

The request presented by Mrs. Rodriguez came under consideration by the Chicago firm. J.B. Kelly, Assistant General Catalog Order Merchandise Manager for Sears, told Mrs. Rodriguez models were hired "without regard to color."

"We will take whatever steps

we can to step up the appearance of these models in our catalog," he stated.

Providing natives can receive quality training, it may not be long before Indians and Eskimos may appear in mail order catalogs because of Mrs. Rodriguez's efforts.