

Part two—

Arts, Crafts Groups Vie at One Another

The wording of your letter was most interesting to us and we assume you have both received a much better education than did we, but we have read many reports of your boss and he seems to have been able to train you to use the same words.

How many of your people produce the kind of way-out art you two are doing? Check with any museum and you'll see how Northwest Coast art, and we mean Indian, is raising its head as the most attractive ethnic art form going today. If you are interested, we can name many museums that are promoting OUR art. If you two craftsmen, who are Eskimo, want to do contemporary art, do so, but don't discredit the art that we are proud of.

Mr. Heinmiller started to help us many years ago and most of us worked with him. We developed what we have with a lot of our own time and money. We have traveled throughout the United States and different countries in Western Europe with our Chilkat Dancers to present a picture of OUR FINE work and we did this at no wage or salary. Can you claim the same?

We don't ask you to believe in our Indian art, but you are not talking for any Indians when you say the things you do about "our people." If, as Eskimos, you want to do modern contemporary art, do so, but don't use the funds, reputation and publicity which rightfully belong to the Natives who desire to make our art form known, and not known as a gimmick, which you claim, and which statement is the usual attempt to discolor our efforts.

If your modern contemporary art is so economically sound, then why do you not go into the business and earn a living from that art work instead of being fully subsidi-

dized with money that should be used in the villages.

Because Mr. Heinmiller, who is our adopted brother, has dedicated himself to helping us develop our art, we resent your implication that he is exploiting us. For the first time in our lives, and many of us are over 30 years old, we are gainfully employed and have redeveloped a pride in our own Indian art. We "whit-tiled" little "totem poles" when young and no one helped us...and, now contrary to Mr. Federoff, we can work in silver, do block prints, work in stone and certainly do many fine reproductions (or our own design) or our unsurpassed cultural costuming. You don't see the Canadian Eskimos finding a need to make nut bowls and salad servers, or to copy Scandanavian silver work do you? No! They are also doing quite well and with the help of the government people - "teachers and State and Federal officials" to quote you.

You say, "the programs reach many more native people than is implied by Mr. Heinmiller." Who, in S.E. Alaska besides you two are there at Sitka working for the government? David Williams at Hoonah received some help ONCE. Who else? We challenge you to prove your statement.

We who sign this are all members of Alaska Indian Arts, Inc, which happens to be founded by Mr. Heinmiller but is also OURS.

Yours truly,

Nathan Jackson - Tlinget
Leo Jacobs, Sr - Tlinget
Leo Jacobs, Jr - Tlinget
Welch Mathlaw - Eskimo
Johnnie Willard - Tlinget
Clarence Kiely - Haida
Johnnie Avatock - Aleut
John Hagen - Eskimo
Leonard Bowman - Tlinget
Wesley Willard - Tlinget