

Letters to the Editor

Grayling, Alaska 99590
October 18, 1968

The Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

Gentlemen:

Your October 4th issue of TUNDRA TIMES ran an article about the meeting held in Fairbanks by the Tanana Chiefs.

At this meeting, Ralph Perdue made some very strong statements about the BIA, AND about me personally, questioning my honesty, and intelligence, and thus casting doubt on the intelligence and honesty of the citizens of Grayling.

I will tell the truth about these false statements, and set the record straight.

The statement about the billage of Grayling getting running water, electricity, and sewage systems from the BIA is a false statement. The statement about the BIA USING me, with gifts of homes, electricity, running water, and sewage for the village, given by the BIA, is a false and slanderous statement.

The TRUTH about the homes here in Grayling is this: The men of the village cut and rafted three thousand, two hundred (3,200) logs to our sawmill, and cut up the logs for lumber for the homes. The men of the village built the houses with the help of ONE associate carpenter from Alaska State Housing Authority. The Grayling men worked three years at this without pay. The Alaska State Housing Authority supplied the village with roofing, plywood, nails, and windows.

The TRUTH about putting the running water into our village in 1966, after six years of waiting for our turn, is this: The P.H.S. did an excellent job of putting in the running water system for our village. Some of the people do have hot water systems, sewer, and flush toilets. The people who do have the hot water systems, sewer, and flush toilets, put them in themselves, INDIVIDUALLY, and at thier own expense.

The BIA did help us here at Grayling by giving us information, and in helping us in contacting various agencies. They helped us when they were asked for help by the Village Council. The BIA has records of all this.

The statement of Richard Frank, Director A.V.E.C., Anchorage, about BIA picking out the school boards, must surely be questioned. "A hand-picked school board! NOT THIS VILLAGE! We made our own nominations, and we held our own legal election, and besides this, there was not even a representative of the BIA at our election. We certainly would not want our school board chosen by anyone but our own village people.

Last spring the Tanana Chief's group passed a resolution against sending any Alaskan students outside, like Chemawa and Chilocco. I have been to Chemawa and Chilocco. I looked them over, and I did my own thinking about what I thought of these schools.

I am in favor of sending our children to GOOD schools outside—until we have more and better schools here in Alaska. If we refuse to send them outside to school right now, we are only denying them the best education they could get. OF COURSE, we would like to send our children to schools in Alaska, if the schools were here. We are in favor of having regional high schools throughout the state. "The sooner the better!" BUT, until we have schools as good as, or better than Chemawa and Chilocco, we will want our children to go where they can get the best education possible.

I hope that this will make it clear to Mr. Perdue, and to all your readers, that the BIA has not given Grayling all the things he said, although the BIA has been a help to us in many ways. I hope it is clear that the BIA is not, and HAS NOT been "using" me, and that I am able to think for myself without the BIA, or Mr. Perdue, or anyone else telling me what I should think!

Yours truly,
Henry Deacon