

Wrong Enrollment Form...

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Whether more boxes exist is not known and "Everybody's unclear on what was done with those were turned over after they were supposedly cross-checked," Shively added.

In addition to making every effort to locate the complete files and notify applicants they must reapply with the official BIA Enrollment Office, AFN said they would take the position that in the event the files are not located in time to meet the deadline, AFN will petition the Department of the Interior to accept the AFN form as a preliminary form for enrollment, signifying "intent to apply" with full right of appeal.

Enrollment Coordinator John Hope in Anchorage said his office was aware that there had been some mix-up over the forms and he added that there has been a similar confusion in southeast Alaska over the Tlingit-Haida enrollment.

Many persons who enrolled for the Tlingit-Haida settlement which pre-dated the all-Alaska settlement believed that they, too, were officially enrolled for all benefits under the later Act.

Hope called attention to another critical problem facing the Enrollment Office in the short space of time remaining. With 71,008 Alaska Natives enrolled as of February 25, 1973, processors are encountering many, many forms that are incomplete, either because of an error or a missing fact.

"In many cases," said Hope, "we don't have all the information we need to process the form. There may be only one or two items missing, but we have to pull the whole form and then try to locate the applicant. Until we do, they are not enrolled. The problem is that many of the people move and fail to notify us."

Unfortunately, in nearly all rural areas, there are no longer any local enumerators available to help people correct forms or to reapply. They must do it by mail or come into a larger area. Fairbanks has no enumerator.

There is one woman who is temporarily in charge of enrollment. If she is out of the office, an applicant is told that no one else can help them.

Enrollment in the Fairbanks BIA office was relegated to so unimportant a position that the switchboard operator did not know what it was and connected a phone inquiry to the education department, thinking the caller meant school enrollment.

Fairbanks has one serious problem with a large group of applicants whose forms have apparently been lost by the BIA. Early in the enrollment, a group known as the Interior Eskimo Association, Inc. enrolled with the help of an official enumerator from the enrollment office.

The Interior Eskimos are comprised of Eskimo people who are living in the urban area of Fairbanks. However, many of them wished to enroll back to Eskimo home villages.

The enumerator, who had only recently completed a brief training period in the technicalities of enrollment, misinformed the group on an important point. They were told that although they could enroll themselves back to Barrow, for example, they must enroll their children in the Fairbanks area.

Alfreda Kushida, spokesman for the group, said that many of them were unhappy about this and eventually wrote letters to Anchorage and Juneau and discovered that they had been misinformed by the officials. They COULD enroll their children as well as themselves to their home villages.

All of the forms of the Interior Eskimo Association, Inc. people were pulled for re-examination and an Eskimo woman, Mable Peterson, was hired to assist in making reapplication.

However, many of the people, had moved and in the time for which she was hired, it was impossible to find and notify all the people who had originally filed.

She completed all of the forms of people still in the Fairbanks area and those she was able to reach.

The day her job expired, she conferred with her superior on what to do about those who had not been contacted, and was told to leave the forms on the desk. When she last saw them, that is where they were.

Months later, someone thought to check and see if the names of all the Interior Eskimo Association, Inc. people had been reprocessed. The master, up-to-date IBM print out sheet from the Anchorage Enrollment Office was checked.

Missing were the names of all those whose applications were part of the group left on the desk. To date, all of these applications have still not been found and reentered.

Their original applications were filed in good faith and in error only by virtue of misinformation on the part of the BIA. Ms. Kushida said the

situation raises the question what happens when an application is lost by the Enrollment Office, either by the enumerator, dropped behind a file cabinet, or misplaced on the wrong desk.

The applicant receives no carbon copy to document the fact that he has, indeed, submitted application.

Two men were sent up from Anchorage office to investigate the missing forms. Ms. Kushida urged them to "get on the radio stations, on television, to spend some money and buy ads in the local newspapers publishing a list of the names of those they were trying to locate."

"But they wouldn't do it," she said.

In sixteen days, it may be an impossible task to unscramble the AFN form mix-up and to locate all the people who have filed incomplete forms and then disappeared, with no forwarding address.

John Hope, Enrollment Coordinator for the entire operation, said it does not appear that there will be an extension of time granted. "The Department of the Interior has taken a firm position that there will be no extension of the deadline."

How do you know if you're officially enrolled and that your form has the necessary information on it and that it hasn't been lost or misplaced?

Hope said all persons enrolling should receive an eligibility statement within four weeks of submitting application. If anyone has NOT received confirmation that his form has been processed and that he is enrolled, he should notify the local BIA, the Enrollment Office in Anchorage, or the regional corporation immediately.

Anyone who filed an Alaska Federation of Natives Enrollment Form or a Tlingit-Haida form, must reapply on an official Bureau of Indian Affairs Alaska Native Enrollment Form before March 30.

Hope had no idea how many persons had submitted applications on AFN form. The Enrollment Office moved once during its operation said Hope and some files were misplaced in the shuffle. "We're still finding some (AFN) forms in the files from time to time, mixed in with something else."

"The Enrollment Office will be determining right up to December 31 the eligibility of applicants," he explained. "This is the purpose of the time between March 30 and December 31." If an applicant has just a name and address in, he will be considered as having made application and eligibility can then be determined.

An Alaska Native who has not applied has only sixteen days left in which to do so, unless the Secretary of the Interior makes a judgement that the time frame is not sufficient to clear up the present confusions.

If an extension is not granted, cases such as that of the Interior Eskimo Association, Inc. foreshadow a rash of lawsuits and deluge of last-minute paperwork and protests swamping the Enrollment Office in Anchorage.

Welfare Rights Meeting at Native Center

There will be a Welfare Rights Meeting at the Fairbanks Native Center, March 15 at 7:30 p.m. If you are disabled, receiving food stamps, or have dependent children, this concerns you. Please attend.

Australian Claims--

Aboriginal People Win Victory

SIDNEY — Aboriginal land claims scored a victory in New South Wales when the government last week set up an Aboriginal Land Trust for the state's 30,000 aboriginal people.

The nine member board heading the trust will be composed entirely of aborigines, and will be empowered to acquire and dispose of the land held in freehold ownership for the benefit of the aborigines of the country.

Last week's action was the result of a two year struggle by aborigines and white supporters to have land rights recognized by the government.

Of the 30,000 aborigines in the country, approximately 5,000 live on several land reserves, ranging in size from one to 1,300 acres, and totalling 6000 acres.

Housing on the reserves varies from floorless tin sheds to modern units built by the government housing commission. The settlement of land rights may open up new possibilities for the people who could farm the reserve, graze cattle, and otherwise make developments.

Rural School System...

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time to come.

Probably the most important point in revised Senate Bill 122 is the "waiver clause," which would allow — indeed encourage, innovative teaching methods which might teach children more quickly and more successfully.

The legislation would dissolve State Operated Schools and establish educational service areas with a board of directors of the unorganized borough school district. The idea behind this is to provide the best possible education by encouraging maximum public participation in the program.

There are still a number of options open to ways of operating bush schools under the village school board system and for any of these to be put into effect, the legislature must take the initial step.

But basically, the problem has been too many experts... or so-called experts, telling village residents what is best for them.

A group of rural Alaska Natives who helped produce the revised education bill, put it like this:

"Each of us could write a book on experts who thought they know better than local people. The experts have proven wrong time after time after time, with disastrous consequences."

"But it is not the experts who have to live with the consequences of their mistakes it is the local people."

"In the field of education, outside experts have made, and are continuing to make, the same kind of mistakes as the housing authorities and physical engineers and for the same reasons."

"We have been very patient. We have sat back year after year and allowed mistakes to be imposed on us which we knew were mistakes, but were powerless to alter. Our patience, however, is growing thin," the bush group said.

What the bush education caucus asks is this:

1. Local control over any local educational programs in planning and decision making.

2. Authority for each village to develop its own educational policy, personnel and program.

3. Put representatives from each village on district education boards, not on a one man — one vote bases, but on a per village, since the needs, peculiarities and requirements of each village are sufficiently unique to require individual representation.

4. Give local school boards the chance to take on complete autonomy for local decisions and additional specific responsibilities as they request.

5. Provide a minimum of any statewide rules and regulations with powers over local school

boards, to allow plenty of flexibility for local self-determination and program design.

State Senator John Sackett of Galena, writing about the education legislation recently in All-Alaska Weekly, offered this priority schedule:

1. 1973 — Service area created for those desiring them this year.

2. 1974 — Transitional period for remainder of service areas desired, coupled with intensive training on all aspects of administration and school board responsibilities.

3. 1975 — School not wanting service area would return to the department of education and SOS would be dissolved. In addition, I believe that after one year a school district should have the option of local control if it is desired," Sackett wrote.

Sackett noted that funding for these schools could be designed similarly to our existing public foundation act which guarantees every school district a certain amount of money per pupil.

The revised act provides all the options mentioned by the rural education caucus. It would give local community school boards the same powers and duties as city or borough school district boards, along with the option of contracting with existing city or borough school districts or private corporations to provide any or all educational services to their children.

The revised bill calls for the legislature to fund the educational service areas and the unorganized borough school district (that is, the present state operated school district).

The revised bill would provide \$2,500 for each school board and \$10,000 for each service area board to organize and develop programs. Each local school board or service area board would have the say as to how those monies would be spent.

Predominately Native Communities, for example, might want their funds contracted to the regional native association this is one option.

Just what the final bill to come out of the legislature will be is being decided in Juneau.

What is the purpose of all this work? Perhaps bush education caucus member Robert Clark of Clark's Point summed it up best in a report to the "Legislators."

"The goal should be to prepare each and every student to live whatever life he ultimately chooses to live. Any of the western education that is (and should be) in the rural school should be from the villages and the peoples' standpoint."

Subsistence Protection

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Fish and Game. However, the commissioner's findings remain in effect unless specifically modified or rejected by the Board Fish and Game.

— The issuance of permits is based on residence in the area, valid permit and license for zone and game, and economic need. Also those who qualify but don't live in a rural community can be issued a permit.

— Permits can be transferred from head of household to dependents. For example, widow to dependent son for hunting.

— Permittees are limited to minimum number of zones necessary to meet their needs. They are not required to purchase a 25 cent license under section 340(a) of title 16, instead they may purchase a regular license without prejudice to their subsistence status.

— Each permittee must comply with applicable regulations

promulgated by the commissioner of Fish and Game.

— It is up to the commissioner to determine how to issue permits but they will be for two-year increments ending on the 31st of December of the second year. Permittees must comply with any request for game management data required for fish and game management.

— Violations are a misdemeanor and all equipment and related paraphernalia shall be confiscated in the event of a conviction.

It is my belief that this bill identifies and deals with a critical situation. At the same time, it allows for maximum use of our resources consistent with subsistence needs and sustained yield principles. Its internal structure is flexible enough to accommodate the desires of sport and commercial hunters as well as those of subsistence hunters in a majority of places in Alaska.