

BORBRIDGE RESIGNS NATIVE AFFAIRS OFFICE AT PHS

Part Two

Q: During your time in office, you have travelled much, visited many separate communities and

individuals; met with councils, regional groups and with their leaders; travelled to conferences in Alaska and Outside—in fact, you've been more on the go in

your work than not on the go! You must have seen changes in attitude, in actual developments. You must have noted responses. . . What stands out in your mind over this time. . . as to what is particularly impressive or significant?

A: As I put together in my mind the experiences of travel over all of southeastern Alaska, to Barrow, Nome, Bethel, Tanana, all over—I think outstanding is the warm hospitality, friendliness of our people and their sincere desire to be of assistance to those of us who are coming into their communities ostensibly for the purpose of assisting THEM.

Another thought which occurs to my mind is that there is a very evident increase in sophistication in the representative bodies and the leaders who are speaking in behalf of their people from the rural areas.

This sophistication has been evident in the desire of the people to be concerned not only about the problems of individual villages but to view these problems in the context of their regional application.

For example: One of the initial policy decisions to be

made was the manner in which we (PHS) would communicate to the people in the Village Council Presidents Association the decision that had to be made by them relative to the location of a hospital.

Should we simplify our communications, or should we simply present in fairly technical form the criteria which had guided the PHS professionals in drawing up recommendations of their own.

We (again I mean the PHS we) felt that out of respect to the basic intelligence and perception of our people, we should present the criteria in the more sophisticated form. Not only did the people understand, but they came up with aspects we had not fully considered.

As time went and I observed these matters from meeting to meeting, more of our village spokesmen started to speak in terms of a regional application. They began to use the same criteria in some of their own programing.

I think there were few things more significant to me than to hear these criteria used by village spokesmen in their own meetings, making their own decisions.

Another reassuring item of significance is that our Alaskan

people have not only joined in ferreting out and encouraging Native people to move into policy making positions, but have realized their responsibility to support those people in their work so that they will be most effective as they seek to serve their own people. . . actually, ALL the people in the state.

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK