

NORTHWAY POISED TO PROTEST SEGREGATED VILLAGE SCHOOLS

Village May Deposit 40 Pupils to State School in Protest

By Tom Snapp

Kenneth Albert, president of the village of Northway, says his people are ready to protest a deplorable "de facto" school segregation situation.

And he called on Alaska native groups for support should the people of Northway carry through the protest and transport on masse all the students from the BIA school at the village of Northway to the state school located near the Northway Federal Aviation facilities.

He said the Northway village council earlier had discussed pulling off the protest move next fall but, in light of recent developments, might pull it off before the end of this school year.

"We want to mix our kids with the non-native kids so they can learn a better way of living," Albert said.

"We're tired of this double-shifting. We're tired of having our kids packed in a 19 by 25 ft. classroom—of receiving an inferior education."

"We're simply going to take all forty kids at the village and deposit them at the state school. It will be their head-

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Northway Protests...

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ache then; we've had a headache for the past 29 years."

Since 1938 when the first Bureau of Indian Affairs School began in Northway—in the home of Walter Northway—to the present. Albert claims there has never been a student who graduated from the BIA Northway elementary school who has gone on to graduate from high school.

"We've only had about six people from our village to graduate from high school and all of them were able to do so because they were moved to other schools while in the lower grades."

Albert, himself a high school graduate, was sent to special elementary school at Mt. Edgecumbe as a small child.

The school situation at Northway points up the dual education system existing in the state today. The BIA village school with one classroom 19 by 25 feet in size has about 40 students; the state school at the FAA two miles from the village has about 50 students.

The BIA school has exclusively native students; the state school has predominantly non-native students.

The state school has two classrooms and a trailer which is utilized for eight graders. The village schools is for grades one through

seven. Prior to this year it accommodated only grades one through six.

"Students have just been passed through the village school whether they could do the work or not," Albert claims.

"We have over 15 men who have completed at least the fourth grade at the school who have not been able to serve their country because they could not pass the military test for reading and writing.

For the past seven years, Albert said he and the village council had been pushing for the building of a new school.

"We have been promised and promised a new school but we always seem to end up at the bottom of the totem pole."

Early this year it was announced that the state take over the operation of the village

as of July 1, this year, school/under a Johnson O'Malley contract.

"We were hoping they would build a new school, but we understand now they are simply remodeling the teacher quarters at the village school and are going to use it as another classroom."

"We are dead set against that," Albert said.

Lee Hayes, area supervisor for the State Department of Education, says that the state has advertised for three portable classrooms for the Northway state school.

"We know that the village is opposed to continuing instruction at the village school and we hope to be able to put all the students together at the state school at the FAA facilities," he said.

"Depending on the bids, we will probably get either two or three of portable classrooms."

The building in the village will probably be used for teacher quarters, he said.

While the state is adding the portable classrooms, he said a request was being made for the amount of money the BIA would have to spend to construct a proper facility.

In his personal estimation, he said this would amount to about \$250,000.

Hayes said the state was endeavoring to obtain former ACS buildings near Northway for state teacher quarters.

"We used to have good attendance. This year the kids are getting discouraged and we are getting discouraged. The kids don't want to go to school anymore.

"Education is our only hope, that's why we're willing to fight for a school for our kids. We hope that people will back us up," Albert said.