

Editorial Comment—

Karen Clark-Teacher

Karen Clark, head teacher at the Two Rivers Elementary School in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, has been selected as Alaska's 1973 Teacher of the Year. Two Rivers school is 18 miles from Fairbanks on the Chena Hot Springs Road.

Mrs. Clark has been teaching elementary schools both in Canada and Alaska and the schools she usually picks have Indian pupils in them. She has taken interest in the education of Indian children long before anyone ever thought of bi-cultural education. The example she has set should be noticed by all the people who have something to do with education of Alaska's children especially the education of Native children.

Mrs. Clark's work, we think, is an important breakthrough in the manner of educating Alaska's youngsters. It is certainly a breakthrough in attitude toward our Native children. Her following remarks points this out:

" . . . I don't believe there are culturally deficient or culturally deprived people. These labels indicate some inherent weakness. In my classroom, regardless of the child's background, I want him to have a good self-concept. I want him to feel clever and a bit proud of himself.

"The six and one-half hours a day my students spend in school should be time spent in a happy, kind, interesting place. School should create life, not frustration. I judge my success by the response of my students. Constantly I must remind myself not to equate success with conformity and docility . . . "

Karen Clark will represent Alaska at the National Teacher of the Year award. It goes without saying that she is one of the best candidates Alaska ever has had for the national honor. Her approach toward education of Alaska's children should become an important guideline for all others concerned with education.