

Nunivak Takes Over Reindeer

BETHEL—Representatives of the village of Mekoryuk, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the State of Alaska met January 15, 1970, and agreed to a program for the Nunivak reindeer herd calling for immediate Native ownership.

Under the terms of the new agreement the Mekoryuk Village Association will take on the full

responsibilities of management, marketing, herding, and slaughtering.

The village will continue to make reindeer available for starter herds. This will aid the growth of the reindeer industry with other Alaskan Natives.

Under the terms of the Reindeer Act of 1937, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has managed the reindeer herd on Nunivak Island from 1937 to the present. The Nunivak herd has been a source of loan animals for starter herds in other areas of Alaska.

The BIA will transfer ownership of the buildings, equipment, and reindeer to the Mekoryuk Village Association. Physical assets consist of corrals, abattoirs, sheds, vehicles, and an estimated 10,000 animals.

Under the program the BIA will provide financial support during an interim period. The extent to which the BIA is being relieved of providing services will determine the amount of financial support.

The Mekoryuk Village Association has contractually obligated itself to provide the same number of animals it receives to other Natives requesting animals for starter herds.

The economics of sound herd management will be the only re-

striction on these transfers.

Technical assistance to the Mekoryuk Village Association will come from the State, Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Community Enterprise Development Corporation.

The State will provide slaughter inspection and animal husbandry assistance. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will assist in determining range capacity through its surveys. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will make knowledge and records acquired through its operating experience available to the new management.

The Community Enterprise Development Corporation has pledged assistance in training, marketing, bookkeeping, and financing, if required.

Final, formal approval of the reindeer program must come from the Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel.

Allakaket Eskimos and Indians Get Along Fine

Rev. Raymond Oppenheim, Episcopal minister at the village of Allakaket deep in central Alaska, was in Fairbanks last weekend.

"All the myths you hear about Eskimos and Indians not getting along together are not true," Rev. Oppenheim said. "In fact we have an Eskimo in the village council out of five members."

What makes Rev. Oppenheim's remarks interesting is that Allakaket is located on the dividing line of Indian and Eskimo countries. The village is located on each side of Koyukuk River.

Although one section of the village is located on one bank of the river and populated by Eskimos, the other one on the opposite bank has a mixed population.

"They have intermarried through the years and they are

getting along fine," Oppenheim said. "In fact Bertha Moses, an Eskimo, is on the village council and she is married to an Indian. They have 11 children. Bertha is also the village health aide and a school board member."

He said in 1964 to 1966 Frank Sam, an Eskimo, was elected chief. Andy Simon, an Indian, succeeded Sam in 1966 and Eddy Bergman, Jr., also an Indian, is the present chief.

Rev. Oppenheim doesn't know whether the good relationships between the Indians and Eskimos at Allakaket have anything to do with good school records among the youngsters at the village, but he said every 8th grader is now in high schools and there has been no dropouts.

"And the village is still running dogteams," he said.

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