



**TELL OF SCHOOL NEEDS**—Leaders of the Fairbanks Native Association this week told local officials and legislators of the pressing need for more high school education for young Alaskans who live north of the Alaska Range. The Native group proposes building a 500-student dormitory in Fairbanks to house Native and non-Native students who

live outside of Fairbanks; these students would attend Fairbanks high schools. FNA leaders pictured in this panel discussion are, from left: Mrs. Mary Jane Fate, Jules Wright (FNA president), Hugh Fate (moderator), and Richard Frank. Not visible in picture was panel member Ralph Perdue.

—Tundra Times Photograph

## Assn. Seeks High School Dormitory at Fairbanks

A request by the Fairbanks Native Association for a dormitory facility in Fairbanks for out-of-town high school students, Native and non-Native, was heard by more than 100 people in a public meeting Tuesday in Fairbanks.

The request was examined thoroughly, inside and out. The concept was applauded by all speaking up during the meeting. The five legislators present agreed that something should be done. And the

Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) pointedly asked the state board of education to take over the responsibility of the project with funding from the legislature.

Two and a half hours of talk produced no concrete commitment or promises from anyone, including the legislators. Only commitments made were statements of support for the idea.

Pointing to a section of Alaska's Constitution which

charges the state with the responsibility to "establish and maintain a system of public schools open to all children of the State," the FNA charged the state board of education to "finalize a study as to the number of children of high school age that have not been admitted to Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools but who are qualified to enter high school" and to "insure that every school in the state, regardless of its affiliation, be made to conform to state education standards."

To Senators Bartlett and Gruening and Rep. Ralph Rivers the FNA sent a plea for them to seek BIA funding for the dormitory and possible expanded school facilities through the Johnson O'Malley Act and to participate in expenses once the high school is built.

FNA asked Governor William Egan to promote and execute any program designed to place the rural students of Alaska in areas where the education systems are on standards comparable to larger population centers in Alaska. Alaskan legislators were

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pointedly asked to fund the facility. "What could be more sound, have as far reaching and lasting effects and help so many people as funding this dormitory facility?" they asked.

To the North Star Borough Assembly and School Board went the request that both bodies anticipate the proposed dormitory in the future planning for schools and education needs in the Fairbanks area.

The City of Fairbanks was asked to submit land for the purpose of constructing the dorm.

Several methods of getting started on the actual planning and work on the dormitory were suggested. One way is to get an appropriation from the 1966 legislature for actual planning and design with a bond issue to follow for the construction costs.

Another suggestion was for the legislature to direct the state board of education to "pull all the facts together" and to initiate the dormitory idea. Getting the Alaska State Housing Authority to build the dorm and rent it to the BIA and operated by the Fairbanks school system was also suggested. Still another possible way of getting the thing started was private foundation money.

One legislator suggested that a study be made by the state board of education to determine all the facts and then report to the legislature.

"We don't want more studies," Hugh Fate, moderator of the meeting said. He was backed up by FNA president Jules Wright and Tanana Chiefs Conference president (and former FNA president) Ralph Perdue in this. "No more studies," they both said.

There is no concise record of students geographically located who would come to Fairbanks to high school if dormitory facilities were available, the Native leaders said.

Their group has not yet been able to compile an accurate list of young people who are out of school now but who would be in school if the opportunity were offered them.

However, 1965 enrollment figures show 1,491 Native students in Mt. Edgecumbe in Sitka, Chemawa in Oregon, and at the Wrangell Institute. They figure that approximately 894 students of these 1,491

come from the Kuskokwim or Yukon watersheds and would be eligible to come to school in Fairbanks.

Other FNA members in the panel discussion were Mrs. Mary Jane Fate, Mrs. Dorothy Perdue, Richard Frank, and Mrs. Marge Wright.

Legislators present for the meeting were Senator John Butrovich, Representatives Sig Wold, Bobby Sheldon, Walter LeFevre, and Barry Jackson. Local city, borough and school board officials were also present as was BIA area director Wallace Craig.

(See next issue for more on dormitory.)