

Bethel Eskimo Working with Slow Learners

An Eskimo with nine years experience in Alaska is spending his summer working as a research assistant for the Mental Health Unit of the Alaska Native Health Area Office in Anchorage.

Oscar Kawagley, born in Bethel, is currently working with student problems, particularly those dealing with slow learners and the mentally retarded. Because he speaks the Eskimo language, Kawagley's work with the unit is particularly valuable in that he can communicate directly with the people he is attempting to help.

The research assistant has already made a survey of suicide reports, tabulating causes and means used when these are known. Such study is an important part of attacking the problem of suicides among young Alaskan natives and also among Indians in the other parts of the United States.

Kawagley will take a teaching assignment in Anchorage this fall. His previous assignments have been a year at Tok and eight years in Glenallen.