

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

Air of Expectancy

The new year has always been welcomed with great fanfare and celebrations and the entrance of 1971 was no exception. The reason for this is that people expect better things in life during the incoming new year.

The natives of Alaska are also in a state of great expectancy as 1971 came upon them. The greatest event in their life history could happen within the next few months—the settlement of the Alaska native land claims. How that will come out for them is hard to tell at the moment. They, above all else, want a good settlement knowing they are about to give up forever great expanses of land they have lived on through the ages in the past. There is no rejoicing on the impending event. There is only hope for a good, fair settlement. They want this settlement to be just so they can have room for a good life in the years ahead and far into the future.

The air of expectancy is upon this great north land. Apprehensions and doubts are rampant. There are also hopes that Congress of the United States will be fair in its dealings with the natives of Alaska. The future of our native people, whether good or bad, is in the hands of the congressional members. We are counting on their good conscience.

We are waiting. We are worried. We are hopeful but we do not know what the outcome will be.

Arctic Institute of North America Finds Real Oldtimers in Alaska

Archeologists revealed at a meeting this past week that we are all Cheechakos compared to some of the real old timers of Alaska.

The Arctic Institute of North America (AINA) represented by Mr. Robert Faylor and anthropologist, Dr. John Cambell made a progress report to the Bureau of Land Management of their activities in monitoring the archeological field research conducted by the Alyeska Pipeline Service Company.

The Alyeska archeologists are exploring the length of the proposed trans-Alaska pipeline route for archeological sites.

Except for small portions between the Yukon River and Prospect Creek, and Fairbanks and Delta Junction, the entire proposed route of the pipeline has been surveyed for sites.

Dr. John Cook of the University of Alaska, one of the archeologists under contract with Alyeska, stated that nearly 200 sites were discovered. Most of the sites were small and of minor importance; but a few large sites were located.

Artifacts discovered at the sites ranged from a few stone flakes or chips where historic man made a tool or weapon, to complete village locations with house pits and tent rings. Numerous artifacts were recovered and are being catalogued.

The eighteen archeologists and

anthropologists who were involved in the project worked out of the "Alyeska" construction camps. The scientists traversed most of the route on foot, using helicopters primarily for travel between camps and from camp to each day's starting point.

The heavy cover of vegetative growth in some areas reduced the effectiveness of the search for sites, said Mr. William Workman of Alaska Methodist University, a chief researcher of the project.

He stated that only one artifact was located between Gulikana and Valdez, mainly because of the density of the vegetation. Mr. Workman felt that more evidence of early man's presence in the area would show up after preliminary construction work removes some of the heavy plant growth.

Dr. Helge Larsen with the Danish National Museum, Dr. William E. Taylor, Jr. of the National Museum of Canada and Dr. Elmer Harp, Jr. of Dartmouth College, and also chairman of the AINA consultant group were among those attending the meeting.

Mr. Ronald Bookman, who heads Alyeska's archeological research program, stated that the remaining preliminary research in the unsurveyed areas would be done this coming summer.

High School Policies Which Place Natives in 'Slow' Classes Can Harm

High school policies which place rural Native students in "slow" classes may penalize those students who are academically talented.

This is the conclusion reached by a study of the Achievement Profiles of Native Ninth Graders—a study which describes the results of tests given to 68 students in the Boarding Home Program.

Native students from rural areas in Alaska arrive in Fairbanks, as in many other Alaskan communities, each fall to attend high school through the Boarding Home Program.

Often, these students arrive without records from their former schools—records which would give school personnel some basis on which to place the children in classes.

Experience has shown school personnel that students from these rural areas usually need supplementary instruction. So, these Native students are placed in lower achievement classes.

What this may do, says Dr. Judith Kleinfeld of the University of Alaska Institute of Social, Economic and Government Research, is penalize those students who are academically talented.

Dr. Kleinfeld is engaged in a study of students in the Boarding Home Program and has administered achievement tests to ninth graders in Fairbanks for a fall orientation program prior to starting school in Fairbanks, Big Delta and Nenana. The students came primarily from the smaller villages in the Interior.

"Rural Native students appear to vary widely in their achievement levels, and many are capable of more advanced academic work," writes Dr. Kleinfeld in her study of the achievements of these students in abstract reasoning, numerical ability, verbal abilities and language usage.

"The current general placement practice is especially likely to retard the academic progress of the group of rural Native student that the schools should carefully nurture—the academically talented."

Achievement tests given to children who are "culturally different" from the students on whom the norms are based can be a dangerous measure of intelligence and competence.

However, says Dr. Kleinfeld, it can be "far more serious not to test and to assume that rural Native students fall into the lowest category."

Students from the Boarding Home Program were given a set of four achievement tests called the Academic Promise Test.

One of the four tests is relatively "culture-fair", one rests heavily on a familiarity with Western culture and the English language.

The other two tests measure levels of present achievement in arithmetic and English usage—useful for determining at what point further English and arithmetic instruction should begin.

On a test of abstract reasoning, the 68 Native students from rural areas who took the test scored about as high in abstract reasoning skills as the national student average.

"A number of students appear to be highly gifted in abstract reasoning ability; seven of the 68 students scored at the 90th percentile and above."

These high scores cast doubts, according to Dr. Kleinfeld on "certain unfortunate stereotypes about Native students' ability to abstract."

"The abstraction difficulty to which teachers refer may be based not on ability to abstract, but rather on cultural differences in beliefs about the things it is proper to generalize about and a limited knowledge of English vocabulary relating to abstract concepts."

These students, as do many other Natives, show great skill in reasoning with diagrammatic figures—a fact which may be helpful to teachers in planning lessons. Test results show students might benefit from instruction centered upon graphs, charts, pictures and other visual presentations.

What is the danger in placing these students together—in classes where teachers can aid those students with problems in English, math or areas in which their cultural background may make them weak? Some students don't have these problems and will be held back.

"In many cases these students are too shy to aggressively demonstrate their competence, and the placement error may not be discovered," writes Dr. Kleinfeld. "Moreover, the teacher's mistakenly low expectations about the student's ability may depress his level of performance."

A teacher's expectation can be an important contributor to a student's level of performance. If a teacher believes a student has low ability he will not expect achievement—and will not get it.

Teachers who base their expectations of a student on their stereotypes of rural Native students may not be encouraging individual students to do their best work.

Boarding Home students show wide variability in their achievements. A student who is strong in math may have difficulty in English—thus depressing his math scores due to difficulties in understanding the problems.

The ISEGR research note, Achievement Profiles of Native Ninth Graders is the first published result of a study begun last year of the Boarding Home Program. The set of achievement tests on which this paper was based was administered at the request of the Fairbanks Native Association. Students tested included Eskimos, Athabascans, one Aleut and several children of mixed blood.

Most of the students came from homes where English was not the primary language. They all attended a summer orientation program for students entering the Boarding Home Program.

Many of the students are performing at average levels or well above average levels and have no need for preparatory work. Placing these rural students as a group may seriously damage their ability to gain the most from their experience in high school.

LETTERS FROM HERE AND THERE

Nenana, Alaska
December 31, 1970

Dear Friend Editor:

I remember back in 1919 and 1920 when my family traveled 400 miles by boat and barge for beaver, moose, marten, etc. There was no moose, marten or beaver within 100 miles around Nulato.

We started shooting beaver fall and spring. Then the Fish and Wildlife, or game warden, put a limit on beaver also marten and moose. At that time I thought to myself that the game commission was wrong, and they were. I sold contraband beaver, marten and moose meat. I knew that's the only way we could live. As young as I was then, 13 years old, I sold for my dad and family.

I knew at that time putting a limit on fur or meat wouldn't do any good because that's nature. When God made the world, he saw to it that the ducks and geese and fish came back every spring. We were pretty hungry about that time. And everything was migrating different places every four years and heavy run of fish every four years. You could tell now where the Fish and Wildlife was wrong. The moose is now public nuisance, the marten is thick, also beavers are all over the Yukon.

I'm not buying trapping, hunting and fishing license yet, but I'm still going to trap, hunt and fish in my own land. I want the whole world to know that and smoke it. I'll go out when I'm hungry.

Nulato Village Council President,
Fred Stickman, Sr.

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515
December, 1970

Open Letter to all Alaskans

My dear Friends,

This will be my last communication with you as the Congressman for Alaska. As the Ninety-First Congress draws to a close, and I disassemble my Congressional office, and prepare for an exciting new chapter in my eventual life, I feel it important to convey to you my deep satisfaction and fulfillment in having served you and all our fellow Alaskans as U.S. Representative in the United States Congress in Washington, D.C.

It has been a deeply rewarding experience. I feel, and hope you do, that I have done a good job, and that Alaska and Alaskans are better off because of my efforts and contributions.

One of the most difficult decisions of my public life was that of seeking the governorship instead of remaining in the U.S. House of Representatives, but I felt I could serve my people even better in that position of leadership at this important juncture in history. Alas, it was not meant to be, for the Republican Party chose to make a different choice in the primary.

Our problems are many, and some of the most significant have yet to be resolved. It is my fervent wish that you and all Alaskans will give our new leadership team in Juneau and in Washington, D.C. all the support and backing possible. Together Alaskans can solve the difficult problems ahead.

I have looked upon my public service as a ministry for my fellow Alaskans, and feel privileged to have been chosen for the significant role of leadership. I was allowed to play. Perhaps one day I will again have the opportunity to represent and serve you and all Alaskans.

God love you and yours, and keep you always.

Cordially and with appreciation
for many things,
Howard Pollock
The Congressman for Alaska