

NEWS FROM INUVIK

By LOIS KEATING

June 20, 1976—It made me sad to learn of Howard Rock's death, and somehow it seems strange to be sending news to the Tundra Times, knowing he is no longer there. Hopefully the good work he started will continue far on into the future. His work for the native people of Alaska will never be forgotten.

Spring came early this year, and break-up occurred at Inuvik during the night of May 28th, and by that time the first barges had already left Hay River

headed north. The shipping season is now well underway, and it is hoped that this year all barges will reach their destinations before freeze-up.

The court case brought by five members of the Indian Brotherhood of the N.W.T., who are trying to get James Wah-Shee reinstated as president, has been put off until more detailed information has been obtained. The Brotherhood has said that its own actions at the Fort Rae assembly last fall were not unfair and against the constitution.

However, it is quite likely that before the case comes to court again, the annual Brotherhood Assembly will have taken place (scheduled to begin July 5th at Fort Norman), and that the question of leadership will be decided there—between James Wah-Shee and George Erasmus.

At the end of the last session of Territorial Council, James Wah-Shee resigned as councillor. One of the previous objections by the Brotherhood was that it was impossible for him to serve two masters by being on Council and President of the Brotherhood at the same time. However, after the resignation, Wah-Shee stated that he was not certain that he would definitely let his name stand for president—that he may decide to do something entirely different—such as go to law school. So things at this point are very much up in the air.

During this same period of confusion and unrest in the Brotherhood, the Metis Association has been having its own problems. Some of the Metis people want to join with the Indian Brotherhood, and some want to remain as a separate organization in order to retain their identity.

There is also the alternative of retaining separate organizations and then, as has been done in the Yukon, forming another combined group which would deal with issues of importance to all, such as land claims. The Metis Association has planned their annual assembly for Fort McPherson beginning July 9th, while the Brotherhood Assembly will probably still be in session. At this time they hope to resolve the question of possible union with the Brotherhood.

Following the Loucheux Games Workshop held in Fort McPherson in February (on

which I commented in my last column), there was a Hareskin Games Workshop held at Fort Franklin, which was equally successful.

The oldtimers demonstrated skills, songs, dances, games, and other cultural activities to the young people, many of whom are not working to keep these traditions alive.

The new log Ingamo Hall Friendship Centre in Inuvik, which has been in progress for over a year, is coming along slowly, and 165 more logs are being floated down the Mackenzie River next week. When it is completed, the center will be a beautiful building, and will fill a great need in this community.

Northern Games will this year be held in Coppermine from July 30-August 2nd. Unfortunately this is the same weekend as the Eskimo/Indian Olympics.

They are still trying to work out some sort of an exchange where some Alaskans can come to Northern Games and participants from the N.W.T. can go over to Fairbanks. However, the Northern Games budget has been cut this year, at the same time as transportation costs have risen considerably, resulting in this year's games being a bit smaller in number of participants. Also, some of the athletes will be at the Olympics in Montreal, followed by appearances in Toronto for the Native Heritage program at the Ontario Science Centre.

In April the consecration for the new Anglican church in Aklavik was held, in a service led by Bishop Sperry. This church replaces the former one which was burned down two years ago.

A new system is being used in the courts here now, called "diversion." This means that, instead of a person being fined or put in jail for a minor offense, he can instead be sentenced to do a certain number of hours of work for the community in which he lives—such as clean-up work, or other jobs not usually done by regular employees.

This system is in effect in other parts of the N.W.T., and now Inuvik has decided to try it also.

Another first for Inuvik is a

Juvenile Court Committee. Juvenile delinquency has been a growing problem, and both the R.C.M.P. and the Department of Social Development do not feel that they are able to deal effectively with these young people who are getting into trouble.

The Juvenile Court Committee will deal with children from nine to sixteen, and will deal with each case effectively. Before each hearing, several members of the committee will visit the child's home and talk with the parents.

In this way the committee will become aware of any problems that the child may be having at home. Then at the hearing, the parents, the child, and the committee members will discuss what actually took place, and they will reach a decision as to what can be done to help the child.

The Juvenile Court Committee has the power to do whatever they believe is in the best interests of the child. The R.C.M.P. and the Department of Social Development will be working closely with the committee.

On June 14th a by-election was held for the Mackenzie-Great Bear seat on Territorial Council, which was recently vacated by the resignation of George Barnaby of Fort Good Hope. Peter Fraser of Norman Wells won over Clair Barnabe also of Norman Wells, with a margin of 82 votes.

The ratting season ended on June 15th, and from all reports, people got a lot of muskrats this year. The price was higher than ever, which was an added incentive.