

Penetrating Look...

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schools but between the teachers and the community they serve, and the literal rapping of pride and cultural values."

Mrs. Kennedy went on to say that an Eskimo girl from Wainwright on the Arctic coast told them about her difficulties in learning to read from the Dick and Jane series "which are still used today."

"She said that for the longest time she could not say 'Oak Tree Hill' because in Wainwright there are no trees or hills and she had no idea what the book was even talking about," Rosaire Kennedy wrote.

"This girl managed to survive in the educational system and has graduated from the University of Alaska but she is exceptional."

"What of the others who are so confused and overwhelmed by the foreign images in their books (cars, mailmen, even streets and sidewalks) that the English language remains completely foreign to them?"

"To make a comparison one could picture children in the first grade of a New York school learning to read from books that spoke of Tunu and Putu watching their father hitch his dogs before setting out to hunt caribou."

Mrs. Kennedy argued that this type of curriculum not only impedes the learning process but impressed on the children that they were inferior to the white race pictured in their books.

"Many BIA teachers are prone to reinforce this myth either overtly or subtly by their methods of dealing with the students and the community at large."

"Thus, it was possible for an intelligent man, member of the Noorvik village council, holder of a master navigation ticket, who served in the intelligence division of the Army, to tell us in all sincerity that he knew Eskimos were not as smart as whites and never could be."

"And he was not alone in this sentiment. Time after time people actually apologized to us for having to live among them and referred to themselves as 'dumb Eskimos' or 'dirty Eskimos.'"

"This is what the BIA system of 'education' has done to the people of Noorvik, educated them into believing that they are second-class citizens."

"These are people who have a rich and noble ancestry with much to be proud of, and who have survived in the most inhospitable climate in the world without any of our modern conveniences."

Mrs. Kennedy discussed briefly the separation of teachers from the villagers.

"Teachers are cautioned against being too friendly with the members of the community and one teacher in Kotzebue felt that his job was threatened because he had entered an Eskimo home."

Rosaire Kennedy deplored the little or no orientation of incoming teachers as to the background of the native culture and the problem of transition that is going on now.

"We have not teachers

who have been with the BIA in rural Alaska for five or ten years and had no more insight into the people than the average man in New York," Mrs. Kennedy pointed out.

"They viewed Eskimos merely as welfare recipients who were either too stupid or lazy to learn. I feel that this lack of contact and understanding on the part of the teacher is very significant."

"It would seem almost impossible for a white middle class citizen to teach members of such a vastly different culture effectively without extensive training and constant dialogue with the people of the particular community he serves."

"Aside from this, the segregation helps to perpetuate the white superiority myth and if a man has lost his pride what motivation is there for learning?"

In her lengthy testimonial to Senator Kennedy, Mrs. Kennedy suggested the following:

That textbooks adapted to the rural Alaskan child be introduced; the introduction of courses in Eskimo or Indian history relating past cultural values to the present;

That prominent native Alaskan leaders and topics such as the formation of native associations and the land claims be included in current affairs discussions;

That at least a month long orientation course be held for ALL new teachers, not just one-fourth of them;

That involvement by teachers in the community life be actively encouraged, if not made mandatory;

That the present system of sending students to segregated high schools thousands of miles from home be ended;

That the BIA launch recruitment campaign for qualified and properly motivated teachers on a wide scale.

Mrs. Kennedy said that the BIA was making changes for improvement but she thought the process of these changes might be too slow. She also commended the agency for sponsoring the teacher-aid program where local people are trained to assist in the village schools.

"I do not claim to be an expert on native affairs or education but it is a matter of conscience that I write this letter to you," Mrs. Kennedy told Senator Kennedy.

She told the Senator that he had recently visited some Indian reservations in the Lower 48.

"If there is any possibility that you could make such a visit to Alaska I would urge you to do so," she said.

She said that aside from educational problems, there were many needs that remain to be met; that if a man of his stature "could learn first hand about the problems and lend support to a development program it might make all the difference in the world."

Sen. Robert Kennedy's committee members are slated to come to Alaska some time in the future but it is not known whether he will be coming along on the trip.

Tlingit-Haida Central Council Accepts \$7.5 Million Judgment

The Tlingit and Haida Central Council held a special convention last weekend and voted to accept the \$7.5 million, the figure set by the Court of Claims for the Tlingit-Haida land claims.

"The Central Council is on record expressing its deep disappointment as to the amount of award made by the Court of Claims for those areas of land and water and resources taken from the Tlingit and Haida Indians by United States and believe the award is grossly inadequate," said John Borbridge, president of the Central Council.

The council, however, decided to accept the award seeing little chance of getting favorable judgment if it appeals.

"Chances of obtaining grant of writ of certiorari is uncertain since information shows that the Supreme Court has granted petitions in one out of 20 cases where was sought and the percentage of success is less in Indian land claims cases," said Borbridge.

Tanana Chiefs, FNA to Meet With Governor

Rep. John Sackett, who is also chairman of the Tanana Chiefs, is calling the executive committee of the Tanana Chiefs to join the directors of the Fairbanks Native Association to meet with Gov. Walter Hickel during the Governor's potlatch trip to Fairbanks on March 16.

The officers of the two groups will present problems and proposals to the Governor.

Sackett is urging his executive committee to be in Fairbanks on March 15 so they will have time to caucus on matters to be presented.

Veralas 4-H Club Learns To Make Pins

The Veralas 4-H Club of Beaver, Alaska held a regular monthly meeting on February 28. The meeting was called to order by Robert Cruikshank, vice president.

The meeting consisted of demonstrations by Victor Winer, Henry Pitka, Norman and Willie Joseph, and Sammy Hope.

They showed various steps in making solder pins which each have made. Sammy showed how he made a tool out of a moose bone.

The meeting was concluded by a slide presentation of the 46th National 4-H Club Congress by Lindell Page, the club's representative to the Congress.

The slides consisted of a group that were donated to the State 4-H Clubs by Mrs. Charles Walgreen of Chicago, and also pictures taken by Lindell.

The next meeting of the Veralas 4-H Club is planned for mid-March.

He said the council has decided to use the money that will be available to, "Number one, it is urgent necessity to take prompt steps to protect rights of Tlingit and Haida Indians in 2,628,207 acres of land in Southeast Alaska to which Court of Claims decided title of said Indians had survived (Indians title not extinguished)."

"Number two," Borbridge continued, "is the pressing need to take action as promptly as possible to safeguard interests of Tlingit and Haida Indians in connection with the proposed legislation being considered by Congress pertaining to Alaska native groups of Alaska."

"Number three is the impelling need to adopt and

place in early operation programs and measures designed to advance economic and social well-being of Tlingit and Haida Indians."

These will be the main point to be considered when the council meets in Juneau on April 25-26-27.

President Urges

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before it gets to the Finance Committee.

"We expect difficulties there," said Hensley.

Hensley also said that President Lyndon Johnson has come out in favor of the native claims bill and urged its passage during the current session of Congress. He said Sen. Robert F. Kennedy also come out in favor of it.

Alcoholism...

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by tuberculosis if the doctors hadn't found a right medication for it. It was getting to be a number one killer. Once a person start hemorrhaging he would only live few months.

WE WERE family of nine. My oldest sister and my father died of tuberculosis. Mom taught us cleanliness at an early age. We use to scrub floors on hands and knees with lysol water and lye soap. We were taught to make potato yeast bread.

IN THE FALL of 1953 my sister died of plain whiskey. I saw her before she died. I felt so bad I did not even go to her funeral. From that time on I have tried to tell people the danger of strong liquor. I am not ashamed to tell this because it's true what alcohol can do. It can kill slowly and quickly it taken carelessly. Some of you may mock me and make fun of me but this letter is for my people especially. Some people are afraid to say anything in public because they're not sure of themselves or they are afraid to lose friends.

IN MY SCHOOL days our teacher was strict. He was my teacher for four years. He make a rule that no one speaks Eskimo in school or on the school ground. He listed our names by the door and make a rule that if we hear anybody speak Eskimo we put a mark by that name. And if he speaks five or ten times in a row he would let him chew piece of Ivory soap in front of us, to make sure he chew it.

NOW TO THIS present age, I would like to see a high school built nearer to our remote villages, centrally located in our state so that our students can be nearer to home and not lose their family ties. I have been conscious of the money involved in sending our students to far away places. With this travel money a good boarding school would have been built, because we don't travel by air free. Hundreds of students are taken to far away places each fall and taken back to their homes in the spring. Many times this question came to my mind: Why were we interrupted from our way of life, the Eskimo way? We use to be contented people as long as we have lots to eat -dried fish, seal oil, berries of all kinds stored in wooden barrels, salt fish and tea and bread.

NOW TODAY we have to keep up with Joneses the white people way. Why can't our people get ahead even they have steady jobs: Because \$5.00 is like \$1.00 today in stores we have. No more ceiling prices-only space prices. Electricity \$10.00 minimum. With no steady job it's very hard to keep ahead. That's why we are here today. We wanted to work.

MOST OF ALL I want to mention in this letter to my people is to thank the doctors who left their respective homes and relatives thousands of miles away in order that you and I can enjoy better health. They are dedicated people. They did not learn the knowledge they have over night. It takes years and years of practice and research. Some perhaps work their way through aside from studying.

IF WE WOULD only understand how much medicine cost and how much money it takes to maintain these hospitals we would be more thankful and take our medicine more seriously. Thank you is big booster when you help someone. It makes you want to help more.

WITH THIS BIBLE verse I like to close: Hebrews 13:6, So that we may boldly say, "The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

I KNOW I WILL be criticized, but I have no fear because what I say is true. True experience I went through and have seen with my own eyes.

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