

Native Education...

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type are still being conducted signals a widespread feeling that Indian education has failed.

The Havighurst Report, a summary of the conclusions and recommendations reached by the National Study on Indian Education, was published last month with several recommendations which have appeared and reappeared in prior reports. The study was funded by the U.S. Office of Education after being proposed by the 1967 Research Conference on Indian Education.

Part of the gap in achievement between Indian and white children can be explained by the lower socio-economic groups Indians tend to fall into—they are some of the country's most needy citizens.

The incalculable factor is the "barrier"—the problem of straddling two widely different cultures which Indian children must overcome to succeed in the white world.

Bicultural education, bilingual education, programs in Indian heritage, are all suggestions which have been thought of before and implemented in several places.

In Alaska, bilingual education started last year in the Bethel area. High schools and colleges offer Native culture courses, language courses and other recent innovations in educational programs.

"A successful education need not be incompatible with the retention of Indian identity, pride and self-respect," says the report written by Robert J. Havighurst of the University of Chicago. Professor Havighurst directed the study of Indian education which involved six universities and dozens of researchers.

The study recommends a greater emphasis on career development, both college prep and vocational training. A serious effort, it says, should be made to recruit teachers, Indian and non-Indians who can work effectively in Indian schools and communities.

Young successful teachers should be encouraged to stay, with salaries competitive with other types of teaching. Teachers should receive special training in how to work within the Indian culture—how to relate with students and their parents. College trained Indian teachers should be recruited to work in BIA schools.

A further recommendation calls for special programs for urban Indians, financed by Johnson O'Malley appropriations.

How do these recommendations apply to Alaska?

"The answers are probably the same for Alaskan education," says Ray Barnhardt of the University of Alaska, "but for different reasons. Acculturation in Alaska is probably about 20 years behind the lower 48—in the amount of English spoken, moving into the cities, etc. It gives the state an opportunity for new programs which can avoid many of the mistakes made in the lower 48 during the past two decades."

Professor Barnhardt coordinates the innovative Alaskan Teacher Corps program—first attempt to train Alaskan Native teachers in the bush. Last year, he served as part of the research team which examined schools and communities in Bethel and Angoon as part of the National Study on Indian Education.

A film study of Eskimo education, conducted by John Collier, turned up some interesting observations on what goes on in classrooms—observations open to the criticism of any person who views the filmed record. Collier is the son of former Commissioner of Indian Affairs

under President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Eskimo students, Collier finds, are most comfortable in the Eskimo environment—in a Kwethluk (small village in the Kuskokwim) rather than in a large city like Anchorage. He compared classes in villages and in Anchorage. He found the most enthusiastic classes in the small villages and in Bethel.

Native teachers, with minimum training, teach Head Start in the small villages—with great success. Traditional kindergartens may tend to smother the Eskimo child, despite high teacher qualifications. Eskimo children tend to react badly to experiences in the predominantly white Anchorage classrooms.

Schools in the Arctic, Collier finds, educate the Native to leave Alaska—to reach goals only available in the lower 48. At the same time, enterprising whites are finding unlimited opportunities in the Arctic bush. Shouldn't the Natives of these areas find the same opportunities?

Their schools teach a white curriculum, through white teachers, with little emphasis on the world of the Arctic—the world the child must understand and learn from. They ignore the world around them to concentrate on a "wider culture" most of the children may never see.

Collier's recommendations parallel those of the National report, for different reasons. He goes even further. He recommends more Native teachers, a phasing out of white teachers to replace them with creative Natives. Community people, he feels, should be brought into the schools. Elders should teach the traditions and crafts of the Arctic, rather than be shut out of the schools.

A school, he finds, should be part of the community—not off on a hill immersed in a BIA or other complex. It should teach the skills of the Arctic, the hunting, trapping and fishing as well as the 3 R's.

Schools in the Arctic, as on Indian reservations, teach the Indian and Eskimo nothing of himself—his people, life, history, environment. They turn the children into adults who are vaguely ashamed of their own tradition, yet held apart from the white culture by these same traditions.

What can succeed? Students at St. Mary's school, a Roman Catholic boarding school, win trophies in Eskimo dances. Collier presents them as some of the most self-assured young Eskimos in the Arctic—educated young people with a strong foothold in their Native traditions.

The Havighurst report will be attacked. It glosses over many psychological factors, says one researcher. A chapter on "mental stability" emphasizes that Indian suicide rates are only slightly above white rates.

"He buries the fact that the highest suicide rate is for young men, 15 to 45," explains educational psychologist Dr. Judith Kleinfeld. "The suicide rate for young Indian men is 3 to 6 times as high as for whites. These are the most productive age groups."

The study's conclusion that the vast majority of Indian young people are basically well adjusted—at home with both the Indian and white way of life may gloss over factors of personality disturbance.

Possibly, the Havighurst summary leans too hard on the factors of socio-economic group, less heavily on the implications of Indian culture on a "white" education.

Yet, its recommendations for

President: Alaskans on the Potomac—

Alaskans Elect Tom, Jr.

WASHINGTON—Alaskans on the Potomac, an organization recently formed by Alaska Natives living in the Washington area, is ready to offer supportive services to Alaska Native leaders during their lobbying efforts here.

Arctic Pioneer...

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for the Eskimo people.

"Even though cancer had almost taken his voice, in a whisper he reminisced about his beloved Arctic. He spoke of Herschel Island, Cape Halkett, Demarcation Point, Wainwright, Pt. Barrow and his trading posts.

"He spoke of the 'Ya-Butt', his schooner that sailed up the MacKenzie and along the coast.

"He delivered my sister Cleo, who was born in Etipia Island, Canada, with a 'hunting knife in one hand and a medical book in the other.' 'It was just like gutting a rabbit.'

"Dad was a free spirit like the Arctic Wind. 'It is not the blood in his veins nor the color of the heart that counts. It is what is in the heart that matters.'

"Oliver D. Morris was born in Seattle, Washington, March 13, 1894. He first came to Alaska in 1910 to Nome, returned to the States for service in the first war. He and Mom were married by Captain Klinkinberg, owner of the "Maid of Orleans", on ship at Herschel Island in 1924."

He is survived by his wife Alice S. Morris; his son Oliver D., born at Pt. Barrow; his daughters, Mrs. Cleo C. Hensley of Nenana and Mrs. Charmaine Huffrich of Phoenix, Arizona; 15 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

"He was an early day friend of Ben Eilson, Sir Hubert Wilkins, Will Rogers, Viljam Stephenson, Captain Pederson and Charles Brower.

"His last wishes were for his ashes to be spread off the coast of Pt. Barrow. His son and good friend Sam Taalak of Pt. Barrow will honor his request in March of 1971."

greater community development, more attention to urban Indians and more emphasis on Indian language and tradition may enforce changes already proposed for the curriculums which will be presented to Indian and Eskimo children in the future.

Rogers Morton...

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the importance of these two critical Alaska projects."

Senator Gravel said he had received firm assurances from Mr. Morton that the two interrelated items each will have "high priority" on his agenda as Secretary of the Interior.

"The fact that Mr. Morton took the time to come to my office and discuss these matters with me," Senator Gravel said, "is indicative of his desire to help resolve these two crucial matters as quickly as possible."

"He has promised to work closely with me and the other members of the Alaska delegation in pursuing the twin goals of fairly meeting the legitimate land claims of Alaska's natives and prudently developing the State's rich natural resources without adversely affecting her ecology.

"Mr. Morton has given me every reason to believe he will be a progressive and capable Secretary of Interior, in general, and a great friend and advocate for Alaska, in particular," Senator Gravel concluded.

The group, numbering about twenty-five members, met to elect officers last Thursday.

Thomas Richards, Jr., Washington correspondent for the Tundra Times and an Eskimo originally from Kotzebue, was elected as President of the organization.

A Tlingit from Juneau working in Washington as a computer specialist, Ray Paddock is Vice-President of the group.

Adeline Katagan, a Unalakleet Eskimo working in the office of Senator Stevens, is Secretary-Treasurer.

"Alaskans on the Potomac are ready to provide nearly any type of basic supportive services to Alaska Native leaders in an effort to enhance the effectiveness of their lobbying efforts here in Washington," Richards said.

"We stand ready to make office space, clerical assistance, transportation, and a variety of other services available to Native leaders," he added.

The organization intends to

meet this week with AFN President Don Wright and other Native delegates in Washington to determine their most pressing needs.

Funding for the operations of Alaskans on the Potomac will come mainly from support by its membership and others with interest in the objectives of the group.

Alaska Native organizations will be under no obligation to make payment on services received.

"Out most important goal is not one of making policy, and nor is it one of lobbying.

"Our most important goal is to meet the needs of Alaska Natives in their effort to influence congressional action for a fair and generous settlement of the Alaska Native land claims," Richards stated.

"It is the wish of Alaskans on the Potomac that our efforts be limited only by what is desired of us by the Alaska Native leadership," concluded Richards.

Sen. Hensley Told—

Beltz Consolidation

Proposal Discontinued

Sen. Willie Hensley has been advised by Commissioner of Education Cliff Hartman that the proposed consolidation of the Beltz Regional School and Nome High School has been discontinued.

Commissioner Hartman's letter to Senator Hensley stated that, "We will not continue with the consolidation plans until some solution has been worked out."

The problem that needs resolving is the issue of representation of villages on city or borough school boards.

Senator Hensley had recommended that a method of village representation be devised to insure that the parents of children attending regional high schools be given a voice in policy-making in academic and personnel areas.

Commissioner Hartman indicated that "we can work on legislation this year which, hopefully, will give us better ideas as to how consolidation might be accomplished under a policy board that would involve representation outside of the city of Nome boundaries."

Native Unemployment..

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Alaskan Natives to fill the various service jobs open in the rapidly expanding social services programs developing in Alaska.

"Alaska state and local government is presently suffering critical shortages of personnel in many service occupations, especially in rural areas of the state...By training Alaska Natives for subprofessional public service positions, especially in rural areas, Alaska government can meet its responsibility to reduce unemployment while alleviating its own manpower needs."

Training its own dentists, doctors, lawyers, social workers and administrative specialists with graduate degrees may be an unreasonably expensive means of producing such people in Alaska—and one which will take many years to develop.

Relaxing qualifications for "in-State hire," the report recommends, may be more realistic. Also, the state must start to compete—in salaries, promotions, opportunities—with federal government and private industries.

Community colleges and on-the-job training programs can, however, train less specialized subprofessionals—draftsmen, nurses, health technologists, and other occupations.

By increasing this training, Alaska can staff its service agencies with Alaskans, giving greater opportunity to Alaskan Natives while upgrading social services in rural areas.

Rural areas, traditional "hard-

ship posts" for outside health and social welfare professionals, can be serviced by people from the area.

This would end the rapid turnover rate which plagues government agencies in the bush—and provide a more intimate relationship between government and the people it serves.

To accomplish these goals, Alaska must first find means to stretch its highly trained professionals. Inter-agency posts, part-time positions, sharing of talent can stretch manpower along with more reliance on subprofessionals.

For too long, state government has let politics decide its hiring policies. Alaska has no state program for minority hire, despite advances in this area in other states with less severe problems.

Successful federal and local programs (Anchorage borough) have proved these programs work.

Eventually, state government must restructure its salaries and promotions scales to attract the top professionals—the people who won't stay in the mediocre jobs which apply political pressure for higher pay.

They don't fit "average" requirements and expect to reach the top.

A state bureaucracy which holds the most talented people down will attract the least qualified, most mediocre people—and it will lose in the long run.