

## Williamson Leaving, Writes Open Letter

Fairbanks District Office  
Box 530  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701

September 14, 1967

TO ALL VILLAGE LEADERS  
AND  
NATIVE ORGANIZATIONS

Dear Friends:

Mr. O'Dean L. Williamson, Realty Officer of the Fairbanks District Office for the past four years, has recently received a well-deserved promotion and transfer. He will be leaving us on October 17 for Everett, Washington.

Mr. Williamson's new duties will be as Reservation Program Officer for the Western Washington Agencies. We will miss Mr. Williamson's expertise in our operations. His general concern for the people with whom he worked is commendable.

He has especially enjoyed the working relationships with village leaders and native organizations. The attached open letter from Mr. Williamson expresses his appreciation for having had the opportunity of working with all of you for the past four years.

Sincerely yours,  
Wallace O. Craig  
Superintendent



AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL MY ALASKAN FRIENDS  
By O. L. (Dean) Williamson

Generally when a Federal employee receives a promotion and transfer he feels gratified that he has finally received recognition for his past work and he looks anxiously towards leaving his area.

I received word that a transfer I requested has come through and I, too, am looking forward to my new assignment as the Reservation Program Officer, Western Washington Agencies, Everett, Washington 98201. But I also have very deep feelings about leaving Alaska. I have already been amply rewarded for what assistance I may have rendered on your behalf while serving as the Realty Officer for the Fairbanks District of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

My reward has been in the form of working for and becoming acquainted with the nicest and most perceptive group of people I have ever or will ever meet and that is you the Alaska Native. I will keep the knowledge I have gained through my relationship with you and your leaders as my most valued asset. I will cherish the help and friendship I have received from your leaders from Northway to Kaltag and Cantwell to Barrow.

You have allowed me to witness four years of your progress toward self-government and service. I have seen your leaders come from the villages and fight aggressively and effectively for your rights and I have felt privileged when they would give me the benefit of their wisdom. For this I thank you.

You are a proud people and you have every right to be proud. I, too, am proud, proud to have been able to serve you.

I hope that someday I may return to serve you again, until then good-by.

Dean Williamson

## Paul Says ANB Has Sought Native Employment for 40 Years

By WILLIAM PAUL, SR.

My reaction to the report of the Federal Field Committee is that it is publishing the low employment ratio of the Federal Agencies that we in the Alaska Native Brotherhood have known for forty years. While the unemployment of natives has been the policy of some federal agencies and also Alaska controlled ones, much of the unemployment has been due to the fact that when employment above the labor category is offered, the department cannot find natives who can meet the minimum requirement or if such be found, they are already gainfully employed and are not available.

I remember that in the thirties, when the Indian Bureau took a census of native Alaskans in their employment, there were only two. Pressure from the ANB eventually brought the number to more than 100, and now that the westward natives are organizing, the total pressure will be increased.

For those who disagree with my statement that non-employment is a policy of some departments, I would cite the fact that when CCC planned to employ 342 in what is now called the "poverty class," not a single native was hired and in a hearing by the Senate Sub-committee, that department tried to justify it.

With the increase of official employment, we face another problem and that is, loyalty to their department either make the native silent or makes him the lawyer of his department. Soon our native organizations will be satellites of the department and our utterances are used to negate our independent leaders.

## Eskimo, Indian Firefighters Draw Accolades of Praise

This summer, the northwest area of the United States suffered drought resulting in huge rash of forest fires and taxed the fire fighting manpower of that area.

Through the director of the Bureau of Land Management in Washington, D. C., Boyd L. Rasmussen, Alaska division of the BLM sent 320 native Alaskan men, most of them Eskimos, to the firelines in Montana.

Although regarded with skepticism at first, the Eskimos and Indians soon proved themselves to be most efficient firefighters. From then on, accolades of praise of their ability, discipline, cleanliness, non-complaining attitudes and efficiency began to break into the news media of the area and praise from many responsible persons.

Montana's Great Falls Tribune said of the firefighters: "Park officials described them as 'very interested, well disciplined and very polite. They learn very quickly.'"

Ray Sellers, district ranger, and James Parr, Job Corps

worker, West Glacier, Montana, said of the Alaskans:

"...Camp boss found that these crews were some of the best that they had ever supervised. They were prompt, courteous, never complained, could work in groups of two or three in mop-up operations.

"This display of individual initiative was not true of the large majority of firefighters on these two major fires. In camp they were very immaculate, camping area was clean, they were neat and orderly, their morale was always very high, singing enroute to the fires and always on a half-run, and all appeared to be very enthusiastic, in good spirits and willing to get the work done.

"In rating these men, as forest firefighters, we rate them as the very highest."

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Joe T. Fallini of the Idaho State BLM Office wrote: "The crews that we had from Alaska were mainly Alaskan Indians from Glenallen and Eskimos from Holy Cross and Aniak. It was unanimous opinion of all the overhead associated with the Alaskan crews that they were far and above the most outstanding organized fire

(Continued on page 7)

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