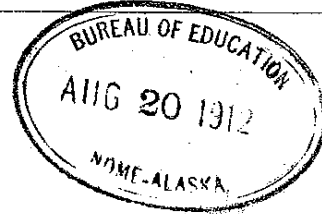


DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF EDUCATION
ALASKA SCHOOL SERVICE

June 30, 1912

SUBJECT

Mr. A. W. Evans,
Nome, Alaska.



My Dear Mr. Evans,-

Enclose annual letter
for U. S. public school at Selawik, Alaska
ending June 30th, 1912.

After receiving our supplies at Kotzebue,
we arrived back at Selawik, Aug. 27th, 1911.

Ourselves and supplies making a
safe journey.

We went to work shortly after our
arrival to prepare for winter. Wood had
to be piled in the shed, after drying
during the summer. Double windows in
and calked. The school house banked etc
to keep out cold winter storms.

The government goods arrived September
second in U. S. condition. The quality
and quantity sent was satisfactory.

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The natives that went to Kotzebue were still traveling as the weather and wind was bad. Some of the other natives had come down to the reservation.

We did not start school till September 25th, as so many go fishing in Sept. to get their winter supply of food.

In educational matters the work was practically the same as in preceding years, with the exception of the attendance being smaller on account of the Yutkon Indians coming here for a trade dance. While the natives were waiting for them to come, there was no trapping and time was spent in idleness, dancing, card playing, which naturally took some children out of school. Otherwise attendance and interest has been good and advancement made.

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In the fall a fair supply of fish was caught for dog feed, and natives food, but from the amount of visitors the supply gave out long before spring.

It was in February when the Indians came and left that month. They had been expecting them since December. While here they had liquor and gambled for money and skins.

This was kept on the quiet at the time, but later on they grew more bold.

The natives lost three months of the best hunting and trapping time.

In March and April many boys and girls had to leave school to hunt rabbits for food and dog feed, while some went to Belawik lake for large shea fish.

Every one seemed to be busy while the muskrat season lasted. Considering the short season, a good catch

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made. They expect to receive \$1.00 for three the largest price ever paid to them.

Some natives who did not attend the trade dance, returned this spring with a fine catch of fox, mink, and lynx.

I saw an improvement in discipline in and out of school. Also a marked improvement in cleanliness of dress and cabins. Some new cabins were built of logs, and many raised higher.

The white man's window is being substituted for the natives skin window. Some have built a second living room.

In the fall by my aid and voluntary native help, a fair sized work shop was built. It was difficult to get them to work, but by giving meals some did help. After tools were installed it has been occupied about every day making stoves sleds, boats, oars, snow-shoes, fishfloats, etc.

They now regret it is not larger and

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better equipped with tools.

I would recommend for this place a line of wood working tools that requires little power. Such as a turning lathe to turn out fish floats, oars, paddles, skiboat ribs, chairrounds, ice pick handles, axe and hammer handles. A scroll saw for sawing designs for sleds, kayaks, and furniture for the home. A mandrel for a cut off saw to cut stove wood. Also a mandrel for a rip saw to rip boards and small logs. A small band mill would be a wonderful help to these people. Any or all these tools should be sent only to stations where spruce is plentiful and the teacher in charge understands filing and keeping saws, so that one or two natives may be taught to keep the machinery up in shape.

It would be unwise to send under

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other conditions

In regard to power, the gasoline engine is beyond doubt the best, which of course requires some expense to operate. It would need some knowledge or experience to run.

The sweep horse power, I believe can be used with reindeer or dogs, and are less expensive to keep in repair. The running expense would be little of nothing and experience not necessary.

A large wind mill say fourteen or sixteen foot would give enough power for any above machines. A wind mill would not be expensive to operate or to keep in repair.

I have thought that knitting machines for heavy wool socks might help to give employment to a few, as well as cutting and sewing of overalls, canvas gloves, parkies

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which are used a great deal in this country. Yarn and drill if bought in Alaska are too expensive to manufacture into any thing to sell, but if sent in from the out side some profit for labor could be realized.

I would recommend an addition either to this house or future school houses built after Ellsworth Storey's plans consisting of three rooms. A industrial cook room and bath room, a natives reception room to spend long winter evenings in, a store room and wood shed.

My idea was an addition built on the North side full length by twelve feet wide. The reception room from the N.E. corner and bath room from N.W. corner, with wood shed between. I am sure the bath room with rules or regulations would be a credit to any village. The reception room is needed badly, as we found the kitchen all together

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to small especially with eight, ten or more in either for medicine, or asking questions and meal time comes to prepare a meal, let alone the odor and room one needs.

A room is needed so not to interfere with household or school duties.

I wish to commend Dr. D. S. Newman for his medical letters. No doubt many teachers like my self need all the help along this line that is available or in other words written so we can understand disease and treatment.

From the help of his letters and our own experience, we treated a case of convulsions peculiar to us, but common as these people have. It was an orphan girl about fourteen years old. From the nature of her sickness, and sores on her body, the natives did not want to keep her. We took her in our home and administered hot sweat baths each night

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along with tonics etc. and good suitable food till she regained normal health again. The reception room could often be used as a hospital ward.

In many cases only medicine that the teacher gives personal is ever taken, as parents will not make children take medicine against their wish, and adults if very sick do not care if they have medicine.

Superstition prevails strongly among them and some prefer the old devil doctor to the medicine.

After the medicine came last fall I saw the cabinet that I made two years ago was too small, so enlarged it immediately.

Later on I made a display cabinet for the school room which I found very useful in the school work, filled with things from the outside and much help or amusement among the older ones.

I made a bookcase and writing desk for the home.

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I would recommend that my successor be given the authority to pay by reindeer the labor in digging out a cold storage.

I tried one for my self on the surface but was not a success at Selawik. If one can be dug in the side hill, I believe will work O.K. If one is built and works satisfactory about all will build individual or partnership cellars. This will over come shortage in food certain times a year. And help to do away with decayed fish now in use.

From experience of preceding years we did not try gardening, as the tundra is mostly ice and moss, and thaws only a little.

However would like to see a little marsh hay cut and cured, and a reindeer barn built of logs and see if sled deer would not gain more working strength than from the moss. If the hay is an improvement there are many acres of good hay not far from here.

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I believe the herd should be sent near salt water during the summer months.

I think Mr. Lopp's plans that Thos. Illyok was inaugurating last winter were fine.

The reindeer industry certainly needs a reliable market to dispose of its deer.

The native cooperative plan was a jewel for the future welfare of these people.

Our people seem anxious to invest money in the store.

In January I visited the reindeer camp and divided off seventy five deer which were sent to Buckland river. I was at camp May 1st, and found every thing in fine working order. Boys had plenty of wood for summer camp use, lots of birch cut to make sleds, snowshoes, and harness. They had more to sell on the market.

Mike took some meat to Kiana in April but found an overstocked market from Kotzebue and Kivalana herds. Meat sold less than ten cents a pound.

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I did very little in industrial wood work as the work shop was in constant use by men making native implements. I gave my attention frequently showing different ones how to use the new tools and keeping the saws sharp.

I held school with out recess in the fore noon or after noon, which gave a excellent opportunity to drill in mathematics, spelling, writing, reading, etc. I realized that some of the older ones were having their last chance in school. I gave these drilling in every day education.

Mr. Shields was a welcome caller the twenty fifth of December. While his stay was not long, yet he gave many helpful ideas. He took Jimmie Oluck from this reindeer camp as his guide and reindeer to go further on his trip. Eventually through the need of a herder at Shungnak

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Jimmi Oluck was transferred to that camp. This meant Shungnak's gain and our loss. The boys here are in fine spirits even if his help is missed. Reports show more fawns and less loss than in preceding years.

I understand the mail route between Kotzebue and Shungnak is shorter via Selawik than by present route (Kobuck river). I think some step should be taken to have the route either go or return by Selawik in order to have winter mail service. At present we get mail only by chance of some one coming or send for it ourselves.

I have made regular weekly visits to cabins and igloos, in order to keep in touch with sanitary conditions. I find they need frequent advising or even ~~threatenings~~ to keep some where near clean.

The cabins or igloos where sick were

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I visited as I thought the case needed.
At times one to three times daily.

The supplies sent in to buy wood has
always been a great help here to tide
over the spring months. He will leave
about 50 ricks of spruce and willow wood,
that will be well seasoned for the next year.

I would recommend that from now
on a years supply of wood be kept on
hand in order to have dry wood.

Linseed oil and paper received last fall,
so have painted the house where ever needed
on the out side. Inside paper was put
on the walls where before it was short.
With such calcimine as we had we cleaned the
walls.

April, May and June were darkened
with smoke from forest fires raging near
Kiana mining camp. It seems a pity
to see a forest of spruce and birch burned
and moss destroyed where needed as this

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country needs it.

In conclusion of this annual letter, and finishing of our work at Selawick, we sincerely wish the work to advance more each year. We tried to lay a good foundation so that teachers who follow us with a helping spirit can carry the work along.

We feel as if we had accomplished a few things. Surely there is a wonderful work to be done.

We do not see white people till we reach Kotzebue a few weeks in the summer, only as a traveler passes by occasionally.

From this isolation and a years rest we will be pleased to reenter the work again. We remain,

Your humble servants,

Mr. & Mrs. Sickles.

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