

## Report of SELAWIK SCHOOL for the year ending June 30, 1916.

## The Village/

The village of Selawik is located on the W. shore of the Selawik River, and about 10 miles from the mouth, making 110 miles from Kotzebue the nearest P.O. and seaport. It is a village most unfortunately situated, a great part of it at this time being under water?

W

There has been a great deal of agitation on the part of the natives in favor of removing the school to a more desirable locality. During the winter months much of the time that the Eskimo should spend in trapping and hunting he must devote to the task of fetching in wood, and each year this is becoming more of a problem, the nearest timber of any consequence being at least 30 miles from the village.

In the winter it is a windswept stormy place, and in the spring, summer and fall, the village is a mudhole fit only for mosquitoes and ducks.

There is no game for many miles, trapping sea on calls for a two or three days journey from the village, and fish are not as plentiful here as in localities not very far distant.

There is a great deal of sickness here, but the wonder is that there is so little when the surrounding are taken into consideration. Around the school there are several miniature lakes, caused by the melting snow, but the water will remain all summer and fall, in fact until the freeze-up. The two outside toilets belonging to the school are in swamps, and drain into these lakes, and the smells arising on a warm day is akin to that of over ripe fish.

COPY

towns, his knowledge of, and contact with white men have been of necessity limited. This state however is not without its redeeming features, for I have found them more honest in their dealings, more straightforward in their communications than they would be if they had associated more with the white element of surrounding villages.

They retain more of their ancient customs and ideas, although, I am glad to say, their most highly respected doctor (native) has lost caste by coming to the teacher for treatment when his wife was sick.

The Selawik native is industrious, and as a rule, a successful trapper, but the white trader has practically every able-bodied man here tied up so tight with debts, that the greater part of his life will be spent in getting out of old debts, and in the process, accumulating new ones.

They are quick to adopt any new policy that might tend to advance them, always providing of course that it does not restrict them too much and interfere to too great an extent with their privileges. One must therefore, in order to accomplish any lasting good, move slowly, so that the why and the wherefor of each successive move may be not only made clear to them but discussed and commented upon in their own private circles where many conferences are held. It is at these private discussions that the success of our plans are decided, and we have found it always expedient when promoting new plans for the betterment of the people and village to explain everything thoroughly to several of the more intelligent

~~-----this-could-be-so~~ easily remedied by the addition of another window. This has been requested, but so far has not been sent/

I believe the necessity for moving the school to a more desirable locality and that in the immediate future is so great that I hesitate to recommend any changes, additions, or repairs to the school buildings, but if but if it is found necessary to remain in the present location any length of time, the buildings should be given a thorough overhauling. The schoolroom is very cramped and it is difficult to accomplish effective work where there is so little room.

#### The People.

The Eskimos are a likable people, easy to get along with and always ready to listen to what the school teacher has to say. They seem to have a fondness for public speaking, and an Eskimo meeting takes a long time, as each one present has something to say. They have a great deal of respect for the law, but their experiences of its official administration has not always convinced them that it deals equitably with all people.

I think indeed that as a rule there is very little consideration for the Eskimo in the average local courts, and believe that all matters concerning the native can be much better dealt with by those whose business it is to teach them, as acquiring as they do an understanding of them that would be of great value in the administering of justice.

Comparatively speaking the Selawik Eskimo is very backward. Remote from the larger villages and

COPY

and capable men who are leaders among the men, and enlist their aid and support.

Much to the chagrin of several white men, we have succeeded in introducing and enforcing a new standard of morals. That it has been successful is evinced by the indignation and outspoken condemnation of those men who have felt its effects and chafed at its restrictions. We have had several cases of immorality, and these have been dealt with by the natives themselves in such a manner, that those who have been lax in the past, are now reflecting that the paths of the unrighteous are not strewn with daisies, and that the integrity of a neighbors wife or daughter cannot be assailed without bringing its full measure of punishment.

#### Physical Condition.

Although there is quite a lot of sickness amongst the inhabitants of Selawik, we find none of the loathsome diseases that prevail in other places. There seems to be very little evidence of cases of hereditary sickness, and tuberculosis while not unknown, is not a common disease here.

During the year there have been 784 "times medical assistance rendered" and I believe 90 per cent of these cases have been stomach trouble and that mainly due to eating either too great quantities of food or eating food that had been allowed to decay.

Coughs and colds prevail here at certain times during the year, but it has been the rule here, to inform the teacher whenever any person showed signs of being unwell, and a vigilant committee has enforced this rule. It is not without the bounds of possibility therefore that our death rate represented by

a 0 has been in part due to the "atitch in time saves nine" policy which we have practised.

I might mention here ( although of course it should be born in mind that I do not profess to know much about the practise of medicine) that I have been very successful in the treatment of the majority of stomach trouble cases by prescribing salol. It seems to be in fact just what the poor sick native stomachs have been waiting for.

There are no cases of insanity here, that is of course, amongst the native population, and but two cases where the mentality is not quite up the normal standard.

Doctor Nichols of Kotzebue visited us twice during the term, and examined quite a few of the older people and all of the children.

In order to make it more convenient for the children to take an occasional bath, we took out the screws which fastened the seats to the floor and screwed the desks and seats in groups of three and four to two inch by four inch timbers which enables us to move them at will to the sides of the room, giving us ample floor space for baths and other purposes.

school work.

while the children show great aptitude and proficiency in school work, yet their rate of progress is slow. There are a few that talk english well, but not as many as might be expected, considering the length of time in which they have had the advantages of education. I think that this is due to the fact that their parents are so much behind the natives of surrounding villages, and this in some measure keeps the children back.



The parents have made a commendable effort this year to send their children to school.

I held night school quite a lot this year, and the older people seemed to appreciate it very much, my oldest pupil was a trifle over 90 years of age.

#### Sewing.

Sewing class was always a great source of delight to the girls, and we have had ample evidence that whatever has been shown them in school has been put into practice in their own homes. A number of things were made up by the girls, some being for themselves, other thin being for needy families, and several boys were the proud recipients of snow)white Calico Parkie under a promise that they should be kept clean or forfeit them.

Quite a number of the older women came to the school to have garments cut out, and would then finish the work in their own homes, as there are a quite a number of sewing machines in the village belonging to the Eskimos.

Follows a list of articles made by the sewing class, all of which have been distributed.

- 6 White parki covers
- 2 Men's shirts
- 3 Women's shirts
- 2 Union suits (childrens
- 2 Boy's Blouses
- 4 Dresses
- 5 Waists
- 8 Aprons

8 Aprons

8 Petticoats.

#### Carpentry.

Owing to limited accommodations we had to limit our carpentry work. This was unfortunate, because the Eskimo boy loves to work with tools. However we made about 25 coasting sleds, built a new book cupboard in the schoolroom, a washstand with shelf, a bookcase for one of the boys, a washstand for one of the pupils, and built a set of shelves for the school.

#### Gardening.

There was a small garden in connection with the school, and we have prepared another and much larger one facing the river, but gardening in Selawik is a discouraging proposition.

Exposed to winds from all points of the compass? wet and swampy, the prospect of anything but a crop of mosquitoes is not very bright. This condition of things is one of the main reasons I urge for moving the schoolhouse, that we may get to some place where conditions are more favorable for gardening? and there are many such places not very far distant.

#### Building.

I have not encouraged the building of new cabins this year? because I believe that the interests of these people will be better served by removing to another site. There have been however 3 new cabins erected, additions made to several old ones and quite a number of " igloos " built. The terrible storms that swept this place in January last, and the unprecedented high water this spring have been deciding factors in favor of a new site for the village.

January last, and the unprecedented high water that covered the village this spring have been deciding factors in favor of a new site Trapping.

Trapping this year has not been much of a success. This is due mainly to the unusually heavy fall of snow. During the storms that took place at the beginning of the year, a large number of traps were lost. Later, when musk rat should have been plentiful, the delayed spring practically spoiled the catch. The few furs gathered however brought fairly good prices.

#### Fishing.

In spite of the fact that fish are very plentiful, the natives insist on burying some for future use, making the delectable "mukki salmon"

This should be stopped for sanitary reasons, and our efforts have been directed towards that end.

#### Cleanliness and Sanitation.

It is possible that the average Eskimo does not have as an heritage a love for soap and water, but that signifies nothing if they can be taught to acquire it, and I believe they can be. We have by moving to the seats, made it possible for them to bathe in the schoolroom, and I believe they enjoy it, at least the older children do. We have however found it necessary to distribute the soap in cubes, the size of which has been carefully calculated as they have a positive genius for inventing ways and means for reducing the size of a fresh cake of soap and after emerging from the bath, if one should be in their immediate vicinity, they could distinctly hear the skin crack because of its thick veneer of soap.

The average native is honest in his endeavors to live up to sanitary principles.



-----10-----

The word " bacteria " is an inspiration is a inspira) tion in itself. It is heard everywhere, and the ambition of every old man and woman is to be able to say the word bacteria and on the teacher's visit to the house, if he is not wary, might endeavor to show his learning by expectorating on the floor, and pointing to it remark " him bacteria stop ". However they seem to have assimilated at least the first principles of sanitary ways and means, as can be readily seen at any of their congregations.

#### Singing.

The Eskimos love to sing, and love to hear their children sing, and this year we have had exceptionally fine singing. As on other occasions I have written new songs for them, they are songs written of things around them, and of things they know and understand, and therefore have more interest in them. I would suggest that the Dept send me a phonograph that I might make records of Eskimo children singing, as I am sure that they would prove very interesting and valuable.

#### Reindeer

The condition of reindeer affairs at the local herd is much more encouraging now than it has been for some time.

In spite of the prevalent cold winds at fawning time, very few fawns were lost. There were several cases of sickness amongst the deer, what appeared to be large boils. These were opened and an ointment which I had prepared from sulphur and vase) line was put in, and in each case it was healed.

It is unfortunate I think, that the herders at Selawik are all young men, they seemingly have not yet acquired that sense of responsibility so necessary for any successful results. I i

## ----- II -----

I wish things could be so arranged that one of the old time men could be taken into the local camp to add stability to our young men, who I believe are fairly good men, but cannot seem to take the reindeer business seriously enough to give all that is best in them to its benefit. At this time to state that I have an earnest conviction that the " Reindeer Fairs " recently organized will be the means of adding a new impetus to the industry.

I have been surprised at the results of the Noorvik Fair which I attended, upon our local herders. There is a new zeal to their work, an interest in reindeer affairs that has never been manifest before: There is a friendly competitive feeling among the men, a desire to accomplish something that will bring them before other men in favorable light; they are painfully aware that they have been neglectful of their duties, they have been made to feel how pitifully small is their knowledge of the reindeer business, and now they desire to learn, profiting by the experience of others and by personal experience, and are now endeavoring to improve the stock and equipment. They seem to be awakening to the wonderful possibilities embodied in the reindeer as a business proposition, and all this has been brought about by the reindeer fairs. They have been tried as an experiment so I understand, but my heartiest wish is, that in the interests of the native reindeer men and the reindeer industry that the reindeer fairs wherever they be held, BE MADE A PERMANENT FEATURE OF THE REINDEER SERVICE.

----)))-----I2-----

Before closing this report, I wish to add an appreciation of the work and helpful co-operation of the resident missionary of the Friends Church, Miss Hunnicutt. Her untiring efforts and Christian sympathy for the Eskimos has been a great factor in making the year's work a fruitful one.

Follows a few recommendations I would like to make.

- I. That the Dept. should obtain the privilege of extending the season for the killing of muskrat when necessary in the opinion of the local teacher. Ice conditions this year have been such that few of the natives will have more than a few days in which to catch the rats.
2. That a Govt. store be maintained at Noorvik, and that the Selawik natives be given the privilege of trading there.
3. That it be made a part of the local reindeer apprentice's duties to carry mail to and from Selawik at stated intervals, and that this work shall if necessary be paid for from Govt. supplies; as under present conditions it is a hardship upon the local teacher to be compelled to pay for the taking and bringing of mail, consisting as it does for the most part, of Govt. mail.

Respectfully submitted,

COPY