

15/73/8
Box 1, File 3

March 16, 1970

Miss Ernece B. Kelly
Department of English
Chicago City College, Loop Campus
64 East Lake Street
Chicago, Illinois 60601

Dear Ernece,

Thank you for all the news about the Washington conference and your thoughts on the Task Force. I gave copies of your letter to Bob and Rod, as you asked, and Bob may well be writing you--I can't be any more definite than that because we've been so busy around here we haven't had a chance for connected discourse.

I wish we had time to talk about your feeling that there are real and dangerous pressures toward a Pollyanna attitude about changing education--as if the big effort had not only been made but had produced the necessary change and now we can slack off. I've been getting this impression very strongly from a lot of the official stuff that comes out of Washington as well as from other sources. Much of it is intangible and I can't put my finger on it, but it worries--no, it scares me. If changes for the better have taken place, it has been because of pressure, and it seems to me that now is the time to push harder, keep up the talk and the action, not relax. Even if the changes had been Giant Steps, this would be true--and they haven't been. Well, I didn't mean to orate.

I'm glad to know that some of the material I've been sending has proved useful. I'll try not to flood you with paper, but I will keep sending things. It seems better to let you make the decision about what to toss out. The enclosed paragraph about Bruce Sealey is from the English Quarterly, Winter 1970, the publication of the Canadian CTE, in which he had a sensible, tough-minded article called "Indians and Métis: Canadians Plus or Minus?" From what he said, it is obvious that discrimination against Indians, educationally and otherwise, is not confined by national boundaries, and he makes some very practical suggestions for dealing with it. If you'd like a copy of the article, let me know and we can Xerox it for you. Anyway, even if there's not room on the Task Force for him, he might be a good resource person.

In the Winter issue of The Indian Historian, I notice an ad for Textbooks and the American Indian, a publication of the Indian Historical Press. The blurb says, "This 285-page book has been

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in preparation for three years. A study of textbooks and curriculum-related books used in the public schools and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools. More than 350 books were evaluated. Of these, 172 were chosen for publication" It will also include a bibliography and a commentary on curriculum, and sounds very saeful for your group. I'm asking the Council to buy two copies, one for us here and one for you. If it looks good, you might want to order more copies for the Task Force. As soon as it comes in, we'll forward one to you.

Very truly yours,

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Prichard
Assistant Executive Secretary

NSP:pg

Enclosure

D. Bruce Sealey

A native Manitoban, Mr. Sealey is ~~him~~ bilingual (English and Cree) and has been a teacher in Indian and Métis communities for many years. He is chairman both of the Manitoba Curriculum Committee on the Education of Indians and Métis and of the Education Committee of the Manitoba Métis Federation. Mr. Sealey is writing his M.Ed. thesis on the English language problems of Cree-speaking students. At present he is Principal of Norberry Junior High School in St. Vital, Manitoba.

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THE LOOP COLLEGE

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10 March 1970

Mrs. Nancy Prichard
N.C.T.E.
508 South Sixth Street
Champaign

Dear Nancy:

Would you share this letter with Bob Hogan and Rodney since I assume that they are both interested in the two matters I'm going into some detail about.

First, the NEA-Human Relations Center Conference. I did not see or learn what I had expected to. It was, in thoughtful retrospect, a masterful lesson in manipulation. The central item on the agenda was, ostensibly, criticism and adaptation and, finally, adoption of a resolution on school desegregation/integration which was to be presented at the national conference of the NEA in July, 1970. In essence, the resolution declared that school integration had failed and recommended that the objective of providing cross cultural-racial-economic experiences for children/young adults be shifted from the schools to voluntary, social service agencies such as the Girl Scouts and the YMCA.

Short-sightedness and a lack of commitment to the goal of integration was indicated, as far as some of us were concerned, by the reasons given for the "failure of school integration", and we were appalled by what seemed to be a gradualist position, as represented by the position paper. My own distress was compounded by the manner in which this important business was conducted: we were given fifteen minutes to digest the paper (why wasn't it sent to us upon receipt of our registration?) and were given forms which only offered gross categories within which to indicate our reaction to key portions of the paper (Mildly Disagree? Strongly Agree?...) with no invitation to show the whys or wherefores.

Well, some of us got together and formed a Black Caucus at which a different paper was drafted and our objections to the original one outlined. Saturday morning the substitute position paper was adopted by voice vote. I was pleased about that. But I continue to be disturbed by the direction the NEA-HRC was willing, indeed, interested in steering its membership. I'm afraid that it is symptomatic of the posture of abandonment which is spreading and taking root in this country. And provides a backdrop against which the goals of the Task Force take on a heightened urgency. (In fact, my pleasure about the adoption of "our" position paper is tempered by my observation and interpretation of why it was relatively easily accepted. These participants and officers were tired of all that debate and all these objections and said,

"Oh, alright. Let's get something to take to the general membership. I'm sick of all these words, and want to go home".)

More positively, I was able to make contact with some persons who I believe will be helpful in putting me in touch with others who have been doing work in the area of textbooks which have cultural/racial variety. I have written to a Puerto Rican and an American Indian contact person, among others, who verbally promised to supply me with some names. Upon hearing from them, I want to thoroughly describe the objectives of the T.F. and invite their participation. (Paul Diederich would be an excellent addition to the T.F., I believe, and is the only person whose name has come to me who has expertise and/or experience in the area of testing instruments).

Do react and let me know what you think of my ideas. Insofar as the composition of the TF is concerned, I have these thoughts: two Blacks, one Puerto Rican, Chicano, and American Indian, and, probably, two whites. Too, I'm aiming at representation from different sections of the U.S. (where it would seem to mean different experiences; for example, Chicanos are a real presence in California; they are not so much so here in the Midwest) and different educational levels. These are the kinds of considerations I'm keeping in mind as I get ready to invite persons to become members.

I am making the Task Force sound task-orientated, which is definitely what I (and I assume NCTE) want it to be. To be more precise, I have sketched out these three objectives, which may be only tentative ones to give us something to chew on and, perhaps, discard later on:

- A. The TF will assess the nature and breadth of the phenomenon of the continuing development of texts and tests which discriminate against cultural and racial groups.
- B. The TF will chart short- and long-range plans for acting on this two-pronged problem of bias.
- C. The TF members will involve themselves actively in the implementation of these plans on their local levels; this does not rule out members forming satellite groups to operate on a national level.

I've appreciated all the communiques related to the TF that have come out of your office. They help me to delineate and crystalize my thinking and visions for the TF. Keep them coming...

Sincerely,


Ernest B. Kelly