

For Canada Natives—**Important Year**

By LOIS KEATING
 INUVIK, N.W.T.—Feb. 5—Despite all my good intentions for the new year, here it is well into February before I'm sending you my first column for 1975.

This will probably be one of the most important years ever for the native people of the Canadian north. Beginning on March 3, the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry will officially begin, and the hearings are expected to continue probably for the rest of the year, and possibly even into 1976. Judge Berger has said he will take all the time that is necessary to get the information which the Inquiry needs.

C.O.P.E. (The Committee for Original Peoples Entitlement), the Indian Brotherhood and the Metis Association all have been sending Pipeline Information Fieldworkers into the settlements to visit each home and speak to the people in their own language, to ensure that everyone knows as much as possible about what is going on.

All during the hearings, CBC (the Canadian Broadcasting Company) will broadcast current information about the hearings—in seven languages. Needless to say, this is a monumental undertaking and requires a great deal of work, both by CBC staff and by the native translators.

Information sessions have also been given in this area by the Beaufort Sea Environmental Program. These people have been doing studies on all sorts of subjects pertaining to drilling in the Beaufort Sea, and its possible effects on the people and the environment.

Last week they came back to Inuvik and the settlements with the results of their work so far, and they also showed an interesting new film called "Understanding the Beaufort Sea." Eighteen oil companies are actively supporting the research program, and the remaining funds are being provided by Environment Canada, a branch of the federal Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

The Federation of Native North of Sixty met in Inuvik in January and the main topics were the pipeline and land claims. All of the native organizations in the N.W.T. have Land Claims Negotiating Teams which will be meeting with government officials in an attempt to come to a satisfactory agreement.

In December, the Delta lost three of its old-time citizens—Rachel Selamio and Elizabeth Koe of Aklavik, and Alfred Charlie of Fort McPherson.

Nellie Courmoyea has taken a year's leave of absence as manager of CBC radio in Inuvik, so she can work with the Inuit people on land claims. She will be working with ITC (Inuit Tapirisat of Canada) and C.O.P.E.—she'll still be living in Inuvik, but will be spending a lot of time in the communities, talking with the people about their future, and about the problems they will be facing as a result of the development that will be going on in the north. Bob Rhodes, who has been with CBC in Toronto, is the new manager of CHAK.

The Territorial Council elections will be held March 10. The number of councillors has been increased to 15, and this will be the first fully elected council that the N.W.T. has had.

The snow is a lot deeper this year than usual. A lot of the trappers have been having trouble with their skidoos in the deep snow, and for a while after the rivers froze over, there was also a lot of overflow, which added to their difficulties.

We had a very cold spell around the end of the year, with temperatures in Inuvik going down to -66 degrees below F.—and in some of the settlements the wind chill factor was lower than -120 degrees below.

The ice roads are now open to Tuktoyaktuk and Aklavik, and for about two weeks now, people have been traveling back and forth. Also, it is now possible to drive from Inuvik to Arctic Red River and to Fort McPherson. It seems good to be able to get in the car and have a choice of directions in which to go.

Mail-in Bail System—**No need for court appearance**

Beginning the first of March most motorists will be able to take advantage of the mail-in bail system designed by the Alaska Court System. It will no longer be necessary for most motorists to appear in court in response to a traffic ticket.

Except for the more serious violations, motorists will have the option of posting bail by mail, and if they so desire they may let the bail stand as their fine for the charge.

This new mail-in bail system was developed by the Alaska Court System as part of a general statewide revision of traffic citation procedures undertaken by the court system, the Department of Public Safety, the Department of Revenue and representatives of the general public.

This cooperative effort was supported by a federal grant from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and saw the development of the point system administered by the Department of Public Safety and the adoption of the Uniform Traffic Citation by all law enforcement agencies in the state.

The Alaska Court System assisted in the design of the Uniform Traffic Citation and the development of the Automated Traffic Processing System to assure rapid updating of traffic records. In accordance with statutory provisions enacted in 1973, the court system drafted a statewide uniform bail schedule and designed the mail-in bail system.

Under this system there are three types of offenses: 1. those for which a court appearance for arraignment; 2. those for which a court appearance is optional and for which bail may be paid by mail; 3. those which may be dismissed.

As in the past, a court appearance for arraignment is still mandatory for those offenses which require the filing of a criminal complaint. These are: operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated, reckless driving, negligent driving, careless driving, leaving the scene of an accident and driving while license is suspended or revoked.

A court appearance is also required for citations which carry six or more penalty points. For these a court appearance is optional on the part of the motorist and he may choose to take advantage of the mail-in bail system.

At the time the motorist is issued a citation a court appearance date will be set. But he also will be given an envelope addressed to the nearest District Court.

If he does not want to appear in court for arraignment, but if he does want to contest the charge he may indicate this in an appropriate box on a copy of the ticket submitted to the court with the correct amount of bail.

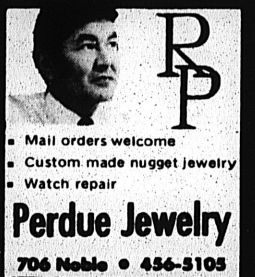
He may also indicate his desire for a jury or non-jury trial. The court will then advise him of his trial date by return mail. If the following trial he is found not guilty, his bail will be returned and no penalty points will be assessed.

If a motorist does not want to contest the charge he may indicate this intention of the copy of the ticket sent to the court along with the correct bail. In so doing he enters a plea of "no contest" to the charge.

This will be treated as a conviction. The bail will be accepted as the fine for the charge and the Department of Public Safety will assess the appropriate number of penalty points against his record. But a conviction based

on a "no contest" plea cannot be used in civil action which may arise from the charge.

The third type of offense involves citations for equipment violations or driving without a license in possession, and these are dismissable. At the time the citation is issued a court appearance date will be set. But if the motorist can demonstrate to the law enforcement agency prior to that date that the equipment violation has been corrected or that he does possess a valid driver's license, the charge will be dismissed.

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