

Editorial—

The Wrong Thrust At the Wrong Time

Many of our native people in Alaska had to sit ill at ease once again last week at the conclusion of the president of the Arctic Slope Native association Joe Upicksoun's testimony before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs where he threatened with political defeat Chairman Wayne N. Aspinall of the Interior Committee and Chairman James A. Haley of the Indian Affairs Subcommittee.

The verbal altercation stemmed from Upicksoun's dislike of the Aspinall land claims bill. Lot of us don't like that bill either and have said so publicly in a manner we thought was right.

Joe Upicksoun is fighting for his people but the manner in which he is doing it can cause grave setbacks that might be irreparable. In our opinion, one don't insult venerable men like Aspinall and Haley in the manner Upicksoun did. They are the elected officials of their respective states and they are highly respected members of the Congress of the United States. Even though they are highly placed in the country's government, they can be criticized—and they can be criticized rather severely but with a good measure of dignity they deserve. They have earned this respect in performing their duties for long years for their people back home and for their country.

We feel that we are duty-bound to try to make amends with Aspinall and Haley in the face of the recent disturbing event. This we do gladly and with sincerity. This we do with consciousness of the recognition we have gained as the voice of the native people of Alaska. We also hope that Donald Wright as president of the Alaska Federation of Natives do likewise. Perhaps other leaders can join him in this because all of us have a great stake in the struggle for equitable settlement of the Alaska native land claims.