

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Trained Natives . . .

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wrote an editorial that contained the following: "Whatever settlement form is finally decided upon by all concerned, there will be an urgent need for technical knowledge among our own people in the fields of law, business management, political science, economics, statistics, sociology, and many other related functions."

In addition, we would also like to make the following comment.

We may not be right, or we could be partly right, in saying that there seems to be some sort of a vacuum surrounding the students when persons of their own races talk to them about native affairs. The subject matter of the talk doesn't always seem to sink in. It makes us suspect that many of the current students might still be suffering from the impact of their early learning processes that all but told them that the ways and customs of their own people were inferior. As a result of this perhaps, there may be a lurking attitude in back of their minds that their own current native leaders do not measure up to the Caucasians to whom they were taught to look up even to the level of reverence. This could be the set attitude of some students—a barrier that will have to be breached before they begin to give proper respect for their own leadership and backgrounds.

That this attitude exists even today is an unmistakable fact. In recent years, the editor of this newspaper was told by one of his fellow villagers that he could never hope to be smarter than ANY Caucasian. Although disturbed by the remark he, however, has tried to keep working spurred on by the fact that his ancestors had achieved successes against tremendous odds under one of the world's sternest conditions.

The current and future native college students have no cause to be ashamed. They are the descendants of brave, nery, intelligent peoples. They have these fine attributes that are inherent in their blood. This is the stuff that can be a superb background for higher learning. All it needs is proper tapping and guidance with understanding.

It has always been our belief that our students can achieve any level of higher education and this belief becomes stronger as time passes. The need for technically proficient native men and women is fast becoming a need if our people are to compete and work proudly in the the coming altered environment that is sure to effect their future. Great many skills will be needed and they will be needed soon.

The following passage of Steve Hass' letter needs particular notice:

" . . . The people, I'm sure, are capable of expanding their occupational horizons beyond that of carpenter and are certainly capable of understanding the issues at hand if efforts are made to make them aware. In the end the question is, given the present general state of the people, will the settlement of the land claims bring any change for the better?"

Juneau Man Writes to Pollock

Written in Juneau
10 July, 1969

Dear Howard:

I will refrain from using the condescending "My Dear" salutation which you chose to use to our governor in the letter you wrote about educational broadcasting possibilities in Alaska and released widely to press and electronic news media. Why couldn't it have been written privately to Keith Miller? There may have been an oversight on the part of the 1st state legislature in that no office of communications was set up for our vast expanses.

Howard, your letter is a great disappointment to me. It does not sound like the Howard Pollock I knew in the late '50's and early '60's. It is like a bull in a china shop. To say the least it is impolite and in bad taste. It lacks your usual touch of charming diplomacy and Alaskan friendliness. Even if there was concern about delay in the applications for the educational

broadcast system etc., there are still only 24 hours in a day and the uncertainties preceding Miller's ascension to the governor's chair were many—as have been the multitude of problems which he has quietly faced . . . with a difficult legislature composed of several hopefuls for the governorship and a diminishing carryover from Wally Hicel's administration.

You mentioned your concern about educational TV broadcasting in Alaska "before" Miller became governor. Perhaps this is significant. Why wasn't it pushed more then—if time were so crucial?

Early in January Keith Miller designated a five-member Educational Broadcast Commission to initiate help offered by PL 90-129 but knowing that an educational type of grant is not always cut off because of unrealistic time schedules, the commission refrained from going off half-cocked and has been like Miller, quietly, working on what we all agree will be a great boon to

Alaskans, especially those in Bethel and other remote areas.

Howard, my friend, we are not missing out on educational broadcasting in Alaska. It is being diligently worked on by members of Keith Miller's staff and our U.S. Congress is not going to deprive our rural population (or urbanites) of educational TV assistance because of a myopic deadline (probably imposed by the corrupt Johnson administration) and because Cliff Hartman, Don Fridley and other members of the Educational Broadcasting Commission did not panic and submit an application without sufficient time to do it properly. I'm confident that your influence and Ted Stevens' influence in Congress will also help us to get educational TV and other broadcasting to the Alaskan bush.

Howard, when you speak of dereliction, I think of the thousands of dead young Americans who might still be living if men like you had joined the ranks of such stalwarts as Hatfield, our own Ernie Gruening, Morse and others who laid their political futures on the line and defied the Johnsonian profiteers, by standing up for logic to either win in Vietnam or get the hell out of a civil war where we had very little, if any, business. My conviction is that you, Howard, were derelict in your duty to every Alaskan that has fallen in Vietnam and to every other American who has fallen since you received the first letters of concern about our involvement there.

Were you afraid to stand up politically then for what Nixon is boldly doing now in Vietnam?

When you so flamboyantly use the word "derelict" against our governor, I am reminded of a two-million dollar AID grant to what is considered by a handful of knowledgeable Americans to be a profiteering and land and political speculating business, masquerading under the name of the University of the Americas in Mexico City and Puebla, Mexico. I think of students and teachers, Mexican and American, who expected you to use your influence to help correct conditions there or to work for a termination for U.S. funds to such a questionable institution which maintains its shaky accreditation by wining, dining and exotically otherwise entertaining the "right" people. Some of their irregularities were filed with the National Education Association near your office . . . but then this involves only two million dollars of American taxpayers' monies to Mexico and cannot compare to the tragedy of our Vietnam involvement about which too many Americans (including you, apparently) have been victims of the Johnsonian line that we are fighting a war there solely to stop the flow of communism.

Then there was Johnny Gannons plea about problems in VA schooling and pleas about postal service in Juneau and elsewhere. Were you, Howard, derelict to the voters in these cases? There are others which space does not allow me to tabulate. Your "We

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College Trained Natives Stressed by Writer

July 10, 1969

The Editor
Tundra Times
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Editor:

In that it seeks a return of lands once used to those subsequently dispossessed of them, the so-called Native Land Claims issue greatly resembles the land reform so fundamental to the social development of many underdeveloped rural societies. However, the Native Land Claims seem to neglect a vital side of any land reform program. For land reform to achieve its intended purpose of a real and meaningful redistribution of wealth it must proceed beyond the mere mechanical granting of lands to the dispossessed. It must through education, training, and organization provide for the development of the beneficiary so that he is enabled to gain a position of knowledge and competency from which he may bring from the land the return so necessary to the material improvement of his life.

It seems that in Alaska perhaps the impetus for this human development must emanate from within the ranks of the dispossessed themselves. This is probable at least in the sense that the landless must demand to be placed in that functional position which will enable them to manage and utilize the newly obtained resource themselves and for themselves.

The officialdom of the dominant society seems not to be overly interested in training the Eskimo and Indian in other than the manual trades. And no doubt skilled mechanics and carpenters will have a necessary role to play in developing the potential of native lands. But where are the Eskimo and Indian economists, engineers, lawyers, managers, and other professional people who seem vital to giving the disposition of the land its proper orientation. Who will decide the direction and extent of the land use? Who will make these policies, and who will administer and enforce them? It appears now that after having won the land the Native Alaskans may be forced to turn it back to white society for management and the determination of its use. In the light of past experience, this course would seem to be dangerous in its potential for dilution of benefits to Native Alaskans.

What will be the role of each individual in the use of the land? Will he be prepared to participate meaningfully in its development? Will he be in a position to claim the returns as his own? Or will there be white administrators telling underexposed village people what to do with THEIR lands. Frankly, a person who is often drunk, undereducated, too ignorant in the ways of the dominant culture to turn it to his use, isolated and unknown, and made spiritless by a continuing contemptuous treatment is in no position to produce anything of value out of the wealth of land which may become his.

This letter is written in the hope of turning the TUNDRA TIMES on to the question of human resource development and, generally, of stimulating some discussion on the subject. Much of your paper is devoted to the question of land rights. But I hear very little from you concerning the concomitant issue of preparation of people to take advantage themselves of what they as groups may acquire. Perhaps it is long overdue that Native Alaskans who have found a voice put it to use in demanding the human development of the people. The people, I am sure are capable of expanding their occupational horizons beyond that of carpenter and are certainly capable of understanding the issues at hand if efforts are made to make them aware. In the end, the question is, given the present general state of the people, will the settlement of the land claims bring any change for the better?

Steve Hass
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