

Editorial—

The Need for Trained Native Men and Women

Steve Hass' letter to the editor, which is printed on the editorial page, is a timely impetus to the needs of the native people in the future—the necessity of having highly trained native men and women to fill jobs of technical nature that will arise once the native land claims problem is settled.

Hass is right in saying that Tundra Times has not pushed hard enough calling for trained people from the native ranks in Alaska. We, of course, have pushed for this in private talks with native high school students and in some gatherings of native college students. We have also called for it in the Tundra Times but which we need to stress more and oftener.

In the Tundra Times issue of January 19, 1968 we

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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, nifty, 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?"