

Editorial—

The Chronic Strain Of Paternalism

The seat of the government of the United States has once again shown its perennial strain of paternalism in the treatment of its minorities. The Joint Senate-House Conference Committee just last week instituted a condition into the Tlingit-Haida bill that the southeastern Alaska Indians will have to get approval of the government before they can spend the award money—the \$7.5 million they are about to receive as payment for lands lost after a 30-year litigation.

The attitude of "You're not as smart as I am so I will have to lead you by the hand" will again be experienced, this time by the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska.

This paternalistic attitude has done some of the worst destruction and waste among the native people of this northern land. Great many native men and women once had the will and spirit nurtured by their respective cultures intricately attuned to their surroundings that had enabled them to meet some of the world's greatest challenges that only the Arctic could offer. Much of their strength-giving cultures have been destroyed, all in the name of paternalism.

Men of high ideals speak of freedom of man. Without full rights, this is a sham.

The action of the Senate-House committee last week does not spell anything promising for the future of Alaska's native people. This can be seen as well in the formulation of the Alaska native land claims bill in the Senate that offers very little land area. The aim of this seems to be that Congress is out for tight control—to keep our people hemmed in, therefore controlling them. As the bill now stands, the government is perhaps on the road to one of its greatest land grabs in its history. The bill stands to be reduced further in land area when it reaches the House. As was demonstrated in the conference committee last week, there is an excellent chance that conditions will be placed into the bill as was done in the Tlingit-Haida bill. If that happens, it will be another thrust of paternalism toward Alaska's native people.

The strain of paternalism goes on, handed out and influenced by the government. To those people to whom it is applied, it is a means of robbing them of their full rights and freedom. Certain kinds of conditions, or restrictions can serve as braking processes on progress of a people. Giving people equal opportunities would be so much the better. We would rather see our people make a few mistakes in the process of doing things for themselves and profit by them. Our people have the amazing capacity to adapt to adverse surroundings. With the innate intelligence that they do have, we do not believe that they should be spoonfed and led by the nose.