

Calista villages are not pleased with easements

Courtesy of LONE JANSON
Alaska Native Management
Report

"I think they will have a hard time selling the new easement agreement to the Calista villages," asserted Harold Sparck, director of the Bethel-based con-

servation group called Nunam Kitlusi, commenting on the eight easement agreements signed in Washington, D.C. by outgoing Interior Secretary Thomas Kleppe in mid-January.

It was the lawsuit, *Calista v.*

(Continued on Page 12)

Easements ...

(Continued from Page 1)

Kleppe, that brought the easement-land conveyance matter to a head. Following the filing of that suit, the Department of Interior issued a moratorium on all land conveyances as long as the litigation was pending.

"Calista Corporation was reluctant to bring the suit in the beginning," Sparck explained, "because they needed title to the land due to a pending oil exploration lease with Shell Oil Company." The contract was terminated before the lawsuit was filed, he said.

"When Calista was slow to act, villages signed petitions to sue with or without Calista. The corporation agreed and initiated *Calista v. Kelppe*. Then the Department of Interior clamped down on land conveyances," he related.

Sparck explained that, after the Land Claims Act was passed, there was an influx of new people into the Calista region for sport fishing and hunting, people who had never used this land before.

"Under pressure by Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Bureau of Mines, and sport and recreation groups, BLM recommended easements based on occasional use at best, and many of them based on this post-Claims-Act activity," said

Sparck.

The resulting pattern of easements was unacceptable to Calista's village people. "The region is criss-crossed with linear streamside easements, coastal easements, and all the rest of them," he said.

"Our main concern is, and has always been, subsistence. We can live with some of the proposed easements, but not as designed," he said. If times of the year were specified, so that the easements were closed during subsistence use times; if they could be terminated if misused; and if damage caused by their use were paid for and the damage properly repaired, then they would be more acceptable.

Again, the burden of proof has been effectively placed on the Natives. This material is then mailed to the Land Use Planning Commission from the village. The staggering amount of work this entails boggles the mind! But, said Sparck, "We are exhausting all legal remedies."