

# ASNA Requests For Meets with TAPS: No Ans.

Since 1966 the Arctic Slope Native Association has been trying to arrange a meeting with representatives of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System—but to no avail.

The federation of villages of Eskimos on the north slope of Alaska wants to discuss with TAPS "mutual problems vitally affecting the Eskimos who have used and occupied the land since time immemorial."

The 800-mile pipeline which TAPS has planned to build to carry oil from Prudhoe Bay in the North to Valdez in the South is scheduled to cross land claimed by Eskimos on the North Slope.

In a letter to TAPS' attorney, Quinn O'Connell of Washington, D.C., a Seattle attorney for the Arctic Slope Native Association, Frederic Paul, reviewed past attempts to arrange meetings with TAPS and wrote that he again invited discussions.

He said that he was offering the invitation in light of a recent decision in District Court in Washington which prevents Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel from issuing construction permits for the pipeline and the haul road over land claimed by Stevens Village in Interior Alaska.

In review, Paul wrote that on April 12, 1966, he sent a letter to eight oil companies and "not one of the recipients responded."

In that letter he contended that the Arctic Slope Native Association is the aboriginal

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owner of the North Slope by virtue of original Indian title and that TAPS' trespass or proposed trespass for oil exploration in that area is therefore an invasion of the rights of the owners.

"Nevertheless," he added, "we are realists and have no desire to hinder the development of the great state of Alaska or to curtail exploration. We therefore invite your discussing the problem with us."

Then on March 10, 1967, Paul wrote to 13 oil companies that had been successful bidders in the State's sale of oil and gas leases on the Arctic Slope. The lands were under claim and protest by the Arctic Slope Native Association.

Contending that the companies had thus bought something on which there is "a cloud of title," the attorney invited the buyers to negotiate with the Arctic Slope natives.

Then about three years later on Feb. 26, 1970, he wrote to the president of Atlantic Richfield requesting a meeting to discuss mutual problems.

A response indicated that a meeting was being planned to discuss job opportunities with natives along the pipeline.

"We however, had in mind a much broader agenda of problems;" the Arctic Slope attorney said, "again we have experienced no fruitful response to our suggestions for meetings to discuss substantive matters."

"Aside from some half-hearted efforts on the part of representatives of Atlantic Richfield last summer in which vague promises were made respecting native participation in certain phases of the TAPS pipeline construction project, which promises later proved to be totally illusory, no representatives of TAPS or the oil companies have responded to our requests for meetings or have volunteered to meet with the North Slope Eskimos or their representatives.

"Even as late as March 24, 1970, we again initiated efforts to meet with representatives from TAPS without avail."