

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

Emil Notti Answers Anchorage Editorial

ALASKA FEDERATION of NATIVES
1689 C Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
December 16, 1968

The Editor
Anchorage Daily Times
P.O. Box 40,
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Editor:

Your editorial of December 13th - "AN ABUSE OF POWER" impells me to write to you.

Ever since the Secretary of Interior instituted his present "land freeze," I have been hearing dire predictions of how Alaska would be driven into bankruptcy and how the State's development would be throttled. So far, I have seen no evidence of the State going bankrupt. I have heard, so many times, the line used in your editorial that the Natives are part of the State and that they need the development to benefit from it.

The land freeze, as I view it, has been beneficial to the State. As a result of the land freeze, the Department of Interior, the State, and the Native people worked together to draw up a land bill to solve the land question. By not flooding the market with so much land that developers could not develop, there has been a slowing-down of releasing land and, therefore, a better price for leases to the State.

The State needs a breather to contemplate what is happening and then do some planning for orderly development of its lands. There is still time to prevent the disasters that have happened in the "Lower 48," which are—to name a few—polluted streams with no fish, streams not fit in which to swim, smog, so thick, necessitating warnings, stopping all burning to prevent death to living things and the denuding of lands which erode beyond use.

We need the time, forced on us by the land freeze, not only to do resource planning but, to do some human development planning. Technology is no problem. We have the knowledge to plan intelligently but firstly, we need men in government who are willing to place human development along with corporate development.

I have heard the argument put forth in your editorial that the Native people need the development in order to benefit from it. History has not proven this and this is not the case now. In the Arctic, where so much is happening, we can see how the local people are "benefiting."

From the information received, of the estimated eight hundred (800) men employed on the North Slope, there are eight (8) Natives employed. The people of Barrow, who are directly affected, have an available work force of approximately two hundred (200) men, at the present time. Yet, they must travel to Anchorage, or Fairbanks, to learn who is hiring. Applications, sent to companies, do not get answered. The people of Barrow have incidents of interference with fishing, of old family homesites being damaged, of complete disregard to their property by the State and oil companies, and, yet they cannot find work. Their children have to travel approximately fifteen hundred miles, or more for an education. The question that may be, rightfully, asked is—"Where and what are the benefits from progress?"

The land freeze has given us time to reflect on what is happening and, also, gives us time to prevent making mistakes of the past.

I have nothing but praise for Secretary of Interior Udall's actions.

I agree with one statement in your editorial, which is—"Right now, the chief hope for Alaskans is the new Secretary."

Sincerely yours,

ALASKA FEDERATION of NATIVES
Emil Notti,
President