

Editorial—

Native Participation in Meets Brings Results

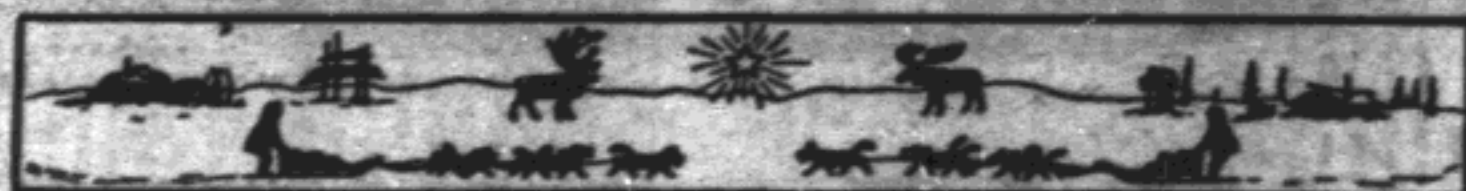
Our governments, both national and state, should by now begin to realize that having native leaders, or those the leaders pick for spokesmen, in attendance at important conferences can be necessary forces to arrive at well aimed goals to solutions of problems peculiar to the native people of Alaska.

The demonstration of this was dramatically brought out last week in Sitka when the Alaska congressional delegation held a meeting on native education in Alaska.

(Continued on page 2)

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

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Native Participation ..

(Continued from page 1)

On what had seemed to be pussy-footing around on the part of the national and state officials on getting around to implementing the regional high school concept in the state was forcefully and surprisingly brought to a head at the two-day meeting so that something will be done—getting off the ground at last toward realization of the regional high school system.

As a general rule, the native leaders enter into conference with well-defined goals and directions. The problems that plague the native people are well known to them. They should know because many of them have experienced those problems themselves and this knowledge has proved to be an invaluable asset in seeking solutions. This fact should be recognized once and for all that the best approach to the complex native shortcomings is to call for full participation of their leaders in the exchange of ideas for solutions.

The native people of Alaska have come to find out that detached information, even by so-called experts in Washington and Juneau, falls short in delving into the root of problems. This, we believe, has been one big reason why solutions fall short no matter how well meant they might have been. This fault, or shortcoming, should be unequivocally and succinctly recognized by the national government and the state government. Proceeding with full consultation of native leadership on the peculiarly native problems can help, by far, to hasten solutions to knotty and perplexing native situations.

The native leadership is finding out that with proper preparations to tackle problems, they can help to take the bull by the horns and help speed solutions. The leaders are astute and well informed as to the needs of their people. In recognition of these qualities among the native leadership, we would like to commend Emil Notti, Ralph Perdue, Mary Jane Fate, John Sackett, John Borbridge, William Hensley, Dr. Walter Soboleff, Eben Hopson, Flore Lekanof, Jerry Ivey, and many other native leaders.

Such leaders, in the span of a mere few years, have absorbed the seriousness and complexities of their peoples' problems and delved deeply into them. Their knowledge of native situations is impressive. Tapping it for assistance by national and state officials can lead to the acceleration of ways to solve many problems, of which there are many as yet.

This the congressional delegation did in last week's meeting in Sitka. The farsightedness of the late Sen. E.L. (Bob) Bartlett and Congressman Howard W. Pollock in planning the conclave with the native leaders and government officials, and conducting of it by Pollock and Senator-elect Mike Gravel with understanding, is indeed commendable. Such procedures with high governmental functions along with full participation of native leadership on anything that concerns the native people can mean meaningful progress toward better things in the future.

Editorial— Stevens, a Good Choice

The speculation as to who Gov. Walter J. Hickel would appoint to serve out the unexpired term of the late Sen. E.L. (Bob) Bartlett, was one of the most intense in the history of Alaska. Hickel's appointment of Ted Stevens probably disappointed a number of people but generally, the choice seems to meet with approval.

Stevens has a good background of experience which should stand him in good stead. He has a good idea of the workings of the Department of the Interior in which he served for a time as solicitor. One facet of his experience is that he has good knowledge of the land claims situation in Alaska. In the coming times of deliberation on this complex matter, Ted Stevens will be able to hold his own above many others of his colleagues in the Senate should the land considerations start within the next two years. He can make his mark by making good efforts on this knotty matter.

With the new Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel next month, who also has extensive knowledge of native claims, Ted Stevens should find common ground on which to work perhaps to the extent of near unanimity.