

'Burning Hot Paths'—

Times Reprinting 'Things We Love'

The activity of the State officials at the moment in connection with native land claims reminds us of the editorial "THINGS WE LOVE" the editor wrote back on March 18, 1963. Although some names have been replaced by others on official levels, the situation today smacks of the very same things the 1963 editorial pointed out. The land matter in question then was Minto, a comparatively localized affair at the time, as compared with the more generalized land matter today.

The land question has expanded and the level of its discussion is now in Washington, D. C., more than ever before. The State officials, as then, are making "burning hot paths" this time to the nation's capitol—and the motivating reason is still the land question in Alaska. The native people themselves have brought the great land matter to a head and it is about to be dealt with on the congressional level, at last.

It's a big package and a precious one. The native people wants it dealt with fairly. The State has its own ideas on it and this bears watching by our people, because some injustices can spring from it. We were happy, indeed, that two men, State Representative William L. Hensley, an Eskimo, and President Emil Notti of the Alaska Federation of Natives, an Indian, are making courageous efforts to represent their people in Washington and to keep an eye on what is going on in regards to land matters. We are also thankful to the kind people who have made it possible for them to make the trip this week.

The following is the March 18, 1963 Tundra Times editorial:

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walking on it, playing, hunting, fishing, pretty soon, make the native folks feel, as they look around them, "It is my land, my home."

Yes, land that has been kind to one's ancestors and the same land that is kind to their descendants today is hard to leave, let alone give up. Yet that is what the State is doing nowadays, trying to make the native folks give up their lands.

The State even suggested that it would select land around Minto so the folks there could buy pieces of it back from the State. Minto natives answered, "We don't like that. Why should we buy back our own land?"

Lots of native folks in Alaska are finding out that the land their grandparents and the parents' grandparents had, is a pretty nice thing to have. They are so used to it that it is hard for them to give it up. If they are forced to give it up, where will they go?

Many, many native folks are hunters now and they will be hunters for a long time to come. Lots of them like to make their living that way and in many cases they can do it real good. Right now that is all they know how to do. They cannot be business people overnight.

There are some bright young natives now who have found out that they can be good business people. That's fine, but they should also think that their parents are not educated and there will be many uneducated natives for many years to come, perhaps generations.

We natives should realize we are in transition from one economy to the other. We have moved from a strictly hunting economy to a semi-cash economy. In order to do so, we have to learn to use and develop our land and its resources in other ways besides hunting, trapping and fishing.

We natives should realize that we will not be able to compete fully with big business for a long time yet. Since we cannot do that now, we should try to hold on to our lands because that is the greatest insurance we can have for the well-being of the native children that will come after us. Without land we can become the poorest people in the world.

If the land is taken away from us we could, many, many of us, wind up in slums of cities. The natives in the villages are proud people and they wouldn't want to wind up that way. The United States Government and the State Government should respect the lands we claim and if they allow us to keep them we can hold our heads high and help to make the State of Alaska respectable in the eyes of other states and nations.

This paper is not too worried about young people who are getting a good education these days, because we have hopes that they will help their folks at home in time, that is, if they remember they are natives and have genuine wish to help the folks at home.

This paper is worried about the folks back home in villages where almost all of 43,000 of them are living. All the leaders in all villages should think about that. They should think of the well-being and welfare of their people. Leaders in villages count a lot and the people living in those villages should always try to get the best leaders they can get.

The village of Minto has a good leader. He is working hard to hold on to the land his people had for centuries. He is Richard Frank, Chief of Minto. Big pressures are being put on him by State Land people. It's a big problem for the Chief to handle. Those of us who can should give him all the encouragement we can muster.

Chief Frank is courageously standing firm on what he and his people believe is the right thing to do. Not long ago he said, "As long as I'm chief, we won't give

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up our land.”

(Editor's Note: Peter John is now the chief of Minto and he is upholding the views of the former Chief Richard Frank.)

Weak leaders don't say things like that. Richard Frank is a strong leader. Let us natives realize that we need more men like him and in having them will help us to hold on to the things we love.

Land is one of those things.