

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

# Tundra Times



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## Editorial Comment—

# The Heated Contest On Capitol Move

The people of Alaska, at the moment, are feverishly slinging pros and cons on the subject of moving the seat of the state government in Juneau to some location in central Alaska and it is getting louder by the minute. No subject in recent times has received such vociferous attention in all the State of Alaska as is the capitol move, including the Native citizens of our state.

At this stage of this statewide game, the Tundra Times is leaning toward opposing the proposal because, we think, the thing is premature because the state has entered, and will be entering into knotty problems in the immediate future. These are: the embroilment of the Native people in organizing to handle the proceeds of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act; the considerable impact of the Alaska oil pipeline; the potentially troublesome influx of thousands of people into the state because of the pipeline activity; and the need to evaluate the flow of revenue from the Alaska oil pipeline that will, in fact, be going on for several years in the future.

These are no small problems that will need full and immediate attention by the powers that be in the State of Alaska. If all these unmet problems are compounded by the capitol move, efforts to solve them might be short-circuited and less thorough results might be realized that could continue to haunt the state operations in the days to come because the jobs have been done in a slipshod manner.

We are not altogether opposed to the eventual move of the capitol but what worries us at this time is the seeming suddenness and intense desire to move when even though the subject is not exactly new. Timing of the effort seems bent on collision with the existing problems that will need immediate attention and if this comes to pass, the moving of the capitol itself might become a victim of a slipshod effort. If the capitol has to move, it will need a most thorough study, perhaps by the responsible Alaskans themselves who know their state so much more than people from elsewhere.

There are, of course, many other problems the movers will have to evaluate one of which is the uprooting of the capitol in Juneau itself. The impact of this eventuality is certain to be a most traumatic experience to the Juneau area people and this involves thousands of them. Such considerations involving those people need to be delved into, again in a most thorough manner.

There are problems indeed and one of them, apparently, being the hiring situation of Alaskan workers on the pipeline. Although we have no real proof of it, there is also quite a bit of grumbling on the partiality shown toward the White workers on the line. If such a thing does exist indeed, something must be done so the working conditions can be a bit more cordial so the progress of the pipeline work can go on a more even level.

As far as the capitol move is concerned, let us do a lot more evaluation while keeping a wary eye on the existing problems we are now meeting.

## Letters from Here and There

### Leaders Given Propaganda On Capitol Move?

Selawik, Alaska 99770  
August 11, 1974

Dear Mr. Rock:

It is disappointing to me to see that the Tundra Times has not examined the Capitol Move Study and is not reporting the results of that study to its readers. Instead I see that village leaders are being persuaded by someone (who?) to print statements of resolutions against the capitol move. My own mayor, Joe Ballot of Selawik, is a highly respected leader and people will vote as he recommends. However, I believe that Joe has not been given facts on which to base his recommendation but instead has been given propaganda by someone who has not read the study and who does not understand the situation.

If Tundra Times does not present the facts of the capitol move study to help counteract propaganda of the opposition, as in the past the people of rural Alaska will be voting against their own interests. The people are being told that if we vote to move the capitol the expense of that move will prevent funds being spent for projects such as education in rural Alaska. I would like to ask that during all the years the capitol has been in Juneau what has rural Alaska gained? Look at education for example. In state operated schools in just the past two years the pupil teacher ratio has jumped and last year alone about 75 teachers were cut from rural schools. Are the legislators in Juneau now meeting the needs in rural schools and in other needed rural programs? No, and I do not believe that keeping the capitol in Juneau will do much to improve programs or increase state money to be spent in rural Alaska.

However, if the capitol were moved to a place accessible for rural leaders to travel to and be heard, perhaps more money would be spent in the villages. The arguments presented to rural Alaskans to vote against the capitol move is not because anyone cares about rural priorities and people needs as claimed but is because the people of Juneau and legislators going along with them are selfishly concerned about the future of Juneau and not concerned about the good of all Alaska.

On one would consider having the capitol of Alaska in Seattle and yet it might as well be there as where it is now, far from the population center and inaccessible to all of us by land. The worst propaganda we are given is the big lie that the capitol move cost is prohibitive. How about telling the facts from the study, an impartial non-political study that has been kept much too quiet. Several top government officials have tried to keep this study and its results from the people and have tried to keep hearings from being held around the state so people would not learn the truth.

The truth is the study says: **RELOCATION IS FEASIBLE.** These are some of the facts:

1. Moving the capitol away from Juneau is feasible from an economic point of view, and the cost could be absorbed by the state.
2. The total cost of keeping

the capitol in Juneau between now and 1990 would be greater than the total cost of building and operating a new city in western Alaska.

3. The general fund of the state will run a deficit starting in 1977 because the state is spending more than it is collecting. The deficit will have no connection with whether the capitol is moved. If the capitol is moved, the state will be obliged to borrow money to initiate the project in 1978. In that same year the state will collect so much money that it will reduce its deficit. Even though the expenditures for the new city are made every year from then, the state will maintain large surpluses every year. In 1979 the surplus will be \$247.7 million and in 1980 the surplus will grow to \$704.8 million. If the capitol is left at Juneau, the state will have a surplus of over 3 billion.

4. The report points out that construction of the new city would dovetail well with the pipeline construction "because of the timely availability of labor and timely availability of facilities employed in that effort. There would be 3,000 to 4,000 workers employed in building the new capitol city." (Are prospective employees in rural Alaska interested in future jobs. Perhaps that should be considered in your vote.)

5. Moving the capitol to western Alaska would result in substantial savings to those who must travel to Juneau because the capitol is there.

Rural Alaskans, think! Who wants you to leave the capitol in Juneau? The people of southeastern Alaska and the politicians who apparently have their own private interests. Perhaps they own land in Juneau.

Juneau will not collapse if the capitol is moved. There will still be tourists. It will still be the center of Southeastern Alaska and many government offices. But even if land values go down and Juneau suffers, can we afford to sacrifice the future of the whole state to the financial interests of a few?

Alaska is a fast growing state. We need a capitol with room to grow. The cost of carving space out of the mountains for further building space in Juneau is prohibitive.

The continued cost of flying legislators to Juneau is absurd. The weather is often bad. Travel there is not too safe. Maybe the legislators like to be removed from the rest of the state so we can't observe them too closely. Maybe that's why so many are against the move. Many of them are apparently not able to read too well or they cannot interpret the study. They are still telling you to vote against your own interests.

Fellow rural Alaskans, if we don't vote to move the capitol this time and continue to keep it in a place it has outgrown at high costs, costs that will outweigh moving it in the long run, we will have once again been sold down the river by false information. Read the results of the State Capitol Relocation Study. Think for yourself. Can you afford a trip to Juneau often? Couldn't you go to a capitol between Anchorage and Fairbanks once in a while and see what your legislators are doing. Vote wisely, not the way someone with selfish interests tells you.

Sincerely,  
Julia Ede

### Who Cheats? Poor or Rich?

2.5 Mile Nenana Road  
College, Alaska  
July 1, 1974

To the Editor:

Many people are opposed to forms of social welfare because they feel they're being cheated. They feel they are being cheated by those who are undeserving, the poor. But how many are aware they are being cheated by those who are undeserving and rich?

For instance, the United States Senate recently decided to continue the oil depletion allowance. The oil depletion allowance is a massive tax break given to oil industries in recognition that an oil well depreciates in value over time. It was originally designed to give financially unstable oil companies a tax incentive to explore and extract new oil reserves. The question now becomes, why is the oil depletion allowance necessary in years of record high oil industry profits?

Fortune magazine reported in their survey of the 500 largest corporations last year, that oil companies led the field in profit increase with a 53.3% per cent profit increase. This year's profits are expected to rise even higher.

Not only have oil industries saddled consumers with inflated prices, but they also are not paying their fair share of our tax burden.

It should finally be noted that both Senators Mike Gravel and Ted Stevens voted to continue this welfare program for big business. When will representatives begin to put the public interest above their own self interest? Surely, not in an election year.

Yours,  
Kevin Harun

### Fred Stickman Notes Nixon's Resignation

Anchorage, Alaska  
August 9, 1974

Dear Friend Mr. Howard Rock, the Editor:

After I quit drinking five months ago, I wanted to get good and drunk today just to celebrate when I got the Daily News this morning, "Nixon Quit."

My memory went back to 50 years ago when and what the Republicans used to do to us during depression, and throw you in jail for drinking during prohibition. They searched your fish camps, sleds, boats and whatnot, without a search warrant. No suspended sentences 30 days to six months "for nothing." Yet the wife and baby starving while the husband got three square meals a day in jail. So I started thinking and praying to God.

I bet \$20 the Democrats was going to be in, just before election, I won the bet. They fired the marshal and sent down King Kade from Galena, Democrat, to be marshal. Oh, there was no Galena at the time, Old Youden. They didn't turn the prisoners free, but just the same, they went home at night and came back to finish their term. They started to get help to feed the

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