

I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it? - Voltaire

Editorial—

TECHNICAL PREPARATION - AN IMMEDIATE NEED

Recent events directly affecting the native people of Alaska have been going on with great implications of influencing their future. One of these is the effort of our leaders, that of the State and the federal Department of the Interior to thrash out means of resolving the land claims situation. The progress made thus far on this complicated matter is showing some signs that the settlement might not be too far in the future. This possibility should be kept in mind.

When the land situation is thought of in that manner, a great deal of added responsibility begins to loom up in the future of our native people. Whatever settlement form is finally decided upon by all concerned, there will be an urgent need for technical knowledge among our own people in the fields of law, business management, political science economics, statistics, sociology and many other related functions.

Although the present leadership has been able to draw technical assistance from outside of the native element and has gotten along well with it, and it will probably do so in the future, it would seem to be more desirable to draw the technical knowledge from our own people. After all, it is our people upon whose shoulders the responsibilities should fall if they are to do things for themselves.

We have to meet those responsibilities with the best we have with skills drawn from our own particular human resources and we had better start preparing for this eventuality because it is certain to come upon us. Although our present leadership is showing up in highly creditable manner, we need to look ahead for added impetus to tackle the increased responsibilities. This means we have to have superbly educated people to help take over the duties that will surely be complicated.

This future need should be driven home to our younger generation—the present crop of young people who are pursuing higher levels of education. We are very much aware, of course, that it is a hard struggle for some of them to stay in school. The students should stay in school. The students should also realize that they have responsibility to their people who will need their skills in the future; that they are getting the opportunity for education great many of their fellow young people will never attain; that they should use the last ounce of will to keep going. Goals attained through difficult paths are often rewarding.

The difficult going by the students should also be the keen concern of the older native citizens who should back their young people with meaningful encouragements and support, monetarily if possible. This can be rewarding for them also and it can mean a good future for their children.