

# Publisher's Notes

## BERGER'S "VILLAGE JOURNEY"

When Thomas Berger took on the job of examining the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act two years ago, he must have had in mind a frame work from which to conduct his study.

The hearings he presided over during the course of his fact-finding tour which took him and his entourage to a number of villages throughout Alaska were for the most part free-wheeling and loosely structured so it is difficult to figure out what his perspective was, if he had one at the beginning.

Much was stated during the hearings about the effects of ANCSA on the lives of Alaska Natives, about Alaska Natives in general, and about everything else one could imagine, some only remotely associated with the Claims Act.

Berger's report, now entitled "Village Journey" is complete and is due to be released to the general public in a couple of months. With such a generic sounding title, there is no clue as to what the report will be about, but there are some hints.

Byron Mallott, who had the privilege of previewing Berger's draft manuscript responded to a question about the Berger report while addressing the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce last week. Byron said, in his opinion, the report will be "a powerful statement for justice."

There has always been a question about whether or not ANCSA was an act of justice. Depending on your perspective, ANCSA was a political economic experiment and a novel one at that.

ANCSA was also a land settlement, plain and simple, but was it justice?

During one of Berger's hearings, someone stated that "ANCSA wore the face of justice," and that is why it has been so confusing to many Alaska Natives, who became disenchanted with the effects it is having on the land, the resources, and the people.

Did ANCSA wear the face of justice and in doing so, deceive Alaska Natives?

If the Berger report is about justice, it will also reveal for us the defects of the American system under which we live, and it will not be easily digested by those who believe in the system.

Berger's report may raise many more questions than there are answers for about justice, about injustice, and about our system of government. It may also raise questions about us, Alaska Natives.

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