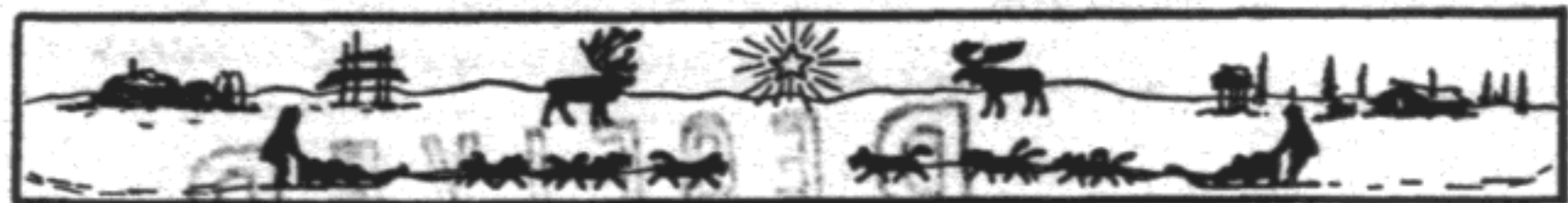


"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

The Sorry State of Nome School Facilities

We would like to extend an unqualified commendation to the Nome school teachers who had the courage to set a precedent when they walked out of their classrooms on April 28 to dramatize the intolerable school facility conditions of the Nome schools.

What we are saying does not mean that we condone walkouts on any situation but the reasons behind the one-day teacher absence from the historic town's schools had sufficient basis for dramatization—the neglected school facilities. It makes us wonder why such conditions were allowed to exist for so many years.

Nome has about 2,500 population about 80 per cent of which is Eskimo. The main school facility built to accommodate 400 students, now occupying about 800, was built 40 years ago. The building is in such a state that it is considered a firetrap. Since World War II, the City of Nome acquired eight Army surplus buildings for classrooms. Built for temporary dwellings at best, these buildings are now about 25 years old and at the present time are in rundown condition.

All this spells utter deterioration of school facilities and with it, no doubt, a retrogressive effect on the learning process of the pupils, not to mention the morale factor among the teachers. It is no wonder the teachers resorted to what they did. Under the existing school facility system in Nome, they felt the conditions were becoming intolerable.

The Nome school situation needs to have a hard look by some responsible people in the U.S. government, the state as well as the responsible citizens of Nome. The upgrading of the system is an urgent need. There should be a call for new, modern school facilities that would compare favorably with the William E. Beltz Regional High School near Nome and which, we understand, Nome students cannot attend. The city's authorities will, no doubt, try their best to improve the school system but we feel they will need a lot of help.

The deterioration of the schooling system was well gauged by the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schools when that organization rescinded the accreditation of the Nome High School. This is a serious warning of things to come if halfway efforts are made to upgrade Nome schools. Nome, as well as the rest of the state, has a great stake in the development of its human resources for the future and this will not be realized to its proper potential if worn and obsolete school facilities are allowed to be used any longer.

Tuvra Munna Editorial—

Quweasukpuktugut

Barrow whalers should be commended for this year's record season. On May 5, Tom Brower's team took a 70 foot bowhead whale which yielded twelve feet of baleen. Weather is reportedly good and whaling is still continuing.

Tlingit Teacher A. W. Demmert Earns Teacher of Year Award

A Tlingit Indian from Klawock, with over 40 years teaching experience in Alaska, was named last week to the National Teacher of the Year Honor Roll. Archie W. Demmert, a Tlingit of the Raven Clan, shares this honor with three other teachers from across the nation.

'Mumbo-jumbo' Ad...

(Continued from page 1)

they utilized all of the area north of the Brooks Range.

The authoress documented and discussed at length how within the past three years the Department of Interior had legally given away two million acres of Eskimo lands by the mechanics of placing an ad in a weekly Interior Alaska publication. An ad that was hidden on an inside page of a weekly paper, that was written in the legalistic mumbo-jumbo of a language many Eskimos could not have understood even if they had been able to read. This is not "impeccably legal" as it has been described. This is legal shysterism and is wrong as a 18th century constitution that allowed slavery.

But, over, above, and beyond the quiet legalistic footwork which sneaked this deal past the unsuspecting Eskimo, other highly questionable actions have been taken by federal land authorities. The fact that former federal employees who were involved in land administration are now in private land business in the very areas where they previously established policy certainly represents a conflict of interest. While this situation with respect to federal administrators may not be illegal, it does have ethical implications which are prejudicial to those dedicated Department of Interior employees who attempt to fairly implement federal land policies.

The Eskimo of Alaska has been disenfranchised by the Department of Interior of the previous administration in the same way that they were cheated out of their lands by the Czar of Russia a hundred years ago. The Czar of all the Russians denied that the Eskimo and Indian had any rights or standing as property owners. The benevolent Department of Interior under the leadership of Secretary Udall has done the exact same thing. This is not an idle jest or opinion. The Department of Interior in the Federal Register of September 23, 1966, decided that the Eskimo would not be allowed the protection which any man in any part of the lower 48, white or black—but not the Eskimo in Alaska—could expect when the Federal Government sells an oil lease on the ground where he lives. What makes the white or black settler of the other states any different from the Alaskan Eskimo settler or resident? Perhaps Mr. Udall, the Johnson Administration Secretary of Interior, can explain the action of the department which denied the rights of an American citizen to all of the Eskimos who live along the Chukchi Sea. The wording of this masterpiece of discrimination is as follows: "The provision (of Federal laws) pertaining to settlers are not applicable. . . to offers filed" in this area. (The oil lands bordering the Chukchi Sea are considered by many to be the hottest unproven potential oil lands in the world today.)

The federal land regulations state a "Patnetee who made entry prior to February 25, 1920. . . shall be entitled. . . to a preference right to a lease. . ." A settler whose settlement was made prior to 1920 also has such a preference right. The regulation is repeated for emphasis—A settler whose settlement was made prior to 1920 has a preference right. This means that before a lease can be issued the settler must be given the opportunity to obtain the lease. But the Department of Interior has officially decided that this provision of U.S. law will not apply to Eskimos. All of the North Slope has been the exclusive home of the Eskimo since earliest recorded history. The fact that the Eskimo most likely was not financially able or interested in buying the lease in question is besides the point. The fact remains that this is a provision of federal law, and the laws of the United States have been circumvented for some unstated reasons.

Will the Department of Interior dare to explain why the Eskimos along the Chukchi Sea were denied their rights as settlers? Will the Department of Interior dare to investigate and establish who has benefited from the decision that was published in the Federal Register of September 23, 1966? This decision denied the Eskimo settlers along the Chukchi Sea the protection of U.S. law. Why?

Is the situation with respect to settlers the only unusual occurrence in northern Alaska land transactions in recent years? Most definitely, No! There have been subtle and unpublicized decisions that have conveyed title under curious circumstances. Is the Eskimo the only one who is being cheated? Not hardly. Every American who has not personally pocketed cash as a result of the multi-million dollar blunders of the Department of Interior's oil land policies in northern Alaska is faced with losing his share of America's resources. The richest potential oil lands in the history of America are being given away for 50 cents an acre by a government agency which, at some level of administration, is apparently incapable of managing the riches of America.

There is an unwritten, but definite trait in American ethics that to steal \$10 is a sin, but to steal \$10 million is a mark of social success. If the oil leases and the 20 million acres of offers to lease which were made on the slope in the last six months of 1968 are legitimized by either the Bureau of Land Management or the State of Alaska, the voting public must accept their portion of the guilt for this misappropriation of the natural resources of America.

The fact that a questionable deal turns out to be a billion dollar bonanza does not transform the phony original agreement into a legitimate transaction. There is something about the potential oil lands, the land freeze that was not a land freeze and other "strange happenings" that have a "bad smell."

Has there been dishonesty in oil land lease activity in northern Alaska? To say the least there have been, and continue to be, administrative irregularities. The irregularities have invariably worked to the benefit of a very small group. When do a series of administrative blunders involving hundreds of millions of dollars cease to be honest mistakes? Where there is smoke could there be fire? Is an investigation indicated? If such an investigation indicates that honesty has prevailed, we will all have more confidence in our government. Who can object to this?

from across the nation.

Demmert, selected earlier this year as Alaska's Teacher of the Year, was one of five finalists in the National Teacher of the Year Award Competition. He is the first American Indian to receive recognition in this program.

In his long career, Demmert has taught in many areas of Alaska. During this period, he has encouraged many of his native students to continue their education.

Many of his students were receptive to his coaching and went on to attain a college education, with some receiving higher degrees.

Demmert fashions himself as both a student and an educator claiming that he learns a lot from his students. He has spent most of his life learning to be an educator.

At the age of 43, he graduated from college. Two years earlier, while a sophomore, the death of his wife left him a widower with two young daughters.

(Continued on page 6)

Letters to the Editor

Nulato
May 6, 1969

Dear Editor:

1937 is a year I never forgot. I was married with two. We went up seven miles from Nulato to cut steamboat wood for the railroad. I cut 50 cords by New Year.

Then I decided I couldn't sell the wood during the winter. So I started to trap. I shot two moose that fall. You couldn't get no fresh meat. Nobody could kill moose without going miles and if you did, it was hard to get the moose.

That's when I started to sell moose meat for 25¢ a lb. People just beg me for it. Marshall, Commissioner, Roadhouse, Postmaster, Guards, Nurses, Mission. I killed five more moose. That's when I knew the game laws was wrong. Even now there is a lot of people that can not go out to kill moose and one moose is not enough for a good hunter as he has to divide it with his relatives and friends, the old, and widows, etc.

I don't know who is making the laws for us. They don't know, no matter how many moose and beaver you get, they're migrating. More and more moose is getting nuisance on my trap line. They ruin my snowshoe trapline.

That year, the Game Warden was going to arrest me after he ate the moose steak in the Roadhouse. He was stationed at Nulato.

That's the year there were a lot of snow. That's how I got the moose. That's the year of the big flood. I lost some of my wood and most of my winter clothes at Koyukuk, Gibson mandolin, violin, guitar, camera, pictures and all.

I had nine dogs. I was going to shoot four then put five in my boat when the cabin floated up.

—FRED STICKMAN

WANTED: Chilkat Blankets; totem poles; ivory pipes and carvings; argillite carvings; potlatch bowls; fish hooks; spoons and all N.W. items 50 years of age or older. Send photo or sketch and prices to: Albert T. Miller, 2235 West Live Oak Drive, Los Angeles, California 90028.