

Editorial—

These Are Times of Delicate Situations

Charlie Edwardsen, Jr., executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, told reporters in Washington, D.C. last week, "My people would like to see no oil development and, if there is oil development, let the pigs pay their rent."

Edwardsen's method was galling to us--the kind that made one wince. If he is going to call his fellow human beings "pigs," Tundra Times will not be a party to it. We of the newspaper have fought for many things on behalf of Alaska's native people through the eight years we have been publishing but we have tried to do it with firmness but never with dirty epithets. We have tried to use reason without foul mouthing our opponents. By doing it in this manner, we hoped that our efforts would carry some dignity--a quality that fits very well among our people.

Our methods of fighting for better situations for our Alaska native citizens have been, we can say, highly rewarding. We have pointed out the dire needs successfully and solutions to them are now in the process of being applied. There is now a lot of difference in native situations between eight years ago and today. Effort to improve them is continuing. Benefits are being established. More will be done. In order to help to achieve this purpose, we will continue to fight hard but we will try to do it fairly and, we hope, with dignity. This is the best way we know how and it has been highly rewarding. We are not trying to impress anyone that we like to battle. We do it because we think we must. There are still many things that must be improved in the situations of our people.

At this particular time in the history of our native citizens, there seem to be some brighter things in the horizon. We have achieved the nation's attention to our needs. We have helped to instill in the minds of the public that justice must be done along with the solutions. The greatest of these to which it must apply is the native land claims question. The solution to this seems imminent. Its climate seems to be favorable--much more than it was a year ago.

This is the time of delicate situations. This fact seems to rule out too much rashness. If serious shortcomings threatened, they should be met with reasoned firmness and determination. Our native leadership, their friends and their technicians can be called upon to do this. They do not need to be handicapped by foul mouthings. Goals honorably achieved can have strong foundations for continuing benefits. This we will need to give for the benefit of our future generations.