

Letter to Editor

Grand Camp

Alaska Native Brotherhood

November 7, 1966

Dear Editor:

Recently I have noted a sharp tendency toward voluntary segregation by our Native populace, i.e., separate political party, etc. In view of our past efforts to gain equality, this is a deplorable situation.

There has even been a suggestion that a special department be created on Native Affairs. Our state constitution prohibits such efforts and rightly so. Any cabinet level department created for, or suggested for Natives implies racial inferiority and I do not subscribe to that inference. Our problems are of an economic nature and in some instances arise because of lack of an adequate education.

Our problems can be corrected without reference to race or ethnic origin. More funds for Rural Development, more funds for Economic Development, more funds for Regional High Schools, more funds for Vocational Training. These are a part of the answer, NOT a separation because of race.

Let me emphasize that our problems are not of racial origin, but exist because of a lack of an economic base in the various villages. The change to a wage economy (laws are restrictive to a subsistence economy) without the preparation for this change, creates the poor situations that now confront our people.

These problems can be met without reference to race.

Why segregate our problems and give them a racial overtone? It will be a sorry day in the history of the State of Alaska, if and when we accept segregation no matter how well intentioned the proposal. I can never accept it.

The Alaskan Native Brotherhood has been a champion of ALL of Alaska's Natives, and has worked diligently in pursuit of objectives to benefit our people. We struggled for years to put the Equal Rights Law on Alaska's book, because we would not tolerate segregation and discrimination.

We, as Natives, must remember we are citizens, contributing to the development and progress of our great state. We have obligations and responsibilities that go with these privileges. We must learn to carry our fair share of the load.

As parents, we must instill in our children the desire attain educational goals. We must see that they attend school regularly. Get to school on time. Do their homework. This may seem mundane and unimportant, but the patterns we establish early in life remain with us for the rest of our lives.

Let us make every effort to become good citizens, ever contributing to the welfare of our state. Let us not encourage racial separation. Let us advance together with other people of this great state.

Fraternally,
John Hope
Executive
Committee