

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



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Editorial - Minority Panics...

That minority of Alaskans which recently inspired a panic reaction against the House version of the land claims bill would do well to recall the effort made by the Alaska Federation of Natives on behalf of the non-Native Alaskans.

The AFN took the initiative in insisting that the phrase, "subject to valid existing rights," be included in the public land withdrawal provision of that bill.

It was not the conservationists, nor the miners, nor the loggers, and not even the State Chamber of Commerce who made that request.

The AFN wanted a just and equitable settlement of the Alaska Native land claims. Yet, it also took the initiative to protect the rights of all Alaskans.

Alaskans are not quick to panic. We hope that admirable trait will continue to be exercised during further deliberations on the land claims bill.

Fires Kill...

The rush to upgrade aircraft navigational aides at Juneau was prompted by the tragic fatal crash of a jetliner near that airport. We hope that another disaster isn't required in order to modernize fire fighting equipment in Alaska villages.

Far too often, it takes a tragedy involving loss of life to correct such inadequacies as were demonstrated during last week's Kake fire. As Kake official Clarence Jackson stated, "It's just a miracle the whole town didn't go."

Fire is a dreaded and dangerous enemy throughout Alaska villages. The State of Alaska, exercising its responsibility to ensure public safety, should review and upgrade fire fighting equipment in the villages.

Poem...

A Brother walks alone and
Tries hard to find
That which will help the
People most
Times of despair and
Loneliness
He knows
But when he hears our
Prayers he is uplifted
Courage Brother for you
Are not alone
Others with the same dream
Walk the same
Hard road.

(From A.E.G.C. Newsletter)

NOTE: The American Indian Cultural Group is composed mainly of American Indian prisoners at San Quentin prison.



BURRO OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

WRITE ON!

Borbridge Assesses AFN Convention

Members
Board of Directors
Alaska Federation of Natives

Dear Members of the Board of Directors:

In retrospect the recent convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives which convened in Fairbanks on October 8, 9 and 10, 1971, appears to have been characterized in part by decisiveness and indecision; by organization and lack thereof.

The delegates were not duly seated and the assemblage could not therefore formally do business until 1:00 p.m. Sunday, the last day of the convention Action on a large number of resolutions, timely in nature, was indefinitely postponed.

Some of the important formal actions taken in accordance with appropriate parliamentary procedures were inadequately explained to the delegates, thus causing occasional confusion and uncertainty. Substantive discussion, debate and action on the land rights issue was deferred to the last day. The delegates were TALKED TO at a time when their opportunities for direct involvement through discussions and direct questioning should have been exhalted rather than curtailed.

Notwithstanding these and other deficiencies which are basically mechanical and consequently correctable, I was elated to note the following significant and highly important developments; the attendance, interest and participation of many young people and the assertion by the constituency of the RIGHT TO KNOW and the RIGHT TO BE HEARD. It was the assertion of these rights upon the heels of President Don Wright's walkout on the convention that led to the unfortunate confusion that was caused by this equally unnecessary act.

If we are to successfully appeal to and involve our young people it must be on the basis of purpose, pride and organization. If we continue to urge them to seek an education then we must match that appeal by upgrading and better organizing our conventions and other meetings. The rights that people have

will not truly belong to them until they understand them and exercise them.

During the development of this understanding it is the obligation of leadership both to protect the rights of its people and to remember that the constitutions which define power, by the act of defining limit that same power or authority. In the final analysis, it is the peoples' rights and the peoples' land. We all serve the same purpose. For this reason I respectfully disagree with those who either mildly or intemperately chastised the convention on the basis that its motivations and actions were unwarranted and indefensible. A case could be developed that it was the convention that was wronged. However, technically deficient were the action of the people, the fact was: they refused to go home before they were ready!

Phillip Guy merely responded to their plea for help; his response was one of the heart. This spontaneous response by the people marks the beginning of a new era in the growth of the Native people of Alaska. I doubt that things will ever be quite the same again—and this is good.

The test of our leadership will be far more exacting and demanding in the days ahead. Accountability will become more of a key concept.

That the convention ended on a note of unity and purpose is a compliment to a people who have steadfastly surmounted obstacle after obstacle in their pursuit of justice. That the leadership received full support of the people is a compliment to both. We must not forget—the past is indeed prologue.

Sincerely,
John Borbridge, Jr. President
Central Council
Tlingit & Haida Indians

cc: Howard Rock

Stickman Asks Village Road

Nulato, Alaska
October 15, 1971

Dear Friend:

It's pretty easy to fight with a piece of paper and pencil. Like Perdue and Ketzler. I used to like to fight with my hands. I don't know what they want to be president of the Tanana Chiefs for. Must be the money. Money or just lazy.

They ought to go out in a heavy timber with a saw and

ax and see who can cut the most pile of wood. That's the way I hear my Grand Folks used to fight, only it was who could catch the most game without guns.

Fast runner and tough one is the one that wins. They even did that for a girl, that's a virgin girl.

Howard, the reason I'm writing this—I just hate Republicans. Because 1930's I was trying hard to raise a family, but the marshal's was after me all the time. That's during the depression. They sneak around at nights try and looking to put someone in jail, so they could make money on them.

They don't care about the wife and kids—what they're going to eat while the husband in jail 30, 60 or 90 days in jail for nothing. In those days, they never let a man go after his arrest, no suspender, no bail. This is why I hate the Republicans.

Everyone I know is just for himself, he's out working and figuring how to make money. I always liked to be a tough man. All I wanted was hard work. Common labor. The harder I work the better I like it. That's the reason I'm still working at 64 years old. I have no physical problems.

But the biggest surprise I had was nine years ago. I was pretty sick when the boss send for me and asked me if I wanted to work for him. That's the state schools, on trailers etc. After he hired me, I think labor foreman, carpenter foreman, plumbers, electricians, I had to run 33 men and I was boss.

That's the job I hated and I quit that kind of jobs. The third day I was still sick. I go to work 7 a.m., 10 hours a day, couldn't even hold water, could not eat. I told the two medics here in the village, but they never came over, but after someone dies. The house is full and they play cards all night.

After the poor guy is dead, he has a house full to visit him and play cards all night. I hope its not that way with me. I hardly see a soul once in a great while. I think they're scared of me.

When we had a Republican for governor, I go up looking a job. I don't have a hard time to get work, but they tell me in the personnel office, the Republicans cut the budget. Then I start talking about this and that till they get tired and give me a job. Now the Democrat is governor, I get job while I'm sick in bed. So I hope all the

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