

Eskimos Vote to Form Corporation-

Action Clears Way for Federally Chartered Corporation

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Eskimos of Alaska's North Slope have taken another step to make their region a new economic force in Alaska.

The Eskimos have voted to establish a federally chartered corporation under the Indian Reorganization Act—a move that gives them formal recognition as a regional entity covering 56.5 million acres.

The Inupiat Community of

the Arctic Slope is the name of the new corporation.

Joseph Upicksoun, president of the Arctic Slope Native Association, which sparked the action, announced the election results.

The vote was a lopsided 541 in favor; 18 opposed.

There seems little doubt, according to what Upicksoun and other association officials are saying, that the corporation intends to figure prominently in administration of the Alaska native land claims settlement.

Upicksoun said the corporation, in effect, is "a white man's tool" that will enable the Eskimos as a unit to enter the business world.

Among other things, it has authority for management of property and money and has tax-exempt status. A special statute authorizes the corporation to protect the lands of its members, with a provision that the secretary of interior cannot dispose of its minerals

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without the corporation's consent.

This could have strong significance on the oil-rich North Slope.

Officers of the Arctic Slope Native Association will serve as the officers of the new corporation.

Villages included in the Inupiat corporation are Barrow, Kaktovik, Nooiksut, Anaktuvuk Pass, Wainwright, Point Hope, Point Lay and Atkasook (Meade River).

Upicksoun also interpreted the objection as a "vote of confidence" in the Arctic Slope Association leadership.

The corporation, Upicksoun said, gives the Eskimos "a modern business vehicle for economic development." Among other things, the corporation is looking into possible management of a proposed air terminal at Barrow.

In addition, Upicksoun pointed out, the corporation is "part of a package" that includes the Eskimos' plans for a giant borough government taking in the entire 56.5 million acres.

"It will be a sister organization to our borough," he said.

The borough proposal is before the state government now.

With a borough, the Eskimos

will have specified zoning and taxation powers on the North Slope—plus the authority to protect their subsistence-fishing and hunting areas from industrial takeovers.

One of the prime projects of the borough will be to have a regional high school at Barrow, instead of the present situation of having to send high-school-age boys and girls to faraway schools.

Estimated population of the Inupiat corporation area is 4,500 persons.