

The Rising Political Awareness

The political awareness of the Native people of Alaska is becoming evident this year and the effect it has can be seen clearly in the political circles of our state. We of this newspaper have tried hard to bring this about ever since we first came off the press on October 1, 1962. We felt the urgency to do this and we did not always pussyfoot in the language of our editorials. We did not sweet talk our people in trying to wake them up to the political potential they possessed if only they would try to make wise use of it. The potential was too great to ignore and we knew that if we could help to bring the awareness of it to our people that it would help them tremendously in their efforts to achieve a better life in our state.

We do not want to take all the credit but we want to credit the new leadership that has arisen in many of our Native areas. One of these areas that must be given mention is the Arctic Slope Native Association with headquarters at Barrow. The energetic leadership of this group has more than given the needed impetus in the political awareness of our people. Its bold statements and actions in recent times have had telling impact on the Native people as well as on the political structure in the State. This has been no mere ripple but a good-sized swell that has made the people of Alaska realize that the Native political potential is not to be taken lightly.

We want to point out, however, that the political awareness of our people is not yet complete, although highly promising. The ASNA of Barrow has made a telling impression but it needs other Native groups and their people to fall in behind it to sustain the impetus it has started. We can not stress too highly the importance of it—its need for assistance from other Native organizations and the people they represent. The political awareness has come off the ground—a milestone in the political efforts of our people. It did not come about easily. It is a hard-won beginning that needs encouragement and assistance for it to become a truly functioning force—a beginning that can benefit our people tremendously.