

## •Editorial

# One battle won, one war to go

It's easy to win a battle and let the war go to hell.

Last week, we reported that a congressional subcommittee approved legislation that could provide strong protection for subsistence resources and users on all federal land in Alaska. That's one for rural Alaskans, but it's only one vote among many yet to come.

After the full House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee approves the Alaska land bill, with its subsistence section, the legislation will be sent over to the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, home of Congressman Robert Leggett of California. Mr. Leggett, chairman of the committee, made it clear during hearings in Alaska last summer that he took a dim view of rural Alaskans seeking protection of subsistence use of federal lands.

Alaskans cannot long savor the favorable vote in John Seiberling's House Subcommittee on General Oversight and Alaska Lands. It appears that substantial work must be done to explain what subsistence is in Alaska to members of Mr. Leggett's committee. We are certain that our own Congressman Don Young will do his best to explain this unique way of living to his colleagues, but he could use some help.

It may be time for village councils to hit up the Bureau of Indian Affairs for some money to travel to Washington, D.C. to explain the importance of subsistence hunting and fishing to the social and cultural well-being of Alaska Natives. Perhaps it is time for rural municipal governments to find money in their modest budgets to send the mayor or a city councilman to Washington to explain that subsistence hunting and fishing still play a significant role in the day-to-day lives of their communities.

We have learned from a reliable source that a major lobbying organization representing American sportsmen may mount an all-out effort on Mr. Leggett's committee to preserve for their constituents the opportunity to out-gun rural hunters who still rely on fish and game to put food on the table.

Can subsistence forces withstand such a threat from a highly organized national organization? Certainly, with a little perserverance, a little of the stamina that made Alaska Natives, collectively one of the nation's largest land holders.

Stay in touch with your leaders, your corporation presidents, drop a note to Mr. Young, Mr. Stevens and Mrs. Gravel. Speak once more of the land you have walked upon for thousands of years.

J.R.R.