

# Letters to the Editor

Arctic Slope  
Native Association  
Affiliate of AFN  
Box 486  
Barrow, Alaska  
September 23, 1969

Mr. Howard Rock,  
Editor, Tundra Times  
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Howard:

In your last issue of the Times on September 19th Mr. John Borbridge stated the status of the Alaska Federation of Natives position very correctly and I want to endorse everything he said.

I also want to state further in reference to the Congressman's words, "that the bill should not require that non-native Alaskans be deprived of benefits to which they would otherwise be entitled."

While I would be the last man to say that the non-native Alaskans are not entitled equally, to the benefits that I claim, this whole proposition is brought about by the fact that the Natives have a substantial claim to all of Alaska, and we are asking for a settlement of which the 2 per cent royalty is only a part. When anyone becomes a claimant, to anything, he becomes entitled to ask for anything that might be a legitimate consideration for settlement.

If the request for the 2 per cent royalty came about in the absence of the land claims, and was made as a request for a hand out, then I would agree with the Congressman. But, like John Borbridge said, we own all the land that we claimed, it is ours.

If the Congressman want to continue to twist some facts around, let me say, that in fact it is the Congressman and the State who are asking for a handout. They want all the land that we are giving up for practically nothing. Let me also remind the Congressman, and go as far as to say that the matter of settling the land claims will be determined by 100 Senators and 435 Congressmen, and not Pollock, Miller or Stevens.

I refer particularly to the North Slope when I say that each time the words "State Land" are used on the North Slope, it is legally wrong and

they know it, there are no State lands there. All of the North Slope belongs to the Native people, and remain so until the legislation is passed.

What may I ask is so unconstitutional about asking for a just settlement? I do not foresee any possibility of the Congress of the United States of America passing legislation constitutionally unsound. The Congressman is an attorney himself, and if his legal staff cannot provide him with an interpretation of the constitutionality of this provision, I would be most happy to furnish him such a research.

By gosh, lets start talking a little common sense about this thing. Are you for it or aren't you.

The congressman stated in the last hearings in Washington, D.C. that he would support whatever position the AFN had, and he was applauded for saying so.

My friend and Congressman is in trouble, remember my fellow Democrat whom he succeeded? Ask him why?

Eben Hopson

Manchester Michigan  
September 26, 1969

Gentlemen:

I read with a great deal of interest the paper you print. Some of the points you bring up do not always appeal to me, but I suppose it is because I have not associated with my people for so many years and had no contact with native Alaskans or Indians of any tribe for so many years.

My record shows I was born at Pt. Barrow, August 8, 1885—taken from there 1890 by Dr. Sheldon Jackson, placed under his guardianship at Unalaska, being brought there by the Revenue Cutter Bear—transferred to Revenue Cutter Rush and taken to Sheldon Jackson Training School where I stayed until 1896 and then to Carlisle Indian School from where I graduated in 1902.

After that year I was in contact only with the whites. So you see my loss of aboriginal instincts would be greater than any whose life was mixed with his original people.

After serving in the U.S. Arm-

y for three years, I was employed at least from 1918 to 1932 as bookkeeper and assistant cashier and finally as cashier at Rice-Stix Dry Goods Co., St. Louis, Mo.—a \$12 million concern. Then I came to Manchester, Mich. as a shoe repair man—on my own—still not contacting any Indians and having lost trace of all my former friends at Sitka and Carlisle.

Since 1945 I have been Manchester Township treasurer enjoying the friendship and fellowship of the people around here.

I finally got in touch with William Paul who was a student with me at Sitka and Carlisle—and recently, after all these years, we enjoyed a reunion after having been away from Alaska for 73 years.

My sincere hope is that through your paper something might be done to relieve the poor housing and living conditions of the people whose heritage is now being sold from under their feet.

Yours,  
Michael Healy Wolfe

September 17, 1969

Dear Mr. Editor:

I have discussed what follows with others who have encouraged me to write to you and the many readers of the Tundra Times.

It has been of great concern to me and to others in the Alaskan conservation movement that participation by native persons has been virtually nonexistent. I am uncertain as to what reasons for this unfortunate situation are. In any case, the reasons are not of great importance at this time. What is important—and, I would suggest, vitally so—is that native persons be brought into the conservation movement as rapidly as possible to do so. We must all work together to prevent in Alaska a repetition of the mistakes that have elsewhere accompanied large-scale development.

In Alaska, as you know, the development fever has begun to take on the proportions of the gold-fevers of old. Worse!—for these present-day "miners" have far more effective tools and even deeper compulsions. The probable, if not inevitable consequences of overpopulation, runaway urbanization, pollution and general degradation of the environment are all-too-obvious.

It is of the greatest importance to all of us who choose to live in

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Alaska that native persons and organizations involve themselves directly in efforts to prevent economic development from being destructive of human and environmental values. The native person (as the "first conservationist") can contribute most significantly in this effort. It is not only that the native has much to teach us about good conservation practices generally, but his intimate knowledge of natural forces, wildlife and vegetation, and of the remotest areas of Alaska are precisely what is needed on which to base recommendations (and legislative proposals) for the protection of these most precious resources.

Mr. Editor, the time grows short for initiating appropriate action in so many of these areas . . . We must all work together in this crucial realm of conservation.

I believe, moreover, that the conservation movement provides the ideal vehicle for bringing native persons together with all sectors of the population to serve an indisputably mutual interest, and that from this shared experience of working together to protect the environment will flow other benefits probably beyond our present reckoning.

I believe that the land is the basic tie that binds us—we all belong to it, and it to us—and if, as in the past of human history, our common humanity was not enough to bring us all together as members of the family of man, perhaps a felt-recognition of our inseparable relationship within the ecological community will help us to achieve that end.

As you well know—and as the very existence of your newspaper attests—it has not been sufficient for a people to present a valid claim to justice, to point to the wrongs which have been committed and which continue to be done. What must be done, it seems to me, is to establish an area of shared concern between the peoples involved. Once done, other mutual efforts and corresponding benefits will surely follow.

It seems to me, then, that the land can indeed be the tie that binds us together. And, as all great movements begin with small but important steps, I wish to suggest that the active involvement of native persons as members of the conservation societies of Alaska will be a significant beginning step—and one that is crucial to the future development of Alaska.

Please allow me to ask that serious consideration be given to these thoughts.

Respectfully,  
Charles Konigsberg  
Anchorage, Alaska

Wales, Alaska  
September 23, 1969

Letter to the Editor,  
Tundra Times:

I have read with interest all the items that concerns the AFN also the Native Land Claims.

On your Sept. 12 issue: I want to commend those young Eskimos and Indians that have picketed at the lease sale. For not being afraid to let everybody know of their opinions and their rights.

And now let's take when the Russians discover Alaska. But, incidentally, they found it was owned by the Indians, Aleuts, and the Eskimos.

Now give this a serious consideration. Who owns the land? The one who found it, or the ones who had been living on it for years and years?

And come to think of it, I have never read or heard of any negotiations, or agreements of the Natives of Alaska turning

over their land to the Russians. And this is my opinion and belief that the Alaskan Natives have a substantial legal right to the land.

And my last statement; if anybody thinks that I am wrong. Put it on the Tundra Times. And I will take back all the statements if I am wrong.

And we can bet that Alaska was sold and bought without the knowledge of the majority of the Alaskan Natives.

/s/ ROY OKPEALUK

501 Moore Hall  
University of Alaska  
College, Alaska 99701  
September 23, 1969

Congressman  
Howard W. Pollock  
House of Representatives  
Washington 25, D.C.

Sir:

In Tundra Times published September 19th, I read a portion where it stated that you "opposed to the 2 per cent over-riding royalty proposal advanced by the Alaska Federation of Natives as part of a land claims settlement."

If you claim to be Alaskan, then I declare that you are Alaskan for outside secret partners by virtue of your congressional representation for Alaska. You certainly do defend unto death our right to say, but not what is good for all Alaskans. What a hell of a way to keep Alaska going by keeping the poor depleted, and keep the rich from the poor. What sort of a politician are you?

As I recall the history of Alaska, the first immigrants to Alaska were forgotten by White House in the middle and the late nineteenth century. For awhile the immigrants enjoyed immunity from White House, but could not stand it later without rights to their lands and benefits for local use. That President Harrison had fooled the immigrants for awhile, but they hadn't been fooled, because they knew what they were talking about. Ol' Harrison was only an inch away from the powerful grips of the immigrants.

Now that you presumably represent Alaska, you are doing to the natives exactly what Ol' Harrison did to the immigrants. Remember that you are only an inch away from the powerful grips of the true Alaskans—not natives or whites, but true Alaskans.

Memorandum,  
John Angaiak