

# **TIMES' PRIBILOF WORK NOTED**

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## **'Reporter' Magazine Credits Paper for Reform on Islands**

THE TUNDRA TIMES has been recognized by the national publication, THE REPORTER, as being the moving force behind far reaching changes on Alaska's Pribilof Islands.

In an article entitled, "Emancipation Comes to the Pribilofs" in the March 9 issue, author Mary Ellen Leary says it was the Tundra Times that spurred two investigations of conditions there.

These investigations, in turn, led to passage of federal legislation "to give Pribilovians a chance for full title to their own homesteads, full rights of self-government,

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# Magazine Credits Times . . .

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and full benefits in retirement," she stresses.

## Wave of Rebuff

According to the author, the newspaper's Pribilof crusade was part of a wave of self-assertion and rebuff of federal paternalism that has swept Alaskan natives and "has been perceptibly quickened by concern for civil rights in the 'Lower States.'"

She writes:

"A coalition of Eskimo and Indian interests has been spurred along by a lively little weekly newspaper, the Tundra Times, edited in Fairbanks by a couple of irrepressible if sometimes ungrammatical zealots with impeccable news sense, Howard Rock and Thomas A. Snapp. When an airborne candidate (Editor's note: Carl Moses, of King Cove, now State Representative) was barred from his soapbox on the Pribilofs, the Tundra Times was ready and waiting with the story.

## Servitude

" 'Most people think slavery in the United States was abolished with the Civil War and the Emancipation Proclamation,' Tom Snapp wrote in the November 23, 1964 issue.

" 'Yet today in the Far North, in Alaska, slavery still exists, in milder form perhaps than existed in the

deep south, but slavery nonetheless. The Aleuts of the Pribilof Islands are today living in servitude to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

"It was this story that inspired two investigations, with a great flurry of charges, alibis, explanations, apologies and pledges of good faith for good faith for the future and led finally to passage of remedial bill sponsored by Senator E.L. (Bob) Bartlett (D., Alaska) last October.

" 'All my life,' said Senator Bartlett, 'I have heard accounts of their problems. All my life I have heard, too, official reassurances that Pribilovians are being well and fairly treated. And yet the problems continue.'

## Not Included

Writer Leary does not bring out in her article that the Tundra Times gathered information of conditions on the Pribilofs under extremely trying circumstances, for two years prior to its first expose' article nor that after it began its series that the paper was subjected to pressured by federal officials.

She does, however, trace the history of the Pribilofs both from the standpoint of its people as well as the multi-million dollar fur seal

industry.

## Agencies Resisted

For various reasons, the author says federal agencies balked at Senator Bartlett's plan to give Pribilovians rights of self-government and equality and that more sophisticated efforts to extend equality threw the Pribilof policy into "shocking focus."

She concludes her article this way:

"To concern oneself in these busy times with a handful of islanders who are far off and usually forgotten may seem an exercise in irrelevance. But the story of the Pribilofs is counterpoint to the civil rights movement, starkly simple in the quality of freedom with which it deals.

"It is sobering to consider that while carrying out valiant missions elsewhere in the name of freedom, this nation has been content, right up to the present, to tolerate a little slavery of its own on the side.