

Tanacross Meeting Finally Planned

The much-sought-after conference between the Bureau of Land Management, the State, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, appealed by the village of Tanacross is finally going to take place on December 17.

Andrew Isaac, chief of Tanacross, had called a meeting for November 12 but the village received word from Bert Silcock, director of BLM for Alaska, that the meeting be delayed until December 17.

On October 30, Chief Isaac had written a strongly worded letter to Silcock demanding that the meeting take place.

"How many meetings," Chief Isaac said, "how many promises, and how many times we have been told not to worry, but they have not meant a thing except to give someone time to continue robbing us of whatever little we have left. We are not going to sit

and do nothing about it any longer."

The Chief said that everyone keeps telling the Tanacross people that the deep freeze was protecting them but all they have gained from it so far were a bunch of rejection slips from the BLM.

"The State of Alaska is continuing to lease and take over land that we have claimed, but we cannot claim anything, not even our Indian allotments," Chief Isaac pointed out.

The Chief complained that some BLM personnel run up and down the highway telling people in lodges what they were doing but never coming to the village to tell the villagers.

"We do not want to hear one more time that anyone is in Mansfield village for any reason unless they talk to us first and we know why they want to be

around there," said the Chief.

"Do you think we will sit back and watch our children starve in the winter just so someone can have a summer vacation cabin and drive all the fish and game away with their boats and other things they will have to amuse them. WE SAY "NO!"

"We have tried," the Chief continued, "to protect Mansfield Lake and our village way before Alaska became a State and all we have ever gotten is no, rejection slips, and more no's.

"Why? We are not trying to get greedy and grab something that belongs to someone else, we just know that over half of our subsistence comes from this lake and the land around it and we don't want to be told one more time that belongs to the State.

"We say it does not belong to the State, it belongs to us, and our back has been against the wall long enough. We might as well start fighting for what we know belongs to us."