

# Divide and Conquer

I see the greatest value lying in the opportunity to be able to contact the Native peoples from other areas. In this day and age, distance should not prevent us from working together for common causes. The non-Native has too long used the old method of divide and conquer, (or more closely said: he has played upon group differences to convince the Native to think a wrong to one group, or tribe, does not affect the others).

We **MUST** realize an injustice, an unfair decision, an arbitrary act of land confiscation, or hunting rights, against **ONE** Native or **GROUP** of Natives is an act against **ALL** Natives and **SHOULD** be treated as such.

For the benefit of our future generations, we cannot afford to lose by compromise any of the things we are entitled to under the law. It's the same now as when the first European came to our lands. The non-Native will make a treaty or law and abide by it as regards the Natives **UNTIL** such time as it is against his interests to continue it. In the past the Natives, through innocence, allowed him to abrogate these treaties and laws without taking legal recourse. Direct threat to survival

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was met with the only recourse the Native knew—namely, recourse to arms: as a result, the Indian wars of the '70s and '80s.

Now I ask you—as badly as things have gone for the Natives, how much worse would it have been for them had they submitted meekly to the will that was imposed upon them? With their very blood, they bought certain reforms and a respect (often given grudgingly) from the white man. This also holds true of the Eskimo, Aleut, and Indian in their dealings with the Russians.

Is this present generation, who is continuing the fight for our people's rights, to be less forceful than those who have gone before? Now the battleground is the court of law and the price of asserting one's rights is no longer at the risk of a life.

But as in yesterdays gone past, we must make a stand; we must not be afraid to force the issue; we have a lawful right to attack when what we have is placed in jeopardy. We must carry the fight to the enemy—not sit back and let him seek us out. And remember, he is still the enemy—the threat to our survival, whether he comes dressed in a morning coat armed with a legal-sounding document, or if he comes dressed in blue, riding a horse and armed with a cavalry saber.

I have had the privilege of several years infantry combat in wartime defending this great land of ours, its laws and its unique, essentially just government. By having done so (and I would do so willingly again), I have done a small part to insure a justice for my people in their fight under these same just and equitable laws. It is my right, my privilege and my obligation to fight THIS fight just as hard, and this right is guaranteed by the greatest document ever devised by man for self government—the Constitution—under which we, the Natives, shall eventually receive our just entitlements.

—Hugh Nicholls  
Barrow, Alaska