

Land Battle Postponed 100 Years—

Interim Gave Leaders Knowledge of Western Man

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SETTLEMENT — PART THREE

OLANGAPO CITY, P.I. —

The land battle in Alaska was postponed for a century after the United States acquisition. Alaska Natives received a century of exposure to the ways of western man. The leaders of the land fight had a good understanding of the way the invading culture operated. They had knowledge of its economics and its politics.

When the threat came, Alaska Natives didn't take up bows and arrows and harpoons. They reached for instruments readily understood by those who coveted Alaska Native land. They formed organizations and associations. Anyone having observed a meeting of those famous Tlingit organizations will be able to appreciate the proficiency which Natives can attain in running and utilizing organizations.

These organizations were instrumental in meeting the threat of land loss earlier described in this series, and another threat which is a deadly today as it was prior to passage of the claims act.

Indian author Vine Deloria, Jr., a Standing Rock Sioux, bemoaned in his first book "Custer Died for Your Sins," that curious affliction which plaques Indians annually on reservations in the continental United States. Indians have anthropologists, he said.

Alaska Natives have, in recent

years, experienced a similarly serious affliction. Alaska Natives have conservationists. Having gouged the earth, purified the air, condemned a multitude of species to extinction, saturated the rivers and lakes with sewage and chemicals, paved and apartmented himself across the American continent, and having made everything generally unpleasant for himself, the exploiter becomes an apologist, a conservationist, and he now looks to Alaska as the place to "do it right the first time." The apologist, not understanding the relationship between the Alaska Native and frustrated with the havoc which he has wrecked upon himself, genuinely believes that Natives can screw up land as easily as he has. As a result, he began tying up millions of acres of Alaska Native land.

At his instigation, the Tongass National Forest was created in southeastern Alaska, for which he generously paid the Tlingit and Haida Indians 7 million dollars three generations later and condemned them to live in the urban centers of that region. To ensure sound conservation practices, the Forest Service subsequently allowed private timber interests to harvest timber through the use of the clearcut method. The clearcut method, as the name implies, means the cutting of all timber in a given acre without regard to age. Also at his instigation, national parks and monuments, as well as wildlife refuges and scenic areas, were created without regard to prior

use and occupancy.

Some may appreciate a concession that Natives may be capable of emulating the conservationist in at least one area, but Natives must certainly take exception to the inference that they might rape and destroy the source of their livelihood American Indians and Alaska Natives, as the shape of the nation today will give indisputable testimony, are the only groups of Americans who have ever exercised sound conservation policies. The need for selfpreservation, let alone our respect for our earth and its generosity, was sufficient to ensure that. Now the conservationists have the audacity to go before the United States Congress, after flashing before the American public propaganda photographs of baby seals being clubbed in Canada, and request those distinguished lawmakers to prevent a hunting peoples from taking sea mammals and engaging in a crafts industry restricted to modest homes of individual artisans.

As reported in the Tundra Times last May, Alvin Alowa made an eloquent defense of his people: "All meat bearing foods which Americans place on their tables every day come from animals, yes animals. Killed in one way or another. We too kill animals and sea mammals because somehow, that's how it was meant to be. We do not waste at all. Our men die yearly trying to bring every bit of the sea mammal home to be used. To waste is to die."

NEXT WEEK: The taking of lands.