

# Native Sovereignty Task Force

Governor Sheffield's well-timed appointment of a task force to "look into" the issue of Native Sovereignty in Alaska is a commendable one. The issue itself is inordinately complex and under any circumstances would require careful handling. During the upcoming political year, the volatility of "Native Sovereignty" will increase as the matter is publicly aired throughout the State, and it is not too difficult to imagine the perils that could exist for a public figure taking a stand on one of the many sides of the issue. Sheffield's action in appointing a task force, made up of a number of well known individuals suggests a certain forthrightness and sensitivity.

We don't expect that Sheffield's new task force or any other task force for that matter will be able to put the issue of Native Sovereignty to rest, simply because the matter is too complex. The problems involved with the applicability of "Native Sovereignty" in Alaska are thorny ones and not easily understood by anyone. The courts have been addressing the issue since the word first came into use and undoubtedly the courts will continue to address the issue in the foreseeable future. In the final analysis, the courts will probably settle the matter. The task force approach as used by Sheffield's administration places the problems in focus.