

Editorial Comment—

Alaska Native People And the Pipeline

After watching the flap for quite some time between the environmentalist and the pro-pipeline factions, the Alaska Native people are beginning to involve themselves in the running controversy — and this involvement is leaning definitely along the lines of the pro-pipeline factions.

This trend is not surprising because Alaska's Natives have a big stake from the development of the North Slope oil — a huge \$500 million package the flow of oil would accumulate for them as 2 per cent royalty from the oil production as set forth by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The sudden surge of involvement has surfaced in the persons of some of our most prominent Native leaders such as Senator Willie Hensley of Kotzebue; Senator John Sackett, president of the Doyon, Ltd., a profit making arm of the Tanana Chiefs Conference; Laura Bergt, well known personality in politics and Alaska society; and Bobby Schaeffer of the Northwest Alaska Regional Corporation, the business arm of the Northwest Alaska Native Association.

These people are now in Washington, D.C. and they are there for the purpose of lobbying for the passage of a pipeline bill authored by Senator Henry M. Jackson of Washington State, among other things. They did not enter into the lobbying effort without experience. They have had a large share of experience during the lobbying efforts for the passage of the complex and difficult Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act bill. This experience should be a valuable asset as they, once again exert their efforts toward passage of another bill — a bill that would open the way for the flow of money in the amount of \$500 million for Alaska's Native people.

Our Native leaders are not in Washington solely for the Native people. They are also working for the great good for the state as a whole. We need to give them a meaningful gesture of encouragement and support.