

THE 'DETACHMENT' IS NEEDED

Virtually no one aside from the oil companies disagreed with the formation of a borough in the Arctic back in the '70's. In fact, there was one hundred percent support from the Alaska Native Community, and there was much jubilation when the final tally was in, and the people living in Barrow and the surrounding villages were at last to realize the true meaning of home rule.

Today, their neighbors in the NANA Region are moving toward the creation of a borough for many of the same reasons that brought about the North Slope Borough. The problem is that part of the land that would help the NANA people lies within the boundaries of the NSB. Giving up land that would mean potential revenues when the future looks financially dim is not an easy concession to make so no one can really blame the NSB voters for the position they took, although the vote was narrow and in fact very close in some of the villages.

The bottom line, however, is that the people who live in the Arctic whether in the North Slope Borough or in the Borough to be formed by NANA will ultimately benefit from the 'detachment' of land that would allow the Red Dog Mine to go into operation. The 'detachment' for this reason is needed.

OUR SOVIET NEIGHBORS HAVE BEEN INVITED

In the past, it was impossible for our people living in the Arctic to visit their relatives, who live a mere 70 miles across the Bering Sea and vice versa because of political differences between the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union.

All this may be coming to an end soon with the signing of a new cultural exchange agreement by President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev at the recent Summit in Geneva.

This means that there will be a real possibility of participation by the Siberian Eskimos at many of the cultural events held in Alaska such as the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, the Festival of Alaska Native Arts and maybe the whaling festivals that take place in the Arctic.

Exchange visits for cultural reasons are important and will serve a number of useful purposes besides creating goodwill between the two most powerful nations in the world. There is much to be gained from sharing ideas amongst the people who living in the Arctic after all.

That type of sharing does take place at our cultural events and also at some of our other meetings too such as the Inuit Circumpolar Conference. The ICC officials have extended an invitation to our Soviet neighbors to attend the next meeting scheduled for Kotzebue during the summer of 1986. The Soviets have always been invited to the ICC meetings and for various reasons did not attend in the past.

It is our hope that the 'empty chair' at the '86 ICC meeting will at last be occupied by the Siberian Eskimo contingent, who have much in the way of culture and ideas about living in the Arctic to exchange with us.