

"I may not agree with what you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it" -VOLTAIRE

Editorial Comment

LOCAL OPTION BILL: THE NEXT STEP IS UP TO THE VILLAGES

Most of us know the pain and suffering caused by alcohol abuse. We've seen family, friends, neighbors, children and our elders, at one time or another, in some way, affected by the disease called alcoholism, and we've all wanted to do something about it.

During the last legislative session a number of village leaders made their concerns known about the ineffectiveness of the law in fighting the abuse of liquor in the Bush, and now we have a new law.

Last week Governor Sheffield signed the local option bill, which will take effect sometime in early September. According to the governor, "This law is for rural Alaska, where community leaders have banded together to halt the destruction that can often be caused by alcohol. If it's the will of the community that they go dry, this law can work to make rural Alaska an even better place to live."

When local elections come around in October, will your village have on the ballot an ordinance which will ban the possession of alcohol? If your community feels it can adequately enforce such a ban and the voters are strongly behind it, it will be done. How effective this new local option bill will be is up to the villages now.

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH INDICTMENTS: A NEW DIMENSION IN NATIVE AFFAIRS

The North Slope Borough is not a Native organization, although the majority of the residents living there are Alaska Native and the people who have been elected to office since its inception have been Alaska Native.

Last year, when newly elected mayor George Ahmaogak made public an audit which told of alleged mismanagement of funds, leading to federal investigations connected with the Brower Administration, there ensued a scandal of major proportions that continued to make headlines for a number of months.

The indictments coming from a Grand Jury investigating the problems of the North Slope Borough during the Brower Administration, after months of speculation, are now beginning to come down. An Alaskan Native has been indicted for racketeering and other charges. More indictments are promised in the next few weeks.

Generally speaking, most residents of the NSB seem quite relieved that the problems which developed during the past administration are finally getting attention, although in some instances, it will mean that friends and relatives will be indicted in the process.

The alleged mismanagement during the Brower Administration brought shame to the Alaska Native people and when it is finally over there will continue to be a certain amount of bad feelings, but if the borough type government was to work as those who helped create it envisioned, it had to include the enforcement of the law which applies to all forms of government.

When all is said and done about the North Slope Borough indictments, a new dimension in Native affairs will have opened up. It is not one which will be heralded by anyone nor welcomed, but those who want home rule government in the Bush recognize that it is necessary.