

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



Owned, controlled and edited by Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Publishing Company, a corporation of Alaska natives. Published at Fairbanks, Alaska, weekly, on Friday.

Address all mail to Box 1287, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701. Telephone 452-2244.

Entered at the Post Office at Fairbanks, Alaska, as second class matter under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Publishing Co., Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee: Howard Rock, president; Thomas Richards, vice president; Mrs. Ralph Perdue, secretary; Jimmy Bedford, comptroller; Mary Jane Fate, assistant secretary. HOWARD ROCK, editor.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Regular Mail (including Alaska, Canada and other states)	1 Year \$ 8.00	6 Months \$ 4.50
Air Mail (including Alaska, Canada and other states)	1 Year \$19.00	6 Months \$10.00

Editorial— Time Is Now for Honing Native Politics

Political overtones are beginning to tinge the native land claims efforts. Some of the color being splashed around is not meeting with approval in the eyes of the native people of Alaska. That this would come about during the agonizing course of the preparation for the land claims legislation in Congress was a foregone conclusion. We didn't imagine, however, that some politicians and certain newspapers would slap the natives and say they are not the State's responsibility; that they were the responsibility of the federal government.

This is basely ridiculous, shortsighted and also biting to the co-citizens of the state—the native people. We think a concerted effort is in line for the natives to work for better governmental treatment and they can make a good try at it with vigorous politics keeping in mind that influential forces would pawn the state's original inhabitants aside and divest the state of any responsibility to them. This is saying in reality that other 49 states should have the responsibility—not Alaska.

Alaska's native people through their land claims solution efforts by congressional legislation are desperately seeking the stabilization of their status in the State. They are no different from any people in wanting some measure of decency of surroundings where they can live with respect of others. They are steadily being pushed into corners by the tentacles of land hunger. They do not want to be a burden to the State nor do they want to be one to the federal government. A generous land settlement can be an investment they can pay dividends generously in the future.

The land claims efforts were sure to pinch sensitive nerves along the way. The anguished and unfair outbursts are now the results. They should be scrutinized as to which side of the political fence they are coming from even though the individuals who uttered them might be hard to reach by the native vote because of their positions in the political picture.

We are of the belief, however, that urban politicians who are opposed to the native efforts on the land claims can be reached indirectly. Also, we are not ruling out the possibility that the outbursts made lately necessarily originated from those who uttered them but that they could be generated from the higher ups in their particular political organizations. Political maneuvers work in devious ways.

Since politics have made inroads into the land solution effort, it is important that the native leaders sharpen their political viewpoints and work to prepare to influence their people in Alaska generally as to what might be the best road to take in the election year of 1970. That year is fast coming upon us. While doing so, they should make efforts toward a political unity of purpose aimed at the most telling points of action. The native political activity beginning now is an urgent necessity. Its well direct-

Bill Would Raise Housing Cost

Alaska Senators Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel have introduced a bill to raise the allowable per unit dwelling cost under the Alaska remote housing program from \$7,500 to \$10,500.

Both senators said they felt

the cost revision was urgently needed to compensate for the increased cost of materials since the programs enactment in 1966.

"This highly important housing program to benefit our Alaska Natives is based on the

principle of maximum owner participation in the construction of the homes, and I believe \$10,500 to build a home in rural Alaska is an incredibly low cost and speaks strongly for the intent of this self-help program," Senator Stevens said.

Senator Gravel stated, "This amendment provides a much more realistic average cost per housing unit ceiling necessary to construct desperately needed housing in Alaska today. It is my hope that such costs may continue to be kept at a minimum in the future so that a maximum number of homes can be built with the \$10 million presently authorized under the program."

The Alaska housing program, funded through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, received its initial appropriation of funds in FY 1969. Primary responsibility of implementation rests with the Alaska State Housing Authority.

Dr. Leon Wall

The Honorable Walter J. Hickel
Secretary of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Dear Sir:

It is the belief of Juneau ANB Camp Number 2 that it would be to the best interest of all concerned if Dr. Leon Wall, Superintendent of Chilocho Indian School, were appointed to the Office of Assistant Commissioner (Education) of BIA. We strongly urge your endorsement of this appointment.

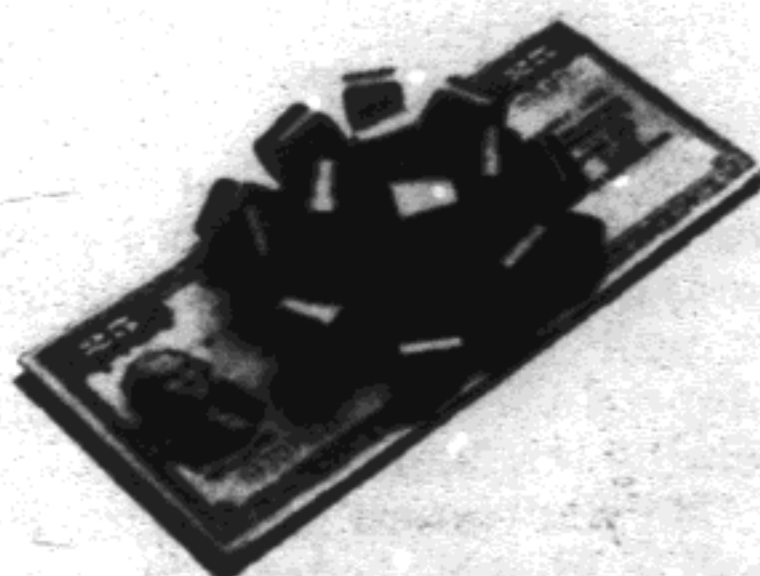
Dr. Wall has achieved recognition throughout the educational field for his dedication to Indian education. As we are all acutely aware, the state of Indian education is at a critical stage requiring someone who is qualified, as well as personally committed to the progress of the Indian student. We agree in general with his educational philosophy, particularly his proposed continuous and highly motivated program beginning with the very young and also his concern for parental involvement in education.

His preparation and experience for the position is highly recommendable, having worked closely with Indian education in Oklahoma, North Dakota, Nevada, Arizona, and New Mexico, and with the many Alaska children among the 23 states with around 100 tribes who have attended Chilocho Indian School. He received his Doctorate from Oklahoma State University in Educational Administration.

We feel that you will agree that Dr. Wall is the person best qualified to serve as Assistant Commissioner (Education) of BIA.

Sincerely yours,
Jim Austin
President, Juneau ANB

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present with
a future.



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Letters to the Editor

Central Council
Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska
1675 C St. Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 272-1322

Dear Editor:

It has been interesting to note the various letters to the editor and articles that have addressed themselves to the presumed recency of Alaska native land rights and the assertion of these rights by the Alaska natives against various forms of encroachment. The following is quoted from the court record in the United States Court of Claims in the case of "The Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska v. The United States", Docket No. 47900 (Decided October 7, 1959):

"66. Shortly following the transfer of Alaska to the United States, several councils of certain tribal chiefs were held at which objections were voiced to the transfer. As officially reported in 1869 by a special agent of the Treasury Department, who was ordered to examine into the resources of the territory and the character and habits of its various tribes:

The dissatisfaction among the tribes on account of the sale of the Territory did not arise from any special feeling of hostility, but from the fact that it was sold without their consent, they arguing that their fathers originally owned all the country, but allowed the Russians to occupy it for their mutual benefit, in that articles desired by them could be obtained from the Russians in exchange for furs; but the right of the Russians to sell the Territory, except with the intention of giving them the proceeds, is denied.

Some of the chiefs were in favor of waging war to drive the Americans out. However, the chief of the Chilkats, who were the most hostile of all the Indians, pointed out the weakness of the defense of the Indian villages against attacks of United States war vessels and advised delay to await further developments. This advice prevailed, the special agent reporting:

When the Territory was transferred to the United States, the natives had no knowledge of the people with whom they were to deal; and, having been prejudiced by the parties then residing among them, some of the more warlike chiefs were in favor of driving out the 'Boston men,' as they termed us. They held several councils to discuss the matter, and were mainly dissuaded from the measure by Shawkuthk, chief of the Tchilkat tribe, and one of the best traders and most influential and active chiefs on the coast. His tribe is the most powerful among the Koloshians, and is located beyond the reach of war vessels, the water being shallow for some distance from the village. This chief represented to the dissatisfied tribes that the new people had many gunboats, and would easily drive them out of their villages; and all would soon starve. He advised them to wait and see what the 'Boston men' would do. This course they adopted, and soon learned, in the increase of the value of their furs and the greater variety of products received, that the change was to their advantage; and in coming to Sitka in small parties to trade with the increased privileges enjoyed by that tribe, all saw additional reasons for peace."

I will be pleased to communicate other examples of early assertion of land rights by the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Southeast Alaska.

Sincerely yours,
John Borbridge, Jr.

ed aims when the time comes can mean better rewards for native causes.

We have long proclaimed that native politics is one of the really effective tools the native people can use to improve their position of respect in Alaska as a whole. Although it is viewed with healthy respect by the state's major politicians, it has never been utilized to its full potential. This must be sought after with vigor. The 1970 election year can be the proving grounds toward realizing what it can really do. The results can be most beneficial and rewarding to the general native effort.

ARTIFACTS WANTED! If you are going to sell old-time objects, please contact the Alaska State Museum first. If you have old-time things that need special care, you can lend them to the Museum for safe-keeping and display. If your things are in the Alaska State Museum, they stay in Alaska. Contact: Jane Wallen, Director, Alaska State Museum, Pouch FM, Juneau, Alaska 99801, phone 586-1224.

