

Delegation disputes editorial

To the Editor:

We wish to respond to the Tundra Times editorial of Sept. 23, 1981, inferring that the Alaska Congressional delegation failed in its responsibility to the Alaska Natives by not appearing at the Aleut Commission hearings in Alaska last month.

The editorial omits the fact that the Commission was established pursuant to Congressional action. If you recall, the original bill establishing the Commission was solely directed towards investigating the Japanese-American relocation during World War II. The Alaska Congressional delegation persuaded the Congress to include the lesser known but equally tragic relocation of the Aleuts into the purview of the Commission investiga-

tion.

Due to this action, the investigation into the Aleuts experience is receiving national attention and could well lay the foundation to include the Aleuts in any legislation suggested by the Commission.

In addition, the delegation arranged with the Congress to pass a separate bill to include an Aleut on the Commission. You will note Father Gromoff of Unalaska was an appointment made by the President Pro Tempore of the U.S. Senate, Senator Strom Thurmond, pursuant to a recommendation made by the Alaska delegation.

Finally, the Commission scheduled hearings, not only in Alaska, but throughout the nation. The first hearings were held in Washington, D.C. Sen-

ator Stevens testified in one of those hearings.

The Commission's hearings are intended to gather testimony and evidence of the various experiences of these people. Our responsibility was to provide the forum to record such experiences. We did that with complete success. Had we testified in Alaska, we would have taken time from those who deserved the opportunity to relate their individual experiences.

We will continue to monitor the Commission's work closely and we hope you understand our dismay at the tenor of your editorial.

Senator Ted Stevens
Senator Frank Murkowski
Congressman Don Young