

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

Tragic Testimonial on Alcoholism . . .

(Continued from page 1)

alcohol. Parents are separated because of this same matter. White men are taking advantage of our native women, young and old, just because they are divorced and are not employed.

LONG AGO during gold rush days Nome, Alaska was a nice city. Perhaps, but in today's newspaper it's called worst city slum. As long as Alaska keeps on like this it will never prosper. Laws are no more laws. From here I like to go way back to 1930's. My first school year when I was seven, people help one another. People in our villages are eager to help themselves.

MY PARENTS would camp for seals, oogruk, and tom-cod. They would take all of us along. This is called spring camping for food. Men go out to sea and catch seals and oogruk, women and children hook tom-cods and hang them to dry.

THEN IN MONTH of May we plant our gardens—potatoes, cabbages, rutabagas, yellow turnips, purple tops, carrots, head lettuce, cauliflower. We dig the gardens with shovels until our hands blister. Every home have gardens. We learn this gardening from a missionary from Sweden. He taught us the Gospel and how to plant and take care of our vegetables. He even helped us ship our vegetables to Nome during World War II. Huge cabbages, hundreds of pounds of potatoes.

ON SUNDAY afternoons he would walk around the village and kind of inspect our gardens, see if they're free of weeds. Then he would handle the insecticide himself so we wouldn't get poisoned, to do away with the cut worm and maggots that wants to destroy our vegetables. He taught confirmation as well, visit the sick, and he preached with an interpreter in those days.

THEN AFTER we thin and weed our gardens we moved up river to our fishing camps. Each camper's place have a name. Our camp's name was Land's End in Eskimo, Noonum Issoa. We stay in our camp's until September.

THEN IN MIDDLE 30's I first heard about Welfare, when my uncle died and left his widow with six children. She was getting \$10.00 a month. Finally this Welfare spread like fire in a few years. You think this village have gardens any more today? Maybe only half dozen homes plant today in the spring. Fish camps are covered with willows.

I'M NOT against Welfare when it is given to people who are widows, cripples, orphans. Some of our native people have nice homes they built themselves, even they don't have education, as long as they know their inches. There are too many able people who are under Welfare. Our fore-fathers lived without it.

IN 1930's very seldom you see or hear about someone being drunk. The village we left is getting to be a dangerous place. Sometimes after we're in bed we would hear gunfire. Nobody take these seriously. I've seen nasty wounds from drunken brawlers. I was medical aide there for six years without pay. Me and my helper would take turns taking care of the clinic, sometimes 2 p.m. to 6 p.m. Many times our dinner is late when I wait for an answer for my patient, and yet my husband never discourage me.

I WOULD LIKE to see little pay for our medical aide in our villages because they have big responsibility.

ONE PARTICULAR night I'll never forget. We heard someone knocking on our door. My husband answered the door then he called me out to see this man with big cut on his eye. One lady had brought him over. So I had to bring him up to the Air Force base for stitching. It was 4:30 a.m. Before I bring him I had to try and find transportation. When I brought him to his house there were three men fighting like cowboys we see in movies. But this was a frightening scene, all of them drunk. Finally one said, "I'll get my gun yet." I ran this way and that way with all my might just like my heart was just about to stop. I left my patient because I want to live too. No more peace.

I NEVER HEAR word BORROW when I was in my first school years. People help one another. No matter how much people fish there use to be lots and lots of fish. No outboard

motors. Only two or three inboard engines. We pole up stream and pull boats with ropes on sand bars, and yet we never go hungry. Too many motors in our rivers these days. They disturb the spawning places too much. Quick transportation for fishing but people never store fish for home use like they use to anymore.

MY PARENTS gave up camping because they want us to go to school. I know it was hard for them to give up the great outdoor living. It's no wonder disease is increasing among our native people. My folks believe in fresh air. They use to take us out squirrel hunting too for parkas in the spring. This too is diminishing event.

NOW LET ME jump to year 1960's. Even before these years of 1960's I really regret why I have sent my first four children to boarding schools under Bureau of Indian Affairs. Many of you will think I'm crazy. My family use to be very close before they start to go to these far away places nine months out of each year. They would write home and say, Mom, I want to come home." How many times I read the letter first and cried. They would go each fall just because their friends are going. They're real different people when they come home. They're restless. They say our towns are dead. Nothing to do. They have no more interest in church or Sunday School.

IN THOSE YEARS I used to wish from the heart that our schools were built nearer to our villages so we could at least let them come home on holidays. Our villages' attitude today is too much. "Let Bureau of Indian Affairs do it."

NOT ALL STUDENTS are successful. Some become real good secretaries. Some who really try become school teachers, carpenters, and some are roaming our streets without jobs and homes. Now, in this past year someone pointed out what the great need was for our natives—WORK.

AN ESKIMO can work if given a chance but his greatest enemy is alcohol. Indians down-fall, Aleuts' enemy, also white man's. First it will be called a sociable drink. Nothing wrong with it, they say. But sociable drink gets hold of you. You can't live without it anymore. Finally you loose your job, your home, your family. Maybe you were a successful business man one time, nice growing family. Then, you are alone today because that sociable drink flare up like fire. Just like playing with matches at first.

THE WORKS of alcohol is nasty. It makes you do things you wouldn't dare to do if you are sober. It can bring you to shame and make you so low, finally you got to have help. Some drop dead because the heart can't take it anymore. I know what I'm talking about because I tried it for several years. Almost lost my family and home but by the grace of the All Mighty God we are a family today.

IN THE CLOSING of this centennial year I am real happy to see results from our visiting whites from Washington, D. C., when they see for themselves what our great need was. After 100 years since our Alaska was bought. Land claims issues are mentioned through radio, T.V. and newspapers. Only if they put our people to work we will be moving forward. We natives should hang on and not settle this in a hurry. It is not a small matter.

IT'S VERY TRUE white people bought Alaska and they have a right to have a big chunk of it because Alaska is big, and you and I have no equipment to survey and dig well for gas, oil, and other minerals. Without white man's help we couldn't do much. We would have been wiped out completely

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LETTERS to EDITOR

Nikolai, Alaska

Dear Mr. Rock:

The people of Nikolai read very interesting things in your newspaper. Some things make us ask questions maybe you can answer since we do not know who to ask about this.

In the January 12 paper there was news that the BIA and Public Health Service is to provide villages radio contact 24 hours a day to take care of health problems and emergencies.

Nikolai would like to have a radio with this service. Who can we ask for this?

We hear many villages who have daily radio schedules with the hospitals but we have no medical schedule here. We are supposed to be in the Anchorage district but Anchorage does not have a radio schedule for medical cases.

So we have never had radio contact with a hospital as most villages have. We are too far away to hear Bethel hospital. We can hear Tanana but we are not on their schedule because we are not in Tanana hospital district. The plane schedules are not practical for getting people to Tanana, but it would sure be helpful to us if we could talk to a doctor during sickness or emergencies.

Our medical aide does a good job. We try to get advice from the public health nurse in McGrath but many times there is no one in McGrath listening to the radio. Sometimes the nurse is visiting a village or on vacation even if we can get McGrath. There are many times it would be helpful if we could talk directly to a hospital. Sometime even somebody's life might be saved if we had some kind of medical contact.

We would sure like to apply for one of these new radios with 24 hour contact for medical problems so if you could print our letter, Mr. Rock, or see that it gets to the right place, we would appreciate it.

Sincerely,
Bobby Esai, Sr.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Mr. Rock:

Please print this letter in the Tundra Times.

The letter published in the Tundra Times Feb. 23, 1968, by correspondent, name withheld, and Barry Jackson, I don't agree with Mr. Correspondent or Barry Jackson. They imply that the Native is not carrying his full load or share of government.

A few years back, we may not have carried our full load. But you can bet we do today. I say that the Natives of the Interior Alaska carry more than their share of the burden of government. No Federal or State money comes to the

Interior to help pay the cost of public utilities in the outlying villages—90 PER CENT HARD WORKING, TOP PAYING VOTERS.

In fact, we in the Interior can't get FHA financing to build or buy our homes.

As for the Natives not developing the land and not spending the money wisely, that remains to be seen. The Natives have come a long ways in the last few years. You see and hear proof of this every day.

I am a Native and manage my business successfully since I started it in 1961. And I know a lot of Natives who are doing the same.

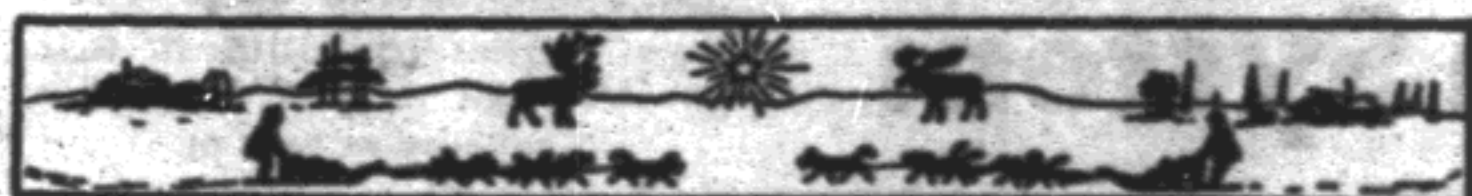
Now Mr. Correspondent, I

want you to tell me who the bigger Indian is. When the federal government built our schools and hospitals our white brothers were employed. More than \$25 million is appropriated annually for the BIA. I would be almost on the mark by saying that 95 per cent of the this money goes directly to the white man.

Seeing as how much money goes to the white man, by the Native being what he is, I would say—lick the hand that is feeding. Don't bite the hand.

Sincerely,
Claude Demientieff
Galena, Alaska

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; Clara Anderson, secretary; Jimmy Bedford, comptroller; Mrs. Ralph Perdue, 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