

Adam John Protests Cannikin

"Of us, the natives in Alaska, it can be said that we are behind an ice curtain—an ice curtain not put on by any country other than our own. This ice curtain that we are behind is a curtain of silence. The true people of Alaska—the Eskimos, the Athabascans, the Tlingits, the Haidas, the Tsimshians and the Aleuts are essentially behind the ice curtain of silence that is perpetuated by people who want something that belongs to them."

These are the words of Adam John, an Athabascan Indian, extracted from a tape he made for KRAB radio in Seattle and a T.V. tape distributed network wide across the lower 48.

Last week, Adam John flew to Seattle—to speak against atomic testing at Amchitka. This trip, and he has appeared in the news media before as a speaker against atomic testing in Alaska, was sponsored by Seattle Women Act for Peace.

During five days in Seattle, John was interviewed by the news media, spoke on television and appeared at various places around Seattle. He is a talented and forceful speaker—upset by the fact that Alaska has been contaminated by atomic testing.

Originally, Adam John got on television through being interviewed by Tanna Beebe, an Indian reporter from KIRO-TV whom he knew from New York. Later, his eloquent plea for his people earned him other invitations.

"We are contaminated. I am contaminated. Due to the cause of atomic testing and so forth, radiation has contaminated all the food that we eat in Alaska—the reindeer, the caribou. These are the animals that eat the lichen or the moss on the tundra in the northern areas of Alaska.

"The tundra is like a sponge. Whenever Strontium 90 or Cesium 137 or any radiation particles are brought down into the atmosphere by rain or snow, it is automatically sponged up by the lichen or moss that reindeer or caribou feed on. We the people in turn for our survival feed on caribou and reindeer and we are contaminated.

"We are dying, yet people do not know that we are actually dying. People will have to see Eskimos and Indians in Alaska die before an alarm is brought out and sounded."

Adam John has also spoken to stateside audiences to inform them of Alaskan fears of earthquakes caused by the Amchitka blast next month, of the Aleut suit against the blast and other native fears.

Outside Alaska, not much is known about scientific findings that radiation is drawn to the poles and that Alaskan Eskimos have one of the world's highest body radiation counts.

Adam John, is presently assistant director of the Model Urban Indian Center in Fairbanks.