

# Disagreeing with Swetzof

To Paul Swetzof:

Up until your article of July 10, I thought you were on the Natives' side in our fight to protect and win back our property rights.

We also have to protect our individual rights from corporate leaders and tribal government that "sell out" tribal rights. Individual rights and human rights should not be subject to the whim of IRA councils, which are merely instruments of the federal government in the first place.

No one tribal member should be denied the right to fish.

I quote from an article appearing in the *North American Review*, April 1879, entitled "An Indian's View of Indian Affairs," and attributed to Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce Tribe, which we believe is similar to what happened in Alaska:

"Suppose a white man should come to me and say, 'Joseph, I like your horses, and I want to buy them.' I say to him, 'No, my horses suit me, I will not sell them.'

"Then he goes to my neighbor and says to him: 'Joseph has some good horses. I want to buy them, but he refuses to sell them.'

"My neighbor answers, 'Pay me the money, and I will sell you Joseph's horses.' The white man returns to me and says, 'Joseph, I have bought your horses, and you must let me have

them.'

"If we sold our land to the government, this is the way it was bought."

We personally know Tom, Mary Ann and Desa to be committed to their people no matter how far from home they are. Tom has worked continuously for his community for 12 years (as city administrator, IRA council president, a vice president of the Tlingit and Haida Central Council, Shaan Seet director and others).

Tom is volunteering time in the Haida Nation's fight to reunite the Haidas. Please witness our fights for fishing rights and our celebration of the Haida Nation July 23.

In the Noatak case, the court said that racial arguments cannot deny or abrogate political rights, and further, the tribes in Alaska do indeed exist, that they have jurisdiction and undefined inherent sovereign rights and powers.

As stated in the Kerr-McGee v. Navaho Nation case, inherent rights do not need secretarial approval, nor are they subject to federal oversight.

Regarding the "starting of a tribe," the Haidas were once overcrowded in Haida Gwaii. Their response was like Mary Ann's: "Move North."

Sincerely,  
Vicki LeCornu  
President, Haida Society  
Hydaburg