

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

Tundra Times



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Whale of a Job

Nearly ten years ago, in our August 3, 1964 issue, we carried a lengthy editorial beginning on page one. It was entitled, "Dying on the Vine."

It described how government agencies through concerted policies and efforts had purposely sought to kill off small villages in Alaska, particularly in the Arctic.

The agencies attempted to force the consolidation of villages by refusing to put schools in small villages and provide other services.

By the time our editorial "Dying on the Vine" was written back in 1964, most villagers, in fact, a majority of Alaskans had become outraged at the Bureau of Indian Affairs policy that forced Alaska youth to be transported thousands of miles from their homes to Mt. Edgecumbe, near Sitka, to Chemawa, Ore. and even so far away as Oklahoma in order to get a high school education.

The policy was designed purely and simply to drain off the small communities most valuable resource, its youth, leaving the villages to decline, to die on the vine.

Then slowly, but surely the dreadful policy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs was overturned. Throughout the sixties, many Native associations were formed and at meeting after meeting, in conference after conference, Native leaders stressed they wanted their children returned from far away boarding schools, they wanted their children to retain strong home and community ties.

The State Legislature, in a package of bills authored by then-State House Speaker (now U.S. Senator) Mike Gravel authorized a program for a few large regional high schools. That program was later modified to provide for a number of smaller high schools in bush areas.

Eben Hopson, mayor of the North Slope Borough, in a statement of policy, said throughout the eight years of working to create the North Slope Borough, "We had the same thing in mind. Through the maximum of local government, we wanted the maximum of self-determination."

"We wanted the right to send our children to schools operated by our own people serving on a local school board. We wanted a high school within our area. We wanted to give our children the finest possible education, an education good enough to equip them to improve their world, even as we were attempting to improve our world."

Now less than two years since the establishment of the North Slope Borough, the borough has established a tax base of \$766 million; elected a five-member school board and taken over schools in Anaktuvuk Pass and Point Hope, plus negotiated for the take-over of schools at Barter Island, Barrow and Wainwright. Initial planning is under way for the building of a high school.

In addition the borough is encouraging the repopulation of former villages such as Point Lay and Nookisut which the former government policies forced to "die on the vine." The Slope Borough is promising to build and maintain schools in these communities.

The North Slope Borough and its Mayor Ben Hopson are to be commended for their leadership, initiative, and courage. They are well on their way to their goal of providing the best possible education for their children. Amazingly, they have done and are doing one whale of a job.

— T.A.S.

Letters from Here and There

Stockholder Speaks Out

To the Editors:

An Open Letter from a Calista Stockholder to the Calista Corporation:

The Calista Regional Corporation in which I own stock, has signed a secret contract with the Shell Oil Company of Houston, Texas. I am writing to call that contract into question on the basis of law, morality, economics, and my heritage. Please publish this letter so that other people of my region can decide for themselves whether they will continue to support the policies and the directors of the corporation we own.

Since the contract was written and signed in total secrecy in Texas, we cannot be sure exactly what it contains. Therefore, I call upon the chairman of the Board of the Calista Corporation to publish in the pages of your newspaper.

1. A complete and unedited copy of the contract.

2. A list of all written studies carried out by the Calista Corporation justifying the various sections of the contract.

3. A statement by the Calista board of the contract's anticipated economic and social impact on the people of the Lower Yukon and Kuskokwim rivers.

4. Answers to the following questions:

A. What assurances does the contract contain that Shell will protect the environment and the wildlife habitat during all phases of oil operations? Exactly how will the oil company go about its business on our land, and how will protective measures, whether they are imposed by the contract itself or by federal or state pollution statutes, be enforced?

B. Do the people assume the risk of accidental oil spills, or is a special compensation clause provided in the contract for all phases of exploration and extraction, regardless of who is at fault?

C. Once the oil is depleted, will the people be paid a subsistence wage in perpetuity so that we can stay on the land and not be forced to move to Anchorage to take work for wages?

D. At what rate will the oil be extracted: quickly, for maximum profits in the short run, or slowly, to insure minimum waste, and to insure profits over a longer period of time?

E. Are both village and regional lands, available for selection by Shell for their exclusive leases? Does Section 14(f) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act give villages a veto power over regional subsurface development in Calista's opinion? How much land can Shell select?

F. Do any financial studies show that a higher rate of return could be earned by extracting the oil, and reinvesting the profits, than by letting the oil stay in the ground and rise in value in place? If not, why was this road not taken?

G. What can each shareholder expect in dividends from this venture each year and for how many years?

H. Does the interim board of directors have the legal authority to enter into a contract of this magnitude and duration without consulting with the shareholders? Will the board ask the shareholders to ratify the contract at the first annual stockholders meeting in the fall?

I. How will the oil be transported from the region: by pipeline to Anchorage, by deepwater port, or by some other means? How will the region be affected by this phase of the operation?

J. What pipelines, service roads or other facilities will be required? Who will pay for them, and what effect will these construction projects have on the environment?

K. What rights does Shell acquire to natural gas, which could be used locally with the minimum of further refinement?

L. Is Shell going to pay for the oil by the barrel, or is the company making a fixed payment regardless of how much oil is extracted? If a fixed payment, how much an acre?

M. Will all the data accumulated by Shell be available for inspection in Alaska by both village corporations and Calista prior to the close of village land selections in December, 1974?

N. With the urgent need for college educated people, why does the scholarship provision

cease when the contract ends, just when we will need assistance most?

O. Why will only 20% of the jobs be filled by Natives, instead of 30, 50 or 70 per cent? Why not spend more time training and delay extraction for a year or two? What types of positions can Natives fill at this stage, without much training, and what will be paid compared to workers from the Outside?

At the meeting with oil company representatives in Bethel several months ago, Mr. Shenker, general manager of Calista Corporation, told us that the letter of intent had to remain a secret because if the people knew its contents, later negotiations might be jeopardized. Now, the final contract is signed. What does it say, Mr. Shenker? What does it mean to my land and my people? Perhaps if I refer to us as shareholders you will know who I am talking about.

Charlie Kairainak
A Village Shareholder from
Chefnorak, Alaska

Your Dental Health

The contents of this series of "Dental Health Talks" was originally prepared by the American Dental Association. They are made available for Tundra Times through the Public Health Education Office of the Alaska Native Health Service.

It is well known that our dental health program in Interior Alaska has not yet reached everyone needing dental services. This is especially true about the people in the rural communities. However, everyone understands how important it is to take care of our teeth which is a part of our total well-being.

No. 10 — How to Find a Dentist

It is best to have a family dentist who takes interest in the general health as well as the oral health of his patients. The time to find this family dentist is not in an emergency situation. It makes sense that a person in pain does not have the time to make the intelligent decision he might otherwise.

A dentist in general practice is fully qualified to provide all routine care. Some parents take their children to pedodontists, dentists who limit their practice to treatment of children. Unlike in medicine, most dentists are in general practice.

You may want to become acquainted with several dentists before deciding on a family dentist to provide regular care. There are numerous ways of finding qualified dentists in your area.

— Ask friends, neighbors or co-workers to recommend dentists with whom they are pleased. You will want to be sure that the persons you ask are individuals who you would expect demand the same high standards in a health professional as you do.

— The local dental society that serves your community has a referral service through which it provides the names of nearby dentists who have indicated they will accept new patients. The (name of society) can be contacted at (address and phone number).

— Faculty members of dental schools in your area may be able to suggest practitioners in the community.

— A nearby hospital with an accredited dental service should be in a position to offer suggestions.

— If you already have a fam-

ily physician, you may want to ask him who provides his dental care.

After you have considered the various recommendations, call for an appointment. Much can be learned in the initial visit.

Is the general appearance of the office and the dentist and his staff neat, clean and orderly? How available is he, both in location and appointment schedule?

Is he prevention oriented? You will want a dentist who is skilled in both the treatment of oral disorders and the latest preventive techniques.

Does he use X rays in his diagnosis? Dental X rays are one of the most valuable diagnostic tools in modern dentistry. For a new patient, he may start with a full-mouth set of X rays on the first visit.

Does he seem to take a personal interest in you and your health? A record of important information about your medical and dental history should be taken, and he will start a permanent record for your future dental and medical health.

Don't be embarrassed to ask him about his fees. In fact, most dentists would prefer that the patient open the subject since the patient is aware of his own financial situation and his new dentist is not. The dentist should be willing to discuss fees and payment plans in advance of treatment.

The benefit of this small amount of time necessary to make an intelligent, informed decision will be a doctor-patient relationship founded on mutual trust and respect.

(Next article: "What the Dentist Does")