

ASNA Asks Special Consideration

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following position paper of the Arctic Slope Native Association was delivered by Joseph Upicksoun, president of the organization, recently at the meeting of the Alaska Federation of Natives board of directors meeting in Juneau. ASNA is the association of the Arctic Eskimos affiliated with AFN.)

THE POSITION OF THE ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION

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Our understanding of the Senate Committee's version of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act is that four of our village will get altogether not to exceed 92,000 acres and Barrow will get not to exceed 46,000 acres, depending upon what some Commission will award.

On the money side, we will get about \$14 million. Furthermore, the money will likely go to municipal corporations.

About the land, if the village is in the center of its township, as Barter Island, for example, we can walk three miles from the village and come to the boundary of our award; at Barrow we would get an area six miles by twelve miles.

Our problem can be stated this way: We came into this Federation bringing with us 56.5 million acres, vast riches in oil—enough to provide and protect the security of the United States—enough to require the Congress of the United States to settle the claims of all Alaskan Natives—enough to make the State tax free and enough to make the business community of Alaska and the oil companies rich.

We know that all the Natives of Alaska are disappointed about the amount of land in the Senate Committee's bill, but let us look at the North Slope Eskimo for a moment. Society has not touched our people and land until the last year or two. We have had complete dominion over our lands, have been happy in running our lives.

The State and the United States really have not bothered about us much. Many of our villages have never had schools or even missionaries. Compare that with some of the concentration of Federal and State efforts elsewhere in Alaska. The point is that in the past the North Slope Eskimo has had only feeble assistance from organized government.

We believe there will be 10,000 miles of pipelines and of highways on the North Slope, some of which are built over our Father's graves. But aside from the emotional trouble, supposing there be an oil spill or a well of gas or oil catch fire or a tanker be shipwrecked. Who will suffer?

Secretary Hickel required the oil companies to indemnify the Federal government for any damage, but who will pay the North Slope Eskimo for the destruction of our lands or caribou or fish?

Our conclusion is that the State of Alaska wants to steal our lands, the Senate Committee wants to buy our lands and to pay the other Natives of Alaska. The other Natives of Alaska are willing and happy to be paid out of our lands. The State is now rich out of our lands. The oil companies want to build a pipeline by experiment over our lands. The United States wants to provide for its own security against foreign enemies out of our land.

Through the years, we have been devoted citizens of the United States. Once upon a time, we had World War II and the United States was worried about the Arctic. It sent its soldiers up there for defense. They flunked, because the Army didn't even know how to dress or live or survive.

And so the Territorial Guard was organized, composed entirely of North Slope Eskimos. We were the security of the United States and we were proud that through the years and today we are the only units in the world who can provide such security.

We have tried to become citizens, in the fullest sense, of the United States, but from 1914 to 1923, for example, there were some of our villages with no schools at all. Even Eben Hopson, who today is only 47 years old, was knowingly denied the opportunity to go to high school only thirty years ago. In other words, the Federal government has through the years failed in its responsibilities to us.

And now today, we believe the Federation has failed to support the North Slope Eskimos and we are distraught, we are frightened and our people are angry, or will be when we tell them, as we must, what the Senate Committee has done.

By direct orders from the Steering Committee just one year ago, the Federation forbade our own representatives from testifying before the Senate Committee. We cooperated and this is what we got.

Even what we get we must share some of it with a non-Native who joins our villages, because whatever we get will likely go to a municipal corporation. A newcomer automatically joins a municipal corporation just by moving there. We are not against somebody moving into our villages. But why should a person who is not a North Slope Eskimo be paid for North Slope lands?

This is our land. In the whiteman's society, where we are bound for, people value private property. We as North Slope Eskimos want our private property for ourselves, just as John D. Rockefeller did for himself. That is the whiteman's idea and in a whiteman's world, we adopt it.

The theory of the Senate Committee's bill is a social welfare program and we urge that you reject that theory. We recommend that we return to the undeniable basic principle which are self-evident and cannot be denied—that we return to a LAND CLAIMS settlement and fight a social welfare program.

We will continue to sit in your councils but we do not promise cooperation. We must regroup and plan our own action, hopefully with you but we feel that we have been cheated. Yes, we have been hurt, hurt by the Secretary of the Interior, by the oil companies, by the State of Alaska, by the Federal government, by the Senate Committee, and by the Federation.

The Arctic Slope Native Association wants to know what you, the Federation, are going to do about it.

—JOSEPH UPICKSOUN

President, Arctic Slope Native Association