

Editorial—

The Native Affairs Commission

The Native Affairs Commission bill was greased through the State House of Representatives recently and it looked suspiciously to be no accident that it passed in that manner. In its preparation, there was no attempt to consult people who might have helped to make it a good and acceptable measure for all concerned, especially the native people and their leaders. Furthermore, it was whiz-banged through the State Affairs Committee so fast that there was no chance to offer any amendments. The fact that it was virtually sneaked through seems to be a design of convenience for the present governor so that it would be pliable for his purposes, which could leave out the true needs of our native people.

The provision that the governor make nominations from names submitted by native organizations is, in itself, a considerable loophole. The nominees might not fully represent the desires of our people because there is a chance that our state executive can find it convenient to appoint those who would be more favorable to his way of thinking. This possibility can point to a serious situation that could affect our progress to better ourselves. It could create future difficulties and problems that

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would not be easy to undo and it could create precedents that might be hard to retract. The commission, if finally established, could also be subjected to pressures legalistic or otherwise, that would greatly influence the commission members, especially if they were handpicked by the governor. If it comes out in this manner, it may be not more than a gubernatorial device and this can mean a gross miscarriage of representation. If this becomes an eventuality, the crux of our numerous problems would not be posed adequately and the solutions offered could fall short of the targets.

The commission, if formed, should be made up of capable and knowledgeable members who would know as much as possible the needs of their particular areas if not all areas. If not, the NAC would tend to half-solve the problems it presents and this could create shaky foundations for the future progress of the native people as well as the general population of Alaska. If such an eventuality occurs, the problems of the state could well perpetuate and prove burdensome. It may well hamper the desire to develop into a healthy and progressive community.

This is the time to look searchingly at our native peoples' problems. It is time to look at them realistically for the good of Alaska as a whole. To do so can prove to be a salvation to the future of the 49th state.