

**Editorial—**

# **Land Use Study Needed**

There is a great deal of discussion going on at the moment about Alaska's native peoples' land claims and much of this talk is tending to create a mist around the issue that might develop into a fog. If it keeps up in this manner, the equitable solution to the land question might get lost in the pea soup.

Although there are some knowledgeable people who make statements publicly about the claims, there are those who would best serve the matter at hand by refraining from speaking. One area that could be mentioned as far as the latter is concerned, is that many of those people have no concrete idea what constitutes land use by our native people. Many of the people in question are influential and are in positions of strength. Their public statements regarding land issues can, and do, influence the Alaskan public that is also largely ignorant of what constitutes land use.

Before the issue goes any further, there should be a serious attempt to educate the general public what land

(Continued on Page 2)

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means to the native people of Alaska. This knowledge is needed for greater understanding among our people and it is certainly pertinent to the land issue, and it could be an important matter in arriving at a justifiable solution to the claims question.

The land situation is of a serious gravity to our state. It is one that must be solved in an equitable manner to benefit all concerned. To achieve this level, it needs people to work on it who know what they are talking about. If not, this fact alone can be a potential source for injustices in the final outcome of the land question. It is regrettable to note at times that lack of knowledge becomes evident on the state level especially when it comes to land use by our native people. This is no less true on the national level. The land matter in Alaska is of utmost seriousness and it cannot afford to have people working on it who have half-knowledge of the situation.

What then should be done to remedy this lack of knowledge of the land situation? We feel that something has to be done because of the seriousness of the matter. It would certainly help to eliminate possible inequities in the final outcome which would otherwise haunt the people of Alaska in the future. Should a team of scientists composed of an anthropologist, a geologist, an ecologist and a sociologist be formed and this team could work under the authorization of the President?

We are not proposing that a study should be done exactly in the above manner but we do believe that those who work on the land situation should have good knowledge, if not explicit knowledge of the land use of the Indians, Aleuts and Eskimos.