

As Those of Early Settlers, Says Leader—

Same Attitudes Exist Today

Alaskan natives need to spend more time preparing and implementing strategy to win their land claims case, rather than merely reacting to comments by non-native opponents, according to Jim Thomas, an Indian leader formerly of Yakutat, Alaska.

Presenting a series of lectures on American Indians at the Smithsonian Institute, the public relations director of the National Congress of American Indians in Washington, said, "the non-native line of attack on the Alaska Na-

tive can be repeated verbatim from those of the early settlers the British, the new Nation."

"The same attitudes which drove the Cherokee from his Georgia Homeland down that 'Trail of Tears' to Oklahoma, prevails in Alaska today," he added.

In his final two lectures, Thomas compared Alaska Native struggles to those of the Indians who first met the newcomers on the eastern shore and later learned to battle for their rights.

"Alaska Natives are now in battle for their rights," the former public relations director of the Alaska Federation of Natives said. "Their success appears to be near in Washington, though the degree of success can't be determined for years based upon how well and how effectively the rewards are shared with and used for the many natives in our remote villages, who as individuals have the same desires for self development as the more fortu-

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nate who have benefited from education."

In an interview with the Tundra Times, Thomas warned that "...battles are not won by great chiefs and great oratory alone,—it takes many camps of warriors and tools—weapons."

He advised that the Alaska Natives not neglect the use of the best tool they have—the right to determine policy and government by their vote at the polls.

He challenged every native to search deep into the promises of the last election and compare them with the job accomplished by the various elected officials.

"Its about time," he said "that Alaska Natives were heard as a single voice at the polls—then possibly, the editorials on the miniscule effect of native vote may take a new turn, and the Alaska Natives respected for their rights as the first people of this land and effective citizens of this country."