

Josephson's Column... Anaktuvuk Tractor...

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and parallel steps will occur in the Senate. The Commission, by August, will have advised the Secretary, and may also seek to influence the Congress by written reports and oral testimony.

But clearly, the Secretary's role here, as well as the Commission's will be "advisory", and whatever legislation Congress approves will also undergo White House review, approval or veto. I therefore hope Alaskans will not be deterred in using the Commission as a new tool which may influence the Federal decision-making process.

Question 2. Why do you think the Commission will have a real influence on Federal decisions?

Answer: I think the record to date suggests strong respect in Washington for recommendations by the Commission. Among numerous examples I might cite are the selection of Federal Co-Chairman Horton as Assistant Secretary of the Interior; Federal support for Commission budget requests; approval by the Department of the Interior of most recommendations by the Commission to which the Department has responded substantively; the decision by the Secretary of the Interior to request the Commission to conduct all public hearings on the future of "(d) (2)" land withdrawals and to receive the Commission's recommendations before preparing his report to the Congress. The Commission, I might add, has enjoyed strong support from Governor William A. Egan and his administration.

Of course, full acceptance in Washington of our recommendations is not to be expected. Of course, we Alaskans must use all of our traditional tools for affecting Federal decisions, such as the important process of direct State-Federal contacts on a government-to-government basis, the role of our delegation in Congress, and letters to members of Congress in general. But the Commission is certainly an additional avenue which must not go unutilized.

In the final analysis, only history will record properly the degree of the Commission's importance in decisions affecting Alaskans. In the meantime, we must all operate on the assumption that the Commission will have an important influence on either the national administration or the Congress, or both, lest we fail to make use of an effective tool for a better Alaska.

Question 3. Is the record of the Commission a "pro-Native" or "anti-Native" record?

Answer: I hope the Commission does not consciously approach problems before it on that basis and that the public will judge the Commission by its actions. Let the Commission be fair and the results will speak for themselves.

But let's look at the record. The Commission has submitted comments on proposed rules implementing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act suggesting about fifty revisions. The Commission has recommended additional withdrawals for several regional corporations, and that Native withdrawals should take precedence over others. The Commission has recommended immediate conveyances to eligible villages of the so-called "core townships" in which these villages are located.

At the same time the Commission has made unprecedented efforts to reach rural Alaska in informal meetings and hearings. These are but a few of the indications which encourage me to think that the results of our work will benefit Alaskans of all races.

Today we have answered a few of the questions which we encounter on meeting with the public. In future columns which will be published from time to time, I would like to deal with the questions submitted by TUNDRA TIMES readers. Questions regarding the role of the Commission can be addressed to me at 733 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 400, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

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This January, the village council asked Steve Gage, a young field social worker out of the Fairbanks office of BIA, to see if he could assist them in getting the "cat" to Anaktuvuk. He would of course, first have to find it, as nobody was too sure where it was after two years.

It turned up in the Fairbanks tractor yard of the Northern Commercial Company. Trainees from the Seward Skill Center had kept it in good repair and it was running and ready to go. Now all that remained was to find that elusive financing for a flight to Anaktuvuk.

Steve Gage called John Shively, executive director of AFN, an old friend and an expert at thawing funds out of frozen budgets. Shively suggested contacting Larry Irving, Fairbanks field representative from the State Community and Regional Affairs Department, who was rumored to have the ability to obtain grants for projects of this nature.

Irving was optimistic, and after going through channels in Juneau, secured \$3,000 to pay freight costs and miscellaneous connected expenses. After two years the "you don't" had finally been changed to "you do".

The answer to the question of how to move the catpillar tractor turned out to be get yourself a cooperative social worker with good connections. As a social worker, Gage could have claimed that the problem wasn't within his jurisdiction and asked the council to write to the proper authorities.

This could have prolonged the stalemate of having the problem in Anaktuvuk and the solution in Fairbanks.

Once the funding had been obtained, arrangements progressed remarkably well. Alaska International Air, contracted to drop off the catpillar on their regular run to the T-3 Arctic Research Station, one of the very few places in the world to which Anaktuvuk Pass is a stop-over.

Due to the extreme weight of the equipment, two flights

were scheduled. One to bring the stripped tractor and one to deliver the bulldozer blade, winch and other accessories.

Last Sunday, only six weeks after the funds had been approved, the stripped "cat" was loaded aboard a Hercules Turbo-Prop which took off from Fairbanks. Approximately two hours later, the giant cargo plane banked through the towering peaks of the Brooks Range and settled gently on the 150 yard Anaktuvuk airstrip.

Practically everyone in the village assembled at the foot of the cargo ramp, to assist in unloading. The "cat" was driven out of the plane to the village hall by Jack Ahgook, and meet-

ing six men dragged a section of housing across the frozen ground.

Since Larry Irving and Steve Gage had accompanied the flight village council president, Noah Ahgook called a meeting of the village council to discuss the difficulties of maintaining the tractor in Anaktuvuk's less than ideal climactic conditions.

Tools and a shed for protection in winter were cited as necessities for keeping the machinery in good repair.

Irving explained that no additional funds were available this year, so he and the council began planning for next year. With one long-standing problem resolved, the people of Anaktuvuk Pass had little time to celebrate before buckling down to solving the next one.

Testimony on Death...

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be admitted as a patient.

SDC personnel said Mrs. Arrow had an epileptic fit prior to being brought to the hospital; yet less than two hours later the hospital advised that she did not need hospitalization.

McDowell said Mrs. Arrow appeared very weak on the evening of April 4 and her condition had not changed on April 5, so when the ANMC personnel sent her back to SDC, the SDC personnel returned her to the hospital. Finally, on the evening of April 5, she was admitted to hospital. A short while later, she was dead.

Cause of her death has not been made public, since the autopsy report is not yet complete and that information is being withheld.

But the attitude of the PHS Survivors Committee, which brought the protest to a head, was perhaps best summed up by Charles Pedro, a private consultant on Native Affairs who has his office at the ANMC.

"There is no basic cause or reason why Violet Arrow should

have been refused medical help and admitted into the hospital," he wrote in an opinion given the District Attorney's office.

"The fact that Violet Arrow was considered intoxicated because she was laying on the floor, when, according to the medical doctor's report (from the SDC physician) she could not stand up because of a bone fracture - brings more questions to mind.

"I believe that Violet Arrow would be alive today if she had been given the proper medical attention. She was refused care on the basis that there was no space, no beds and that she did not need medical care. Yes, she was a chronic alcoholic, but she also was a human being," Pedro said.

The District Attorney's office meanwhile, is investigating the case, trying to determine if there was criminal malpractice in treating Violet Arrow and if so the case may be handled the District Attorney or must be turned over to federal authorities.

Stirs Controversy...

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declined to discuss any details on what treatment, if any, she had received.

Fortune said it is NOT a general policy of the hospital to categorically refuse treatment to alcoholics; that in fact two per cent of admissions to ANMC are for alcoholism and many alcohol-related injuries.

PHS Survivors committee charges suggest that Mrs. Arrow may have, in fact, been dismissed as being drunk when she was having an epileptic seizure and needed treatment of a broken hip.

The Survivors committee also charged that the treatment Mrs. Arrow received was typical of that given Natives with alcohol related problems and one committee member, Mary Ann Holland of the Urban Native Center, said she had received numerous complaints of similar incidents since Mrs. Arrow's case became public.

Bob Moore, director of the American Indian Committee on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, was in Anchorage for a youth conference at the time the Survivors Committee went to the District Attorney's office. Moore went along for that conference and then to a meeting of the committee with hospital officials.

Moore told assistant district attorney Justin Ripplly that "Violet Arrow's death is symbolic of all those who died in the past and all those who will die in the future, so pursue this

case diligently."

"We have Indian health boards all over the land, who do NOT set policy for the number one problem of the Native American, alcoholism," Moore told Fortune. "The alcoholic is just as terminal as the cancer patient. We must reprimorize."

The case of Violet Arrow meanwhile appears to have uncovered a whole kettle of worms in alcoholism and alcohol-related problems of the Alaska Native.

"We need more and better service to the alcoholic," Moore said. "I realize it's difficult to change attitudes, but it's got to be done."

"If the alcoholic patient is sick enough, he will be admitted," Fortune said. "But alcoholism is more of a preventive disease than other, we should prevent it. Treatment at the hospital is only the end stage... where you pick up the pieces."

"We don't have the facilities to take care of people who are simply intoxicated. We do admit people for cases of more than simply drunkenness or with alcohol problems as a complicating problem," Fortune said.

"It is impossible to change individual attitudes of staff, but on the whole our staff is much more sympathetic than the rest of the community" (health personnel) he said.



DELIVERY ACCOMPLISHED — Larry Irving, field representative for the Community and Regional Affairs Agency presents Noah Ahgook, mayor of Anaktuvuk Pass, with the crank for the

caterpillar tractor delivered to the village Sunday. The tractor is much needed for maintaining the village's airstrip.

— Photo by FRANK MURPHY

DID YOU KNOW ?

MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS is called

"The great crippler of young adults"

