

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Guest Editorial—

By JOHN SACKETT

Each of us as Alaskan Natives should be extremely concerned about the effect that the proposed Trans-Alaska Pipeline will have on our lives. Too often we will run with the general trend of the day and support something that perhaps really doesn't benefit us just because it is the "thing" to do and it is popular.

I believe that it is our right to question thinking that is prevalent today, that being, how is the pipeline going to benefit our people in terms of employment and life-style.

The history of the state for Alaskan Native employment has not been good to us. Whatever the reasons that are given, be they ranging from the stereotype of the lazy Indian who doesn't want to work, to the situation of many of our people being away from work centers, the fact does remain that 80% of our people are unemployed and it certainly appears as if this is going to continue unless everyone makes a concerted effort to change this situation.

A hundred years ago all of our people were unemployed and their only livelihood was living off the land. In all this time — 100 years total — only 20% of our people are working and the rest are still trying to live off the land, a method of living that is becoming more and more difficult every passing day. There will come a time soon when even Native people will not be able to live off the land and when that time does arrive, what will we do then?

Without question, the programs and attempts for Native employment have not been successful to date. People throughout the State have stated that they are making continuous attempts to hire Alaskan Natives. They state that they have program galore, and yet, we still have the highest unemployment rate in the nation. It is no wonder that we would question exactly how much of an attempt these people are making for Native employment.

It is a fact that we have our share of persons who do not want to work at all. It is also a fact that there are many people who do not want to leave the villages and move into the urban centers. It does remain a fact, however, that the majority of our people do want to work, especially on a seasonal basis, but they are not yet — after 100 years — assimilated into the work force of Alaska. The two basic reasons are that training programs have not been geared for Alaskan Native employment and the present system of labor in Alaska legally discriminates against Alaskan Natives.

These are terrible accusations to make, but the facts are what they are — we are still unemployed for these specific reasons. The administrators of training programs have never studied the Native way of life. For example, every training program has always been geared to working in cities when Native people do not want to work there. They have always been geared to permanent year — around employment rather than seasonal which fits much more readily into the Native way of life. These are only a couple of examples of many that must be taken into consideration when training Native people, but they haven't ever been recognized yet by the administrators.

Nearly all employment in Alaska is performed through unions of one sort or another. Unions in general have been extremely beneficial to their members and have been successful in obtaining employment for them. But Alaskan Natives are excluded because the majority of us do not know (1) how to join, and (2) the labor unions have given only lip service and never made any aggressive attempt to bring in Native people. Until these two areas are recognized and solved, Native people will never be employed.

The public will cry that we are attempting to hold up the progress of the state by protesting the pipeline until these areas of concern are resolved, but look at the facts

Lost VISTA Volunteer And an Old Eskimo Strange Encounter Leads Into Extensive Analysis of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Land's End Village
State of Alaska
July 30, 1973

Dear Howard,

There were some people here in the village who heard about the last letter I wrote to Tundra Times. They were upset because I had written that AN ACT was like a disease that would leave no living Natives in 20 years. Some people got mad because they think that the money we are to get will be helpful to our people. Other

people just didn't understand what was troubling me so much. Now I can see that many things that I had written about in earlier letters were adding up for me to say that in the last letter.

My youngest daughter had a baby girl last week and we all realized that unlike her older brother, who is three years older, she will never be enrolled as a Native in Alaska. By the time she grows up and has her own family, anybody will be able to buy and sell Native land, any-

body will be a stockholder in the Native Corporations, and brother will be set against brother according to which was enrolled. Wally pointed out that I had always said that I was a Native whether I was enrolled or not — and that is true. But I realized that while 20 years may be a long time in the life of one person, it is nothing in the life of a people. I thought about my children and my grandchildren and their children. What does 20 years mean to them before they are born, before they can know the land and way of life of their parents?

To be honest, I don't know what our life will be like when we have corporations in every village and our land taxed and sold. But I am afraid we will lose whatever control over our lives that we ever had. Will our children have to go to the city to make money so that they can eventually come back to their grandparent's land some day like rich tourists? Will they too complain of the crowded cities and cry when they have to return?

These questions bother me because every time a child is stolen from us to be educated, we are made to feel as nothing. Our children are treated as orphans because their parent's way of life is being destroyed. Why should this be so? I am an old man, Howard, but my vision is set on the future as well as the past. Sometimes I wonder what will become of our people if they want dollars more than their own land and they forget their children.

Your friend,
Naugga Cinnerput

Tom Richards, Jr.'s Column--

BUREAU X
January 23, 1973
Richards

TWO SONGS

(This column releases a poem which started nudging me while I was in Alaska and finally won its freedom in the Philippines)

Were I a writer of verse
Wanting to write our history
I would write two songs.

First, a sad song,
An expression of horror
And grief and unconsolable
Sorrow over a loss
Gone without retribution.

Second, a song of hope
For life born of despair and
Uncertainty,
Shaped with love from
What is good of
What is left.

The first would sing
Of a village on a spit
Between a lagoon and a sea,
Of a woman giving
Smiles of happiness
Made of wrinkles
Made of hardships,
Of a boy on a bench of bone
Sending his spirit over the sea
Along a bright amber band
To the sun that sits
On a mountain,
Of snow that groans
And ice the whispers
And dogs that sing
Better than I,
Of solitary motors
That politely offer conversation
And make small ripples
Over huge smooth wet surfaces,
Of tents that talk to wind and rain
And a loon that says goodnight
And a bird that sings in the warm goodmorning.

The second would sing
Of little of this
And sings louder.

and you will find that really the Native receives very little or nothing. True, some of us will be hired, but not the majority, and there will be training programs but they too will be unsuccessful in meeting our needs. Unfortunately, the history of employment in Alaska has shown that the Native never participates and outsiders will flow into Alaska like the times of southeastern pulp-mills, gold rushes, and the Kenai oil exploration. In the end, we may well have wished we had never heard of the pipeline because by that time, our present subsistence life will also be gone.

Wait Until Next Year

July 23, 1973

Tundra Times,

This Department has in the past not been involved in support for the Inuvik Athletes to the Alaska Olympics and this year, too, no formal request for assistance has been received. For that reason and especially in view of the fact that sub-mission preparation, et cetera, takes a considerable amount of time support for this years event was unfortunately not possible.

We are at the present time in the process of developing guidelines for a recreation and support program for Native people. Indian and Eskimo Olympics could possibly qualify for assistance if the request is in accord with the terms of reference of the program.

Marc Lalonde
MINISTER OF NATIONAL
HEALTH AND WELFARE
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Real Mad at BIA

Dear Editor of the Tundra Times,
My name is Duane Larson, I was sent by Fairbanks Manpower Center to B.I.A. on July 17, 1973 to obtain information about a new training school at Wildwood, with a written referral to Mr. Jones or Miss Okittum, neither was there. Like a fool I saw (instead) a White Blank Lady. I was queried about my background and advised to "get a highschool diploma and then come back and see her." I in turn received no answer, yes or no, about the information about Wildwood. She wanted more information about personal life about me. I left B.I.A. hurt and mad. Is that what B.I.A. is all about? How many people do they do this to?

Duane Larson
"Quint"