

may not agree with a word you say but I will defend your right to say it? Voltaire

Editorial—

'Move Along'

There is something despotic and disturbing about the Fairbanks Police Department's "move along" orders to people who stop to talk to one another on the streets of the city. Although claiming that the order is not discriminatory, there are indications that the origination of it carries strong connotations that it was aimed toward the native people. It arbitrarily labels them that they are all drunkards who should not be allowed on public streets because they drive away customers from local businesses.

If they were all inebriates we would be inclined to go along with the idea because we also abhor drunken natives, or any drunken person, on the streets. They are not a pretty sight to see. People in that condition should be off the main thoroughfares no matter who they are and the order to "move along" should be directed to those people only.

The order, in the first place, seems to embrace that all native people are drunkards and this implication is not resting well with our more responsible native citizens. It smacks of discrimination and this we don't need in Alaska. If orders, such as the "move along" that carry connotations that the native people are this or that are allowed to be carried out, they cannot help but strain relations among the people of our state. This could be harmful in the end. It ruffles feelings and it has done so already.

This was brought out explicitly and distinctly last week and it happened to none other than the head of our statewide organization, Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

"You know what just happened to me?" Notti pointed out. "I was told to 'move along' by a policeman and he wasn't very nice about it. I just stopped to talk with Andy Demoski and another man whom I have not seen for many years."

Emil Notti had come from Anchorage to attend the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks and the men he had stopped to talk with were delegates to that conference. They had not been drinking.

There will always be native people in Alaskan villages, towns and cities everywhere. Some, unfortunately, will be drinking but there will be great many others who will handle themselves with propriety and act as any self-respecting citizen.

These are the people who should not be subjected to "move along" type of orders just because they are natives. Many of them are actually working to better the lot of our people and many of them are working to better relationships with other citizens of our state. These are efforts that should not be hampered by shortsightedness and feelings of superiority. This can be a grievous attitude in which our state has close to one-fourth native population.