

# Brief NWT Eskimos . . .

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resents 66 per cent of the total people.

At present COPE has almost entirely Eskimo membership and represents their interests in land claims. The Indian peoples of Canada have lived under statutes and treaties dealing with aboriginal rights.

There is much discussion today on whether certain of these treaties covering lands in NWT were "peace treaties" or those which ceded Indian land to the government. These treaties cover only a limited number of the Indians living in the North.

There are several thousand others, who, because of the manner in which the treaties were handled, have not signed any treaty with the Canadian government. But the two Native groups work on their problems independently, not as a federation as in Alaska.

The Inuits, however, were not interested in the earlier treaty efforts and have never signed any such agreements. Only a half dozen years ago, it appeared that these Native peoples would have no opportunity to negotiate on their aboriginal rights.

Now, however, with the assistance by the federal government, the Northern Native people have begun to produce substantial legal material in support of their claims for the recognition and compensation of their aboriginal rights.

An Indian Claims Commissioner has been appointed to assist in the valuation of these claims.

The Canadian government has emphasized its desire to seek a settlement of all land claims through negotiation, rather than through the judicial process.

The government is now awaiting the presentation of specific demands for compensation from the Native associations. It is to gather information to help in these proposals to the government that the NWT group visited Alaska.

Cumming points out the paradox of their position. "On the one hand the government is responsible for Native rights. On the other hand, it takes the land for its development with no legal constraints on the government."

"There is no excuse," he continues, "for not having a (land) freeze. We do not have the respect that Alaska got under the freeze, our rights are ignored. While nothing is done, they keep talking, another five years without a settlement and there will be nothing much left to settle!"

Last year there was a "temporary land freeze" in certain areas covered by two treaties—numbers 8 and 11.

The Supreme Court of the Northwest Territories has ruled that there is "sufficient evidence of legitimate Native interest in the land to justify the filing of the caveat."

This last is a declaration of legal interest in the land and if accepted would prevent lands in question from changing hands or being developed without prior consideration of interest in them by the Indian Brotherhood of the NWT. The federal government is appealing the decision.

The Canadians, says John Shively of AFN, do have opportunities the Alaskans do not have. Chief among these is absence of large cities in NWT so that land is not already taken by the urban areas. Also, the proportion of Natives in NWT is higher.

Shively also emphasized the importance of communications with the villages ("settlements," the Canadians say). He acknowledges that it was difficult to interpret the concept of the land claims.

And although many problems have arisen because of the unique nature of the Regional Corporations and what is expected of them under the Settlement Act, there are still long-term advantages for the Alaskan Native people.

There have been "no dramatic changes in Native lifestyle since the Settlement," Shively agrees, but in answer to the question, "What's the advantage," he says, "We must look to the future."

Positive aspects of the Settlement, Shively told the visitors, include:

- Village leadership is changing to deal with issues

- Natives will know what they own, they can keep others off and manage their lands within two years.

- Regional Corporation capital can begin to develop opportunities which can better the standard of living of the people if they wish.

- If there is much oil and mineral discovery, there will be changes with just money into the corporation.

- There are other options under which Native may acquire more land.

A major consideration before the government of Canada and the people of NWT is the proposed Arctic Gas Pipeline. "Arctic Gas wants a pipeline," said one of the visitors. "Without a land claims settlement, the people are not prepared to go along with the pipeline."

"Up to now it has been a matter between the federal government and the industry. But industry in Canada realizes that the government might support the people against the line if there is no settlement. And, if the line is forced, there will certainly be 'social instability.'"

Arctic Gas believes it would be a disadvantage to all Canadians, including the Natives, if failure to settle the claims in "timely fashion" were to jeopardize development of the natural gas resources in Northern Canada.

"With careful planning," says a spokesman, "it would provide job opportunities and other benefits of a viable wage economy which many northern Native persons seek without impairing the livelihood of those who prefer to hunt and trap. . . . It is clear that unnecessary and excessive delays in commencing negotiations (for settlement) will only serve to retard these economic benefits."

"Now that the concept of aboriginal rights has been recognized, Arctic Gas continues to urge that these negotiations be undertaken soon, but without prejudice to the claims, in order that fair and equitable settlements be achieved."

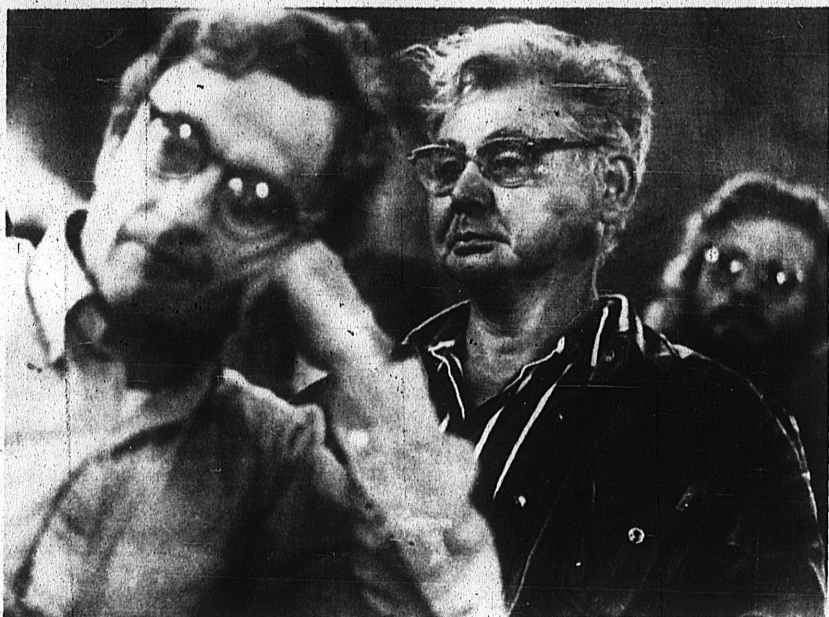
Sam Radi says the settlements in his region are pushing for negotiations to get under way — especially Sachs Harbor and Tuktoyaktuk.

"They're screaming at me," he says, "and when they scream, then I'll have to start screaming."

Now nearly blind, Radi finds that the more he gets into the work of COPE, the harder it becomes and the more interesting. A land use and occupancy study for the Western Arctic has been completed, he reports — the main research for the land claims. "Next step will be the negotiations."

This trip has been most interesting, Radi says. "The most striking thing to us had been the Regional Corporations. I was surprised to learn it was not the best thing, so now I will study why it is not so good."

Radi visits the settlements in his big country to discuss prob-



BRISTOL BAY FISHERMAN Nick Gregory, of Egegik, flanked by Chief Justice Jay Rabinowitz of the Alaska Supreme Court (left) and State Rep. Mike Miller, D-Juneau, right, listens to a discussion on law in the bush at the Minto conference on bush justice.

## To Barrow Officials, Many Others— BP Offers Gala Welcome

By BETZI WOODMAN

A group of local government officials and their wives from the North Slope Borough and the City of Barrow was flown by charter aircraft to Prudhoe Bay last Thursday for the gala dedication of BP Alaska's new \$21 million Operations Center. They were joined by another charter planeload of dignitaries from Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Invitations to these northern Alaskans was in recognition that Prudhoe Bay and its activities are within the state's largest local government region, the North Slope Borough.

This was stated at the champagne party by Laurie Gay, BP's district manager and master of ceremonies when he said, "We are well aware that we are in the North Slope Borough."

In later remarks this group was also included when both Frank Rickwood, president of BP Alaska and Governor William A. Egan said that keeping the north a suitable habitat "will need the help of all Alaskans."

Lloyd Ahvakana, administrative and finance director for the borough, substituted for Mayor Eben Hopson in making remarks during the program.

Others invited to the affair from the Barrow area included: Barrow Mayor and Mrs. Jacob Adams, Borough Assembly President and Mrs. Johnny Nusun-

lems and to learn the thinking of the people. The Sachs Harbor people, he says, are expert trappers and very independent. Now they are becoming more powerful and able to express themselves.

"They can resist the pressures of the oil companies who want to do seismic work there in summer."

There are two Indian settlements along the seven which are members of COPE which Radi serves — Fort McPherson and Arctic Red. Although he says the Indians and Eskimos are "two different peoples," the two communities in his area "work closely" with us all.

Now aware of the federated nature of Alaskan groups and the importance of holding political office to be effective in their government, Radi is going back to his region with some new approaches to their problems — particularly the land claims.

ginya, Sr., Borough Assemblyman and Mrs. Edward Hopson, Sr., Assemblyman and Mrs. Oliver Leavitt, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation President and Mrs. Oliver Leavitt, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation President and Mrs. Joseph Upicksoun, corporate secretary for the corporation and Mrs. Nelson Ahvakana, and Borough planning commission member and Mrs. Tom Brower, Larry Dinneen, executive vice president of the corporation was also present with Mrs. Dinneen who joined him from the Anchorage flight.

Roger Lang, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives attended also. Howard Rock, editor of the Tundra Times was invited but could not attend.

Although most of the men in the borough group had seen Prudhoe Bay before, it was a first for most of their wives. Wearing corsages of yellow roses with green tulle and ribbon for the BP colors, the women took great interest in facilities visited on a pre-party tour from the docks at Prudhoe Bay itself to the pipeline yard.

Getting special attention in the BP center was the two-story garden area with a 16-foot Alaskan black spruce, some birch trees and native ground cover. This and other parts of the unique building was designed to combat the greyness of winter and bleak face of the Arctic tundra.

Brilliant colors mark off sections of hallways with the effect of a rainbow as one looks down the corridors. Huge floor to ceiling numbers indicate floor levels and individual two-bedroom suites have bright foyers and mixed textures on the walls.

Lounges and reading areas are comfortably furnished and lighted. One recreation area next to the dining room boasts pool and pingpong tables along with other games. A 40-foot swimming pool has a Riviera-blue bottom and sides to make the swimmer forget that the water is also for use to fight fires if needed.

Most striking is the third floor recreation area where the party was held. Under foot is bright green and spongy astro-turf. Vaulted roofs are translucent and walls of the 200 by 50-foot room is glass.

Huge windows, which can be opened in summer, give additional light. In winter, artificial

lighting will offset the twilight of the non-sun days. In fact, lighting throughout the public areas of the building is brighter than in conventional buildings in order to keep a cheerful atmosphere.

The handsome hors d'oeuvres served at the champagne party were prepared by chef Peter Dienki who also directs food preparation for the dining room. The facility will house about 140 members of BP's staff.

At the close of brief speeches, Dorothy McGonigle, the first woman to go to the Slope to work for BP, in behalf of her employers gave Governor and Mrs. Egan a soapstone carving of an Eskimo family by Mary Regat.

Governor Egan commended BP for its facility, built "with as little desecration of the environment as humanly possible" and spoke of its "brightness, as though it were summer." He said that petroleum people "such as these" who with their families have become entwined in the life of Alaska have earned the right to be called "true Alaskans."

Frank Rickwood, president of BP Alaska, made the most thought-provoking statements at the dedication. He commended Alaskans for their efforts to save wildlife and scenery which "is given to you — you only need take care of it." But he also chided the people for paying so little attention to where people are living.

"What you do today affects the future," he said. "Leaving things to work out for themselves 'doesn't make great cities.'"

"It's your tremendous responsibility for the towns that become cities," he said. "They can be the most beautiful in the world."

## Ester Mosquitos Show No Respect

ESTER — Four streakers successfully toured the Malemute Saloon Saturday night, wizzed back for a second show and reappeared, fully clothed, for a standing ovation from patrons.

Only complaint was from the streakers themselves who reported the mosquitoes around Ester have no respect for a man's privacy.