

"I may not agree with what you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it" -VOLTAIRE

CONSIDER ALL SUBSISTENCE BILLS VERY CAREFULLY

Senator Mitch Abood and his Senate State Affairs Committee, surprisingly, came up with a Subsistence Bill that looks very much like it favors rural Alaska, but a second and closer look reveals that it is not the answer to the dilemma we find ourselves in. Finding a workable solution to the Subsistence problem will not be easy.

No doubt there will be many changes to Abood's bill, and there will be other bills offered during the new Legislative session. All the ideas and possible solutions are needed right now if there is to be an answer before the June deadline. The Federal Government will come in and assume management and control of fish and game resources if Alaskans cannot solve the problem, no question about that.

Senator Abood is not known for being a friend of Rural Alaskans and so it is surprising that he would produce a bill that seems favorable to us. He held hearings and teleconferences around the state this summer, and the information gathered through those channels should be put to good use in fashioning legislation that will help put an end to the uneasiness surrounding the Subsistence issue which has plagued Alaskan politics for sometime now.

The Legislature now in session will have an endless number of issues to deal with before 120 days have passed, but the Subsistence issue is by far the most important one. We hope that each of the 60 persons and their staffs in Juneau will consider all the bills having to do with Subsistence very carefully and come up with a bill that will make life a bit easier for Alaskans in the years to come.

120 DAYS WILL PASS QUICKLY

Along with the major issues of Subsistence, insurance, and dwindling revenues, the 14th Alaska Legislature now has to decide what to do with the \$243 million from the ARCO Settlement. The session could be long one, but it probably won't be.

With an election year facing them, the legislators in Juneau hopefully are aware that 120 days passes quickly so there won't be time for ceremonies and fun and games. Such activities are part of Alaskan politics so hopefully they will be kept brief.

NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH DETACHMENT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE DIVISIVE

The boundaries that were created to make up the North Slope Borough back in the '70's, and the boundaries that will be drawn for the new borough in Northwest Alaska are nothing more than artificial lines and should not be allowed to affect the ancient family and neighborly ties that have existed since time immemorial.

George Ahmaogak, Mayor of the North Slope has a responsibility to do as his constituents bid him when they voted last October on the detachment of land. And Willie Hensley, President of the NANA Region has an equal responsibility to act in the best interest of the shareholders of his corporation.

The detachment question is a thorny issue, but it should not cause the divisiveness that has been created so far. Both parties need to agree that whatever decision eventually comes out from the Local Boundary Commission will not be allowed to have a long term effect on the ties that are more important than artificial lines.