

Editorial—

Native Politics Needs Direction

Politics, all the way from the top down on the Alaskan political arena is rapidly shaping up. Plans for gubernatorial and congressional contests for seats are already well underway. Political strategists are working feverishly to map out winning maneuvers and how to defeat opponents. All this is known but not what the native leaders might have in mind as to what effort might be made to apply native politics in the 1970 political year.

What seems to amount to some apathy toward political matters by the native leadership is seeming to be evident. When issues and candidates are becoming clearer everyday, inaction by the native leaders becomes somewhat alarming. We feel that some positive political actions, with plans for those actions, are imperative in what could be one of the most momentous political years Alaska has ever seen.

The outcome of election results of 1970 will affect the everyday lives of all Alaskans, which means that all villages—all village people—will feel the results of issues and be influenced by many of those elected to office. With this in mind, it is imperative that efforts be made to acquaint the native people as to issues that will be decided and to acquaint them as to the qualifications of major and lesser political candidates. These will be vital facets that should be pushed so the native voters will have a better than ever understanding of political matters when it comes time to cast their votes in the August primary and November general election.

There has been some talk by some native leaders to organize a political club, a political steering committee or a political action group. The idea has merit. It should be pursued and expedited. Its organization should be carefully planned so it will perform for the best interests of of our native people. Knowledgeable native citizens should be involved from all regions in native areas. There should be a decision whether the group can operate independently of native associations or whether it should work closely with them. The officers of the Alaska Federation of Natives should be consulted as to the best route to take and what the statewide group might consider the best direction for it. If it should work independently of native organizations, it should then establish the best possible communications with the regional groups. If it must work closely with them, then there should be the best possible spirit of cooperation between them.

The 1970 election year promises to be one of the most intense areas of political activity in the State of Alaska. Our native people should be given a well meant chance to understand more of political matters as never before, gathered for them by politically knowledgeable native persons. The stakes are high and the end results will be felt, most likely for a long time to come in the future.