



"WE WILL SURVIVE"—Arctic Slope Native Association President Joseph Upicksoun, highlighted by television lighting, delivers his speech

attacking Alaskan natives for their lack of help when the slope people were fighting for their mineral rights. Photo by ROBERT KOWELUK.

Upicksoun's Eloquent Protest--

'We Inupiat Have Never Wanted Money as Such . . .'

In the midst of affirmative votes and self congratulations, the Arctic Slope Native Association registered their solemn protest Friday against an Act which cuts them off from most of the mineral rich lands of their native north slopes.

"We Inupiat Eskimos have never wanted money as such—we wanted land, because out of the land, we would make our money. We would protect our subsistence living, and we would still have our heritage," ASNA President Joseph Upicksoun told the Alaska Federation of Natives in a speech Friday afternoon.

"The Congress is making this settlement for just one reason—because the oil of the North Slope is owned by the Inupiat

Eskimos of the Arctic Slope."

"A couple of years ago, the oil companies wanted to get a permit for a pipeline—but the Inupiat Eskimos, the Athabascans and the Chugach Eskimos

had claims to the land. What did the Tanana Chiefs and the Chugach Eskimos do when approached by Atlantic Richfield? They sold their lands to the

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Joe Upicksoun . .

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oil companies for a promise—of jobs...”

“As it turns out, the pressure of the pipeline simply has required the Congress to move. You are getting paid faster—perhaps one hundred years faster—because the Arctic Slope Native Association said—No—No—No—,” Upicksoun charged.

In his speech, Upicksoun referred to the time one year ago when ASNA withdrew from the Alaska Federation of Natives.

“Just one year ago—the Arctic Slope Native Association met with your board of directors. We had withdrawn from your organization and you wanted us back. And so—just one year ago—we—the Arctic Slope Native Association and you—the Alaska Federation of Natives struck a bargain: for most of the settlement we would divide it on the land-lost formula and we rejoined you.

“It took you one month to break your promise. You got us back because the North Slope oil has the glamour and you needed us. And then you broke your promise.”

“This is a whiteman’s world. We are supposed to compete in that world. We are not against that. But how greedy can you be—that you start the race to Western culture with so many tools—education, for example—and you want to gobble us up?”

Upicksoun attacked the State of Alaska’s selections of slope oil fields as a “direct effort to grab our lands with full knowledge of what she was doing.”

“Not only has the Congress put its approval on this grabbing, but I did not see a single regional association step up and help the Arctic Slope Native Association. You are so busy fighting for you population proportion.”

“How did the State get these superior rights? I will tell you. Senator Stevens, Senator Gravel Congressman Begich teamed up with Aspinall and Haley.”

Upicksoun disclosed that the village of Nooiksut, a traditional slope village had been excised from the final list of villages to be included in the Claims Act.

“Nooiksut is three miles from the new oil strike,” Upicksoun said. “We reason that Senator Stevens was, and is, determined to make the land we get worthless.

He accused Governor Egan of being part of the team. After advocating that the Natives should get fee simple rights in Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 the result was just the opposite, Upicksoun charged.

“We get no State selected of TA’d lands. We get no Petroleum No. 4 lands, and no wildlife refuge lands.

“Thus, the only eligible villages we have are Anaktuvik Pass and Point Hope. These men have made sure that the lands we get have no economic value. Yes, we will get some “in lieu” selections, but the restrictions on where we can select are so huge, we will have to do some real scrounging to make them meaningful.”

“What are we going to do about it? The human body is a wonderful thing. We, the Inupiat Eskimos have been resourceful enough to live in the North. We will survive. Our real emotion now is one of sadness—it need not have been this way. But like people around the world—when there is social discontent—we must react—we must find some other way of achieving our self-identity and self-respect.”