

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

Editorial—

Better Prepare for Next Year's Land Push

The land claims legislation in Congress of the United States this year has dimmed and all concerned had better start making preparations for a truly concerted effort to have a measure passed next year.

Considerable experience in pushing for a measure this year has been gained and for next year's effort, whatever has been learned should be applied to its fullest effectiveness. Whatever mistakes were made in the effort should be remembered and better approaches made in their stead.

There should be many questions asked as to why this year's effort fell short. Were there brakes applied in the complex mechanisms of the legislative halls? If so, who made them? Did our congressional delegation make full use of its powers? There should be many, many more questions asked, and, soon.

Preparations for next year's push should be made right away. This had better be of first priority in whatever agendas our native leaders will be drawing up.

The preparation should, perhaps, begin next week at the brief land claims hearings to be held in Washington, D.C. on July 11 and 12. Perhaps the hearings will be for that reason but if no one has thought of them as such, they should be. A nail driven in the foundation for next year's effort will not hurt. It may be the start of a firm base from which to build.

The Alaska Federation of Natives will be meeting next October in Fairbanks. This statewide native organization has built up considerable influence in the affairs of Alaska and which rubs off on the national level. It is a fine vehicle from which good, sound ideas can spring. Our native leaders have, and should, make good use of it and without selfishness.

Perhaps next October's conference can be the refining center for plans to push for just solution to the land claims. Ways to educate congressional members on the land situation in Alaska should be one of the urgent aims of our people. How can this be done? It must be done and ways to do it must be found.

The push for next year's land legislation in Congress, we feel, is the most urgent target to aim toward. Familiarization of what it is all about to those who will work on it can not be stressed too far. It's a big assignment but we have trust in our native leaders. There is talent among them. Let us press this talent and draw from it the best ways of approach to the hard task at hand.