

# Tundra Times



Owned, controlled and edited by Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Publishing Company, a corporation of Alaska natives. Published at Fairbanks, Alaska, weekly, on Wednesdays.

Address all mail to Box 1287, Fairbanks, Alaska, 99707. Telephone 452-2244.

Second class postage paid at Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

Eskimo, Indian, Aleut Publishing Co., Inc. Board of Directors Executive Committee: Howard Rock, president; Thomas Richards, vice president; Mrs. Ralph Perdue, secretary; Jimmy Bedford, comptroller; Mary Jane Fate, corresponding secretary. HOWARD ROCK, editor.

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Regular Mail (including Alaska, Canada and other states) .....	1 Year \$10.00	6 Months \$ 5.50
Air Mail (including Alaska, Canada and other states) .....	1 Year \$21.00	6 Months \$12.00

## Editorial Comment—

# The Failings of State Senate Bill 61

The joint hearings by the House Labor and Management Committee and the Governor's Equal Employment Opportunity Committee, with the Senate and House State Affairs Committee represented, focussed attention on minority group employment in state operations in the Fairbanks area. Indeed, this is a big step toward progress if follow-up results in those problem areas that were identified.

The hearings exposed a glaring problem however—the lack of follow-up on the part of the state administration in implementing certain acts of the legislature, specifically with respect to Senate Bill 61 passed by the legislature on March 8, 1971 and signed into law by our Governor on March 16, 1971.

"Not one single person has been hired under Senate Bill 61" was the report given to the hearing panel. It was also brought out that some of the state government agencies were unaware of the Bill 61. There was also some misunderstanding of the bill itself. This disgraceful disclosure is not easy to take.

It is also abhorrent to us that when the legislature—with good intentions to help alleviate the critically high unemployment rate in rural Alaska—that no follow-up was done on Senate Bill 61.

Perhaps a lack of communication caused such a dismal failure on the part of the State. In any event, it is inexcusable for such an important piece of legislation to fail so miserably. It might not be a bad idea if the State should account to the public why nothing was done.

It is said that for every person that becomes gainfully employed, he creates six supportive jobs for other persons. The Senate Bill 61 didn't get such a chance. It languished in the half dead atmosphere of state neglect. If it had been dutifully applied, the bill could have impacted the rural people who need jobs desperately.

The hearing in Fairbanks brought out possible good things that would benefit Alaska's minorities. We hope that a good try at follow-up will result. There are too many useful and meaningful possibilities that surfaced at the hearing to allow Bill 61 to fall by the wayside because of inaction.

Rampart Village is less than an hour's flying time from Fairbanks. That is not very far, unless you are an elementary school teacher, without any funds for the purpose, who

would like to give some of your students a glimpse of high school life.

Last November, Miss Patricia Dauksza, the teacher in Rampart Village, began organizing for a

school trip to Fairbanks. This was in response to an invitation from Lathrop High's basketball coaches George Lounsbury and Clair Markey to be their guests at any of that season's games.

Also, Herb Mann, manager of the Old Clipper Gold Mine had volunteered to find lodgings for her students. The lodgings were to be in the homes of his friends, not in the Old Clipper Gold Mine.

When told of the trip, the students staged a cake sale and ran bingo games to raise money for their expenses while away from home. Miss Dauksza announced that everything was ready for the six eldest of her thirteen pupils to go, if only they had transportation.

At this point, Ike Weisner, author of "Trader Ike on the Yukon" and a store owner in Rampart, collaborated with Tom Olsen to Fort Yukon Air Service, to arrange a free round-trip for the group.

Three months after they had decided to come, the delighted Rampart students flew into Fairbanks. The Musk-Ox farm, the University, and the Old Clipper Mine were some of the sights seen during the day time, with Herb Mann acting as a guide.

At night, there was basketball, as Kodiak met Lathrop in an exciting two-game series, after which the coaches accompanied Miss Dauksza's pupils to dinner.

The object of the trip had been, according to Miss Dauksza, "to show the children some of the enjoyable things high school has to offer." She added, "a one-room schoolhouse has its limitations as far as teaching about the world beyond the village. A trip like this is ideal."