

Calista Region Hails Meeting Of the Deadline

(CALISTA News Bulletin)

Anxiety, anticipation, determination, and a certain amount of fear were just a few of the feelings connected with the date Nov. 18, 1974, the deadline for village land selection.

The Calista region with its 56 villages covers a total area of 40 million acres. Out of 40 million acres, 5½ million will be selected. Calista will have title (surface and subsurface) to a land area of about 8,600 square miles. The Calista land holdings will be larger than the size of any one of nine lower 48 states.

The first village to submit its application for land to the Bureau of Land Management was Marshall on Nov. 7, 1974. The last village to turn in their application was Newtok on Nov. 22, 1974. In the space of two weeks a job almost considered impossible was done against many odds.

Bad weather, bad radio-telephone, communications and unreliable transportation were just a few of the many problems. Special care and time was taken in translation from Yupik to English as well as English to Yupik as the land selection process was explained. New concepts had to be learned overnight. Trust had to be developed with the use of the computer. Conflicts with overlapping land withdrawals had to be resolved.

Great anxiety had built up

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as the deadline data was approaching. The Land Department collected data until the last possible moment. Then the great and delib-

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Deadline . . .

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erate process of actual selection was begun by the villages.

The job of selecting the "right" 5½ million acres was so important that many of the villages sent in members of their board of directors as well as the selection representatives. Instant approval or disapproval was needed in case of major changes in the selection of land by individual villages. The final choice of land rested with the village—they alone made the final selection. So great was the feeling for the land that many villages sent in their representatives a week early in case of bad weather.

As one saw the entire land selection team, one saw the faces of the young and old. The selection had to be right, it had to be right the first time and there was to be no second choice. The young and the old worked as a team with mutual respect for each other. Added strain was felt as each realized that this selection was to affect children not yet born.

The Land Department, feeling the great responsibility, worked deliberately, diligently, and confidently. The entire structure worked like a well-oiled machine and the completed applications for land were submitted to BLM well in advance of the imposed deadline.

Congratulations, Land Department and Village Representatives on a job well done. We can all be justifiably proud of the fine work that has been done.