

Editorial—

The Uncommunicative AFN

The Alaska Federation of Natives has done some notable service on behalf of the native people for which it was organized to serve. One of these, of course, was when it made available its members of the Board of Directors to serve along with the Native Land Claims Task Force established by Governor Walter J. Hickel and which had a vital role on land matters and played an all-important part in the formulation of the land bill S.2906 now pending in Congress.

The combined effort of the Task Force, the State and the Department of the Interior received wide publicity throughout the State and elsewhere including the outlying areas of Alaska. This was vitally needed and

(Continued on page 2)

I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend you right or wrong

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(Continued from page 1)

the State was informed as it should be. The native people, along with other citizens of Alaska, can be deeply grateful that there was ample news material on this important matter. The AFN played a good role in this publicity even though its part in it was somewhat indirect more or less.

On other matters important to the native people, however, the statewide native organization has tended to be disturbingly uncommunicative with the resulting dilemma that the native people it supposed to represent know very little of what the AFN is doing or what it is trying to do in their behalf. Perhaps the people in the outlying areas are fully informed of what is going on but we of the Tundra Times are not aware of it.

We think that if Tundra Times has been bypassed on information of what AFN is doing, so are the little people—the mass of the native population in Alaska. This is the vitally important mass that shouldn't be left out of important information that concerns it. The little people in it want to know what is going on. We know because they wait weekly for the Tundra Times "because your paper is very informative" and we know also that they would like to know more about the AFN and what it is doing.

The AFN is an organization expressly established to serve the native people and they want to believe in it. The statewide native body can lose its dynamism by being too reticent—by being publicity shy—by being overly close-mouthed.

AFN is statewide, So is the state government. We wonder what would happen if Governor Walter J. Hickel would publicly cease to inform the state population of what the state is doing. We can be sure that the resulting clamor as a result of it would be deafening.

How is the fund raising effort progressing outside of three contributors we know of: The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska through the eminent offices of Bishop William Gordon that contributed \$1,000; the Alaska Native Brotherhood, \$500; Mr. and Mrs. Dick Pedrick of Rockford, Illinois, \$15.

The fund that is being raised is for traveling expenses of the native delegations and their attorneys to Washington, D. C. and Juneau, the state capitol, to work on behalf of land matters and the goal has been set at \$72,000.

It is no wonder that Fred Paul, attorney for the Arctic Slope Native Association, noting the lethargy in the fund raising effort said in exasperation in his open letter in the Tundra Times last week:

"...But I say unto you, somebody better light a firecracker under this lethargy or your bill will be just as silently killed."