

Editorial —

Management of change

On the airplane the other day, your editor sat next to a Texan who was very much concerned about Alaska's local hire law. "Isn't Alaska part of America?" he asked. "You could come on down to Texas and get a job right away without a residency card. And, if you can't find one yourself, let me know and I'll get one for you," he promised.

As tactfully as possible, the generous offer was refused. Your editor began to explain that the local hire law as with many other measures considered by Alaskans in recent years, was an honest attempt by the people of Alaska to provide for Alaskans themselves to benefit from resource development in their home state. Even at that, recent revelations have shown that lobbyists for oil companies based in our Texas friend's home state fooled Alaskan legislators into taking the meat out of local hire. Because of a loophole in the law three times the size of Texas, Alaskan workers are finding themselves out of work before their non-resident co-workers (see "Alaska hire law failing to work," T.I., Jan. 26, 1977).

We are hopeful that Alaskans are beginning to learn how to control development within their own state. The historic pattern of massive exodus of wealth from Alaska (fish, timber, furs, gold, copper, etc.) with no residual benefits to the people of Alaska need not be repeated for offshore oil development and gasline construction. One of the most hopeful signs of local control over development of Alaskan resources is the sophistication of Alaskan villages in their approach to management of change brought about because of pressure to develop resources. During the Management of Change seminar in Anchorage over the weekend, villagers discussed the use of tools such as taxation, zoning ordinances, building codes, land swaps, political pressure and direct negotiations for cushioning the impact of corporations thirsty for Alaska's OCS petroleum reserves.

The objective of thusly managing change is ideally to use development to enhance the lifestyle preferred by local communities. Knowledge of the tools for managing change, if not providing for the ideal objective, offers some chance for survival of cultural values and rural lifestyles in affected communities.

—T. R. j.