

'I may not agree with you but I will defend unto death your right to say it.' - Voltaire

Editorial—

Watch, Listen, Prepare

The native people of Alaska are in the threshold of coming to grips with what will probably be their greatest challenge in the long history of their habitation of this north country—the effort to resolve the land question in the Congress of the United States. The legislation on this complex matter is in the offing and a bill may be introduced in the national body soon. But before it is introduced, there will be discussions of profound importance to mold it into a measure that will, supposedly, make it acceptable to all concerned. This is where the rub will be and our native leaders and their people had better measure up to the challenge and be ready to fight for the rights they deem best for themselves.

Our native people have had a great deal to do in bringing the land question to a head that has lain dormant for almost a 100 years. Since they have had an important part in it, it is time for them to watch, listen and prepare to take important parts in the land discussion.

In the meantime, anything concerning land in Alaska will bear intense watching. It will be a period in which to listen intently to what is being said. If our leaders have things to say about it, they should weigh their words before uttering them because speaking of the matter will carry weight. Whatever they have to say about it, the utterances should be representative of their people.

Many of our native leaders are knowledgeable about what land means to our people. This is the knowledge they should have at their fingertips at all times to tap from when the need for it arises and this need will certainly come to fore, perhaps numerous times, as give and take process of the land discussion takes place.

The preparation for the final bill will become the arena where people concerned will be playing for big stakes and talents of high degree will be engaged in it. There will be parrying for positions of advantage by leamed men. Complicated maneuvers may come into play seeking out weak points in the native faction of the land discussion.

The molding of the bill for introduction to Congress will be a critical period for the native people of Alaska. It will be time for our native leaders to use their wisdom to the greatest extent possible. It will be one of the most serious challenges our people have ever faced. Our leaders should prepare for it with the best they can muster because whatever the outcome of the land measure, our people will be profoundly influenced in their future lives.

Our people have a long history of facing great challenges and solved them. Let us meet this one in the same spirit that have stood us in good stead.