

Calista Speaks

LUPC Hard Of Hearing . . .

CALISTA CORPORATION

July 19, 1973

Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission
733 West 4th Avenue
Suite 400
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Commission Members:

At the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission meeting of July 19, 1973, a Commission member made the statement that the letter Calista Corporation had written to the Commission in Yupik was a "publicity" and "political" play. This stems from the fact that Calista had written a letter on June 8, 1973 in Yupik, and not translated, requesting that the Lands Claims Settlement Act be translated to Yupik so that all of Calista region's residents could understand the tremendous problems facing them.

Asked by a representative of Calista why the letter had not been answered, the Commissioner turned his back on Calista's representatives. He retorted, "After all, you're bilingual and I'm not." One point for the Commissioner — many of Calista region's residents are not bilingual either. Many cannot read or write English. Therein lies the problem.

The letter had been written in Yupik to underscore the seriousness of the communications problems between the Eskimo people of Calista and the United States government. Ironical? People in the 53 villages of Calista have a very hard time understanding the Act, the results the actions of today will have on them, their children and descendents, and the time-crunching deadlines imposed on them by some law that they do not understand. The letter was written in all sincerity, and not the "publicity" stunt which various white men strive for. "Publicity" stunts are not known in the Eskimo culture.

The Commission had been informed of the seriousness of the problem at one of their first meetings. Every member nodded their heads as if they understood. Apparently not, emphasized by the Commissioner's remarks. If the attitude of this Commissioner is one of the entire Commission — then this is a sad day — for without understanding, without the bridging of the communication gap, without humanity, almost all has been lost for us.

Sincerely,

Gilbert Hendrickson

cc: Tundra Times
12 Regions
Honorable Rogers C. B. Morton