

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

What Price Opposing Forces Can Wreak

The member senators of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs became disenchanted last week when the state government under the leadership of Gov. Keith H. Miller intensified its opposition against the Alaska Federation of Natives land bill now under scrutiny in Congress. Businessmen, Alaska State Chamber of Commerce, consulting geologists, and at least one newspaper publisher, lined up behind the governor in forming the opposition.

The rush to jump on the coattails of the governor was a surprising development because Miller, in his latest position, was even more drifting away from the position taken by the Alaska Federation of Natives. This development threatened to develop an impasse in the deliberations of the Interior Committee. Even in the face of this, Gov. Miller persisted in standing firm.

Gov. Miller has taken a dangerous position that could endanger the future of his state. The AFN bill is not all that bad. It is not an ominous thing the Anchorage Daily Times and its columnist W.C. Arnold try to make it be. Even the 2 per cent overriding proposal contained in it might turn out to be a blessing in time when Congress might act to reduce the revenue sharing formula of 90-10 to 37½ per cent. It would be that much more money coming into the state and which could relieve the state of having to shell out welfare money to the native people.

As for the recent flareup of negative publicity mostly against the AFN bill, the effort, probably, attained its purpose to a good degree—that of pitting white people against native people.

During her recent travels to southeastern Alaska cities to attend the annual Alaska Native Brotherhood convention at Kake, a well known Tlingit lady stopped at a town where she grew up among white people of whom many were her childhood friends.

"I was amazed at the hostility that has arisen even from those I grew up with," said the lady.

This is an ugly development. The tragic part of it is that this was achieved with halptruths and downright lies. The dispensers of them must have surely known what the consequences might be. If this was so, it has been a disservice for the Alaskan public. If the dispensers were ignorant, which we doubt of course, that was no excuse either. It is ironic that the native leadership, along with great many of their own people, are coming out of the land claims involvement much more knowledgeable than many of their white brothers. This can be attributed to their dogged determination to do the thing right as much as possible under the circumstances. There is no other way to evaluate it—it is a highly commendable effort on the part of the native people.

Right is might, as they say, and falsehoods seem to be on the verge of being taken for what they are and we hope the trend keeps going in that direction.

Woman: White Culture Impact Traceable to Native Mental Ills

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following talk was delivered by Sophie Wirth before the Farthest North Press Club in Fairbanks last week.)

By SOPHIE WIRTH

There is no doubt that mental illness and retardation are serious, grave problems among the native people of Alaska. The keepers of statistics tell us that personality disorders are the third leading cause of hospitalization of Natives, behind accidents and respiratory diseases.

Mental retardation among Native children is higher than for any other part of the United States, and 50 per cent of it is traceable to damage from infectious disease in early life.

I'm here to tell you that mental illness, depression, psychosis, and other disorders are directly traceable to the crushing impact of White culture on the Natives.

I'm going to simplify the problem to make my message clear.

There is no doubt that when the white man began making inroads into Alaska, his TOOLS and machines were vastly superior to the tools of the Natives—and I'm speaking about things like guns, and gunpowder; televisions; radio; transportation; construction methods; and technological devices.

But superior tools and mach-

ines do not equal superior people and social structure—nor do inferior machines and tools mean inferior people and social structure.

But the white technology set about changing Native life in such a way as to make it unmistakably clear that Natives were inferior AS A PEOPLE. For example, the educational systems established by the whites supposedly for the benefit of the Natives have refused to include courses on Native history and culture; have refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Indian and Eskimo languages; and were based on white suburban teaching methods and techniques used in the Lower 48.

Also, the religious systems pressed on the Native people were highly critical of Native beliefs and traditions—discarding them as either evil or unnecessary.

While my people may have had machines and tools and ways of doing things that were not as sophisticated and as complex as the whites, they were NOT inferior people. They had a culture which was remarkably advanced—they had a social organization and structure which permitted them to live at peace with one another (which is, by the way, far superior to anything whites have ever been able to do)—and

they had worked out a way to live in harmony with their environment, a magnificent achievement.

But the Native people have been made to believe that it was they themselves who were inferior—and have been subjected to the overwhelming effects of a mass inferiority complex.

This has led to the mental illness problems we know about. The jarring cultural collision, and white technological superiority leads to:

1. mental illness, arising out of depression and shame and inferiority;

2. alcoholism—a sickness itself—but more, an escape from inadequacy.

3. meekness in the face of white paternalism and aggression, followed by deep shame and helplessness, and then to alcohol and mental sickness.

I think that white culture—now that it has already crushed and destroyed the Native way of life—must at least recognize what it has done, and assume the burden of remedying the defect. Part of the remedy is treating mental illness, mental retardation, and alcoholism—with clinics, hospitals, doctors, rehabilitation—BUT, most importantly, an understanding of what they have done, and a resolve not to commit the same insensitivity again.

Letters to the Editor

Inciting Dissent By W.C. Arnold Under Attack

Hydaburg Town Council
Hydaburg, Alaska 99922
November 18, 1969

Dear Editor:

To men of good will: W.C. Arnold's campaign to discredit Native Land Claims of Alaska with his pamphlet, which must cost a lot of money, was asked who his clients were, he would not say. He is continuing with greater zeal to incite dissent among the citizenry of Alaska, which could result in riots or destruction of oil wells, which are so vulnerable. He may well remember the fishermen strike which tied up canneries up and down the coast, and this writer was one of those flown in by chartered plane, at the expense of the canned salmon industries, to negotiate a settlement. The Indians were up in arms then. So take note of the trial going on in Chicago, of the eight who are accused of conspiracy to incite riot.

Now, let us view the legal approach of the Alaska Land question and in the context on the case of the Hydaburg Reservation, which was set up by Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Krug, pursuant to authority granted to him by Congress in the I.R.A. act.

There Judge Arnold as the advocate of the Canned Salmon
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Way of Spending Lease Sale Funds Suggested

By WILLIAM THOMAS DUNN
Auke Bay, Alaska

Beginning with the first indications that Alaska was going to realize a considerable sum from the North Slope oil lease sale, many suggestions have been put forward about what we should do with "all that money." While there have been some notable exceptions, all to many have been spending ideas. Having observed the State's fiscal management and financial judgment since statehood, and much of it with less feeling of awe than "awful," I am becoming concerned. There seems to this Alaska citizen-by-choice a very real danger that we may "blow" this possibly once only modest bonanza and wind up a few years hence sadder, no wiser, and once more a semi-welfare case.

With the indulgence of the reader, I would like to offer some thoughts on this oil money. My views are the product of many years relaxed familiarity with large figures, some financial and economic perspective, and a lot of thinking. They are offered in the public interest as it appears to me and the only axe I have to grind is good government.

The very first essential in planning for the care and best use of this money for the people of Alaska is that we recognize at the outset that 900 million dol-

lars is not forever. It is actually not even very much money and it will disappear like snow under a summer sun if utilized for fun and games in any guise instead of being locked up tight and out of harm's way right from the start. A million thousand is only a thousand thousand and \$900,000,000 is only nine hundred million. The gross public debt of the federal government is around three hundred and sixty billion dollars right now, and the State of Alaska in its bare ten years of statehood has gone through about two billion dollars already.

It is also vital in planning for the use of the oil lease money that those having this initial responsibility in both the legislative and executive branches of the State government appreciate fully that this money is coming to us in return for permission to take from the ground of Alaska a non-renewable natural resource. Oil is a capital asset in the fullest sense of the term and once depleted it will never grow again. For this reason it is imperative that we start our planning on the basic iron-clad policy that we are going to replace one capital asset with another and that therefore this oil lease bonus money is to be preserved completely intact and invested in the safest and most productive manner possible. I know that

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