

Editorial—

Beware of Rumors

Now that the land claims legislation in the Congress of the United States seems to be in the immediate offing, rumors of all kinds are beginning to flit back and forth from many corners. Most of them are apparently concerned with the native land claims. Many of them, if taken seriously, can be harmful to the unified effort sought by our people and which is needed at this time. Some of them seem to be of subtle nature aimed, perhaps, at creating a divisiveness among the native groups. All are rumors without public pronouncements that they are valid.

Many more of these rumors will be generated in the future and they should be taken for what they are—RUMORS—because, before being heard, they have not

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been substantiated by any authorized agency PUBLICLY. Anything heard concerning the land claims, or any important situation, should be taken with a grain of salt until it has been properly, and authoritatively, publicly released by responsible sources.

It is a well known fact that rumors, taken seriously, can create dissensions. They can be used for character assassinations against people who honestly work for gains in any well meant effort. They can create distrust of the very people who are working effectively or who have accomplished concrete achievements for the people for whom they have worked and labored.

Rumors, very seldom, start by accident. Some rumors can be considered as good but some can be considered as bordering on maliciousness and allowed to circulate as a means to an end. If they come under the latter category, they can be subtle veiling some harmful intent. Rumors have to be watched because they don't usually originate from ordinary people. Sources from which they emanate may be important and established entities that for some reason or another wish to create certain feelings for or against an important situation, or to create a certain level of confusion.

The native leaders and their people at the present time are in the midst of facing perhaps the greatest problem in their history—the native land claims. They have been instrumental in bringing the matter to a head so that it is about to be tackled by Congress. This was no small achievement because it was done under some of the most difficult circumstances. It was not uncommon to encounter hostile atmosphere in the struggle for recognition of the native land claims matter. It was painfully achieved in bringing it to its present level—the doorsteps of Congress—and from which the native people are hopefully anticipating a fair and just settlement.

The native people have made great strides within the last few years as far as the land matter was concerned. This achievement should not be allowed to be marred by rumors that might be adverse to causes we seek. All of our people should be on the lookout for them and should only listen to utterings substantiated by nothing less than official public releases from official sources. Let us not tend to base our judgments from strictly unofficial rumors that might influence our course toward aims beneficial for our people and all of Alaska.