

Editorial—

The Matter of Regional Corporate Structures

It is certain, of course, that organizations in distinct native regional areas of Alaska will be of prime importance to the regions and villages in the event of the settlement of the Alaska native land claims. They will be of vital force in the management of the settlement proceeds not only in the regional areas but in the villages in those regions. The organizations should be straight forward but simple in structure so they can function smoothly and quickly without being cumbersome and without being burdened with red tape.

The Arctic Slope Native Association is planning to form a corporation if the people up there vote to form such an organization under the dictates of the Indian Reorganization Act. The corporation would involve Point Hope, Point Lay, Barrow, Kaktovik and Anaktuvuk Pass. This corporate status is viewed when established, it will ease the means of extending federal recognition to tribal groups. Which means that services, appropriations and other governmental procedures would have easier sledding if applied in that region.

If the organization would apply well in the post claims settlement, then it should be encouraged, and it may even serve as a pattern for other regions to follow. If there are some doubts about it, then it should be looked into and scrutinized. Would it have enough power, or would it have too much power. Would it encourage more organizations within it. If this happens, it would get cumbersome and it may lead into hiring more administrators, technicians, attorneys and other specialists which could make the corporate functions over-complicated as well as expensive.

On the other hand, existing regional organizations should be looked into, studied and streamlined. This process should get underway as soon as possible because their functions will be needed probably sooner than some people think.

While this process goes on, it should always be remembered that individual villages are important. The right of the smaller villages to determine what will be done with their shares of land and revenues should be protected.

We are also aware that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has shown considerable interest in helping to organize, and help streamline, the regional groups. If this service is forthcoming, the bureau should immediately update and upgrade its capabilities so BIA could apply this service as soon as possible. It could turn out to be a vitally needed service by the regional organizations.

At any rate, the Arctic Slope organizing into corporate status will be watched if the villages involved vote to incorporate under the I.R.A. If it meets with success in every way, this should be noted by other organizations and perhaps become a guideline for other corporate groups. If it does not, then something else might be more appropriate for post native claims settlement situation should be sought.

The mechanisms of administering claims proceeds should be aimed at doing the best job possible for the benefit of this generation and, most certainly, for the good of our future generations. Selfishness should not be allowed to flourish. Dedication should be the watchword. The stake for establishing good benefits without being overly generous for the present and for the future of our people is too great. These we can realize by utilizing good leadership for the big jobs ahead.