

Two Letters Sent to Jessen's Daily Debate Native Land Claims Matter

Dear Editor:

Please understand that I am not anti-Native, or for that matter anti-anything involving minority groups or religious groups unless it threatens our own rights and freedoms.

Many of my friends are Negroes, Natives, and Baptist, etc. Therefore I ask you not to print my name if you have the gumption to print this at all and I believe you have. That's why I subscribe to the Jessen's Daily.

My complaint is this. The Natives have been given a grant of some 7½ million dollars. This will come out of taxpayers' pockets and now they, the politicians, are trying to give the Natives royalties on oil and other minerals, as well as millions more of land grants which we will no doubt have to give a cash grant on them in some later years. They, the Natives, will not develop this land or use the money wisely, as witnessed in past years.

In the first place, they have no more right to the land grants and/or cash than you and me, the hard-working tax paying voters. In fact, I feel as do others that we have more right to this than Natives because we had to fight to protect it as did some Natives and we fight to keep it safe for all Alaskans and free peoples.

I am not against helping people that need it, who will, in turn, begin to help themselves.

This give away program has to stop, not only here but in all the states. Federal and state govern-

ments have built schools, homes, hospitals, and many other things for Natives all over the United States. This is fine, but they are citizens of this country and should carry their own weight.

Most of them adjust to almost any type of work and skill seems to be prevalent in Native groups.

I suggest that they be given the same treatment as you and me, which is work and acquire your possessions by your own efforts. Then you can take pride in achievement. It has become a way of life for some Native groups to accept everything from government and give nothing back because their fathers before them lived the same life.

This is unfair to themselves as well as the public that pays all these services. Get your property the same as I do, either by purchase or homestead. As a citizen you have that right. I can't send my son outside to school free on the taxpayer and neither should you. Hunt your game for meat or sport the same as I do by buying a license.

In short this land was purchased by USA and lucky for the Native it was, for as Russian subjects it may not have been so good. The natives of America enjoy the protection of the Constitution, the laws and our Armed Forces. On local and federal level, help preserve these rights by paying your own way.

I have Indian blood in me, way back but as much as some of the

present ones. My ancestors on both sides of family in this country came here on the Mayflower.

Doesn't this give me the same claim rights as you?

Many Natives have become famous. I'm sure some that we have never heard of have done outstanding things. Come on Natives earn your place in society.

If you do it will do away with many political jobs and this is why you are being exploited and used as political footballs.

You vote and this is proof that you are citizens, then act like citizens, and stop these lawyers and politicians from getting rich on your poverty.

If anyone takes the time to think about it for a while objectively, it is we the white citizens who are being discriminated against, for it is we the working man and taxpayer that foots the bill for all this nonsense and I, for one, am tired of working for these groups as they are as able bodied as I and should produce at least their share and not be dependent on me and you. We owe the Native nothing, morally and materially any more than any other citizen.

It's time we were paid for our long suffering installment payments on the right to be free here where it is still possible to think and say what you believe to be right and fair.

Thank you kindly,
Name Withheld by Request

Feb. 21, 1968

Dear Editor:

On Wednesday you published a letter to the editor by a correspondent who states that the Natives of Alaska have no right to a land claim settlement. If he believes the Natives have no moral right to their land or a settlement he is entitled to his opinion, but legally he is wrong. He says some of his ancestors came to the United States on the Mayflower. Then he should know that they settled on land that was purchased from his Indian ancestors or that if the Indians were driven off, the United States has subsequently provided for payment and is still doing so.

Many people believe that when the United States purchased Alaska from Russia, it bought the fee title. At the risk of oversimplification, what the United States bought was the sovereign rights to Alaska, together with the property rights of the Russian-American Co.

When the United States bought Louisiana for \$3,000,000 it purchased Louisiana subject to the property rights of the inhabitants of New Orleans, such as their homes and business buildings, and subject to the Indian title of the Indians of the Great Plains. The United States has since paid, either at the time of treaty signing, or later, these Indians for their lands, which make up nearly all of the Louisiana Purchase.

Today, Alaska is unique for the Natives still occupy and still have Indian title to much, and perhaps most of the land in Alaska. The United States Court of Claims which awarded a \$7¼ million judgment to the Tlingit and Haida Indians on Jan. 19, 1968 (referred to by your correspondent as a grant out of the taxpayers' pocket) refused to give compensation for a 2.6 million acre portion of Southeast Alaska because this land is still owned by the Tlingit and Haida Indians and has not been taken from them by the United States.

If the Natives have no rights in the land, then the land settlement is a "give-away" as your correspondent suggests. But if the Natives do have these rights

then the proposed compromise settlement represents an intelligent way of accommodating the interests of both the Natives and the State of Alaska, and a way to achieve the sound suggestions of your correspondent.

The Natives could not develop the land in the past because they had no marketable title. With marketable title to some of their lands and with money payments for loss of other land rights the Natives believe that economic development of all of Alaska can be promoted, to the benefit of not only the Natives but all Alaskans. The Natives see the settlement as a way of ending their legal and economic dependency upon the federal government, which your correspondent also desires. Native leaders abhor the welfare approach as much as your correspondent.

They want to work and develop their property, pay taxes, and carry their full share of the burden of government. The proposed settlement, which will translate their existing legal rights in the land into property rights held by Native-owned business corporations now, and not after endless years of litigation, can provide the means.

I suggest that the accomplishment of an early, fair, generous, and reasonable settlement of the Native land claims, with an early lifting of the land freeze, is in the interest of all Alaskans.

Very truly yours,
Barry W. Jackson

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WHERE
YOUR HEART IS..



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