

Letters from Here and There

Telida Neglected For a Century

Koyukon Development
Corporation, Inc.
Galena Center
Box 72
Galena, Alaska 99741
October 20, 1972

Dear Editor:

I was dumfounded and unable to believe during the Board Meeting of the Koyukon Development Corporation, which is a RurAL CAP organization, to find that in the history of Alaska and its purchase by the United States more than a century ago, there is a village where 18 people are living under conditions that existed more than a hundred years ago. The village is Telida and the people still make it their home.

Telida is one of the oldest, inhabited villages in the Interior of Alaska, and nothing has been done for its people. This should bring attention to all senators, representatives, state and federal government agencies, and the governors of Alaska.

They have no Post-Office and postmaster, schools, clinic, stores, airfields, and no way of communicating.

The present airfield was hand-made by Karl Seseui and the only tools he used was an axe and a shovel. He spent two years of his lifetime making this airfield, believing that his people might get a Post-Office, and other agencies could eventually come in with their projects, but only to find that it cost the village \$70 or more to charter a plane which brings their supplies and mail. Karl Seseui and

his people are paying a dollar or more for a letter for their mail service. The Post-Office Department make him and his people pay the necessary postage on their letters to move their mail, but refuse to give them the mail service, as well as any isolated village in Alaska, that other United States citizens are given. Proper mail service is desperately needed in these areas as it is the only link with the outside world, and the people can benefit from it like the other places in Alaska and the United States.

I ask all of you to make it an all-out effort to see that the village of Telida get their mail service at least once a month, and that the Post-Office Department establish a Post-Office in Telida, and also, appoint a postmaster.

I request that the present Governor of Alaska to check the State Agencies as their responsibility to see that the village of Telida gets a school, so their children won't have to be sent by poor transportation conditions to a nearby village called Nikolai to go to school. The children should be able to live in their own village and learn.

The BIA should have responsibilities to see that Telida gets a school, and a co-op store.

Every village is entitled to a clinic and radio communications, and so is Telida.

The Department of Aviation should start working on an airfield that will make it possible to have transportation and freight adequate to the other villages. Instead, they had to wait for 76 year old Karl Seseui with his old axe and shovel to make the airfield.

I, as the Regional Director of the Koyukon Development Corporation, will demand an answer

from every agency, except for Tundra Times of course, and to whoever this letter is addressed to.

Yours very truly,

James Huntington
Regional Director

cc: Sen. Mike Gravel
Gov. William Egan
Morris Thompson
Bryan Motlock, Local
Affairs
Dept. of Aviation
Dept. of Education/
State Operated
Schools/Anch.
Post-Office Dept./
Anch.
Tanana Chiefs
Conference
Tundra Times
Public Health
Services

Heads Swollen, Writer Claims

October 16, 1972

V-3 Division
USS Oriskany CVA-34
FPO San Francisco, California
96601

The Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

Dear Sirs:

An open letter to the members of the Alaska Federation of Natives seems appropriate at this time.

Now that the land and money have been allotted to the AFN, it is beginning to fall apart. Differences were with the Federation from the beginning but that did not prevent the leaders from making a united stand. They compromised their differences. But now, their heads have swollen. Now, they do not look for the several answers to the problem. No, there is only one right answer to the problem and anyone that has a different solution is wrong (so it seems). Where are the compromisers that got us our settlement? Are they too big to compromise any farther?

When leaders begin bringing suits against each other, the followers begin to question the intentions and sincerity of their leaders. Are they doing what is best for us? Or are they doing what is best for themselves? Are they trying to protect public images? Are they trying to protect reputations? Are they doing anything worthwhile at all?

Reputations and public images have a way of complicating business matters. A person trying to protect an image or reputation has two questions to answer . . . "Is this the best for the people?" . . . and . . . "How will this make me look in public?" People with images to protect will more likely than not, protect the image than do what is best for the people they are serving. The Alaska Federation of Natives has too big a responsibility to the Native peoples of Alaska to be bothered by "reputations" and "public images." My advice is to go ahead with the office cleaning and get rid of the reputations and public images in the way.

Respectfully,

Fred Sagoonick