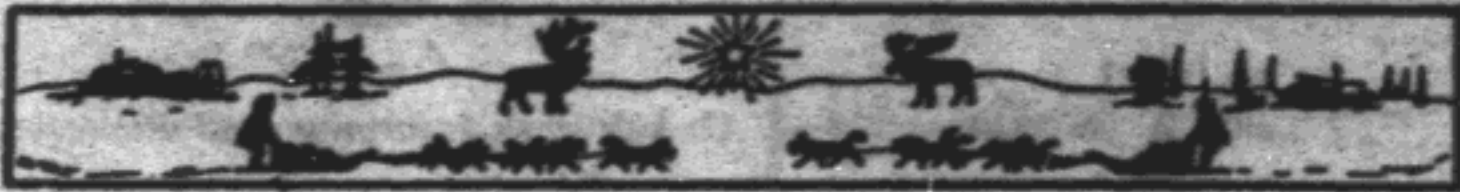


"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Other Voices—

'... Makes My Heart Swell with Pride ...'

NATIVES OF ALASKA AND FRIENDS:

The indignities heaped on our people for centuries and the stigma of social inferiors and outcasts which has prevailed since the intrusion of the so called civilized, sanctimonious element in our land, will shortly be a thing of the past. The process of educating and helping these narrow individuals to a broader understanding and appreciation of our proud heritage and culture will serve to strengthen our whole social structure to the betterment of all mankind.

What has been referred to as the transition from a subsistence economy (living off the land) to a wage economy (punching a time clock) which we have witnessed and are witnessing in the very short period of a generation or so is an example of the initiative, integrity and strength of a people who have had to be strong to survive the elements in our beloved but harsh land where the summers are short and the long hard cold winters a test of ingenuity and endurance.

The necessity of adapting to a wage economy and equipping our people, through education, to compete in our democratic society is an indisputable fact. However, in this transition—conforming to a materialistic competitive existence—our people have much to offer and much to lose. Anyone who has studied the Indian, Eskimo and Aleut cultures, before the contamination of foreign influences, is aware of the simple, honest, and gloriously free social order our ancestors enjoyed. This has been viewed with envy and nostalgia by many of our knowledgeable historians.

Our people can contribute a dignity, honesty and sense of fair play and justice to our new society which, in my view, can be an example and a benefit to everyone who must cope with the insidious corruption that history has shown decays and strong republic when it becomes too smug in its own sense of might is right.

The small part I have been privileged to play in the recent meetings grappling with the Alaska Native land claims has been an education. My admiration and respect for our Native leaders has increased with each meeting. The enormity of the problem and the complexities involved in striving for a fair settlement, which has been shamefully ignored for 100 years, is almost overwhelming.

The dignity and dedication exhibited by our Native leaders in facing this issue makes my heart swell with

Other Voices—

The Long, Long Wait

In 1961 and 1962 when we pointed out that Alaska indigents, particularly from the villages, were in need of legal assistance and that legal aid programs and a public defender system was needed, never would we have believed they would have such a long wait.

Two years ago a Statewide Legal Aid program for the poverty-stricken was approved and funded and yet today in Fairbanks, this program has not got underway. Never in our life have we seen so much bungling.

It seems there is so much haggling over selection of directors and so much haggling over who is to be employed and whether or not they can work with the director and the director can work with rank in file, that it is highly dubious whether or

not a functioning organization is ever going to come about.

We wonder where all the money that was approved to be expended on the program in the Fairbanks area for the past two years will go—will it be used to beef up the legal assistance program in other areas, or just what will happen to it.

We are also very disheartened by the prospects of ever having a public defender system although one is definitely needed. The various bar associations at times indicate they are in favor of such a system but we notice that last year they did bat an eye at dropping the defender system in favor of pay raises for the judges, appointment of more judges, and retirement benefits for the judges.

—JESSENS DAILY

Letters to the Editor

Nikolai, Alaska
January 28, 1968

Dear Mr. Rock:

The people of Nikolai read very interesting things in your newspaper. Some things make us ask questions maybe you can answer since we do not know who to ask about this.

In the January 12 paper there was news that the BIA

and Public Health Service is to provide villages radio contact 24 hours a day to take care of health problems and emergencies.

Nikolai would like to have a radio with this service. Who can we ask for this?

We hear many villages who have daily radio schedules with the hospitals but we have no medical schedule here. We are supposed to be

in the Anchorage district but Anchorage does not have a radio schedule for medical cases.

So we have never had radio contact with a hospital as most villages have. We are too far away to hear Bethel hospital. We can hear Tanana but we are not on their schedule because we are not in Tanana hospital district. The plane schedules are not practical for getting people to Tanana, but it would sure be helpful to us if we could talk to a doctor during sickness or emergencies.

Our medical aid does a good job. We try to get advice from the public health nurse in McGrath but many times there is no one in McGrath listening on the radio. Sometimes the nurse is visiting a village or on vacation even if we can get McGrath. There are many times it would be helpful if we could talk directly to a hospital. Sometime even somebody's life might be saved if we had some kind of medical contact.

We would sure like to apply for one of these new radios with twenty-four hour contact for medical problems so if you could print our letter, Mr. Rock, or see that it gets to the right place, we would appreciate it.

Sincerely,
/s/ Bobby Esai, Sr.

Flood Photos In Library

A large collection of aerial photographs of the August, 1967 Chena River flood has been presented to the library of the University of Alaska by the Bureau of Land Management.

Paul McCarthy, university archivist, said the photographs will be available for study by geologists and other interested persons.

Sincerely,
/s/ Elva Naanes, Secretary
Alaska Federation of Natives