

Tundra Times



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GUEST EDITORIAL

He stood in District Court yesterday, his black hair touched gray by the years, brown face somehow out of place in the sea of white, and on his face a look of bewilderment—or was that resignation?

His large, rough hands trembled slightly. Hands of another time. Hands made to hold a harpoon, a knife, a trap. Hands made to carve to work to guide a dog team. Hands that now—too often—held a bottle.

Downcast eyes, there in District Court yesterday. Eyes made for looking toward a far horizon, made for looking clear out over the edge of the world, made for spotting a lumbering polar bear, a spouting whale, eyes made for reflecting a midnight sun, eyes to see forever. And now red and watery, they looked across the sterile courtroom to where a man wearing a gloomy black robe spoke of lawyers, and constitutional rights and jails—spoke of all this in the flowing syllables of a language he only partly understood.

The robbed man kept asking if he understood. The man kept nodding. He understood the escape of booze, and he understood courtrooms and judges and he understood jails.

And he understood there would be another incident and another courtroom and another judge and another jail. And he didn't know when it would end—nor did he care.

He belonged in another time, another place and he knew it. And there was a time he screamed out in the anguish he experienced in the here and now, screamed out and no one heard him. Screamed out and the frustration drove him to the very brink of insanity and a firm grasp on his bottle was all that kept him from slipping over the edge, all that made his existence tolerable.

And the robbed man pondered. How and for how long do you lock up a lost soul. Five days, he thought. "Five days," he said, aloud.

—Jerry Fears
KFAR News

COYOTE'S LAMENT

Out in the country
where we used to roam
we knew who we were
we knew we were home Sir

The earth was the mother
the father was sun
we were all created
by the almighty one Sir

All are a part
of one body it's true
and when you came
we thought that you knew Sir

But since you've come
we've been torn apart
you tried to kill us
from the very start Sir

What could account
for what you've done?
You did the same thing
that made you run from England

Now you'd kill
the very spirit you need
to save you from
your own hate and greed

You're blind Sir

MARK HOOVER

(Aleut)

If your thoughts
Are of kindness and peace,
Then let them drift
As smoke to the skies
of invisibility,
Where scatters eternity
yet,
As a fragrance of incense
to make way,
Into the minds
Of many already adrift.

And then,
As determined as are
the dreams
Of peace,
They will become
in
Actuality, reality.

DARREL D. St. CLAIR

(Tlingit)

STATEMENT AT BARROW PUBLIC HEARING ON SUR- FACE MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS, OCTOBER 27, 1976

My Name is Abel Akpik.

I like to start with some questions. Does this law of April 3, 1976 requires it totally and imminently explore the Native Region of PET 4? Does this law, namely designates to explore and develop the PET-4 region? Can the Department of Interior, through the regulations of BLM, start and develop our lands now?

My statement would be as an inhabitant of the land, giving them (U.S.) or for that matter, the State of Alaska - leases to Petroleum Industry the Prudhoe Bay area was enough. I say, PET-4 need not be explored now. Due to the economic status of the United States in 1974 the Prudhoe Bay oil field was issued permit to build the pipeline. In our corner of the world, the energy crisis is somewhat over and the recession is hitting us. But I feel and believe that the further exploration and development is not required at this time. I say, the oil exploration with their regulations and rules and whatever you have, with the land delicate as it is, cannot, and it has proven biologically, cannot with stand the pressure of oil development and subsistence living of the Inupiat.

My solution, or one solution would be, in my estimation, would be to honor the Alaska Native Land Claim Settlement Act of 1971 and POSTPONE the exploration of National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. Until 1991, the year our regional corporation, our village corporation and the inhabitants has learn to govern and manage their own land. Then the Department of Interior can proceed to explore.

Point No. 1

Excerpt from the interpretation of the Public Law 94-258—94th Congress H. R. 49 April 5, 1976. "The—provide procedures to explore—and to insure protection—during the required exploration program."

Such wording makes one wonder if ever we, the Arctic Slope Natives will ever be left alone enough to deal with our own environment first; then, "if subsistence living is not feasible, then we could be going into development of the "Reserve." I would like to elaborate on that matter. Here it is a law, and such words are respected by Inupiat, a law stating that exploration must begin now—even now already going on—before the Department, namely the Department of the Navy, has been so involved with red tape and systems and whatnot that I, myself, get frustrated before we even start. So I praise the enactment of the Public Law 94-258 for the transfer of administration for the exploration of National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska. Even now the Inupiat families are preparing themselves to respect the everpowerful law of the White House and resigning themselves reluctantly to the exploration, watching the tundra

getting immersed in heavy equipment and gravel roads and people.

Point No. 2

Prudhoe Bay area oilfield is now almost completed—to date, 85% complete—and the proposed date of April, 1977 for which to start flowing of oil is just 6 months away. This project has proven more drastically commercial and costly then ever dreamed possible, is one example of "systematic development". Land exploration requires titles and red tape, land leases and so forth. As we all know, land leases to the Prudhoe Bay area were protested by our Charlie "Etok" Edwardsen to no avail. And one can see the tremendous oil impact on the Prudhoe Bay area, with all strictest constrictions, with strictest rules and regulations, the land, still is gone forever as once a fertile hunting ground. I would think that the Nation is and should be pacified with the Prudhoe Bay. Do they want more oil? Do they want to explore for more oil? Do they want to explore for more oil, at the expense of the Inupiat Nation? A movement of ethnic people around the Nation, is preservation of ethnic culture and identity. We would like to start ours!

With the passage of the Land Claims Act, I myself thought and believed that, "Wow, here is a way to preserve our culture and our land. Here is an insurance of hunting for my meat and seal oil." And by best of motives, this is one of the best language to abide by. So we go through the system, and claim title to our 160 acres of Native allotments, too. But because they are in Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, they are lost in court systems

of the United States. Because they are in somebody else's jurisdiction, the titles are lost and we cannot forever claim them as our hunting areas. If that is not robbery, what is? That is like, running a meat cache, that we had stored a certain amount of fish or meat when they were plentiful and come back later during the short daylight hours of winter until the next season. Each family has certain spots around the Arctic Slope for that type of livelihood. We are trying to remain within the Whiteman's system of titles and appropriation and whatnot, but we are being cut-off before we even start.

I feel this plan for exploration cuts off our economic growth as a Northern Community through our Land Claims Act. We were compensated so much money, so that we can, through Village Corporation, and finally through Regional Corporation, develop a system to apprise ourselves into the business community of the Nation and the State. The village corporations are in their infant stages. We have not even started to walk, let alone, run with oil industry who is supposedly the economic backbone of the United States.

Let us learn to walk first. Honor our Alaska Native Land Claim Settlement Act. Then, in our own fashion and growing ability, we will deal with the explorations and developments of the National Petroleum Reserve of Alaska.

We have already experienced the seismic exploration from Cape Sabine to Tashepak Lake across the Arctic Slope and it has proven futile to the subsistence living of the Natives. (Interpretation of the above in Eskimo followed.)

Thank you.

BOOK REVIEW

The Eskimos of Bering Strait 1650-1898 is more than just an excellent history of western Alaska, it will stand as a basic reference work for many years to come.

Dorothy Jean Ray has devoted more than fifteen years to research on the history of the Seward Peninsula and the Bering Strait Region. In reading this book it is evident that she tracked down nearly every thing that has been written about the early history of this area. She had to dig through stacks of original or primary source material, sort out the important events and people and place everything in proper perspective. Then she set out to do fieldwork among the Eskimos to get their input and give a complete picture from all points of view. It is the type of work that only an anthropologist-historian-scholar and understanding person could produce.

The reader finds, then, that this is not just an average local history for Alaska. It is a precise work, correct in the smallest detail. She points out, for instance, that the proper designation of the region is the Bering Strait (not Straits). In matters where

there has been a great deal of controversy or confusion, she sets the record straight. Questions about the expansion of the Malemiut, the so-called "lost Russian Settlement of Kheuver-en", the search for the Franklin expedition the early missions and schools are all answered clearly and succinctly.

This is not the kind of book that one browses through quickly. It is the sort of work that a person reads and re-reads several times and each time finds something new and worthwhile. This reviewer recommends that people buy the hardback copy; in years to come, the interested reader will have many occasions to use the book as a standard reference in Alaskan history.

The community college at Nome has already adopted the book as a basic text on Alaskan heritage. Hopefully, other colleges and universities will add it to their libraries and classroom use as one of the books on Alaska. In 1899, Edward Nelson published his classic work on the Eskimos About Bering Strait. Dorothy Jean Ray's book not only supplements Nelson's great

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