"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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On Taxes and Revenue

By NELS ANDERSON, JR.

We need incentives for development rather than obstacles.

We need equity in taxation rather than blind stabs thrust into the field of revenue-generating schemes.

Last year (1975) I wrote an article that outlined my views on fiscal policy for the State of Alaska. The terms of that policy are viable today. Strict fiscal control is vitally necessary in order to get our state on a responsible path into the future.

I will once again, to refresh your memory, outline the suggested directions the state should take.

1) Cut the budget. Once again, I state that the State Administration missed an opportunity to give direction in state spending by not reducing personnel and cutting programs that can wait until revenue from oil flow is a realtiy. This is a politically unsafe suggestion, but an effective means of raising revenue by reducing spending. The legislature and administration can work out this problem without hurting the welfare of our Alaskan citizens.

2) Look for other revenue sources. During the interim (summer and fall of 1975) several legislative sub-committees sought ways and means to raise revenue for the state from oil and gas resources. The legislation drafted this past year has created an impact throughout the nation. The merits of those bills are yet to be tested and will receive careful scrutiny in upcoming hearings.

What about other alternatives? What about the fishery processors of our state? Have we overlooked possible revenue sources in that sector of economic activity? For instance, how much does the state make from egg roe from Alaska's salmon?

Do we tax alcohol and tobacco products adequately? Does the state enjoy a reasonable return on alcohol and tobacco use when dealing with the social problems that result from abusive use of alcohol? If the Administration really believes that programs should pay their own way then a tax structure should be devisined that will permit programs dealing with alcoholism without unreasonably burdening the state's treasury.

3) A Beaufort lease sale. This suggestion was a good idea in 1975. Economic conditions for a sale now indicate this would be a terrible mistake. Any lease sale would better take place in the future when economic conditions would parallel those of 1975. Lease sales can be a viable revenue source of timing is considered as a primary factor for decision-making.

4) Sale of future oil and gas royalties. This option will be studied more thoroughly since the legislature now has a Gas Impact Committee to study the gas-related side of future sales. Hopefully the state can determine its future foreseeable needs, then decide what is avaiable for sale. A commitment now in a sale could be a good decision if we consider possible future decrease in oil and gas prices. Many oil and gas provinces are opening up and will be producing which could make our high cost gas and oil an unattractive source of energy.

Last year's passage of an ad valorem tax on oil and gas reserves was a mistake. Its passage injected further uncertainty into an already unclear taxing policy on oil and gas. The record will show that an undefined tax policy is going to leave our state in a no-growth posture. The result will be devastating to our future income needed to function properly.

The present proposed laws further muddy the waters. Our state should be framing its tax policy on its non-renewable resources to encourage exploration and development. Rather than be on the offensive, we should carefully examine incentives for home-based corporations with large private land holdings. Providing such incentive will encourage exploration and development rather than impede such activity. At the same time Alaska should demand the development of a domestic industry through credits and other tax incentives designed to require employment of its Alaskan (native and non-native alike) residents and to promote the development in Alaska of satellite and supporting industries among Alaskans. Our state and nation require our resources. These resources must be available for development to secure for ourselves and our fellow citizens access to these resources which will enable us to move into the future with confidence.

Letters from Here and There

Reading about idiot gussuck bothers Charlie

Mr. Howard Rock, Editor
TUNDRA TIMES
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707

Dear Editor:

The Ediorial Section of your February 4 publication is very much bothering me because it surprises me to read about this idiot gussuck named John L. Kent, The Contributing Editor of The American Mercury.

If he thinks Eskimos are idiots, primitive, uncivilized and are not worth of exercising their right to vote then he should travel to our villages and find out if what he has said is true and insult us in front of us and find out about our reaction instead of hiding in his luxurious and civilized home.

Also I would advise Mr. John L. Kent to see a psychiatrist because such an idiot is subject to psychoanalysis and is not fit to be an editorial contributor.

If you have the address of the Chief Editor of the American Mercury, I would like to have it so that I can draft out a letter directly to them.

I also would like to advise all of the Native Leaders to keep watchful eyes on anything that effects our way of life and freedom because we have been insulted and cheated enough by white idiots!

Sincerely,
James R. Charlie, Sr.
An Eskimo Idot

Board of Regents strongly opposes Senate Bill 658

Here for your information are copies of a letter sent to all legislators by Dr. Robert W. Hiatt on Feb. 19, 1976 regarding Senate Bill 658, which provides for the separation of the 10 community colleges from the university statewide system, and a resolution on the subject adopted unanimously by the Board of Regents at Juneau on Feb. 14, 1976.

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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701
February 19, 1976

The Honorable
House of Representatives
Pouch V, State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Re: SB 658

Dear:

Attached is a resolution passed unanimously by the Board of Regents at their recent meeting in Juneau regarding their very strong opposition to SB 658, "An Act Establishing the Alaska Community Colleges; and Providing for an Effective Date".

In brief, SB 658 merely separates the community colleges and all off-campus extension centers from the University of Alaska. It specifies exactly what the community colleges and our out-reach programs are now doing. It contains no new ideas and mixes up and confuses existing relationships between the University, its land grant status and its ability to handle endowments and donations.

Unwittingly, it also points out clearly why the University of Alaska Statewide System should remain intact rather than be artificially dismembered to suit some short range political objective. I refer specifically to all those places wherein it admits that cooperation in programs and joint use of facilities must be worked out in some manner of consortium over which the Alaska Postsecondary Commission must serve as a referee or "super-board". The avoidance of such jurisdictional problems is one of the principal reasons for maintaining a singly statewide higher educational system.

Perhaps the most vital flaw in the Act is the drafter's apparent misunderstanding of the basic rural educational philosophy presented last year in SB 239 and 240 after extensive input from the native community, and which are now implementing through the Office of the Vice President for Rural Educational Affairs using the University's total system strengths—not just that of the rural community colleges or out-reach centers. Coordination of this rural effor is difficult enough within a single system such as we fortunately have. Coordination of two competing systems would not only prove unworkable; it would largely destroy the rural effort that so many native leaders have helped the University design, and on which native people have placed so much hope for their future.

I have heard it said that the University of Alaska is not responsive to the needs of our communities or to rural Alaska. This is a lagging concept undergoing extensive change in recent years. No state has come so far as Alaska in having its State University System respond to the needs of both our urban communities as well as our rural communities. We are still pushing education outward at an accelerated pace. Indeed, the newly completed Academic Development Plan spells out for the first time in any state what the whole rural or native educational thrust is all abot. SB 658 is strangely silent on all this, yet purports to take it out of the University's hands. The total strength of the University System is needed to insure success of this program. It is a high priority commitment on the part of the Regents and University Administration, and with proper funding will be implemented completely in record time.

Recent responsiveness has certainly been demonstrated specifically in the urban area by bringing into existence the Tanana Valley Community College and in the rural sector by upgrading the Nome Extension Center into the Northwest Community College. Not only has responsiveness been shown, but selling the idea of a community college to a somewhat resistant community in Fairbanks had to be accomplished. This was done by the regents and administration of the University of Alaska with excellent assistance from an interested citizen's advisory committee.

Historically many states initiated different levels of post-secondary education—state universities, state teachers' colleges and community colleges—through varied sponsorship and governing boards. Over the past two decades each state has had to wrestle with the inevitable excesses such disparate entities bring about. Increased overhead costs, duplication of facilities and educational effort, political infighting for financial support and academic authority, unfortunate competition because of impossible coordination—all these and more surface quickly.

Alaska and Hawaii, developing their constitutions after these difficulties became apparent in other states, wisely provided for a single system of public post-secondary education, thereby avoiding the necessity of establishing "super governing boards" to coordinate the governing boards. Witness the fitful struggles going on in Washington, Oregon and California, for example, to understand how far-sighted and wise Alaska's delegates to the Constitutional Convention were. In the knowing educational world, Alaska and Hawaii's single governing board systems are the envy of all other jurisdictions.

If one were to set about deliberately to wreck the post-secondary educational system in Alaska which is just now coming to fruition and has a definitive plan for its future growth, he could not contrive a better way than to promote the diviseness inherent in Senate Bill 658. Passage of this Act would set Alaska's educational progress back for years with little hope of eventual recovery. It does grave injustice to the citizens of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Robert W. Hiatt
President
cc: All news media