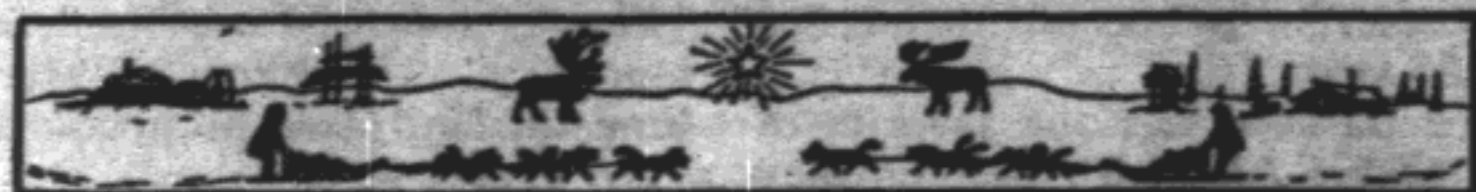


"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

Crowded and Pressed

Throughout history the Arctic Slope region has remained an area where the western civilization has least made an impact. While it was true that whalers and then traders once traveled to the northlands, their visitations terminated as soon as whaling and the fur trade became unprofitable. In the meantime however, Barrow, the largest Eskimo village on the Arctic Slope has grasped many of the finer aspects of the western culture. They are a very aggressive group, dedicated to improving the living conditions for their people. During the past few years they have built new homes, installed a natural gas heating system throughout the city and like other areas of Alaska, have grouped together in a common cause through the Arctic Slope Native Association.

At the same time however, the Barrow Eskimos to a very great extent still live off the land. They do much hunting, fishing, and trapping. Like all rural areas of Alaska, it would be absolutely impossible for them to live totally on a cash economy.

It is with great, rapid and thundering stride that the complexities of the 20th century has struck the Arctic Slope. Oil, the magic word of our modern world, has been discovered on this tundra region and it has been within a very few months that the greatest activity on the slope has occurred. Civilization is closing in faster than anyone can imagine, and it is difficult for this writer to comprehend that now wells are being drilled where last year there was a trapline providing a livelihood for someone. Great regions where a man could travel for miles upon miles in search of furs and food is now criss-crossed by caterpillars trucks, and the ceaseless noise of carpenters building structures to house the lord of all activity—oil.

The feeling of the Eskimo on the Arctic Slope can best be summed up in the following statement as can be seen from their point of view.

"Forever we have owned the land in the Arctic. We have trapped, fished, and hunted on it and our lives come from the land. Today in making a transition we are all without jobs while the largest industry in the world is spending millions and hiring hundreds of men with the intent of making millions upon millions of dollars. The federal and state governments which are suppose to protect its citizens has cut the entire Arctic regions into sections—an area which we know is our land as we have our trapping lines on it, we hunt caribou off of this land and we fish in its rivers—and men from the entire nation are now claiming it. Hunting cabins are caught up in this leasing with crews searching for oil over traplines and oil platforms are even drilling in the yards of trapping cabins with absolutely nothing going to the owner.

We know that this is our land, and we cannot understand why this is happening."

This is a depressing and intolerable picture of events because it is the age old story of the rape of the Indian people in the lower 48. Imagine, with all the sophistication and ethics we profess to have in this modern day,

Editorial—

Hickel — The New Man

President-elect Richard M. Nixon's appointment of Alaska's Gov. Walter J. Hickel to be his Secretary of the Interior can mean significant developments for Alaska. Secretary Hickel can play a historic role as far as the native people of Alaska are concerned. His influence in his new office can mean a meaningful future for the natives. If he falls short, it could be an indelible blot on his record of public service.

Walter Hickel is an unusual man. He is forceful and dynamic. He has also shown us that he has capacity to learn situations to the extent of being an authority after initial and questionable beginnings. One of these was his initial approach to the native land claims. His utterings concerning this knotty subject left much to be desired when he took over the governorship of our state. We felt alarmed and disturbed. Things looked grim for a period of several months. During that time, native leaders began to speak out forcefully against Hickel's stand on the land matter. Apparently the Governor listened and began to see the other side of the picture. His change of attitude toward the land claims matter came about. It was as dramatic as it was disturbing at the beginning. Thereafter, Gov. Hickel sought to negotiate and attained the "Let us work together" level.

This is an admirable quality in a powerful man—a capacity to delve into the backgrounds of difficult problems. In doing what he did, Gov. Hickel probably, more than most persons perhaps, learned the thinking patterns of the native leaders and their people regarding lands. The insight he gained from his good effort can stand him in good stead.

There was another change we have noticed. Perhaps it was not a change but a latent quality that found the waiting channels to come to the fore. Gov. Hickel, even before he attained the governorship, was generally regarded as "a cold man." Although he is forceful as ever, the coldness that seemed to be one of his characteristics has, and is receding to the background.

There is a warmth and friendliness in the man that is not formidable to reach. He has manifested this trait a number of times in meeting people and not the least of this was meeting native people and their leaders. This quality stood out again not long ago when the Governor made a swing through rural areas inspecting Alaska National Guard units. In village after village, little native children went for him and the pleasantness of this reception reflected unmistakably in the man.

He has said to this effect: "I really want to help the native people."

Gov. Hickel has now a seat of vast influence and this influence will be felt in no small degree in Alaska. Along with everyone else, Alaska's native people will be watching every move he will make.

that the conscience of the nation would allow a repeat of the degenerate actions of the past decades.

This is happening right here at home! the native people comprise 1/5 of the state's population and they are all fighting to save their land. To a great extent this feeling of utter despair has developed through a general lack of communication, and much of this lack of communication can be attributed directly to the oil companies. The public relations department of these oil companies has been non-existent with the ultimate belief of the Barrow residents that this industry cares nothing about them or their state.

Now is a time for action. We have had politicians for years express their concern for the "Indian plight," and unfortunately that is all that has developed—an expression. The plight of the Indian in the lower 48 has remained the same for years and he has received little or nothing for lands taken from him.

The conscience of the American public must be awakened so that they will not allow the natives of Alaska to be cast aside and remain in the claws of poverty while the state and other interests benefit.

—SENATOR JOHN SACKETT

Arizona School Develops Novel Primer

ROUGH ROCK— A Navajo primer, the first of its kind, has been completed at Rough Rock Demonstration School and will soon be printed.

Martin Hoffman, director of the school's Navajo Curriculum Center, said Rough Rock teachers prepared the book with technical help from the curriculum center.

It will be the first book children will use in learning to read and write the Navajo language.

The primer, first in a planned series of Navajo language books, came about partly as a result of workshops held recently at Rough Rock by Dr. Caleb Gattegno and Dr. Oswald Werner.

Gattegno, a progressive educator in teaching of language and math, developed the noted Cuisenaire rods for teaching math and the Words in Color reading program.

Werner is an anthropologist from Northwestern University who has done extensive work with the Navajo language.

The primer uses Gattegno's method of teaching language with Werner's type of Navajo orthography.

Hoffman said "decoding" is the key word in describing the primer since the object of the book is to get children to rapidly decode, or read, the symbols.

The book starts with vowels, which children sound as the teacher points to them.

Then come vowel and consonant combinations, some of which make words. By the end of the book children can read simple sentences.

It takes three to four weeks for first grade children to complete the book.

The method, used by Gattegno is designed to teach children to read or decode in the rhythm of the language—in sentences—instead of teaching words alone and depending on memory to carry the children through until they can learn enough words to read sentences.

In other methods of teaching language, it usually takes a year before children can read sentences.

"Memory is the weakest of the human faculties," Hoffman said. "What we do in this book is to teach children to use discretion instead of memory."

Rough Rock this year began a new program of teaching Navajo reading and writing to children at kindergarten and first grade levels while waiting until second grade level before starting English reading and writing.

The idea is that after children get used to reading in their own language, reading in a second language will be easier.

Gattegno's method of learning language through its rhythm rather than by learning words alone has been used at Rough Rock in teaching English for the past few weeks with good results.

Reading specialist Theresa Bradley taught some lower elementary children to read and speak English sentences within three weeks.

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