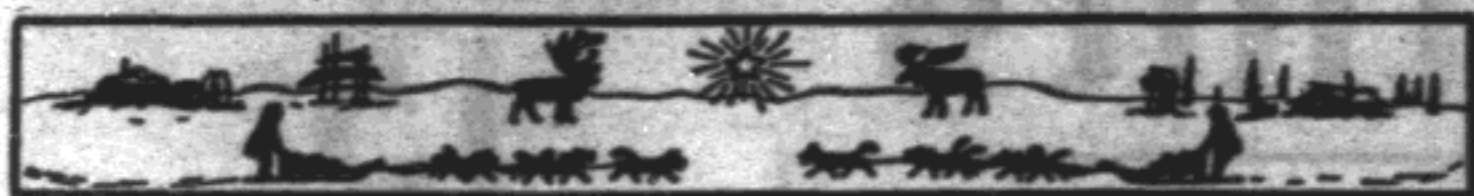


"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." - Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

Bethel Fish Squabble

There is something sad and galling about the controversy involving the Bethel Fishermen's Co-op and the State of Alaska. The most touching thing about it, perhaps, is that the native fishermen involved in it are apparently being used to confuse the issue. A divide and conquer method is being used on them because they are new to the venture—a brave effort to do something for themselves with the help of those who are willing to do so, but which is apparently being frowned upon.

The Bethel area native fishermen had formed a cooperative last year with a freezer facility to go along with it. That freezer was destroyed by fire last fall and left co-op. with no processing means for this year's fishing season.

Sensing difficulty in marketing their fish this year, the co-op acquired the assistance of the Alaska State Community Action Program and an arrangement was made to sell fresh-caught salmon to a Japanese freezer ship.

When the setup became imminent that it would be utilized, things began to happen. The state began to make moves as if to stop the transaction. Charges of intimidation against the fishermen began to appear in the press. In the process, the members of the Bethel Fishermen's Co-op became confused. Members began to oppose other members. Things got sticky and it looked as if the cooperative would disintegrate. An impasse threatened.

The way we see the controversy in Bethel is that it was started perhaps inadvertently by the arrangement by the fishermen and the ASCAP to sell the co-op bought fish to the Japanese freezer ship. It was an emergency setup to market the salmon catch for this year because the co-op fishermen lacked freezing facilities.

The legality of the transaction seems to be on the side of the fishermen because they are doing nothing drastically different than the forest products processors loading their products on Japanese ships in Ketchikan, Sitka and Wrangell.

There is a concerted effort today to enable the native people to earn incomes that would make them more comfortable in living. The Bethel Fishermen's Co-op members by forming a cooperative are also trying to do this—to earn a fair return for their product—the fish.

There should not be any opposition to this because if there is, it would tend to keep them under the yoke of second class citizens. They need to compete under equal opportunities. They need to get their feet wet seeking those opportunities and the Bethel area fishermen are doing just that today. They need to grow into more productive citizens.

Controversy Seethes Over Ferryliner

A heated controversy erupted this week between Gov. Walter J. Hickel and Sen. E. L. (Bob) Bartlett over the purchase of a foreign ship Stenna Britannica, a Swedish ship, by the State of Alaska to add to the fleet of ferries on the marine highway system.

The almost new Swedish ferry, now named M. V. Wickersham, has been the bone of contention in regard to the Jones Act that prohibits the use of a foreign-built ship to operate between two American ports.

Gov. Hickel reacted vigorously to Sen. Bartlett's latest letter to the governor written on June 5.

Bartlett told Hickel that "this is the time for hard, cold facts. We do not now have those facts."

Bartlett was referring to 10 questions he asked the governor "which must be answered."

Gov. Hickel called on Sen. Bartlett to "show more concern for what is best for Alaska and Alaskans, and less for the influential lobbyists of the powerful U.S. shipbuilding industry—which has no shipyards in Alaska."

The governor reacted to the published reports about the Bartlett letter which he said he has not received up till last Tuesday.

"I am deeply concerned about the lack of understanding shown by Sen. Bartlett on the subject of the Jones Act," said Hickel.

"Over the years, Sen. Bartlett has continued to assure Alaska voters that he realizes that the Jones Act places a stranglehold on Alaska's development.

"And he has repeatedly assured us, at election time over the years, that he will work for a Jones Act amendment. Now we learn that his intentions are directly the opposite."

Hickel commented that it was inconceivable that a man who has been in Washington since 1936 is not familiar with the menace of this act to his home state.

The state has been seeking an amendment in the Jones Act or a waiver from its restriction which prohibits the use of a foreign-built vessel in trade between American ports.

An amendment, or a waiver, (Continued on page 6)

Vancouver Sun Prints Editorial

The estimable Vancouver Sun of Vancouver, B. C., in its edition of May 31 carried the Tundra Times editorial published on May 10 entitled, "Olympics Queen's Crown Means Many Things."

The Sun reprinted the editorial in its entirety under the headline of, "Eskimo Crown Carries Both Stature, Dignity."

The editorial stressed that the attainment of the World Eskimo Olympics crowning of the queen is a goal that should be sought after by our beautiful native young women and that its attainment can mean a valuable asset and a memorable milestone for our beautiful native queens.

Need 'Cold, Hard Facts'

June 5, 1968

Hon. Walter J. Hickel
Governor of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Governor Hickel:

This is in reference to your letter of May 28 concerning the Swedish ship STENNA BRITANNICA and the Jones Act. As you released your letter to the press so, too, will I release my reply.

You very aptly compare the difficulty of amending the Jones Act to the stand the Greeks made against the Persians at Marathon. The odds in favor of a Greek victory then were very poor. The odds in favor of the amendment of the Jones Act now do not appear to be much better.

As I explained in my letter of May 29, the amendment which you desire will need the approval of the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee before it becomes law. Certainly the House Committee appears unwilling and unlikely to amend quickly the Jones Act.

If the amendment is to become law the combined weight of important elements of the American Merchant Marine, both labor and industry must be overcome. This is not an easy task.

If the amendment is to become law the state must present the facts of the matter—and its plans for the future—in a clear and straightforward manner. The Congress, the industry, and especially the people of Alaska have a right to know precisely what the state wants and precisely what the state plans. Without such information—and we do not now have such information—the chances of congressional approval appear remote.

The following questions are among those which must be answered.

1. Does the STENNA BRITANNICA meet the safety standards required of American ships?
2. If the ship does not, does the state intend to operate it without a certificate of safety?
3. Or does the state intend to remodel the BRITANNICA so that it will conform to American safety standards?
4. If so, how much money will this remodeling cost and how long will it take to remodel?
5. When you appeared before members of the House and Senate merchant marine committees and representatives of the administration at the informal meeting in February, you emphasized that the Jones Act waiver which you sought was to be a temporary one, operative only until the new U.S. built Alaska ferries would be ready for use. The fact that these ferries were to be constructed in the U.S. was offered as a sign of the good faith intentions of the State of Alaska. Now I am informed the State of Alaska has rejected all bids on the new ships, even though they were within price. Has the state now dropped its plans to construct new ferry ships to replace the STENNA BRITANNICA within a two or three year period as originally planned?
6. Is the State of Alaska now seeking a permanent waiver of the Jones Act?
7. Does the State of Alaska intend that the BRITANNICA become a permanent part of the Alaska Marine Highway system?
8. If the act is now amended in the closing days of this session—and as I have said it appears extremely unlikely to be so amended—is it the intention of the State of Alaska to operate the BRITANNICA this summer under a foreign flag? With a foreign crew? Sailing from a foreign port?
9. If the ship can operate successfully in this manner this summer will the state continue to press for a Jones Act exemption and, if so, on what grounds?
10. American crewmen serving on a ship operating under a foreign flag are not eligible for the public health care accorded American seamen sailing under the American flag. What are your plans in this regard?

We must have the answers to questions such as these. The future of the Alaska tourist industry is of very great importance to the future of our state. The continued and expanding operation of the Alaska Marine Highway is of very great importance to the growth of the tourist industry. This is a time for hard, cold facts. We do not now have these facts.

Sincerely yours,
E. L. Bartlett

WEATHER

Southeast Alaska experienced relatively dry and warmer than usual weather. Elsewhere except for cooler than normal conditions at Yakutat, Nome and Kotzebue, temperatures were near or above normal and with average amounts of precipitation.

Variable amounts of snow fell with many areas of the state measuring unusual amounts for so late in the season.

WANTED: Chilkat Blankets; totem poles; ivory pipes and carvings; argillite carvings; porlatch bowls; fish hooks; spoons and all N.W. items 50 years of age or older. Send photo or sketch and prices to: Albert T. Miller, 2235 West Live Oak Dr. Los Angeles, California 90028.