



Rural-CAP

ACTION REPORTS



Mailing Address: Drawer 412 ECB

Telephone 279-2441

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

KOTZEBUE PROTESTS HEAD START CLOSURE

What Is It All About?—

Native Allotment Act Explained in Detail for Everyone's Information

What is the Native Allotment Act all about?

Native land allotments are 160 acre tracts of land which may be claimed by eligible Natives who make proper applications.

The Native allotment application or grant is often confused with the federal settlement of the Alaska Natives' aboriginal land claims. True, both the Native Allotment Act and the prospective land claims legislation will result in the confirmation of title to some land to Natives, but after Congressional action, this similarity will end.

The Native Allotment Act provides a PRESENT RIGHT for eligible Natives to acquire up to 160 acres of land for their individual use. This act has been in existence since 1906, but has NOT been widely publicized NOR used.

A Native allotment claim is based on actual personal use of a specific piece of land for a period of five years. It results in the grant of that specific land to the individual who used and occupied the land. In this respect it is a special version of the "homestead" laws.

A Native allotment claim requires an affirmative act on the part of the applicant. This means filing an application, proving prior use of the land, and staking the claimed area.

What is the difference between the Native Allotment Act and the land claims?

The Alaska land claims settlement is a piece of future legislation, not yet enacted. It will be designed to extinguish all Native aboriginal claims to the land now known as Alaska. Thus, it is based on community and cultural usage on a historic basis.

The land confirmed to the

Native people of Alaska by Congressional legislation will generally be in the form of group or village grants. Nothing affirmatively must be done by individual Natives to secure this grant.

All that is necessary, in the first instance, will be done by the United States Congress.

The important thing to remember is that The Native Allotment Act is something already existent and is in addition to the expected land claims settlement.

However, individual applications must be filed for the 160 acre land allotments and this must be done as soon as possible.

Who is involved in providing assistance for filing Native allotment applications.

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Alaska Legal Services, with specific endorsement of the Alaska Federation of Natives, have come together in a concerted effort to have as many Native allotments filed and certified as possible.

Personal contacts with prospective applicants under the allotment act is the only practical way to insure successful applications.

Rural CAP has thus offered the use of their regional and central staff as contacts with Native applicants at the rural level. The Bureau of Indian Affairs will furnish application forms, maps, and technical assistance. They hoped the result of this joint effort will be an increased concern on land-related matters and a large increase of Native applications being filed and certified from those eligible Natives.

In all cases, people filing should try to establish occupancy at least prior to December of 1968, the date of the beginning of the super land freeze.

Why is this announcement being made?

The purpose of this Native allotment drive is to inform all eligible Natives of their right to file and obtain certifications while the federal law is still in existence.

This purpose is dictated by a series of events which make the Native Allotment Act one of the most significant rights currently available to Native people. There are 55,000 Native people in Alaska, of which 20,000 are estimated to be eligible under the Native Allotment Act.

It was generally conceded that the final versions of the land claims bills previously introduced in Congress would repeal the Native Allotment Act of 1906. The land claims bills that were reported out of the Interior and Insular Affairs committees, specifically repealed the act.

This act was not specifically mentioned in the Federal Field Committee proposal, but the drafters of the legislation, indicated that the clear intent was to repeal the Native Allotment Act.

ONLY the Alaska Federation of Natives' bills to date, specifically retain this act. However, it seems there is little likelihood of enactment in the final form of a land claims bill.

Therefore, on the basis of the bills already filed and, on the temper of the United States Congress, it seems certain that if a land claims bill is passed this year, it MIGHT REPEAL the Native Allotment Act.

What about the land freeze?

If the land claims legislation is not passed in Congress this

State Fire Marshall Nixes Arctic Way of Closing Door Inward

The City of Kotzebue has protested the closing of their Head Start center by the State Fire Marshall. The Head Start center was closed because of minor violations of the fire code, including the fact that the fire escape door opens in and not out.

Elmer Armstrong, Mayor of Kotzebue noted that in the Arctic it is a necessity for doors to open in because of the problem of snow drifts which could prevent the door from opening at all if there were a fire.

John Shively, Executive Director of Rural CAP noted that the Kotzebue Head Start center was in one of the best buildings of any of the Head Start pro-

grams in the State.

He stated, "These programs have been running for five years and this is the first one to be shut down." Shively added, "The closing of the Kotzebue center points out the extreme importance of House Bill No. 279 which would provide \$100,000 through the Rural Development Agency for renovation of Head Start centers."

Shively also said that this Bill, introduced by Representative Martin Moore of Emmonak, is of major importance if we want the young children of rural Alaska to attend preschool in the most comfortable and safest setting possible.

year, it is imminently possible that the land freeze will be lifted by the end of the year. The lifting of the land freeze will allow the state to select its remaining 96 million acres of land under the Statehood Act.

Thus, most if not all of the land of value, either for commercial or subsistence purposes, in and around our villages will be taken from the grasp of potential Native applicants, and the Native Allotment Act will be rendered meaningless.

Can we still file allotments even though the freeze is on?

A recent Department of Interior decision forced a change in the Bureau of Land Management policy with regard to the processing of Native allotment applications filed during the super land freeze of 1968.

So, these three factors: (1) the expected repealing of the Native Allotment Act; (2) the lifting of the land freeze, if the land claims bill is not passed this year; and (3) the recent decision to accept Native allotment applications during the land freeze, combined with the

insufficient acreage now being talked about in the land claims legislation, come together to make an immediate and effective push on obtaining all potential Native allotment applications an immediate issue of paramount importance.

REMEMBER, every eligible Native individual has a lien on the land that we have been using and occupying for the past centuries. Our claims on our land are being litigated at our nation's highest court—the United States Congress.

Meanwhile, we have in the interim, a federal law of 1906, a provision to claim file, stake, and obtain certificates of ownership to 160 acres of land per individual.

If you think you are eligible, you are urged to act now. Remember, if you don't do it, it won't get done.

For further information on Native allotments, please call, write, or see your Rural CAP regional staff, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, or your Alaska Legal Services representative.

Dear Editor:—

Then Things Get A Little Worse

If you stop to think about it, every community, large or small, gains its sense of identity and purpose through the pages of its local newspaper.

If you want to find out anything or let other people know about some event, service or product, it's a pretty fair bet that the pages of your local newspaper can lend a hand; even ex-subscribers seem to think so.

A letter published in the Hayti, Missouri, Herald makes this point and illustrates, as the editor put it, "... one of the better days in the life of a weekly newspaper publisher."

The letter says, "Dear Editor: Please send me a free copy of

your newspaper containing the obituary of my aunt. Also publish the enclosed clipping of the marriage of my niece. And I wish you would mention in your columns, if it doesn't cost anything that I have two calves for sale and our church is having a chili supper Friday night and the tickets are only 75 cents. As my subscription has expired, please stop the paper as I can't waste money on newspapers. — Ex-subscriber."

About the only comment that can be made here is that some days just start out bad and once in a while they don't get any better!

Unique Training—

Disaster Preparedness Training At RCA Alaska Communications

A unique "disaster-preparedness" training exercise is taking place at RCA Alaska Communications, Inc., in Anchorage.

Management and non-operator personnel are learning to be operators at the long-distance switchboard.

Overseeing the training are Gwen Christianson, Training Group Chief Operator and Rose Bartlam, RCA Alascom Anchorage Chief Operator.

Personnel trained in Anchorage can be sent to augment "disaster" teams at the RCA Alascom toll centers in Ketchikan, Juneau and Fairbanks as well as Anchorage in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

state could be handled by these specially trained teams during any emergency.

RCA Alascom sources estimate entire toll operation of the

JOHN B. COGHILL

UNION OIL DISTRIBUTOR

for Tanana and Yukon River Villages also in the Nenana, Clear, Healy areas

P.O. BOX 268, NENANA, ALASKA

