

"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 Comment—

Arctic Slope's "ASNA," The Vigorous Fighter

"... You are getting paid faster—perhaps one hundred years faster—because the Arctic Slope Native Association said—No—No—No!"

The above quotation is from the speech of the president of the Arctic Slope Native Association, Joseph Upicksoun, he gave during the Alaska Federation of Natives' conference in Anchorage recently.

The leaders of ASNA, right from the start, have been strong, vigorous spokesmen for their people on the Arctic Slope. Starting some seven years ago, the Hugh Nicholls, Sam Taalak, Charlie Edwardsons and Joe Upicksouns have been vociferous in the fight for justice for their people. The main basis for their fight was land. They wanted enough of it for Alaska natives and perhaps a little more for the Arctic Slope because the hunting patterns of the slope people covered more distances than in some other areas. This, we think, is a reasonable demand.

It becomes even more reasonable with the following quote from the same speech of Joe Upicksoun:

"... There is still another injury you have hit us with, and that is the cost of living difference. Using Seattle as a base of 100, construction costs at Ketchikan are 125—at Anchorage around 160—at Bethel 245—and at Barrow—365!"

That is a staggering difference. Something should be done about it. We have, editorially, pointed this out in the past—that freight rates and other things be considered because if the Arctic Slope was given equal amounts as other areas, the drain on the capital would be much more than in other areas. This should surely be considered. Otherwise, Arctic Slope is going to be shortchanged.

The claims bill as it came out from the joint conference committee, and which was signed by President Nixon into law on December 18, 1971, has turned out to be rather unkind to the North Slope people. The pattern of the fight for the equitable settlement of the claims was many times spearheaded by ASNA. The meat of the sentiment for a certain stand was always there. In fact, other organizations that make up the AFN have learned some real basics from the arguments of ASNA leaders. Some presentations by the Slope leaders were not always to the liking of others, including ourselves, but the logic was always there.

We think that some corrective measures should be forthcoming in the way of amendments to the bill starting as early as January when Congress reconvenes. In order that a strong attempt can be made for amendments to the bill starting as early as January when Congress reconvenes.

In order that a strong attempt can be made for amendments, the organizations in the AFN should get behind ASNA if that organization wishes to push for amendments for the good of the Arctic Slope Eskimos. After all, those northernmost people have furnished some of the real aims of the equitable solution to the Alaska Native Land Claims.

Fortunate You Drove Carefully

During the past year, did you make a serious effort to obey Alaska traffic laws and to drive as safely and carefully as you knew how?

If so, that is one of the reasons why you are now looking forward to another new and exciting year of your life.

Letters from Here and There

The Catholic University
of America
Washington, D.C. 20017

Dear Editor:

For the past few years I have enjoyed the friendship of many native leaders when they have been in Washington, D.C. and even worked for a couple of months this summer as a volunteer helping the AFN any way that I could. I have usually tried hard to mind my own business and not to impose my ideas on others but that is not easy for a teacher to do. I understand that there is a great deal of confusion about this bill right now and for what they are worth I would like to toss in a few ideas which have arisen from my personal concern over the ultimate consequences of this bill on the future happiness of the native people.

I think that anyone who has been to Washington D.C. knows what happens when a minority is forced to immigrate to the cities. Not only are the streets unsafe but many of these poor people are miserable. I don't like to see that happen to Alaskan natives to the cities either but it is already rapidly coming about and the projects I have seen in Anchorage closely resemble the slums down here. I personally know that many of these people had to move to the city because they became dependent upon cash and they couldn't afford to live in the village where prices were too high and there was too little work. I believe that anyone who thinks about the matter for a few minutes will realize that pumping money into the villages will increase the dependence that many have on cash and may actually cause prices to go higher there. This will in turn result in many moving to the city where they will certainly have problems both economic and social.

Some say this can't be helped but I won't buy that. It can be if native leaders are willing to deliver themselves from the hands of the lawyers and invest in the future of their people. It is so simple; just reduce the cost of living in the villages by subsidizing the cost of transportation of goods to the village. They do that with farm goods down here and in army PX's all over the world. Alaskan natives have really been paying an enormous tax for not having roads and this puts their economic base way out of line with the rest of society. Make the price of bread and stove oil and canned goods the same as in the city and the people will stay in the village. All other programs of welfare, housing and starting industries will cost less and have a better chance of working. It will not put hot money into peoples hands nor substitute for incentive to earn. This plan would work in a village, a region or the entire state. The native people expect to get something for their land and they are going to be disappointed now and mad as hell later on with their leaders and the government if they don't deliver.

Sincerely,
James H. McAlear, Assoc. Prof.

Box 912
Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
December 22, 1971

Dear Sir:

Now that the Alaska Native Land Claims bill has passed and much of the furor surrounding it has died down, I'd like to comment on something that, while only incidental to the Claims bill, is of direct concern to Alaskans with regard to our Congressional delegation.

A couple of weeks prior to passage of the bill, I became concerned about some provisions of the bill as reported in the press. Accordingly, I attempted to call the various members of the delegation to express my concern. With the time difference between Ketchikan and Washington, they were not in their offices so I tried to reach them at home. Imagine my dismay when the operator told me Senator Stevens had a home phone but had requested that the number not be released. The same was true of Senator Gravel. Only Representative Begich had a listed home telephone and I did talk to him at some length.

We in Alaska have always been proud of the fact that, due to our small population, our public officials were readily accessible to the Alaskan man on the street with problems or opinions to talk about. Most state officials are still accessible by telephone and Congressman Begich, in the true Alaskan tradition, seemed most happy to receive my call. But what about Stevens and Gravel? Surely the number of Alaskans who are willing to pay for a call to Washington are not so many that they would become a problem. Or is it that they feel they are somewhat "above" the man on the street or previous office holders? Let us hope other public officials don't begin to follow their example and try to isolate themselves from the public.

Yours truly,
Warren L. Bienek

ANICA BOARD RESOLUTION

ALASKA NATIVE INDUSTRIES
COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION, INC.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

RESOLUTION 71-12 NORTH STAR III

WHEREAS; the Bureau of Indian Affairs, has operated supply vessels serving the Native coastal villages of Alaska for over fifty (50) years; and

WHEREAS; the NORTH STAR III is still providing reliable delivery of supplies to these same villages; and

WHEREAS; the NORTH STAR has always guaranteed delivery of supplies to Alaska Native villages irrespective of weather conditions, ice, extended delays or other adversity; and

WHEREAS; the NORTH STAR also provides many extra services to the Native villages, including bulk tank installation, refrigeration and electrical repair, tractor use; and

WHEREAS; the captain and crew of the NORTH STAR have year after year shown a deep concern and commitment to their responsibility of supplying the Alaskan coastal Native villages; and

WHEREAS; the NORTH STAR has been a self-supporting operation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

WHEREAS; there have from time to time been attempts by politicians, commercial carriers and others to stop the NORTH STAR from serving these villages and Native people; and

WHEREAS; the Native people served by the villages have never been consulted during these attempts to get the NORTH STAR removed as a carrier; and

WHEREAS; in 1971 there are new attempts being made by government agencies, individuals, and commercial carriers to replace the NORTH STAR with commercial carriers who have exhibited no previous commitment to the Native people of Alaska; and

WHEREAS; the loss of the NORTH STAR could create undue hardship on people already at the bottom of the poverty ladder; and

WHEREAS; the Native people of Alaska again find themselves the subject of decisions and actions which they are not offered a voice in;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Board of Directors of Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association, Inc. (ANICA, Inc.) a self-supporting, Alaska Native organization representing numerous coastal villages served by the NORTH STAR, does not protest any action to eliminate the services of the BIA vessel NORTH STAR III without the involvement and consent of the coastal Native people; and

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED: that ANICA, INC. contact all effected villages, councils, representatives and managers to solicit their assistance in protesting this potentially disastrous action against the Native people of Alaska.

/s/ Paul K. Jones
President
Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association, Inc.

CERTIFICATION

I, the undersigned, Secretary-Treasurer of the Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association, Incorporated, do hereby certify that the Executive Committee of the Board of the Association is composed of five (5) members of whom three (3), constituting a quorum, were present at a meeting thereof duly and regularly called, notice, convened and held on November 12, 1971; that the resolution was duly adopted by the affirmative vote of three (3) members; and that it has not been rescinded or amended in any way.

/s/ Robert M. Hilts
Secretary-Treasurer
Alaska Native Industries Cooperative Association, Inc.