

The proposal that up to 50,000 acres be granted each village only amounts to some 8,750,000 acres, a mere pittance compared to the remainder of the land that will benefit not only Alaskans but others in our great Nation as well. For the products of these lands will, as they already have done, contribute much to our abundant gross national product. And remember, we haven't even mentioned the resources to be extracted from the sea that surrounds us.

So our position is not extreme. Nor are our requests unreasonable. They have been misinterpreted, misunderstood, and misrepresented, usually by special-interest groups that are not even Alaskan-based.

One additional objection that is a major one as far as the native people are concerned is the matter of the proposed Alaska Native Commission and the continuing trusteeship by the Interior Department, especially if it is assigned to the Bureau of Indian Affairs. We oppose unqualifiedly any efforts to create another bureaucracy, with the Department to administer, oversee, or effect judgments concerning Alaska's native people. A Presidential autonomous commission reporting directly to that Office or an independent agency reporting to the Congress would be far more acceptable. We would hope that the Congress consents to having the commission weighted favorably to Alaskans and predominantly native in membership. Operational headquarters, we urge, should be located in Alaska.

The proposed trusteeship that the Department of Interior wishes to continue—under what principle we do not know, except perhaps that they have failed in their other trusteeships in the lower 48 and wish to continue Alaskan natives in the same vein—may have its points. However, they are not clear at this point in time. We feel there are existing institutions that can carry this responsibility far better than the Department of the Interior.

Our concept of statewide regional corporations acting on behalf of their native membership can more than adequately fill this role.

Perhaps some of the things we propose are daring. Perhaps they haven't been tried before or, at best, if tried, they were doomed to failure because of the inattention of those responsible for their management. But these are new approaches and these are new times and the time for bold new approaches is now. We can only say that the Congress must face this issue this session.

One additional bill, S. 3586, H.R. 17128, has been introduced by the administration. We see little difference between it and the first administration proposal in S. 1964. As a matter of fact, it was S. 1964 and the resulting furor it created that caused Mr. Udall to make his famous flying trip to Alaska in November 1967. It was at the urging of Mr. Udall, as the record will show, that Alaska's State administration formed the Native Land Claims Task Force. To this group fell the task of obtaining agreement between basic native and State issues. It was also to this group that Mr. Udall appointed a personal representative. It cannot be said, at this point in time, that the executive didn't know what was going on or what was being proposed.

We believe that two additional members of that task force should have been invited to sit in—the chairmen of the House and Senate Committees on Interior and Insular Affairs, or at the very least their designated representatives. Perhaps we wouldn't be here today justifying our need for equity had that been done, for we and the State were