

Task Force that was created by the Governor last year, and a recently appointed member of the National Council on Indian Opportunity which President Johnson established and the Vice President chairs.

I am submitting for the record a copy of a report by the Governor's Task Force on Native Land Claims. This report was drafted following lengthy work sessions by a tripartite group consisting of the natives of Alaska, the State, and Interior Department officials. We attempted to seek a solution acceptable to the major parties concerned in the settlement of the Alaska land issue.

This is my first appearance before this subcommittee, and I doubt that this committee has ever before considered legislation concerning the land claims of the Alaska Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts on a statewide basis. You have undoubtedly seen and heard many delegations of Indian tribal groups from the lower 48, but we want to make clear that the situation with the Alaska natives is quite unlike that of recognized tribal entities you are accustomed to dealing with.

1. Alaska natives are not recognized as a single tribe by Congress or the Interior Department.

2. We have only recently organized regional associations and a statewide federation. These associations grew as a result of the land issue and a desire by the native people to improve their economic and social condition, but these organizations are not recognized in law.

3. Only a very small percentage of Alaska's natives reside on few reservations.

4. The major Alaska native groups, the Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut, are culturally and linguistically distinct.

But we all basically agree on the major objectives in the land settlement.

You may wonder—during the course of the testimony—why you hear so much about the social and economic conditions of the Eskimo, Indian, and Aleuts. We feel that a settlement of the land issue is a major part of the problems we face and, as soon as this problem is generously disposed of, we can begin concentration on educational and economic improvement of the 53,000 Alaska natives residing in Alaska.

Here, in a nutshell, is a picture of the Alaska Eskimo, Indian, and Aleut.

One-fifth, or 53,000, of Alaska's population is native. We live in scattered villages throughout Alaska's 586,400 square miles. Seventy percent of the native population live in 178 villages. We have a subsisting economy of hunting and fishing, supplemented by cash incomes earned on various jobs during the short summer season. Seven out of 10 adult natives have only an elementary education. We have a rapid rate of increase—29 per 1,000 annually—which is twice that of the United States. The median native age is 16.3, and 80 percent are less than 35 years of age. The median family size is 5.3. One-half of the native work force of 16,000 to 17,000 is jobless most of the year. The accrued death rate is twice that of white Alaskans, 9.6 deaths per 1,000. The cost of goods in the remote parts of Alaska is 74 percent above Seattle costs. Most Alaska native families earn less than \$2,000 annually.

The picture is bleak, and there is a definite trend indicating that things are not improving. I am fearful that the future of Alaska's natives will be a frustrating and hopeless one, if Alaska continues to