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CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska

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JOHN BORBRIDGE, Jr.
President & General Manager

Re: Text of Speech presented
before the Annual Convention
of the Alaska State Chamber
of Commerce in Ketchikan, Alaska
on October 3, 1969

By: John Borbridge, Jr., President & General Manager
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska
and
1st Vice President of the Alaska Federation of Natives

ALASKA NATIVE LAND RIGHTS

THE ALASKA NATIVES ARE ASSERTING THEIR RIGHTS TO LANDS, USED,
OCCUPIED, AND CLAIMED BY THEM AND THEIR ANCESTORS SINCE TIME
IMMEMORIAL. DESPITE EXPLICIT GUARANTEES WHICH PURPORTED TO
PRESERVE THE DEFINITION OF THESE LAND RIGHTS FOR LATER CONGRESS-
IONAL ACTION, THE INDIANS, ESKIMOS AND ALEUTS OF ALASKA HAVE SEEN
THEIR RESOURCES EXPLOITED AND THEIR LANDS TAKEN. MANY OF THEM
HAVE BEEN FORCED TO LIVE WITHOUT THE ASSURANCE OF FORMAL TITLE TO
LANDS FROM WHICH THEY WRESTED A LIVING - AS DID THEIR ANCESTORS
BEFORE THEM. THEY HAVE OBSERVED LAWS SO ADMINISTERED SO AS TO
CAUSE THEM TO LOSE THEIR LANDS IN WAYS THAT THEY DID NOT UNDERSTAND,
SINCE THEY ASSUMED THAT THE LAWS WERE FOR THEIR PROTECTION TOO.
BUT THEY HAD CONFIDENCE AND THEY BELIEVED, AND THEY WAITED.

THE EXCITEMENT OF STATEHOOD CAME TO ALASKA AND EVERYONE JOINED IN
MAKING IT POSSIBLE FOR OUR GREAT LAND TO JOIN THE UNION OF STATES.

Charles Nelson, First Vice President, Ketchikan
Richard Kito, Vice President, Petersburg
Roger Lang, Vice President, Sitka

Kenneth Leask, Vice President, Seattle
Harvey Marvin, Treasurer, Sitka
James Thomas, Secretary, Yakutat

Tlingit & Haida Indians of Alaska