

The value of the land which the Natives used and occupied -- or, to put it differently, the value of the land to which they hold aboriginal title -- staggers the imagination. In September of this year, bonus bids will be offered by oil explorers for the right to search for oil on 431,104 acres of land. "Notice to the Petroleum Industry," State of Alaska - Department of Natural Resources, July 10, 1969. It is anticipated that these bids will bring in as much as a billion dollars. Wall Street Journal, May 2, 1969, p. 34. All of these oil-rich lands are lands which the Arctic Slope Eskimos have used and occupied for as long as man can recall. Indeed, in the course of oil exploration activities Eskimo graves have been literally torn apart on the Northern Slope, and lands used for grazing have been despoiled by rubbish heaps.

Without speculating as to what the bonus bids will bring, we know that plans have been made to construct a \$900 million pipeline to transport oil from the Northern Slope to Valdez. Wall Street Journal, May 2, 1969, p. 34.

The September bids only involve a portion of the lands in a limited geographical area. When we consider the oil throughout the lands claimed by the Natives, the timber, the hard minerals, the potential sources of hydro-electric power, the fishing, and the resources which have yet to be explored, it becomes clear that the value of the lands historically used by the Natives is, at the least, in the tens of billions of dollars.