

WHY DISCRIMINATE?

There is a law in Alaska which forbids the giving, bartering, or selling of intoxicating liquor to Indians. If a white man gives, barters or sells the liquor to a native, the law is broken and the man of the lighter skin becomes a transgressor. If a native secures the liquor and himself gives, barters, or sells it to one of his own people, he is the law breaker, without regard to race, or color the man or woman who breaks the law is surely the criminal. Lately some of our Alaska newspapers have been much alarmed lest some poor white man be convicted on a charge of disposing of liquor to thirsty natives on evidence furnished by the testimony of Alaska Indians. It seems strange that our news writers set themselves up as more competent to judge as to the value of testimony than are judges and juryman.

The Alaska natives though law abiding and self-supporting have withheld from them many of the rights of citizenship which they are capable of possessing and enjoying. The whites have taken much that belong to the natives in matters of property rights and means of livelihood.

Now it seems that some of our news dispensers would wish to take away their rights to testify, or wholly to discredit their testimony, against men who are breaking the laws that the white man himself made for the natives, protection.

It is possible of course that we have misunderstood those who have so ardently defended the poor friendless, innocent white man who, though inoffensive, guiltless, and harmless, has, while moving along the peaceful, calm and even tenor of his way, been suddenly apprehended and rudely taken into custody by the strong arm of the law. It may

be that these writers were only serving notice upon the judges and juries before whom such cases have resulted in convictions, or before whom such cases may yet come, that they are wholly lacking in good judgment and are without the required knowledge to discriminate in the least between testimony and evidence. In either case it is to be feared that the writers are slightly biased in their opinions. We believe in a square deal for the white man and we believe in a square deal for the Indian also. If there is evidence that a native's testimony is false or that it is true, such testimony should surely be treated in exactly the same way as that of a similar testimony from a white man.

The writer's limited experience leads him to believe that the majority of judges and juries are fully as capable of placing proper valuation on testimony offered before them as is a newspaper reporter in the courtroom or the editor in his sanctum. Why try to influence public opinion against a people when they are proving themselves of such worth to our territory, especially economically and industrially? We are glad that some of our papers endeavor to influence public opinion to deal fairly with men—to treat the false and criminal justly, be they of one color or another, or to recognize honesty, truth, purity, strength of character and manhood whether it comes in colors of red, or white, or brown, or black,—The Thlinget.

David Churchill who was in the fourth B class, is now in the fourth A class and is doing fine.

Margaret Desautel is expecting her cousin George to visit her for a short time from Republic, Wash.