

AFN/HAD Represents Native Interests at Meet

The Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., Health Affairs Division represented Native interests at the Alaska State Nutrition Committee meeting on May 28, 1975, at the Anchorage Westward Hotel. The Committee will affect legislation concerning the growth, processing, and consumption of food products with a primary goal of better human nutrition.

The meeting was an opportunity for various groups to identify some nutrition problems, services, and programs and suggest priorities for action.

The Committee meeting was chaired by Winston Osborne. Discussions were led by Marguerite Stetson from the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Alaska and Audrey Cross visiting nutritionist from California.

The Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. was represented by Jane Hillyer. Others in attendance included representatives from both the Federal and State agriculture components, Indian Health Service, Bureau of Indian

Affairs, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, nutrition-related professional associations, and educational institutions.

In order to examine the particular interests Native people would have in the stated goals at the Alaska State Nutrition Committee, a position paper for Native people is in the process of being developed.

The first draft is being prepared by Thomas Ongtooguk from Norton Sound and Jane Hillyer from the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. The paper will be circulated to all the Regions so that unique contributions from each Region can be made.

The paper will be the basis for contributions to be made in future hearings and meetings.

Food collection and consumption are an integral part of our daily lives. An alternation in food-related habits affects our relationship to ourselves, others, and the environment.

Certain Federal, State, and commercial incentives exist in our

communities and alter our way of life. It is necessary to become aware of these incentives and to exercise true choice in selecting the direction our actions take us.

Some examples of incentives are: food stamps, prices, taxes, USDA food processing regulations, etc. Stores will stock items in demand. Your dollar is a vote for a product or non-product, a locally or "outside" produced item, a commercially based or individually collected activity, etc.

Health and dental disease is related to nutritional value of diet. Misplaced value on modern products, e.g. candy, etc., detracts from nutritionally valuable traditional diet.

All comments are welcome. Write to your local or Regional Health Authority or to Jane Hillyer, Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., Health Affairs Division, 670 West Fireweed Lane, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.