

CLAIMS ACREAGE DISAPPOINTS

AFN to Discuss This And Other Points at Juneau Board Meeting

"A real stunner" was one Native leader's assessment of the land provisions reportedly in the Senate Interior Committee land claims bill.

Other native leaders expressed similar disappointment in that portion of the bill.

According to unofficial reports, the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs committee has agreed upon a bill that provides:

1. \$500 million over a 25 year period
2. a 2 percent royalty on state and federal revenues from oil and gas leases for 13 years or until the amount is \$500 million

3. about 7 million acres of land of which 3.6 million acres would be granted in fee simple to native villages.

First vice-president of the Alaska Federation of Natives,

BULLETIN: The land claims bill was reported out of the Senate committee on Interior and Insular Affairs Tuesday.

John Borbridge, said, "the land provisions have been a stunning thing."

"From 40 to 4," he added. The AFN had requested that the natives be given 40 million acres of land.

Also, Willie Hensley, past executive director, said he felt very strongly that the land provisions reported in the newspapers have got to be improved. He stressed that he was merely expressing a personal opinion and not that of the AFN.

The Board of Directors of the native organization has called a meeting for April 19 and 20 at Juneau to plan its strategy and

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next move. The meeting will probably be held in the Alaska Native Brotherhood hall.

Other than land provisions, other parts of the bill seemed to draw a favorable response from the Native leaders.

"It is much better than I expected," Hensley said.

"Financially, when you compare it to all the settlements the Indians have ever gotten, I think it is quite an achievement," he added.

He expressed disappointment that a provision to give the Natives choice lands on the North Slope was killed. The measure would have given the Natives the right to select one million acres with full mineral rights, half of which could be north of the Brooks Range.

After the final bill officially comes out of the Senate committee it must then go to the Senate floor and eventually to a vote of the full Senate. Afterward, it will make its way through the House of Representatives and later through a House-Senate compromise committee.

AFN lobbyists for the past months have been working with

the Senate committee. When the bill makes it to the Senate floor, they will once again have the opportunity to work for amendments, this time through the individual Senators.

Hopson predicted that there would be quite a bit of reaction to the bill when the board gets together in Juneau.

"I think," he added, "that this is our last opportunity as a group here in Alaska to suggest alternatives."

It has been reported, he explained that the Senate bill will be quickly pushed through the House with few changes.

In the Senate, Borbridge said, he thought there would be some efforts to reduce the current terms of the settlement.

However, he added that the prestige of Sen. Henry Jackson would probably suffice to withstand such efforts. Jackson is the chairman of the Senate committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

The dilemma now facing the board of directors, the first vice-president said, is: "how do we select the figure which is going to be less than 40 million acres."

"We have to wage the fight for the things that our constituents want," and at the same time AFN leaders are told that their friends in the Congress will not help them unless they come down from the 40 million acres.

The decision is going to be difficult, he added.