

# Outline of Claims History--

## *What Does Land Claims Mean ? Probe To Find Out*

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**OLONGAPO CITY, R.P. —**

Many of our people live in the cities. Our top administrators are acquainted with the world of business. Many of our people prefer to live in villages. Most who live in cities must take refuge in villages at some time during the year to preserve their sanity. And some never care to leave the cities.

How are we to reconcile these varied life styles, and apply the proceeds of the settlement to the wishes of people with different values and changing values? Land is life, we said when we fought for the land. Are we to keep to that philosophy or modify it? So, we do have guidelines, possibly mandates. But are they really what we think they are? Are they what most of our people want? What are they anyway?

Am I asking too many questions? I hope some people

think so. We have many fine leaders, many of whom I didn't credit during my series for T.T. But we also have a few leaders who have always been afraid of questions and would probably curse me for attempting to stir up their constituents.

We cannot afford to relax and "quietly explore" alternatives. The settlement is a collective heritage for all Alaska Native people. Before, I believe that there may have been justification for the use of a small hard-core leadership to think out strategy, because so very few people gave the claims a chance or wanted to become involved.

Unfortunately, and that is too weak a word, many people were never reached until after the act was signed. But now, everyone should be reached and informed, and should ask questions of corporate executives and officers, of the people who authored the legislation, and of those who have a responsibility to carry out the intent of the

act.

The settlement is a reality but it is not firmed, and it isn't corrupted into stuffy institutions. Not yet, at any rate. Every pertinent question that anyone can contrive should be asked, an answers should be expected. The settlement is land and money, but it is also structures.

It is corporate structures, and government structures, and even disguised structures. But it is structures which are young, and which are better understood when probed and questioned and shook up while they are young. That is like making sure everything works before your warranty expires.

I think that the best way to do this is for anybody who doesn't understand what is happening to bare their ignorance in front of the regionals and the federal government and everybody. First, be aware that you are a beneficiary, an Alaska

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Native in the settlement. As such, you have a legal right to make inquiries and participate in decisions for use of proceeds under the act. Use this right to ask questions and make sure that you know what you will be deciding.

Continue to probe until you understand the settlement. This will remain a long process for me, since there is still much that I don't understand. I hope that it will also be a long process for many others.