

Koniag asks investigation

From our Anchorage Bureau

Koniag, Inc., regional Native corporation for the Kodiak Island area, has requested an investigation into the method of selecting federal juries in Alaska. Karl Armstrong, secretary of the corporation, said Koniag was "shocked and dismayed" by the findings of the Rowan Group report on racial prejudice in Anchorage. The Rowan Group, hired by attorneys of Kodiak Natives charged with fraud in setting up the village of Shuyak, reported earlier this month that it would be "very difficult" to gather a fair jury to hear the case.

"We are asking that the Chief Justice of the United States cause an investigation by the Justice Department of the federal jury selection system in Alaska, charging that the present system of jury selection deprives Alaska Natives of their human rights and civil liberties."

Armstrong said Koniag has asked for investigations by the Justice Department, congressional judiciary committees, and the judicial committees of the

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State Legislature.

The letter to Chief Justice Warren Burger, copies of which were also sent to the State Human Rights Commission, American Civil Liberties Union and the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, states that the Rowan Report "reveals a shocking degree of prejudice against Alaska Natives in the Anchorage area. When we learned that the Federal Court System jury selection procedure systemitically and methodially results in the elimination of Alaska Natives as jurors we were, and are, shocked and dismayed."

Koniag described the situation as "shameful and frightening."