



LEADERS PONDER HUMOROUS NOTE—Faced with the weighty task of placing AFN land settlement proposals in final bill form for presentation, the Alaska Federation of Natives Board of Directors find relief in a moment of laughter. The

native leadership was still meeting Thursday evening in Anchorage with Goldberg associates Ed Weinberg and Peter Berle to consider proposed AFN legislation.

—THOMAS RICHARDS, JR. Photograph

AFN Executive Board Makes Final Consideration on Bill

The Executive Board of the Alaska Federation of Natives, in meetings beginning Wednesday, started final consideration of its proposed land claims settlement bill.

The bill, largely authored by Association on American Indian Affairs attorney Arthur Lazarus, and reviewed by Goldberg associates Weinberg and Peter Berle, outlined five settlement proposals stemming from AFN policy decisions.

The proposals which would be enacted under the bill are described as follows:

(1) a grant to each village "... of title site and additional lands adjacent thereto for community use and expansion;"

(2) the organization of native corporations and, "in order to promote economic self-sufficiency as well as enhance the Native's present and future welfare, for a transfer of lands and rights to such corporations;"

(3) "a payment of \$500 million, and retention of an overriding royalty, as compensation for Native lands and interests in lands taken in the past..."

(4) authority for individual

natives to acquire ownership "of lands which they use and occupy for homes, businesses, fishing, hunting and trapping camps, and for reindeer husbandry;" and, (5) protection of native subsistence biotic resources.

In line-by-line examination of

the bill, the native leadership scrutinized both the language and intent of the bill's provisions. One of the most closely regarded provisions of the AFN bill would organize native corporations on three levels to invest

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the proceeds of the settlement.

At the top of the structure, a statewide corporation would supervise the distribution of the funds. This Alaska Native Development Corporation would also be responsible for providing expert advice to the regional and village corporations.

Not more than twelve regional corporations would be established under the bill. The regional corporations would be organized in geographic divisions similar to existing regional native associations.

On the base of the structure, native villages would organize in geographic divisions similar to existing regional native associations.

On the base of the structure, native villages would organize and administer village corporations. The villages would receive the bulk of settlement funds, amounting to seventy-five per cent of the \$500 million requested by AFN.

The regional corporations would receive 20 per cent of funds, while the statewide corporations would only receive five per cent.

Regional and village corporations would issue stock to their native members and would receive funds on a per capita basis. The state-wide corporation's board of directors, the bill provides, will consist of representatives from the regional corporations.

Responsible for the initial organization required, the Alaska Native Commission would be established with the enactment of the bill.

One of the Commission's prime duties, as specified in the AFN proposed legislation, is the preparation of a "final membership roll of Alaskan Natives and a roster of Native villages."

Any protests, procedural considerations, and questions of eligibility concerning the roll will be decided by the Commission. It is

also empowered to review annual budgets and articles of incorporation of the corporations.

In addition, the Commission will determine regional boundaries, land disputes, and review land transactions.

The five members of the Commission would be initially appointed by the President, with the approval of the Senate, for staggered one to five year terms. Three of the appointees must be Alaskan natives.

Another provision of the bill requires the federal government to pay to the Alaska Native Compensation Fund, upon passage, an initial payment of \$100 million "as partial compensation to the Natives of Alaska for lands and interests in lands taken in the past to which their rights and

claims are extinguished by this Act."

An additional \$50 million each year of an eight year period would be deposited in the Fund. An interest rate of 4 per cent per annum will be placed on the annual payments.

By the Thursday afternoon session, the AFN Board had considered nearly half of the sixty-five page document. AFN President Emil Notti estimated yesterday that consideration of the AFN proposed legislation would continue late Thursday evening.

Still to be discussed are provisions concerning disposition of lands granted to natives under the act, the revenue-sharing concept, and the relationship of the village corporations to the overall structure.