

# Wright's Wildwood Conference

## *Old Alaska Federation of Natives Is Dissolved: Hensley*

By JOYCE ZIMMERSCHIED

Controversy flared again over the status of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) in the wake of Don Wright's assembly at Wildwood last weekend. One of the strongest critics was AFN President Willie Hensley.

Hensley, elected to the post in September when Wright was removed from it, felt that there wasn't really an issue at hand.

People feel, he said, that there is only one AFN, which is the case in my opinion."

He added that, before September's convention in Anchorage, the general feeling was that "there was not going to be any problem concerning the old association."

Replaced by AFN, Inc., the former association was dissolved during the convention. It was exchanged in favor of the present system, currently being organized along the lines of the 12-region structure. This structure, Hensley noted, will assure representation for all regional and village corporations and individual Alaskan Natives.

Problems arose when Wright tried to recess the Anchorage convention and it would not recess, said Hensley. It was at this time that Wright was removed from the AFN presidency.

About Wright's actions in "reconvening" the convention near Kenai, Hensley said, "The old association is dissolved. He is acting purely as an individual."

And he criticized Wright sharply for "trying to do so under the colors of the AFN."

A group of between 35 and 50 people, the number reported attending the Wildwood meeting, is not any kind of a convention, he said. None were chosen by any regions or corporations, and all were acting as private individuals, he added.

# Hensley Hits Wright...

(Continued from page 1)

"As far as I was concerned, the real problem is that the regions, who have the money, did not want to support "an organization that was losing money," he said.

That the situation had gotten much better in recent months he backed up by saying that debts were being paid off and pressure on the AFN lessened.

The debts, accumulated during the fight for the land claims bill passage, are another bone of contention. Money acquired from corporations, banks and other sources totaled almost \$700,000. Wright has said that he plans to file a suit against AFN, Inc., if the bills are not paid.

"He knows absolutely nothing about what's happening to the debt," was Hensley's reaction to Wright's statement. Saying that the regions were sending in money for payment of the debts, he predicted that the programs now set up would survive.

With a check for over

\$49,000 received this week from the Bristol Bay Native Corporation, money sent in from the regions amounts to approximately \$108,000. Koniag, Inc. has sent about \$24,000, the Aleut corporation \$23,000 and AHTNA corporation close to \$10,000. This and other money is being used, said Hensley, to pay outstanding debts.

"We want to try to get all indebtedness paid off and start off with a clean slate for the new year, or at least not far into the year," explained Hensley.

Concerning Wright's actions, he called on him to "quit confusing our people." He also said Wright is doing a tremendous disservice to Alaska Natives by calling a convention for a non-existent organization that was dissolved by its own members.

He cited a need for unity among all Alaskans as a major reason for wanting Wright to "stop playing games with Alaska Native people."