

**Favor S.2650—**

# **Tlingit Leaders Hit Borbridge**

**ANCHORAGE**—Two Anchorage Tlingit Indians sharply criticized recent statements of John Borbridge, Jr., president and general manager of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska, for what they called "the real possibility of his misrepresenting the Tlingit and Haida people."

The two, Byron Mallott and Robert Willard, referred to an April 2 front-page article of the Anchorage Daily News, in which Borbridge stated that he supported a Tlingit-Haida appropriations measure sponsored by Senator Ted Stevens.

Borbridge said Monday "he would accept some bureaucratic regulation over his tribes' finances in return for prompt release of a two-year-old Government debt of \$7 million."

"We favor S. 2650 which authorizes release of the \$7 million to the Tlingits and Haidas with no Governmental regulation (and was introduced by Senator Mike Gravel, D-Alaska)" Mallott and Willard said. "However, the ultimate decision rightfully belongs to the Tlingit and Haida people, represented by the Central council which comprises over 50 delegates from 18 communities."

The Stevens bill (S.2628) provides for release of the 1968 Court of Claims Judgment Award, expenditures of which are subject to the approval of the Secretary of Interior, a traditional Congressional method of dealing with Indian tribal settlements.

"I understand that removal of the Secretarial overview would be a departure from the traditional way of doing things," Willard said. "So is a legislative settlement of Native rights to the

land."

He reiterated that "the ultimate decision belongs to the Tlingit and Haida people" as a matter of right, and stated that he would put the question to the full Central Council when it meets in Anchorage in mid-April and that he would abide by the will of the majority.

Mallott said, "It is unfortunate that this statement is made necessary; however, Mr. Borbridge has seen fit to establish Tlingit-Haida policy by public pronouncement, thereby necessitating a public response to an issue that should have really been decided with calm deliberation by the Tlingit-Haida people prior to any public statement."

"Indian people nationwide have consistently pointed to provisions for secretarial control in Indian programs as singularly abhorrent. For the Tlingit-Haida people to accept such a provision without significant protest simply for the sake of expediency would be revealing of a real lack of the courage of conviction."

"This cannot be the case. I cannot believe that to legitimately protest such a provision would endanger passage of the appropriations bill; and to blandly state that the Tlingit-Haida people will accept secretarial control, although in principle we oppose it, just doesn't set well with me."

Willard has written to Senator George S. McGovern, D-S.Dak., Chairman of the Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, and before whose Committee the Tlingit and Haida distribution bills are pending, asking a delay of Committee action so the Central Council can have an opportunity to express its feeling.