

Event was jovial, somber

The days, weeks, months and years of dispute on 7i since the passage of the Claims Act showed itself in the joking and horseplay that went on in the grey-walled board room in the CIRI headquarters.

Many of the men who were to sign the document had come from a dinner of salmon, reindeer stew and corn held to raise money for the subsistence effort.

As they trickled into the board room at about 9 p.m. the air was expectant and somewhat nervous.

According to Byron Mallott, who chaired a day-long meeting of the 7i negotiators, "I wasn't really certain until I walked in that room that there would be a signing. All we said when we left at six o'clock was 'I hope someone is here at nine o'clock.'"

By 9:15 p.m. most of the corporations were represented

but Arctic Slope Regional Corp. had not arrived.

Jokes started about a boycott but then ASRC vice-president Larry Dinneen and ASRC Chairman Edward Hopson Jr. walked quietly in.

But then, a computer problem delayed the glory of the moment.

The 7i document was really a piece of computer tape which had to be fed into a computer which then printed out each page. That computer terminal broke down and the operators had problems fixing it.

So, the board room slowly emptied out as the men and women who came to witness the event wandered around, talking socially, taking pictures of one another, and reading.

More than once someone was heard to say, "Well, we've waited 10 years, what's another hour or so?"

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Sealaska's attorney, John H. Huhndorf, and ASRC vice-president Larry Dinneen sign the document. The document was brought to the board room.



Sam Kito representing Doyon Limited, signs the document.



Toasting their own success after 14 months of hard negotiation are, left to right, Willie Hensley and John Shively of NANA, 7i chairman Byron Mallott of Sealaska, and mediator, Ralph Wienshien.

Ceremony filled with friendly jokes

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Willie Hensley passed coffee around, feet were propped up on tables.

At about 10:30 p.m., attorneys brought in three copies of

the document, then a further delay occurred when a working stapler had to be found to fasten the documents together.

At last the papers arrived in the board room and the par-

ticipants grew silent for what was the first time during the evening.

Mallott asked if anyone had any business to conduct and Huhndorf said, "Mr. Chair-

man, I move the agreement before us, the settlement of the 7i provision of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act as approved subject to approval of our respective board of di-



Sam Kito jokingly asks why three bottles of champagne are missing from the requisition and is told that the nine bottles on the table represented 70 percent distribution of 7i!

Photos by Bill Hess



"You guys really took us to the cleaners," Altna's Herb Smeltzer jokes as he shakes the hand of Kosnag's Harry Carter, right after he signed the document.



Willie Hensley was one of numerous photographers at the historic event.

rectors."

Krukoff seconded the motion.

Roger Lang of Sealaska called the roll and one-by-one the representatives walked to take a chair near Mallott to sign the name.

Smeltzer was first and as he walked to the signing table, he said, "Here's one for you, Sealaska."

As the signing was over, nine bottles of champagne were brought to the board room and passed out. Mallott raised a just-opened bottle in a toast and said, "Gentlemen, to you."

As the champagne was being uncorked, Kito rose and said in mock seriousness, "Mr. Chairman: The requisition for these refreshments called for 12 bottles. I only count nine on the table."

Herb Smeltzer from Altna chimed in, "That's 70 percent!" and the room exploded in laughter.

The other three were produced by a grinning CIR aide.

Another in the room said, "To the spirit of Kha-Nee-Ea."

Arbitrator Wienshien said, "Never have so many done so much to so many."

Edgar Blatchford raised a toast to Mallott's efforts through the 14 months and Huhndorf said, "I'd like to bid you all a fond farewell."



Krukoff, seconded the motion.



Chugach Chairman Edgar Blatchford enjoys a joke as the ceremony ends.