

Spirit of Kha-Nee-Ta should be remembered

The true strength of our Alaska Native people was shown last Tuesday night when leaders who represented corporations with ethnic similarity but with divergent and disagreeing business interests were able to agree on something that all of them had found some personal and corporate fault with.

Fourteen months ago when the leaders of the regional corporations decided to personally handle the complicated and thorny issue of 7i revenue sharing, no one really expected it could be done.

After all, accountants and attorneys had fought for five years with no notable progress.

These men decided they must follow their best instincts and handle the matter themselves.

The discussions were sometimes bitter and difficult. Although these men had sat on the same side of the table in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act battle, they were charged with a different role in the 7i talks — the role of protecting the interests of each individual corporation.

But they realized that the good of *all* must prevail. And with that realization, which has come to be called the "spirit of Kha-Nee-Ta" after the site of the first 7i retreat — they came to agreement in only 14 months.

That spirit forged resolve and that resolve made each recognize that he must stay in the discussion, even when pushed to the edge of his corporation's limits.

They didn't walk out as some others might have. Unwaveringly they sought their goal, and last Tuesday a collective sigh of somewhat surprised relief was issued when that goal was reached.

This is an accomplishment that is nothing short of astounding.

The men who sat through hundreds of hours of 7i discussions are to be congratulated and thanked.

They have worked hard and given much. They also have gained much more than financial agreement.

They have gained the knowledge that they can work together even when disagreeing, that they can solve problems even when all aren't happy with the solutions, that they can forge a future even when the past is filled with dispute.

The 7i settlement is one which will surely be remembered when our corporations deal with one another and with other outside companies.

Now more work begins.

The men who negotiated this settlement must bring it to their shareholders and directors for ratification. Faith in the agreement has been demonstrated by the NANA Region which already has ratified the agreement.

We hope when your leaders explain this matter that you listen carefully and thoroughly.

We hope when you discuss this agreement you remember that no one came out of this settlement entirely happy. All gave up something.

We hope you remember the greater good and the Spirit of Kha-Nee-Ta when you advise your directors how to vote on 7i.