

# Hensley Makes Special Report-

## Amendment Paves Way to Pay AFN Debts

By WILLIE HENSLEY

There are two or three things I want to report to you on, but the main objective of my recent trip to Washington, D.C. was to go and see if we could push through the amendment that would allow for the regions to either guarantee or loan funds to the AFN to resolve the over \$600,000 of indebtedness that we have accumulated.

The primary problem I see that we have is the interest on the principle and the interest on the interest that was bringing us further and further into debt

— and other indebtedness that couldn't fit into other programs, so immediately upon being elected to the presidency by the Board, I had called Senator Stevens about our problem and drafted a letter urging him to do everything that he could possibly do, both from a legislative standpoint and maybe from the standpoint of getting a legal interpretation of the Act, that would allow us to wipe out that indebtedness.

And so he was able to attach an amendment which the BIA solicitor in the Interior drafted at my request, and that was

adopted in the Senate and when Congressman Begich and Senator Stevens were up in Fairbanks I flew up and met with them and discussed it and decided that it was necessary to go to D.C.

And Sam Kito and John Sackett were there and we lobbied the piece of legislation through. We did have some opposition from Congressman Wayne Aspinall and the Interior to some extent, because Assistant Secretary Loesch didn't approve of the language that would have allowed the regions to contribute funds to AFN.

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# Amendment Paves Way

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He felt that the present boards and regions should not obligate the future stockholders monies which have not been indentified yet, so we just took out the "contribute" language and simply authorized a loan, or a guarantee of a loan to AFN, and AFN, Inc, to pay off the debts.

I will give you the language of the amendment, it's not lengthy. It says that "Any of the funds heretofore or hereafter advanced, under authority of the Second Appropriations Act 1972 (Public Law 93206) or the Act of Aug. 10, 1972 (Public Law 92369) to a regional corporation organized pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of Dec. 18, 1971, (Public Law 99203) may be used by such regional corporations to loan to, and such regional corporations may also guarantee loans by third parties to the Alaska Federation of Natives and/or the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., in such amounts and upon such terms and conditions that may be determined by such corporations, and in recognition of the services of said organizations in advancing land claims settlement legislation." This was adopted on Oct. 14th - Saturday, and this gives us the vehicle to finance the indebtedness of the organization, which to me was a primary objective.

Senator Stevens, Congressman Begich, Julia Butler Hanson and Lloyd Meeds were very helpful in getting the amendment through.

The other thing I discovered when I was down in Washington, D.C. was the fact that apparently the Bureau of Indian Affairs

has deleted the position of Co-ordinator of Alaska Native Affairs and his staff. I have a copy of the budget estimates for the fiscal year 1974 and they show a deletion of \$181,000, and it is apparent that, as far as I know, that position has been eliminated from the budget.

I sought a meeting with Commissioner Bruce but he was unable to meet with me at that time.

He sent some fellow out - one of his assistants, I presume - and he indicated that there was no deletion, but whatever they did in that area would be to improve the operations. It was the opinion of the Co-ordinator that he had met with Louis Bruce and Louis Bruce had indicated that they were going to go ahead and eliminate the Co-ordinator and his staff.

I think this would be very detrimental to the implementation of the claims settlement, because part of their responsibility was the drafting of the study regarding the educational and health services that we get from the federal government, and this was to be done in a three year period.

Of course, the way that particular study is approached is going to have a substantial bearing on Alaskan Native people - in the services that we get from the federal government. I have been writing letters to our delegation urging that if this office has indeed been deleted from the budget by the B.I.A. administration, that they do everything possible to reinstate the funding.

One other item was that I met with one of our legal counsel and Undersecretary of Interior, Jared Carter, regarding Mr. Morton's refusal to provide for a stipulation that would allow for compensation to subsistence hunters and fishermen when they have a loss of subsistence livelihood due to pipeline activity.

No one has been able to meet with Secretary Morton on this particular issue - that is, no native people have been able to meet with him on this issue in a year and a half - and it seems to me, with respect to the overall cost of the pipeline, that whatever compensation might go to native people for loss of subsistence livelihood is a very minor amount of money.

If people cannot hunt and fish anymore, they shouldn't have to go on Welfare if their loss is directly due to pipeline activity, and we are going to go ahead and try to seek a reconsideration of this issue on the part of the Secretary.

Senator Stevens drafted a strong letter urging reconsideration of this decision, but apparently it hasn't moved the Secretary.