

Justice A. Goldberg Delays Acceptance

Justice Arthur J. Goldberg returned to New York last week from Anchorage without agreeing to be counsel for the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Justice Goldberg's visit to the Cook Inlet city and his series of meetings with the AFN officials were widely publicized and a great deal of speculation that he would accept the offer to be counsel were numerous.

His meetings with AFN were informal and intimate and the native leaders noted that he was thorough in his efforts to get to the bottom of all subjects, mainly the unity within the native statewide organization.

Justice Goldberg told Tundra Times editor Howard Rock in the following manner:

"Frankly, if there is discord within the organization, I do not want any part of it. I would like to be assured there will be cohesion and unity in the native group."

This was Goldberg's main concern throughout his conferences with the AFN officials and the board.

He said that even if he didn't accept the offer, he would be interested in working for justice for the native people of Alaska but that if he accepts, he would want to be chief counsel.

During one of its meetings, AFN board voted unanimously to accept Justice Goldberg to be

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the general counsel.

The members said that it would be a great boost to the native effort to get equitable solution to the native claims; that Goldberg should be the national spokesman for the land claims; that he would also be influential within the Interior Department.

Justice Goldberg told the editor of Tundra Times that he has "a great feeling of the problem for the native people of Alaska." He said that this was nothing new to him.

He said that as U.S. Secretary of Labor, as Supreme Court Justice, and as Ambassador to the United Nations, private and public career, he has always been concerned with problems of the ethnic groups.

Goldberg said to the AFN board, "The best foreign policy is to do justice at home."

He said the native people of Alaska have been denied health, dignity and justice; that this has been a tragedy for a 100 years. He said that if he should decide to work for the native people of Alaska, "we will not fail if the state, the federal, and the natives work together."

Justice Goldberg also strongly stressed that there be unity on the state level, Department of the Interior, congressional delegation and the native regional counsels.

Goldberg hinted at the AFN meeting, after meeting with Interior Secretary Walter Hickel,

the state and the congressional delegation, that there was some differences of opinion in the congressional delegation.

Some of the AFN officials commented that perhaps Justice Goldberg will be asked for a decision whether he will serve as general counsel for the native people.

Some thought that he was delaying his decision because of his desire to meet with Sen. Henry Jackson, chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and Congressman Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

The two men are expected to play highly important roles in the native land claims legislation in Congress.

Justice Goldberg also told the AFN board meeting that he would like Miller, Kay and Libbey law firm in Anchorage to be the liaison between the native regional counsel and other concerned sources.

Goldberg also told the meeting that he was not necessarily interested in money as far as his services were concerned. He also said he was against "unconscionable arrangements" moneywise between the native regional counsels and the native people.

Justice Goldberg is a senior partner in the law firm in New York that employs 125 lawyers.

"It's a very busy firm," he said.