

AFN CONCENTRATES POWER

Organization To Focus Mainly On Land Claims

By MARGIE BAUMAN
KTVF/KFRB

FAIRBANKS — The Alaska Federation of Natives Inc. took strong steps Sunday to relieve itself of secondary responsibilities and concentrate solely on implementing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

While strongly supporting all social service programs now under the statewide body, the board voted to transfer some administrative responsibilities and agreed to return to their regional boards with a proposed plan to finance the statewide body through regional assessments.

The transition will take some time, because another statewide group has to take on these responsibilities and as yet has not been appointed.

For months now, board members have invariably agreed that the main function of the statewide body was implementation of the land claims act, and that a statewide group to handle social service responsibilities should be set up to handle it.

Current social service programs within AFN Inc. include Healthright, the Alaska Student Higher Education Services, OEO Technical Assistance Grant, a nutrition program and several thousand dollars in health contracts, plus Johnson-O'Malley education funds.

The board called the move a "mile stone" in its efforts for the statewide Native community.

Also in line with financing, the board moved to send each

region a formal request for payment of land claims debts, and approved a proposed budget and work program prepared by the administrative staff.

Willie Hensley, president of AFN Inc. called it a "very successful meeting" and a move that could help the organization proceed in "a more businesslike fashion" dealing mainly with capital and land involved in the settlement and related business.

Hensley represents NANA Regional Corporation Inc. Also present were Nels Anderson, Bristol Bay Native Corp., Hank Eaton, Kontag Inc., Ralph Johnson, Cook Inlet Region Inc., Showalter Smith, Calista Corp., Herb Smelcer, Ahna Inc., and chairman of the board John Sackett, Doyon Ltd.

Dick Jenson sat in informally for Chugach Natives Inc., their representative, Cecil Barnes, was unable to attend. Mike Swetozof, president of the Aleut Corp., also attended portions of the meeting, but did not participate. The Aleuts have withdrawn from the statewide body.

The board meeting began Saturday and delved into a

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 1)

number of issues, ranging from recent passage of Senate pipeline legislation to the Interior Department's revision on deadlines on Native Allotment applications.

As a group, they demanded that the Interior Department immediately halt implementation of a memorandum by

Undersecretary of Interior Jack Horton involving a critical change in the deadline for Native allotments; pending a review of the matter by Alaska Native regional corporations and AFN.

The board asked to be allowed to participate in review and development of policy changes in allotment requirements, as required by law.

It further demanded that Horton and Bureau of Land Management director Curt Berklund meet with and discuss the matter with the Native leadership and other interrelated parties as soon as possible.

In other action, the board: — came out in support of Senate legislation protecting anadromous fish and extending jurisdiction 200 miles off the coast of the United States.

The action came on grounds that foreign high seas fishing

has violated U. S. fishing agreements and that foreign fishing interests off the coast of Alaska are diminishing resources with no controls or regulations set on them. (Fishing has proven an economic disaster to hundreds of fishermen in Southwestern Alaska this year, what with too many fishermen and a poor run of fish.)

— resolved that no study of federal programs primarily designed to benefit Native peoples be conducted unless Natives

have participated in planning the study, as required under the land claims act.

— opposed the Woods Canyon Dam Project on the Copper River on grounds that it would flood lands below 1,000 feet, from Chitina to Copper Center, destroy salmon fishing and spawning in the Canyon River and tributaries and a new bridge across the Copper River at Chitina, upset migrating wildlife and cause Native allotments in the area not to be processed.