

Tanana Chiefs Conference Reaffirms Stand on 40 Million

The Tanana Chiefs Conference reaffirmed its stand for a "minimum" land settlement of 40 million acres at a meeting Friday in Fairbanks.

A resolution to that effect will be presented to the AFN at its annual convention in Anchorage, Oct. 15-17. The Chiefs Conference originally voiced the position in June at a meeting in Tanana.

In essence, the resolution states that the Senate version of the land claims bill is unacceptable. As recently passed, it provides 10 million acres, \$500 million in cash, and \$500 million in royalty payments to Alaska's natives.

Delegates to the conference expressed the need and desire for more than 10 million acres

and backed the AFN bill as a "minimum settlement" for their land rights.

The AFN bill calls for 40 million acres, a 2 per cent overriding royalty, and a \$500 million cash compensation.

Meeting in the Carpenters' Hall in Fairbanks, the nearly 20 delegates also heard reports from Al Ketzler, president, and Tim Wallis, president of the Fairbanks Native Association, on the status of the land claims bill.

Ketzler and Wallis were in Washington, D.C. with about 10 other native leaders while the land claims issue was under discussion in the House committee on Interior Affairs and its subcommittee on Indian Affairs.

Wallis reported that the committee and the subcommittee re-

cessed without taking any action on land claims.

However, he added that there were some indications that a task force from the subcommittee might be appointed to draw up the basic outlines of a bill during the recess.

If so, then the Congressmen would have something to work with when they return after the November elections, and a bill would have a much better chance of emerging from the House before final adjournment of the 1970 session.

Wallis also reported that the AFN delegation met with Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, and discussed what might happen if a bill is not passed this year and the land freeze is

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lifted.

The president of the Fairbanks Native Association said that Hickel mentioned the possibility of freezing about 8 townships around each village if and when the super land freeze is lifted. The action would be taken to protect native claims until the land issue is settled.

Ketzler said that in addition to the land claims resolution, the conference would present other resolutions at the AFN convention concerning improvements and developments of some of the individual villages in the Conference. About 34 Interior villages belong to the organization.

The meeting adjourned about

4 p.m. and some of the delegates remained in Fairbanks for the AFN board meeting on Saturday and the Tundra Times banquet Saturday night.

Present at the meeting were: Ketzler; Wallis; Edwin Simon of Huslia; Sanders Cleaver of Koyukuk; Richard Ketzler, Violet Nusunginya, and Jessie Brown of Nenana; Ruby Tansy of Fairbanks and Cantwell; Eddie Bergman of Allakaket; Arthur Stevens of Fairbanks; Moses Gabriel of Chalkyitsik; Richard Frank of Minto; Larry Petersen of Fort Yukon; Linda Swenson, Helen Peters, and Tom Swenson of Tanana.

Also, several observers were present.