

AFN Board Postpones Action Till Conference

The Board of Directors of the Alaska Federation of Natives postponed a decision Saturday on future land claims efforts until the annual meeting in Anchorage, Oct. 15-17.

Meeting at the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, the 17 board members discussed at length the direction that the organization's lobbying effort should take during the next two months.

A split occurred on a motion by Don Watson of the Cook Inlet Native Association to place a full-time lobbyist in Washington until the land claims question is settled.

On a second count, the motion was narrowly defeated.

The disagreement seemed to arise over what kind of lobbyist the AFN would send. Should he be an employee of the organization? Should he be a board member? Should he be salaried? Will the position be rotated?

Willie Hensley, of Kotzebue explained that he opposed the motion because he thought that such a decision would be premature and that the body should wait 10 days until the annual convention.

Waiting until the middle of October will not make that much difference in the passage of a bill, he added. By that time, he and others said, the group could have before it more facts and could thus more clearly define the kind of lobbying effort it wants to support.

John Borbridge, Jr., first vice president of the AFN, agreed with Hensley. By convention time, he explained, the office could have determined how much various lobbying efforts might cost and how much money is available for such purposes.

The House committee on Interior Affairs and its subcommittee on Indian Affairs, which were considering the land claims ques-

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tion, recessed the last of September without taking action on the matter. The committees are scheduled to reconvene after the November elections.

A dozen native leaders were in Washington for about a week prior to the recess pushing for the AFN land claims position.

Unofficial reports have said that the House committee favors the 40-million land settlement requested by the AFN. The recently passed Senate bill provides for only 10 million acres.

While some sources are reporting that a land claims bill has almost no chance of emerging from the House this year, the AFN leaders have remained optimistic and have said that they will continue to push as hard as they can for passage.

Eben Hopson, executive director of the AFN, assured the group that the office would be in close contact with the organization's attorneys in Washington and promptly alerted to any developments on land claims.

Before discussion closed on the lobbying issue, Watson added that he would appeal the decision on his motion to the body at the annual convention.

He and some of the others supporting the motion seemed to feel that the AFN needed someone in Washington now. Others supporting the motion seemed to do so because they felt that everything should not be put off until the annual convention.

Sitting around a T-shaped table arrangement, the board members and approximately 20 surrounding observers found the long session lightened by refreshments of moose jerky and salmon strips provided by Mrs. Pauline Carlo of Fairbanks.

With these delicacies before them, the board members went on to discuss several other matters.

The group backed the native land allotment drive described in this issue on the RURAL CAP page.

Don Wright, area vice-presi-

dent of the National Congress of American Indians, urged strong participation in the NCAI convention the third week in October.

Individuals may join and vote at the convention for a fee of \$5 and villages will be entitled to a minimum of 10 votes if they pay the \$25 membership fee.

Before the meeting adjourned about 5 p.m. "Red" Boucher, who sat through the lengthy afternoon session, welcomed the board to Fairbanks as the mayor of the Golden Heart city.

He went on to say that Emil Notti showed the state that the natives have an important role to play in the past, present, and future of Alaska.

After a relatively quiet campaign, Notti collected about 12,000 votes to Boucher's 14,000 in the Democratic primary for Secretary of State.

Boucher, who said that he was at the meeting primarily to observe, added that the State's leaders have a responsibility to fill the social and economic gaps existing in Alaska. The State's leaders must have a desire to solve the state's problems, and "I have that desire," he said.

Present at the meeting were: Cecil Barnes, Chugach Native Association; Fred Bismarck, Native Village of Tyonek; John Borbridge; Roy Ewan, Copper Center Indian Association; Philip Guy, Association of Village Council Presidents;

Wesley Aiken, Arctic Slope Native Association; Gerald Ivey, Upper Kuskokwim Native Association; Tony Lewis, Kuskokwim Valley Native Association; Byron Mallott, Alaska Native Brotherhood; Alice Brown, Kenaitze Native Association; Harry Carter, Kodiak Area Native Association;

Margaret Cooke, secretary of AFN; Tim Wallis, Fairbanks Native Association; Don Watson; George Walters, Seattle chapter of the AFN; Willie Hensley, Kotzebue; and Al Keizler, Tanana Chiefs Conference.