

JUSTICE GOLDBERG QUILTS AFN

Famed Juror Lays Blame on Regional Organization Lawyers

The breakdown of relations between the Alaska Federation of Natives and Justice Arthur J. Goldberg is being seen generally as a definite setback by some native leaders in their efforts to help solve the complex Alaska native land claims.

Last Tuesday, Justice Goldberg wired Emil Notti and John Borbridge that he will not be able to continue to represent the AFN. Notti is the president of the AFN and Borbridge is the first vice president of the organization.

Justice Goldberg set down his reason for resigning in the following manner:

"I am in receipt of several letters and telegrams from certain lawyers purporting to represent affiliates of the Alaska Federation of Natives. These communications are entirely lacking the respect owing to one who has served our country in three of its

highest offices, and I shall not dignify them with any direct reply.

"I agreed to represent the



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AFN largely as a public service, but I cannot fulfill that responsibility under these conditions.

"With great regret, therefore, I must advise you that I will not be able to continue to represent the AFN in your commendable and justifiable efforts to obtain justice and equity for the Alaska Natives from the Congress of the United States.

"However, as I told you and your colleagues on several occasions, I shall be very glad, in my

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Arthur Goldberg Resigns as Counsel for AFN . . .

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private capacity, and without any compensation, to continue to lend support to your most worthwhile cause."

Goldberg apparently reacted strongly to pressures put to bear by some lawyers of the native organizations such as the following wire sent him by John W. Hendrickson who represents the village of Unalakleet. The wire was made public to the press by Hendrickson and it reads as follows:

"I am surprised to learn of the manner in which your office is dealing with the Alaska counsel.

"Your office appears to be interfering with my contract and those of other attorneys.

"Also, you appear to be soliciting our clients."

John Borbridge told Tundra Times that Hendrickson is implying that Goldberg was soliciting clients was a rather serious charge.

The controversy that erupted between Justice Goldberg and the Alaska lawyers for native organizations has apparently been smoldering over since Goldberg brought Edward Weinberg into the native land claims dis-

cussions.

Weinberg is the former deputy solicitor in the Department of the Interior under former Secretary Stewart Udall.

Alaska lawyers thought that Weinberg's involvement in the land claims issue would be in violation of Title 18, Section 207 of the federal code.

The code says in effect that a former employee of the U.S. government may not serve as an agent or as an attorney in any proceeding in which the government has had an interest and in which that attorney has worked on the same case while in federal service.

"The Attorney Weinberg, who was retained by Goldberg, was the solicitor for Udall," said Ralph Perdue when asked by Tundra Times. "This same attorney was the one who has been rejecting the attorneys that we have chosen to represent us in the past."

When asked about the AFN-Goldberg situation, Perdue stated:

"I don't think it is a great loss. Under the circumstances, I feel that we saved ourselves a lot of money that was being spent

unnecessarily. From what I saw of the contract that was drawn up, it was more like a blank check and I don't think our leaders should have even considered it."

"In forming his citizen's group against the ABM proposal," added Perdue, "Goldberg had established bad relations with the Nixon administration."

Perdue indicated that he felt this situation would put Goldberg in a bad position to bargain with the Nixon administration.

In his communication to the Tlingit and Haida Indians Central Council, of which he is president, John Borbridge said:

"I regard the withdrawal of Justice Goldberg as an unfortunate situation, and am personally appalled at the circumstances which led to his decision.

"We can be pleased that our Central Council and our general counsel were positive in their efforts and abstained from interfering with negotiations to retain Justice Goldberg.

"Time is a critical factor and we anticipate a formulated course of action in preparation of our land claims."

The controversy between Goldberg and the Alaska lawyers began to come to a head in Washington, D.C. during the recent hearings held by Sen. Henry Jackson and his Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee on Alaska Native land claims.

Some of the attorneys claim that they were kept out of meetings by Goldberg. When Weinberg entered the picture, the controversy became more intense.

Alaska lawyers feared that a scandal might have developed if Weinberg was kept active in the land discussions. Some of the native leaders who went to Washington were also disturbed when they found they could not attend some meetings.

This became apparent when Goldberg met privately with the steering committee of the AFN composed of Emil Notti, John Borbridge, Rep. William Hensley, Fore Lekanof, and Eben Hopson.

Borbridge said that the meeting was attempting to work out policies to be presented to a larger meeting with representatives from areas of Alaska concerned with the land claims.

This meeting was labeled "secret" by some members of the delegation to Washington. This, apparently, had started a flurry of rumors that began to sweep many areas regarding Goldberg, the steering committee members and the land claims situation.

The AFN board held a meeting yesterday in Anchorage but at the deadline time of the Tundra Times, nothing concrete had been received.

Earlier, Borbridge told Tundra Times that the group might work out a program in which Alaska native organization lawyers will be working along with the native groups on the land matters.

Barry Jackson, who resigned as counsel for the AFN Wednesday, later that day told Tundra Times that he has set aside time

from his regular law firm schedule to help to work out a land bill to be presented in Washing-

ton.

"This will have to be done soon," he said.