

# ENROLLMENT PACE QUICKENS

## Regions And BIA Push To Complete Lists

By MARGIE BAUMAN

Over 15,000 more letters of acceptance for land claims enrollment went out Wednesday, but incoming mail to the Alaska Native Enrollment office brought more appeals from the 10,000 rejected applicants.

"We're still plodding along," said enrollment coordinator John Hope, in good humor as he arranged to tan out enrollment workers this weekend to Dillingham, Bethel, Kodiak, Barrow, Nome, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Juneau and

Sitka to help with appeals forms.

To date, 77,116 persons have been declared eligible for benefits of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, but some 10,000 others have been rejected, for reasons ranging from incomplete forms to a question of citizenship. Predicting that some 5,000 of those rejected will be accepted, Hope was nevertheless hurrying to get his staff out to regional corporations to iron out details of appeal.

At Seattle, the liaison operation of the Alaska Native Enrollment, under Art Johnson, has been working full time on

(Continued on page 4)

# Enrollment Pace . . .

(Continued from page 1)

appeals, and within Alaska's 12 regions, there has been much activity too.

The Aleut Corp., based at Anchorage, is appealing all 325 rejected enrollment forms, most over the "Creole" issue. "Most of the rejections involve blood quantum," said Larry Merculieff of the Aleut Corp. Many persons applying for acceptance in the Aleut, Kodiak and Cook Inlet areas apparently put the word "Creole" on their enrollment form. All those who have been determined ineligible because they used that word inappropriately must now obtain approval from their village or group to which they enrolled, certifying that they and at least one parent are considered Native.

"The word 'Creole' indicates one having some Russian blood and there probably isn't an Aleut today that doesn't have some Russian blood," noted Merculieff, but the land claims act says one accepted as Native by their people should be accepted for enrollment, and this is the basis of the Aleut appeal.

Doyon Limited, regional Native corporation of the Interior, is appealing 630 rejected forms, including 397 rejected for incompleteness, charging that Bureau of Indian Affairs enumerators were responsible for making sure those forms were completed properly. Another 233 forms involving change of permanent address were appealed on grounds they were filed within the period allowed for amendment to enrollment applications.

The mass appeals forms from Doyon were initially blocked by the BIA solicitor's office, on

grounds the regional corporation lacked power of attorney for the individuals involved. Doyon challenged this move, because they were appealing on behalf of the region. BIA again questioned the legality of the regional appeal, saying that the region must first make an official protest. But Doyon pointed to the act, noting that a region must protest only in the event that the region is opposed to an applicant. "Since all the subject appeals are in favor of allowance of all applications for enrollment, no protest is required," Doyon snapped back.

Calista Corp. records show 167 rejected and no immediate region appeal planned. NANA Regional Corp. said they were appealing about 60 rejections.

In Anchorage, meanwhile, Hope expressed some relief that the last of the eligibility letters were out. That mailing started several months ago, with an initial 6,000 acceptance forms going out, followed by bulk mailings of about 15,000 acceptances at a time.

Hope gave much credit to Sealaska Corp., the regional corporation of Southeastern Alaska, for the enrollment of a number of persons who might have missed out altogether. Several thousand persons signed up as members of the Alaska Federation of Natives assuming they were enrolled for the land claims settlement.

Sealaska officials came to the Anchorage enrollment office and obtained a list of those signed up with AFN, plus Natives in state institutions and filed on their behalf, Hope said.

"Sealaska, mainly George See, worked very closely with us, to sponsor several thousand persons.

We wanted to do it, but we didn't have enough people or enough time to do it," Hope said. A number of those initially sponsored by Sealaska will in fact be enrolled in other regions. "In fact, the first person to come in on appeal was an Eskimo woman sponsored by Sealaska, who was subsequently enrolled elsewhere," Hope said.