

# No. 13 Rears Its Head—

## *13th Reg. Overshoots Target Date*

13 has always been considered an unlucky number and the much-talked-about 13th Region seems to be causing its own brand of troubles.

The Associated Press carried a story from Seattle yesterday saying the 13th Regional Corporation has been formed by representatives of many Alaska Natives residing in Washington, Oregon and California.

According to the release, the newly-formed corporation is to administer the non-resident Native share of the Alaska Native Land Claims, some \$250 million and will be the largest single corporation with stockholders

numbering 18,000 to 20,000.

So says the wire service release. But according to the official Enrollment Office in Anchorage, there can be no 13th Regional Corporation until the enrollment is completed on December 18th of this year, and then only if a majority of non-resident Natives vote YES on the enrollment forms.

Assistant Enrollment Coordinator George Walters said it would be impossible to create a 13th Region unless a majority of Natives living outside Alaska who do not have a permanent residence in the state of Alaska

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# 13th Regional...

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choose to vote in favor of a 13th region.

Even if a majority of those living outside Alaska DO vote YES, only those persons will be enrolled in the 13th region, and other non-residents still have the option of enrolling back to Alaska and to one of the established 12 regions.

If a majority of Natives over the age of 18 residing outside of Alaska vote AGAINST a 13th region, there will be NO 13th region formed.

The vote is being taken on individual applications as people enroll from out of state. No one is going to know for certain whether a 13th region will be an entity until the roll is complete on December 18.

John Borbridge, president of one of the 12 Native regional corporations, SEALASKA, is concerned that the news release may confuse and mislead some persons residing outside of Alaska who have not yet registered and who do not fully understand the practical consequences of the choice they will have to make.

"The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Enrollment Office have maintained a position of

neutrality which in a sense has resulted in the fact that the public hasn't been sufficiently informed about the options."

"The national TV and radio ads simply state that wherever you are, enroll, and you will receive benefits. This isn't automatically true. If, for an example, you're a Tsimshian and you enroll back to Metlakatla, you may NOT receive any benefits."

(The Act now includes Tsimshian Indians not enrolled in the Metlakatla Indian Community)

"If however, you are Tsimshian and you list your residence as Seattle, the chances are that you will receive benefits. We need to outline the consequences: A. This is what is going to happen or B. This is what is going to happen."

"What happens if I live in San Francisco and enroll back to the place where I was born? Or what happens if I live in San Francisco and vote against the 13th region? Or what happens if I list San Francisco as my permanent home and vote FOR the 13th Region?"

There is nothing illegal about a group of non-resident Alaskans forming a corporation for their own purposes. Legally any three persons may form a corporation.

But there can be no legal 13th corporation formed under the terms of the Act until the final vote is certified on enrollment records

Sec. 7 (c) of the Act reads: "If a majority of all eligible Natives eighteen years of age or older who are not permanent residents of Alaska elect, pursuant to subsection 5(c) (pursuant to enrollment), to be enrolled in a thirteenth region for Natives who are non-residents of Alaska, the Secretary shall establish such a region for the benefits of Natives who elected to be enrolled therein, and they may establish a Regional Corporation pursuant to this Act."

The 13th Region can be created only by the desire of the people as they enroll and as officially recognized by the Secretary of the Interior. Until that time, number 13 remains in the uneasy shadow of doubt.