

AFN Bill Favored...

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although handicapped by lack of financial resources to obtain adequate education and health care, were able to achieve positions of respect and responsibility.

They appealed that, whatever the size of the settlement awarded through the land claims, Alaska Natives be allowed to manage their own affairs independent of extensive state or federal control.

Limited opposition came from a small number of witnesses, who spoke as individuals and represented no organizations in any official capacity.

Each witness was allotted five minutes of oral testimony and permitted to submit additional written statements to be entered into the records of the hearings.

Although Chairman Wayne Aspinall, (D-Colorado), was present, Rep. James Haley, (D-Fla.), chaired the hearings. Haley, chairman of the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs, was repeatedly apologetic that the committee's schedule did not permit more oral testimony by native witnesses.

The five-minute limit imposed at the Fairbanks hearings was decreased to three minutes during the Anchorage hearings on Saturday.

In Anchorage, testimony on behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives was spearheaded by AFN President Emil Notti.

NOTTI DEFENDS

Notti defended the three provisions of the AFN bill. He stated that the 40 million acres requested by AFN was a "minimum amount of land" and would provide a "base for moving into the mainstream" for Alaska Natives.

It would also insure that, for those who would choose to do so, Natives would be able to continue living off the land.

Notti described the \$500 million cash settlement as barely reasonable and based on \$1½ per acre for native land.

The 2 per cent royalty, Notti noted, "would provide a means of preventing our people from coming back to congress in future generations."

He renewed the native plea for self-control of the proceeds from the settlement, stating, "We need to be able to determine our future and . . . we have the competence to do so."

The AFN chief said the native bill called for regional corporations so that it may "bring the administration closer to the people."

LAND, MONEY IMPORTANT

In questioning, Notti was asked by Rep. John Saylor (R-Penn.) whether he favored more emphasis on land or money. Notti said they were both important.

"The money is needed now," he said, "and the land for the future."

President Notti was followed by John Borbridge, Jr., president of the Tlingit and Haida Central Council. Borbridge impressed on the committee that, with Alaska natives, there has been no extinguishment of native title.

He pointed out that, as in other native regions in Alaska, the Tlingit and Haida Council has formed a corporation and is ready to compete in business interests.

"We are coming in now," Brobridge stated.

Other significant testimony was entered by Agnes Brown and Fred Bismark, representing the village of Tyonek. They explained that, when oil reserves were discovered on the Tyonek Reservation, the Interior Department authorized competitive leasing.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, they explained, wanted the Tyonek Indians to approve all lease bids. The Tyoneks held out until they were given the right to manage their own affairs.

Universally acclaimed as a great success story, the Tyonek Indians not only vastly improved their living conditions but also compete in a number of business ventures.

Rep. Ed Edmondson (D-Okla.) asked Bismark if the rest of Alaska Natives would be able to repeat the Tyonek success.

"I think that they are all capable," Bismark replied.

He pointed out that Alaska Natives, as did the Tyoneks, would be able to hire any necessary expert advice required to manage the monies and lands from the settlement.

CAUTIOUS SUPPORT

A cautious note of support for the native position came from a delegation of witnesses representing the Alaska Miner's Association.

They pointed out that Alaska Natives justly deserve the land and money which they request, yet they warned that withdrawing large tracts of land for selection by Natives would tie-up land for years and drastically hurt the state's economic development.

MINERS TIE UP LAND

Countering this allegation in his testimony, State Representative Willie Hensley (D-Kotzebue) told the congressmen that mining interests have tied-up land in much of Alaska for years, and have contributed to slowing economic development.

The miner's association has indicated support for the native position, particularly emphasizing that Natives should manage their own affairs.

A small vocal minority within the organization has opposed many aspects of the settlement, yet it is reported that the association would probably continue support of the native position in thinking that the settlement would eventually benefit Alaska industry as well as Alaska Natives.

The opposition that has been generated within the state, although it may be threatening, is expected to have no great effect on land claims legislation.

ANGER THAN RESPECT

It is reported that the Miller Administration's argument that the federal government has no power to allow the state to participate in a land settlement is drawing more anger than respect.

It is increasingly felt that the opposition voiced by Miller, Rep. Pollock, and Senator Stevens is serving more to enhance the popular image of the state as a greedy organism which is more sympathetic to filling the state coffers than listening to its native population.

Conspicuous in its absence, the only representative of the state during the hearings was assistant attorney general Robert Price, who sat as an observer toward the rear of the auditorium in Anchorage.

CONSERVATIONIST THREAT

The only threat to a favorable settlement of the land claims is yet dormant. It was pointed out by several of the Congressmen, including Chairman Aspinall, that active opposition to a land grant may come from powerful conservationist lobbyists.

Under the AFN bill, Alaska Natives will be allowed to select lands from within the national forests and parks. In some cases, such as in Southeast Alaska, there is no other land available for selection by villages.

It is thought that conservationist groups may oppose such selections.

In consideration of the entire land claims issue, the House hearings were thought to further the native position. Generally, native witnesses gave very effective testimony which was, for the most part, favorably received by the committee.



EQUIPMENT—The photograph shows a piece of equipment which will provide voice communications via ATS-1 satellite between the University

of Alaska to Fairbanks and the Kuskokwim Delta. The equipment was donated by Walker G. Buckner of Buckner & Co.

Philanthropy Aids Satellite TV

WASHINGTON—A cash gift from a New York philanthropic organization will enable the State of Alaska to embark on an innovative satellite communications experiment, according to U.S. Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alaska).

Senator Gravel announced Monday that Walker G. Buckner, of Buckner & Co., a member of

the New York Stock Exchange, and president of The Foundation for the Needs of Others, Inc., provided the funds necessary to purchase two earth stations capable of receiving very high frequency radio signals from a NASA satellite.

The foundation agreed to participate in Senator Gravel's pro-

posed experiment due to its interest in education and audio-visual aids to classrooms.

The two earth stations will be placed on the University of Alaska campus at College, Alaska, and at Bethel, Alaska. Bethel is the center of the Kuskokwim Delta area, with a native population of about 16,000.

The University will transmit educational and cultural radio programs to the delta area through ATS-1, an experimental satellite which will be used for the radio program as well as an experimental television program also proposed by Senator Gravel.

The earth stations will operate in a frequency band which has never been consistently used through a satellite. The success of the experiment may open a new era of economical application in frequencies so far denied the communications industry, Senator Gravel said.

Buckner's gift follows on the heels of several announcements by the Communications Satellite Corp., American Telephone and the Columbia Broadcasting System regarding the urgency of establishing a domestic communications system.

Senator Gravel introduced a bill in the Senate last month which would amend the Communications Satellite Act to permit more than one domestic satellite system.

The Gravel Bill, now awaiting public hearings, would also remove the middle-man charges to customers by allowing public entities, such as universities, to own and operate individual earth stations.

"By having more than one satellite system, we can avoid being influenced adversely by foreign interests in the international satellite system," Senator Gravel said.

He charged that the domestic system has failed thus far to respond to the urgent needs of public broadcasting, particularly in the area of educational and cultural television.

The Alaska experiment will serve the 16,000 Kuskokwim Delta residents with radio communications. At present the only radio available in the region is short wave broadcasts from the Public Health Service.

The program, dubbed "The Agony Hour" within the state, gives an ill person the opportunity to discuss his symptoms with a physician, who then determines if further medical attention is necessary.

Unexpected Praise

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den" in describing the document.

The angry reaction of Congressman Edmondson was repeated by a number of native leaders. AFN president Emil Notti termed the editorial "ridiculous." Other native leaders described it as "out of line" or "condescending to the Native people."

"... that is what the congressional committee must realize,

and that is why this Goldberg Line that has been fed into the Alaska Native Federation bill is a threat to all the people of the 49th state," the Anchorage Times concluded.

Apparently at least one congressman did realize something from the editorial, and apparently it was not quite what the Anchorage Times expected.

Borbridge Chides State

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ments attributed to Tom Kelly," wrote Borbridge, "that the state intends to forge ahead with the selection of land in the National Forests, I feel compelled on behalf of the Natives of Southeast Alaska to inform you why I think such action at this time would be contrary to the interests of both the State and the Natives."

Borbridge said that first of all, the natives have been repeatedly assured by the officers of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, whose approvals would be required before such selections could be invested with even color of efficacy, that such approvals will not be granted while Congress is considering legislation to settle the natives' claims.

"This is why I say that I am not much alarmed by Commissioner Kelly's pronouncements," stated Borbridge.

"Were the Commissioner," he continued, "merely setting the State on a vain course of action I would not be even greatly dismayed; but it is not only a vain course, it is harmful and mischievous one which can be productive of nothing but spoilation of the spirit of cooperation among the Natives and non-Native citizens of the State so recently and painstakingly developed by men of good will in both groups."

Borbridge reminded the governor that each of the settlement bills now receiving the attention of Congress, including the one

sponsored by the administration, makes provision for the granting of lands in the vicinity of their villages to the natives.

"Because most of the villages of the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Southeast Alaska are now surrounded by the Tongass National Forest, effectuation of the village grants in their case will necessarily entail the conveyance to them of lands presently in this forest," said Borbridge.

Borbridge said that the governor would readily understand why Commissioner Kelly's announcement that the state intends to forge ahead with selections of forest lands has been a source of considerable consternation among the Tlingit and Haida people.

"Until their rights to receive land in the vicinity of the cities and villages where they live are defined by legislation, they regard it as a breach of faith for the State to attempt to select lands in the forest areas," Borbridge pointed out.

"I urgently recommend," he concluded, "that you make clear that it is the aim of the State as well as the policy of the Federal Government to preserve the status quo until Congress has had an opportunity to settle and define the rights of the Natives."

"When this has been done, their rights and the forest land selection rights of the State can be coordinated and exercised in the cooperative spirit so essential to the future of Alaska."