

# Jackson, Fenton Firm Resigns Chiefs

The firm of Jackson and Fenton announced last week their resignation as attorneys for the Tanana Chiefs Conference. The firm has represented the Interior-Indian organization since Novem-

ber of 1967.

In the past, the attorneys have also represented the Fairbanks Native Association and the Alaska Federation of Natives.

"We will continue to represent

six villages in the interior. Minto, Tanacross, Eagle, Tetlin, and Northway in the land claims settlement," Barry Jackson stated in the letter.

Jackson attributed his resignation to a number of factors. He said the period of his firm's most meaningful contributions to the land settlement has passed, that the cost of financing full representation of the organization has been straining the firm, and that the firm may have spread itself too thinly in representing native clients.

"As in any client-attorney relationship, our goals have been to promote the interests of our client and to carry out our responsibilities as your attorneys

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in a manner satisfying and meaningful to both parties," Jackson said.

"We believe that we have done so in the past but have reluctantly concluded that the time of our greatest contribution to an early, generous, and equitable Land Claim Settlement is now past.

"While it is true that we have been deeply involved in suggesting and drafting the concepts which now seem likely to be included in the settlement, control of the legal aspects of our case has passed out of our hands as regional and AFN counsel and AFN counsel now rests with Goldberg and his associates.

"In the meantime, we have reached the conclusion that we can no longer continue to finance the out-of-pocket costs of full representation on the scale that we have in the past. Currently we have invested about \$25,000 of our money in out-of-pocket expenses and we have advanced the overhead necessary to support our law office incident to our representation in Land Claims matters.

"We are a small law firm and this has strained our resources to the breaking point," Jackson added.

Jackson said that it has been increasingly difficult to maintain a balance of representation to his clients.

"We believe that it is unwise for a law office to be primarily engaged in representing one client or one group of associated clients.

"Such a situation leads to a danger of exploitation of the firm by its principal group of clients to the detriment of the attorney-client relationship and a danger of fostering dependency on the part of the professional.

"For this reason we have always attempted to maintain a balance in our practice; a balance which has not always been kept in fact," added Jackson.

He said that another problem had arisen occasionally where his village clients may have disagreed with the Tanana Chiefs leadership, and his firm had been a target for those who opposed the leadership.

As settlement efforts intensify, Jackson said, it is important to achieve an arrangement where attorneys can represent solely one group, such as a regional corporation.

"We have appreciated the opportunity of representing the Tanana Chiefs Conference. We are sure that both you and we shall achieve, as a result of our efforts together, an early, generous, and equitable settlement of the Native Land Claims and that the Natives of all Alaska will be able to use the settlement as a means of taking their rightful place in Alaska's economy and society," he concluded.