

# Ahtna, Inc. and Doyon, Ltd. Border Dispute Postponed

Ahtna, Inc.'s border dispute case against Doyon, Ltd. was postponed last Wednesday by U.S. District Court Judge A. van der Heydt on the grounds that he did not have enough data for a decision.

Another hearing has been set for Monday, Jan. 15. This is also the date set by the judge for submission of briefs and memoranda by both involved parties.

Time is getting short, as Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton has declared March 15 as the closing date for boundary settlements. This is just 15 days short of the March 30 enrollment deadline as well.

The suit, filed on Dec. 21 and served six days later, involves about 280 townships of 36 square miles apiece. This covers slightly over 10,000 square miles and would include the villages of Cantwell, Dot Lake, Tanacross, Tetlin and possibly Northway, according to Doyon's attorney Barry Jackson.

The controversy arose when Ahtna claimed this land as its own. The Copper River area is in the southern part of the state. Robert Goldberg, attorney for Ahtna, has noted that the area each corporation administers, as well as the final land selection and number of enrollees will determine how much money the villages and the corporation will receive. This could involve millions of dollars he said.

An agreement was reached earlier between the Copper River association and the Tanana Chief's Conference concerning borders. But now Ahtna, the regional corporation, is testing the legality of that agreement.

"They state that regardless of what the Act says, an association cannot set boundaries set for a regional corporation. They are, as you know, requesting a preliminary injunction," said John Sackett, head of the TCC.

This injunction would demand that Doyon begin arbitrating with Ahtna over the contested area.

Jackson has made two requests in this case. The first is for more time to get legal data together, such as what laws are specifically involved here, and the second is for Secretary

Morton to get involved in this case.

"He may be an indispensable party," said Jackson. "The

## George Attla Enters Biggest Race in Alaska...

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World of Sports might be in for a fat contribution as well.

Sponsored in the past by the J. C. Penney Co., Attla approached BP this year "before I got hungry." BP has twice before sponsored a runner in dog races.

Laurie Gay, BP Alaska's district manager and a former dog musher himself said, "Dog racing is a part of the old Alaska which we would like to see retained. George Attla exemplifies the spirit and tenacity which has always been associated with the state."

The race is scheduled for March 3. While this does not leave Attla with a great deal of time, he expressed confidence in himself and his dogs. He did say that he had more new dogs this year, meaning more training time is needed.

But he went on to say, "When I really train heavy in a couple of weeks, I should know how they're going to act. I spend more time with my dogs than anybody else."

He has been known to buy a dog that no other musher would look once at, let alone twice, and turn it into championship material. And he knows each of his 40 dogs as individuals. All of this adds up to a man who knows his business.

"I think a 16-dog team — a completely different team than my main race team," is what Attla is talking of running in the Iditarod. "It's going to take a dog team that just knows how to poke along," he continued.

He said that his regular dogs were good for about 30 miles but not much more than that because "the only way they know how to run is wide open."

The longest race he has run up until this time is 80 miles. But he knows at least part of the long trail, unused for about 50 years, through his experience as a river pilot in the summer. "The only place I don't know is between McGrath and Anchorage," he said.

## Hearings on D-2 Lands..

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each of the federal agencies mentioned has plans to reclassify the land, and the rural village people are lost as to what this means to their ways of life in the near future.

"Our residents are extremely concerned that a park or a federal forest or a wildlife reserve may be placed near them. They are also concerned as to what a river classified as wild and scenic will do their hunting and future economic development within a wild and scenic classification," he stated.

"These federal agencies must explain in detail the exact affect their branch of government's operation will have on the people and the land, and they must go into each area and hold public hearing to learn if the local people affected want the jurisdiction of any of these federal agencies."

The agencies referred to are the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service on Wildlife Reserves, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, and National Parks Service.

The agencies are presently drawing up proposals on 80 million acres of land as how the land will be classified, and they

have until next Dec. 18 by which to make their recommendations to the Secretary of Interior.

"Dependant upon which agency makes a proposal on use of the D-2 lands they can restrict and in many cases totally terminate all human activity and development.

Subsistence hunting and fishing, game regulations, and future economic development can and will be changed and the local Alaska residents have a right to know how these federal agencies are planning to restrict their lives," stated Sackett.

"While we are not necessarily against any of the proposals that may be made, all of us as Alaskans do have a right to know in advance what the affects will be and have the opportunity to make our opinions known," he stated.

Sackett further called upon the Land Use Planning Commission to monitor and make sure that the federal agencies will gain the opinions of all people affected in the different geographical areas.

Sackett asked that hearings be held in the Kuskokwim, Yukon, Tanana, Upper Tanana, and Fairbanks area within the Tanana Chiefs region.

court cannot give full relief that's being asked for by the plaintiff" if the court does not ask Morton to take action, he

concluded.

Ahtna, Inc. says that there is a legitimate case for the courts. Doyon, Ltd. and the

TCC say there is not. Whether there is or not, the outcome remains open until next Monday's hearing.

said Attla. He went on, "I'm planning to make it in less than two weeks because I plan to be back for the North American." That race is set for March 15-17 in Fairbanks.

Much of the outcome depends on the strength of the dogs. But equally important is the sled. Attla is working on a specially-made one, basically the same design as his ordinary one but longer and heavier. And it will be made out of the best wood available.

The only negative note he sounded was on the unfamiliarity of the area to his team. "If a dog knows where he's going, he'll get you there. But in this case, he won't know

where he's going," he said.

Joe Reddington Sr. of Knik, head of the Iditarod Trail International Championship Race committee, is a moving force behind the whole race. He is a lifetime musher with a strong feeling for the sport and the area. He has said that, although the trail means little to people now, old-timers remember when it was used for a regular travel route.

George Attla may not qualify for the title of "old-timer" yet. But he knows dogs and he knows dog racing. If this race comes off as planned, he could well have one more trophy to add to his collection.

## Claims Attorneys...

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they have unlimited contacts. In my particular situation, the the Natives wanted to be paid out of the North Slope too. The reason and the amount was because of the North Slope.

"When you consider the results, we believe that 40 million acres and the better part of a billion dollars is a substantial amount. And our team contributed substantially to that. I stood alone back in 1966 and said the Natives should be paid in land and money."

Calling the Claims Settlement Act, "the first time Native people have been treated half-way decently," Paul listed the policy his firm developed as a third factor in determining fees.

The policy included such items as wanting payment because the Natives had a legal right to it, not because they were poor, and the team's refusal to compromise on anything they really wanted. The expertise needed for such a job was another factor, as was the time involved.

"My legal team has over 15,000 hours invested and we have not been paid a penny," he said. "When you divide seven or eight years into that kind of money, you're not talking about a great annual compensation." He cited other Indian claims bills where the

lawyers are paid 10 per cent of the recovery.

"When you consider the recovery we have had here, the \$2 million gross limitation of statutes is not fair to the lawyers," he concluded.

Some Alaskans have a different view of the matter. Joe Uppicksoun, former director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, said "We have the Section we and the plans that our lawyers have submitted to the court of claims and we have a committee reviewing the claims now being submitted. As far as I can say, we'd have to thoroughly look at what our lawyers have submitted" before deciding what they think is fair.

And Sen. Ted Stevens also said the courts would have to settle the problem. But he added that some legislators who had worked with the land claims bill feel it unfair for "big city lawyers" who have only entered the tight at the last minute to get the same fees as lawyers who have been in on it from the start.

Sen. Stevens said that he and others had tried, and failed, to get the law phrased so that long-term attorneys would have priority over those who just recently got involved. But now, as he said, it's up to the courts.

## Nick Begich Eulogized..

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Affairs). He was indeed a young man of great ability and great love," Aspinall said.

Begich accomplished a great deal for Alaska, said Albert. "And I could always count on him to be on the floor for a vote, even if he had to fly all night to get back. But his greatest achievement was the land claims act... which he almost singlehandedly pushed through Congress."

"Whenever a man dies, we mourn... but when a leader dies, we say special things," said Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Native Foundation, in a moving eulogy which was his tribute to Begich.

"There is something about this great land of ours that attracts men," Notti said.

"Perhaps it is the opportunity perhaps it is the challenge of life in a society that is still in the making... perhaps it is the people... "Whatever the reasons many

come... but very few of us stay. Nick Begich was one who stayed. He was one of us, an Alaskan... and he is with us still."

Recounting the life of Begich as an Alaskan, Notti said that it was fitting that his first commitment to Alaska was as a teacher, because his concern for improving education in the state. He noted Begich's rise in politics and that "there was something about him; here was a man who was willing to work for people's first concerns."

The life of Nick Begich was "a life lived," Notti said. "A short life, indeed... but a man's life and a leader's life at that."

Others taking part in the memorial tribute were Alaska Rep. Gene Guess, Margaret Poljola of the Begich staff, and Joe Josephson, co-chairman of the Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission.