

Chiefs and Corporate Structure- Villages Tackle Problem for Better Life, Schools, Etc.

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW

FAIRBANKS — How do you cozy up to a corporation and make it work for you? Representatives from 38 interior Athabascan villages met in Fairbanks Sept. 27-29, to translate the complex corporate structure of the Native Land Claims Settlement into better life, better schools, better homes, better health, and a certain something called PROFIT.

The semi-annual meeting of

the Tanana Chiefs Conference centered around the activities of three corporations: Tanana Chiefs, the non-profit regional corporation; DNH Development Corporation, an early profit-making venture of Tanana Chiefs; and the more recent DOYON, Ltd., profit-making corporation formed under terms of the Act and recipient of \$500,000 organizational monies.

DOYON, Ltd. is the entity which will assist each of the member villages in forming

village corporations to complete the corporate network.

The "stockholders of the future", Alaskan natives who will enroll under Tanana Chiefs, received full reports on the activities of all three corporations.

In addition, copies of the articles of incorporation and by-laws for DOYON, Ltd. were presented to every delegate as well as a hefty and impressive book called "Implementing the Alaska

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Tanana Chiefs Struggle with Tough Corporate Structure...

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Native Land Claims Act", prepared by Robert Nathan and Associates for the Alaska Native Foundation.

Barry Jackson, attorney for Tanana Chiefs, outlined the functions of DOYON, Ltd., explained the intricacies of stock ownership and transfer, and the manner in which native corporations and stock differ from that of an ordinary American profit-making entity.

President John Sackett addressed his people on the responsibilities DOYON, Ltd. has that IBM, General Mills, and General Motors do not have to worry about.

"They do not have to worry about whether their stockholders have good educational and transportation facilities, they do not have to worry about obtaining adequate housing for their people, or whether or not there is electricity in the village or adequate health facilities."

"All they have to do is make a profit and profit alone. So we have a greater burden on

us."

Tanana Chiefs will have "about \$125 million in our villages and regions and we will be owners of 13 million acres of land — the largest land owner in the state . . . assets far in excess that most corporations have that begin their initial stage."

"Because we have so much to lose," said Sackett, "we have a tremendous responsibility to ourselves and to our people."

With this awesome task before them, Athabascan delegates — heavy equipment operators, trappers, fishermen, construction supervisors, fire-fighters, store-owners, students, and women leaders, urban as well as village people — sat down together to work out a future.

Education was a major and immediate topic — early childhood education, scholarships for college students, and management training for the corporation executives of the future.

Health needs were another issue high on the list. Georgi-

anna Lincoln, Tanana Chiefs' representative on the Tanana Health Service Unit, announced the intent of the Public Health Service to lease clinic facilities in 13 villages of the region.

The clinics will be constructed by individual villages and

leased to PHS, bringing income into the villages. Delegates discussed moving the service director at the Tanana Hospital into Fairbanks for better efficiency and communications, but resolved to leave the administrative head in Tanana, re-

sisting the tendency to urbanize all regional activities.

Land Chief Richard Frank and consultant Robert Jenks gave a detailed projection of land goals for the next few years, answering questions on selection procedures.

How do you identify and protect historical and cemetery sites? How do you measure a mile, a section, a township? Who owns the beds of navigable waters? How do you coordinate checkerboard selection between village and region to maximize ownership of potential mineral-rich land?

The diagrams and mechanics of checkerboarding were sufficiently involved as to suggest the possibility of Alaskan natives calling on chess expert Bobby Fisher to mastermind a land strategy.

Incorporators of DOYON, Ltd. went to great lengths to insure that corporation power

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Chiefs . . .

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does not fall into the hands of a few people living in Fairbanks. If a certain portion of stockholders reside in villages, a certain portion of board of director members must reside in villages.

IBM or General Motors stockholders own shares of stock that hopefully produce a dollar return. Shareholders in Tanana Chiefs, DNH Corp., and DOYON Ltd., have a share in a larger meaning of "return on investment".

At the close of the book, "Atlas Shrugged" by Ayn Rand, John Galt, the hero faces a valley full of people and draws in the air with his hand the symbol of the dollar.

That symbol has been clearly drawn by the Congress of the United States over the heads of the Athabascan people.

"On the trip to Washington, D.C., and to Toronto, Canada, two weeks ago," said John Sackett, "I saw what big business is, huge and powerful and helpful, it can be made to assist our people."