

Chief Andrew Isaacs: You are still Indians

The most moving cry for unity among Alaska Natives was put by Chief Andrew Isaacs, traditional chief of the

Tanana Chiefs Conference who told young and old delegates at the AFN convention "I want you people to join to-

gether. Don't think you are different tribes.

"You are still Indians. So long as your name is Indian

you are Indian."

"So long as you live in the USA you're American.

"You belong to Alaska."

Chief Isaacs told the group he doesn't understand the property rights afforded by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act."

"I don't know where your 40 million acres' been settled. I think the whole of Alaska. I think that's me."

He spoke briefly of his participating in the fight for Native land claims and he said "the younger generation asked me, 'We can't manage it. We may need townships.' I told them my grandfather never tell me townships.

"Alaska is our home. We live it. We born here, raised here and raised our children here."

Chief Isaacs told the delegates that the drive to take

subsistence fishing rights from Natives "is foolish," and the group roared its approval.

"My grandfather saw rabbit, he go shoot it. He saw moose, he shot it. Today I take my fishing rod to fish, and here comes somebody telling me you can't fish.

The 84-year-old Isaacs, wearing his traditional beaded hide vest, headgear and mittens, told the group that he was sorry for the younger generation because they don't know the joy of living a true subsistence lifestyle.

"The way the younger generation goin' . . . you get in hard times . . . you lose. This world, you're not going to enjoy life all the time."

He ended by telling the delegates to take care of their old people, to care for them and listen to them.

And then, the chief stepped back, waved to the standing crowd, and walked off the stage with a proud smile on his face.



Chief Andrew Isaacs, traditional chief of the Tanana Chiefs Conference told the delegates at the recent AFN convention, "As long as your name is Indian, you are still Indian." Chief Isaacs called for Alaska Natives to unite in matters concerning them.