

Ketzler Discredits New Republic Article

The Alaska Native Land Claims issue has received considerable national publicity. One article, recently published in the New Republic, drew comment from at least one Alaskan native leader.

Alfred Ketzler, President of the Tanana Chiefs and Alaska Federation of Natives Executive Board member, was concerned about statements in the article that indicated the natives had

already lost their land rights and that a land settlement would amount to nothing more than an extension of the poverty program.

"We have not lost our land, ours by law, and will not lose it until Congress expropriates ('extinguishes' is the polite legalese)," Ketzler said.

He also commented on those who view the settlement as another approach to solving the

poverty problem.

"To those who view this problem as one of alleviating poverty, and not involving property rights, our demand for some \$10,000 and 800 acres per capita seems unreasonable, even outrageous. So we were disappointed to see Mr. Henniger overlook our legal right to our land, for it is the keystone to a fair, generous, and just settlement of our land claims," Ketzler said.

"Native leaders in Alaska have given great attention to the structure of the settlement, the means of administering the land and money. Indeed the concept of the development corporation is ours, though we would divide the land and money among three levels of business corporations, local, regional, and statewide, in keeping with the pluralism of American society and economy,"

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Ketzler . .

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he added.

"We have owned most of Alaska from time immemorial, but as wards of a paternalistic Federal Bureau for over a hundred years we have been effectively denied the legal tools needed to deal with our land as landowners in a capitalistic economy. While we appreciate and will continue to need government programs, especially in health and education, we want an end to wardship, and government restrictions," continued Ketzler.

"We see in a land settlement a means to this end, a means to ending poverty among our people, a means to taking our rightful place in Alaskan society, and a means of proving to the world that America will do justice to last of its aboriginal peoples still occupying their historic lands as the Alaska Oil rush forces development of America's last frontier," he concluded.