

History of Native Movement

(From the Federal Field Committee Report, Alaska Natives and the Land.)

The only organizations of Alaska Natives for nearly fifty years were the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Their membership was made up of Indians of southeastern Alaska. Then in 1961, Inupiat Paitot, made up of northern Eskimos, was formed; and in 1962 the Tanana Chiefs' Council was organized.

Explaining the formation of these new groups in the early 1960's, Tundra Times editor Howard Rock said, "we had begun to realize that we, as Native people of Alaska, had many problems. We also found that by speaking as a group, we were heard. As a result, some good things began to come our way. Having tasted the fruits of our labors, we are encouraged to try to perpetuate the existence of these organizations."

The real growth in the number of Native associations came in 1965 and 1966, with most of the stimulus coming from the issue of land claims and protests. There are now 21 regional or community organizations and

their statewide association, the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The regional groups are the Arctic Slope Native Association, Copper River Indian Association, Chugach Native Association, Association of Village Council Presidents, Tanana Chiefs' Council, Alaska Native Brotherhood, Tlingit-Haida Central Council, Kodiak Area Native Association, Northwest Alaska Native Association, Arctic Native Brother-

hood, Alaska Peninsula Native Association, Bristol Bay Native Association, Aleut League, and Lower Kenai Native Association.

The community organizations are: Cook Inlet Native Association, Kuskokwim Valley Native Association, Native Village of Eklutna, Fairbanks Native Association, Five Chiefs of Yakutat, Kenaitze Indian Association, and Native Village of Ty-

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In October of 1966, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) was organized. The reasons for its organization are described in the preamble:

We, the Native People of Alaska, in order to secure to ourselves and our descendants the rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws of the United States, and the State of Alaska; to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Native people; to preserve the Native cultural values; to seek an equitable adjustment of Native affairs and Native claims; to seek, to secure, and to preserve our rights under existing laws of the United States; to promote the common welfare of the Natives of Alaska and to foster the continued loyalty and allegiance of the Natives of Alaska to the flag of the United States and the State of Alaska, do establish this organization. . .

Objectives of the AFN named in its constitution and bylaws are: "to promote pride on the part of the Natives of Alaska in their heritage and traditions; to preserve the customs, folklore, and art of the Native races; to promote the physical, economic, and social well-being of the Natives of Alaska; to discourage and overcome racial prejudice and the inequities which such prejudice creates; and to promote good environment, by reminding those who govern and those who are governed of their joint and mutual responsibilities."

Membership in the AFN consists of all persons of Eskimo, Indian, or Aleut blood extraction, duly enrolled in the tribal rolls of any village or area-wide association of the State of Alaska, or until such tribal rolls are established, enrolled provisionally on the temporary tribal rolls of the village or area-wide association.

Representation in the AFN's annual meeting is based upon the number of enrolled active members in such area-wide associations, or if the village is not in an association, the number of "en-

rolled active members" in the village. Each association and each village not in an association has one delegate and an additional delegate for each 100 active enrolled members beyond 50.

At annual meetings held in October, delegates elect officers and directors and transact other business. The six officers (president, first and second vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, and sergeant at arms) are elected for two-year terms and serve as voting members of the Board of directors. Other members of the board, also elected for two-year terms, are the elected single representatives of each area-wide association and three at-large members elected by villages not in associations. Governing authority over the AFN between annual meetings is vested in the Board of Directors.

Emil Notti of Anchorage has been president of the AFN since June of 1967. Upon his departure in October of this year for Washington, D.C. to press for land claims legislative action, he named Willie Hensley, a state representative from Kotzebue, as executive director of the organization. In addition to directing land claims efforts and general AFN activities, Hensley supervises the administration of programs based upon grants from the U.S. Department of Labor, the Economic Development Administration, the Office of Economic Opportunity, and private foundations. Fifteen persons are employed full time in the Anchorage office or in positions in the field.

The future of Native organizations was the subject of a forecast made by the Anchorage Daily News in late 1967. "It appears likely," the newspaper said, "that the Native organizations will outlive the land claims battle and extend their influence into other social and economic areas affecting the Alaska Native." Such extension of activities has already occurred, and continuation of Native organizations beyond the land claims battle seems assured.