

Perhaps 10,000 by Christmas—

4,000 Signers Support AFN

ANCHORAGE—Petitions signed by over 4,000 Alaskans supporting the Alaska Federation of Natives land claim proposal will be presented to Senators Stevens and Gravel and Congressman Pollock in Washington Friday.

Eben Hopson, executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, and Phillip Guy, Alaska Village Council Presidents representative, have left for Washington to present the petitions and join the AFN team in the nation's capital.

The petition says: "We, the undersigned citizens of Alaska, request that Senators Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel, and Representative Howard W. Pollock support us in obtaining a just settlement of our land claims by promoting the Alaska Federation of

Natives' position."

The petitions have circulated in urban and rural areas over the past three weeks.

"The Federation does not believe in influencing legislation by petition when such a clear moral and legal issue is at stake," said Jim Thomas, AFN Public Relations Director. "But the efforts of some Alaskan businessmen of limited vision to cloud the issues gave us no choice but to take our case to the people."

The AFN indicated that the 4,000 plus names represented only the first group of petitions received.

"At the rate we're going, I'll be surprised if we don't pass 10,000 by Christmas," said Thomas.

The AFN reported that the

petition campaign was strictly a citizens' effort, with supporters of a generous and fair land claims settlement taking the petitions to their friends and on through a community.

"We don't have the funds to have people working full time on getting signatures or to run daily newspaper ads throughout the state," Thomas said.

"Under these circumstances, the overwhelming favorable response to our citizens' effort makes this all the more impressive."

AFN Public Relations said any Alaskans wishing to sign the petition should write to AFN, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.

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AFN Land Proposal Intact in Committee

The AFN proposal is still intact as the Senate Interior Committee works this week to hammer out an acceptable land claims program.

This points to the seriousness with which Congress regards the Native position.

Under the AFN proposal, any citizen who is an Alaskan Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut of one fourth degree or more (A parent or grandparent must be a native) or in the absence of proof of a minimum blood quantum is regarded as a Native by the village of which he claims to be a member, and one of whose parents was considered to be a member will share in the settlement.

The settlement proposal asks for confirmation of title to land in the Native villages which has been used and occupied by the Native people from time immemorial. AFN proposed that this should amount to 40 million acres.

The 40 million acres will be realized through the grant of four townships per village and 500 acres per person for villages over 184 in population.

The Natives further ask for a payment of \$500 million and revenue sharing of 2 per cent of the gross value of all leaseable minerals (oil and gas) from the remaining public and state lands (over 370 million acres.)

This is compensation for the extinguishment of any and all claims against the United States based upon aboriginal right, title, use and occupancy of lands in Alaska by any Native or Native group.

The \$500 million is to be paid over nine years with \$100 mil-

lion for the next eight years. Interest is to be payable on unpaid balances.

The AFN also asks for recognition of a statewide Native corporation, and not more than twelve regional corporations as the management group for the land and funds.

And to assist in the Administration of the settlement Act, the AFN seeks the creation of an Alaska Native commission.

Hunting and fishing outside the village lands are to be protected by the secretary of the Interior. Native reserves are to be retained by the villages using or occupying land. And patents for the surface use only of campsites and reindeer husbandry areas is permitted.

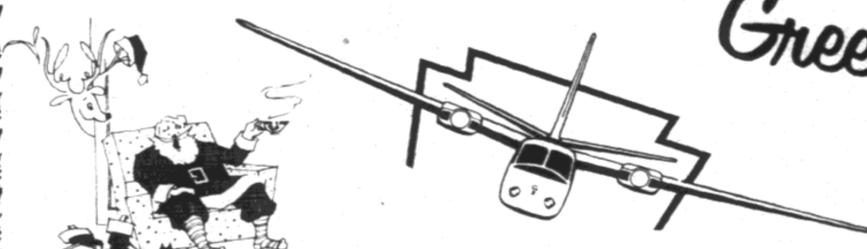
Finally, non village natives are to receive patent to 160 acres of land if they so choose.

It should be noted that this is merely the AFN's proposal. Congress may not accept all of this plan.

But for the first time they are seriously considering this Native proposal. And that's news.

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"We regard the AFN Bill as a very conservative request for justice."