

Cautious Optimism-

Good Contacts May Herald Fair Bill

After what was described as an "amicable and purposeful" meeting on November 17, the House-Senate Conference Committee on the Alaska native land claims bill will begin meetings on November 30 and work till a compromise bill is prepared.

This week, as Congress is in recess for a week long Thanksgiving vacation, activity in the nation's capitol has slowed. Most AFN board members are back in Alaska for Thanksgiving.

According to John Borbridge, who remained in Washington through Tuesday, the AFN was busy convincing legislators that they want a 30/10 land settle-

ment," Borbridge commented in a telephone interview with the TUNDRA TIMES. "As we prepare for the final stretch, there are desirable provisions in both bills."

He emphasized that the AFN espousal of the land provisions in the Senate land claims bill did not mean that they were rejecting the House bill, which had many provisions they considered necessary for an acceptable land claims settlement.

"We're not only on the brink of a bill, we are on the brink of assumption of vast responsibilities in the post land claims settlement era," Borbridge emphasized. "The native people

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have a great capacity for responsible leadership. The next two weeks are sensitive times, times for sober responsibility."

The Conference Committee is working against a deadline of December 10 for introduction of any bills onto the House floor. Congress is scheduled to recess for a six week winter break on December 15—another deadline.

The AFN lobbying delegation for the final stages of the land claims deliberation will probably be in Washington by the 29th of November to be present during the week the Conference Committee will work on the land claims bill.