

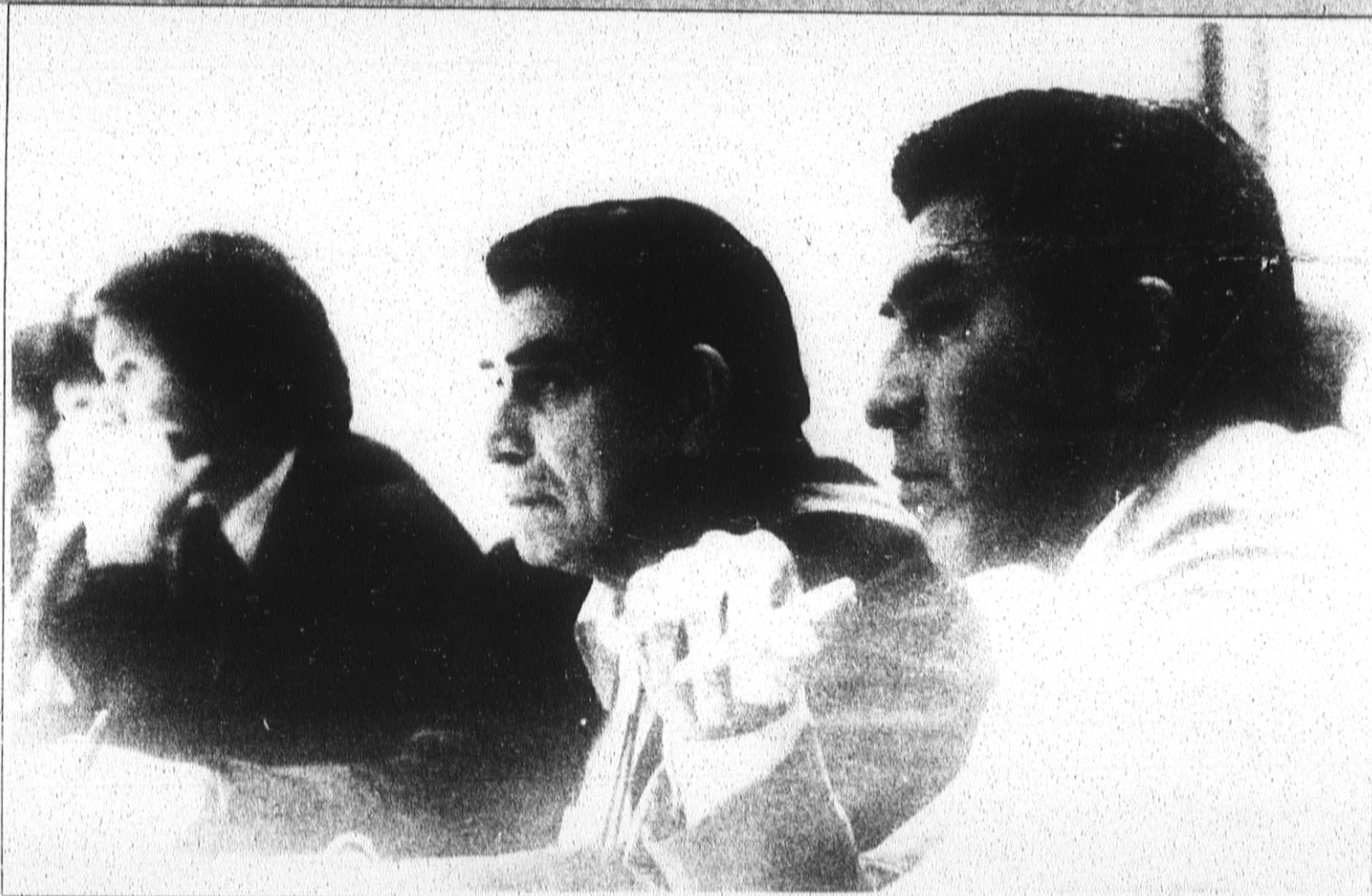
AFN gives villages convention vote

Residents of about 240 Native villages, communities and groups in Alaska have been given a louder voice in the Alaska Federation of Natives, the state's most powerful Native organization, for the first time in AFN's 19-year history.

The more than 61,000 Alaska Natives who live in those communities will gain voting rights at AFN's 19th Annual Convention which convenes in Anchorage Oct. 24. Voting rights entitle them to a voice in AFN policies which are expressed in the resolutions adopted by the delegates.

In addition, a new interim board to represent village residents in AFN policies will be created at a special statewide village meeting to be held one day before the convention. The Village Board, to be composed of one representative from each of Alaska's 12 regions, will look at the options for permanent village representation in the AFN structure.

The changes were approved Oct. 7 by the AFN Board of Directors and Village Steering



Gordon Pullar (left), Alex Shadura and Markel Ewan at the recent meeting of the Village Steering Committee and AFN board.

photo by Bartz Englishhoe

(Continued on Page Twelve)

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(Continued from page 1)

Committee. They are the result of a resolution adopted at the 1984 AFN Convention which called for 'the restructuring of AFN to include all Alaskan Native peoples and their organizations.'

Delegates to previous AFN conventions have represented the 13 regional profit corporations and 12 non-profit associations, created under the 1971 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. There were 891 such delegations to the 1984 Convention, with delegates apportioned according to a formula based on Native enrollments.

Under the changes, Native communities will be granted nearly a third of all votes at the convention. Regional profit corporations will have about 36 percent of the votes, regional non-profits about 35 percent and Native communities about 29 percent.

Convention votes will be distributed to regional and community delegations on the basis of one per 25 people listed in the final ANCSA roll. For example, the village of Huslia located in the Doyon region and with a Native enrollment of 227, will receive nine convention votes. Doyon, Ltd., the regional profit corporation, has an enrollment of 9,062 and will receive 362 votes.

The four types of Native communities which qualify for convention representation and votes

are: ANCSA-certified villages including former reserves and urban corporations, ANCSA-certified groups and pending groups, the Annette Island Indian Reservation (Metlakatla) and other Native communities recognized by the federal government as Indian Reorganization Act villages or traditional councils.

It will be up to each Native community to decide the composition of its AFN convention delegation. An AFN credentials committee will approve each delegation.

AFN President Janie Leask said the change is one of many undertaken by AFN since its

creation in 1966 to meet the changing needs of Alaska's Native people.

"The point is that AFN represents all Alaska Natives," Leask said. "As a people, we can only benefit from the strength that comes with unity."

Native communities are encouraged to begin making arrangements to attend the 1985 convention. Further information is being sent to the communities by AFN.

