

**But Needs Financial Support—**

# Washington State AFN Chap. Gains Momentum

By LIBET JOHNSON

The new Washington State Chapter of the Alaskan Federation of Natives is gaining momentum, though hampered by the absence of financial support.

Several programs have already been started, launched with little more than the determination of the workers involved and a real need.

One of the most important projects the chapter has undertaken is a census of all Alaskan Natives, 1/4 degree blood or more, now living in Washington. This effort was started last June.

With the cooperation of six radio-television stations in the Seattle area and two in the Portland area, advertisements for the census were broadcast regularly, appealing to all non-resident natives to contact the AFN and register themselves.

At last count, 956 adult Alaskan Natives had responded in writing, with over 4,000 dependents. George Walters, Washington State Chapter president, estimates that the toll may go as high as 15,000.

With the present toll, the chapter is entitled to 34 votes in the Federation, since it has formally been recognized for a seat on the Convention floor. It also qualifies for a seat on the Board of Directors.

Several projects are presently under way or on the drawing board. Henry Apodruk, an Eskimo carver, is heading the Committee to Preserve Cultural Heritage. He hopes to start a training program in Native Arts and Crafts.

He is also looking for dancers to start an Eskimo Dance Team, to which some boys from Wainwright have offered to donate a drum.

Mr. Apodruk has been generous enough to donate some of the proceeds from his own carvings to the AFN.

Margaret Cooke, an Athabas-

can Indian, is the coordinator for the Education Committee. It concerns itself with ways of securing scholarship money for students through other organizations such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Economic Opportunity.

At the moment it is mainly involved in giving information and being of as much assistance as possible, while working out of Mrs. Cooke's own home.

In fact, the whole chapter is run from private homes, the main one being that of George Walters, where his wife and children pitch in wherever needed, which is everywhere.

Mrs. Walters recently estab-

lished the Health and Welfare Committee. So far it has been working on getting flowers to some of the hospitalized natives as well as directing people in need to appropriate medical services. The committee is mostly an advice and referral operation at the moment.

One of the intentions of the Chapter is to keep the people informed of the Land Claims issue. Mr. J.B. Mallott is the Public Information Officer and has news available at all times on current charges and progress.

Newsletters are sent out to all members of the chapter,

which number over 300 now. These letters contain news of the local and overall AFN activities and the state of the Land Claims issue.

The funds used to purchase the paper and stamps all come from donations, as does all of the rest of the money used by the Chapter so far.

Mr. Walters encourages all Native Alaskans of 1/4 blood or more, now living in Washington, to back the AFN resolutions as well as register themselves with the AFN so that the chapter will be eligible for funds to implement these necessary services.