

AFN, Inc. Takes Steps Toward Unity at Annual Convention...

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the organization to the present time.

Charlie Edwardsen, Jr., representing what he called the "minority view" of the Arctic Slope people, addressed the body on the question of voting and credentials.

He called for a halt to the squabble over "who I am and who you are not." Speaking of the Native people, Edwardsen said, "We took a long shot and it was the price of every dignified person and every sole person here what the long shot is."

"I think we have a definite

obligation to AFN: Here again that this is our soil. Here again, that this is our land."

"Some are at home. The majority will always be at home." Edwardsen spoke of AFN as "our marriage to this land that we commenced in 1966. I must say to my brethren and to my sisters, this is still your land. No corporation in America has ever gotten 40 million acres of land. I feel that we are going to have to protect ourselves and resolve our monetary differences. If we can borrow \$700,000 and have

gotten 40 million acres, we're not too shabby!"

Edwardsen, because of his minority position, refused to vote the 22 votes awarded Arctic Slope. He asked for and received a half-vote only.

The question of who the convention was representing became central to the issues. Aside from Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, there was also no official representation from Cook Inlet Regional Corporation although delegates attended from Cook Inlet Native Association, the non-profit group.

During the first part of the convention, voting was permitted for the following delegations: Tlingit-Haida, AVCP, Kodiak, Bristol Bay, Kenai, Copper River, Alaska Peninsula (no longer in existence), Arctic Slope, Unalakleet, Tanana Chiefs, Aleut League, Cordova, Tyonek, Eklutna, Washington Chapter AFN, Upper Kuskokwim, Cook Inlet, Nome, and Kotzebue.

Wright entreated the membership not to dissolve the old organization until there was a positive commitment by the twelve regional corporations to assume the debts.

"The most important thing in my mind is to see unity among the Native people, but only if they honor their debts and pay their bills."

In a sudden move to forestall action by the convention, Wright attempted to recess the convention Friday and reconvene it at Wildwood on Dec. 15.

As he walked from the room, Tanana Chiefs' president John Sackett called for a point of order on whether Wright had the power to recess the convention.

Vice-president Philip Guy took the chair in the absence of Wright and called for a ruling from parliamentarian John Hope.

Hope ruled that the chairman did NOT have the authority to recess a convention and that it could proceed in his absence.

As the session continued, Borbridge rose to say, "It is we the people who have the right to determine where this convention will go."

Shortly after Wright's departure, the assembled body passed the final resolution of the old AFN, a resolution to dissolve its existence. The resolution passed by a vote of 420, YES; 33, NO; 23½, absent; and 19, abstaining.

AFN, Inc. President Willie Hensley has consistently maintained that he did not view the two organizations as conflicting or separate ones and that, in fact, their operations have overlapped for some time.

The formation of AFN, Inc. was accomplished under the auspices of the board of the earlier organization, Don Wright presiding, to coincide with the structure of the Land Claims Settlement as set by Congress.

"We are not kicking you into a structure which has been set without your participation," said Borbridge on the following day. "It will be an organization of the people."

Hensley said, "There is nothing in the land claims act which requires a statewide organization. If there is such a thing, it has to be by the common consent of the regions."

In the matter of financial obligations of the regions for debts incurred by AFN (which was awarded no monies under the Act) "common consent" will be a crucial matter.

"I think," said Hensley, "every Native person, every village, and every regional corporation that stands to benefit under the act has a moral obligation to pay this debt."

Referring to the \$700,000 total, Hensley believes there is a good chance at least \$400,000 will be awarded by the U.S. Court of Claims. "That leaves a \$300,000 bill for six years of operation. That is not a very substantial debt when you consider the benefits derived."

It has been held by many observers that the structure devised by Congress effectively promotes fragmentation, divisiveness, and regionalism, rather than unity.

Will all twelve regional corporations eventually rejoin the central entity now known as AFN, Inc.? "Joining is, after all," said one delegate, "the choice of the individual organization."

Roy Huhndorf of Cook Inlet commented: "I feel people always have a means to form themselves into a group."

"There are now in Alaska two sources of power available to the Native people," added AFN attorney Ken Bass. "The first is the power of the regional corporations created by the settlement act, enormous power and money. The second source is the Alaska Native people that have been here thousands of years. When both work together,

er, that power is insurmountable."

One by one, representatives of the people rose up to support the structuring of the new AFN, Inc. along the lines of the twelve region concept. They agreed to take back the proposal drawn up by the board to each region for further definition and refining before final acceptance.

The body present also passed a resolution calling on "each Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act corporation to implement the authority granted them by the 1973 Supplemental Appropriations Bill and loan to AFN, Inc., a population proportioned share of the estimated \$750,000 indebtedness incurred by AFN in obtaining passage of the Land Claims Bill."

It was further resolved "that this matter be given the highest possible urgency by every regional corporation."

It was a possibility that the larger and more powerful groups could have overridden the interests of the smaller regions had they chosen to do so. At several points of the convention, unity was in serious danger. Concessions had to be made and compromises effected.

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Questions and Answers

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- A: You have to incorporate before you can do anything under the bill.
- Q: Would the people be taxed?
- A: Not on the money you get out of the settlement, but if you put that money to work for you, then you pay other taxes.
- Q: If the village wanted to use its money to improve the quality of life in the village should it have a profit or non-profit corporation?
- A: It can have both. Perhaps this is the time to explain to the people that this is not something the borough devised to confuse you. It's something your Congressmen devised to confuse you.
- Q: If somebody died, would that money come into the corporation or go to his family?
- A: Even if the person died, not leaving a will (which is called legally "intestate") it would not prevent his interest being passed on to his heirs. Only if you have no children, no living relatives, no wife or husband, would your interest go back to the corporation. If he has no relatives, he can, however, leave a will with his interest in the corporation going to a non-native. But that person could NOT vote the stock.
- Q: Who is entitled to be a stockholder in the regional and village corporation?
- A: Every ¼ Alaskan Native ENROLLED. Every man, woman, and child. A young baby is every much a stockholder as well as every 80 year old person.
- Q: If I had died on Jan. 5, 1972, still qualified as a Native under the Act, even though the corporation is unformed, what happens to my share?
- A: Even though the corporation was unformed, your shares, your interests would have passed on to your heirs.
- Q: If I have an adopted white baby, could he qualify as a stockholder?
- A: No, he would not. But you could leave your stock to him in your will.
- Q: Can the stocks be sold, bought, traded, or bartered at any time?
- A: No, they cannot be sold, pledged, mortgaged or alienated in any way for a period of 20 years.
- Q: Will stockholders receive any dividends during that time?
- A: Yes, the profit making corporation CAN make dividend distributions every year and for the 20 years thereafter. It is not FORCED to make dividends and can choose to plow it back into the corporation. If you have
- some directors who are not paying dividends and you want dividends, then you have the option to elect different directors the next year, directors who stand for paying dividends.
- Q: How much stock can one person own?
- A: Each person is one shareholder. A parent is the caretaker of his children. No one can assume power by accumulating anyone else's stock other than his kids for 20 years. If each person receives 100 shares in the regional corporation, imagine a person with 5 children, three under 18, two over 18. Each child has 100 shares. The three under 18 are not entitled to vote at the annual stockholders meeting or on any matters of business. The parent will be entitled to vote his own 100 shares and the 300 shares his minor children hold. The two children over 18 vote their own shares of stock.
- Q: Would we be issued the certificate of stockholder and how important is it to have this certificate?
- A: Stock certificates will not be issued until enrollment is FINAL. A stock certificate is simply evidence. It's really just a piece of paper that gives evidence you own stock in the corporation.
- Q: What if I lose this certificate?
- A: Your stock will be registered with the corporation so if you lose your certificate, the corporation would have a record of it. They could issue you a new one. In 20 years, you would have to have the certificate to sell the stock.
- Q: Can you buy additional stock other than your own.
- A: The answer is NO.
- Q: What happens if I move to Wainwright? Can I transfer my stock to their corporation?
- A: You are enrolled to a specific village, Point Hope. You are issued in the corporation of Point Hope. If you moved to Wainwright, you could NOT transfer your stock to Wainwright but that wouldn't prevent you from owning your Point Hope stock.
- Q: What if I'm not from here? I'm from Barrow.
- A: Where are you enrolled? If you are enrolled here, you can still be a stockholder in the Point Hope corporation.
- Q: My father is still not enrolled. Can I still enroll him?
- A: Yes, you can still enroll him anytime before March 30, 1973.

GOVERNOR

WILLIAM

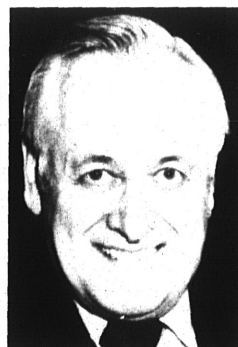
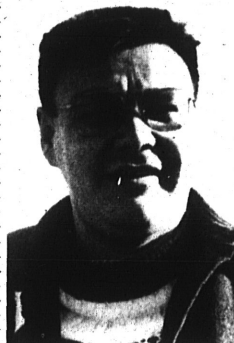
A.

EGAN

ENDORSES

LARRY

PETERSON



(Paid Ad by Committee to Elect Larry Peterson to the State House, Sampson Henry, Chairman, Box 970-A, Fairbanks, AK)