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Unanguq Tunuktauq The Aleuts Speak

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HOUSE PASSES LAND CLAIMS

'One More Hurdle,' Says Don Wright

"There are three approaches that we can take to this problem of native land rights in Alaska," Assistant Secretary of the Interior William E. Warne told the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, "procrastination, negotiation or expropriation."

"Of these three, the method of procrastination has been the most widely used."

These observations are taken from a statement made almost 24 years ago, on February 24, 1948. Almost a quarter of a century later, the U.S. Congress is just coming to action on the problem of native land rights.

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives acted upon its first bill to settle the problem of "native land claims." By an overwhelming vote of 334 to 63 after two days debate, the legislators agreed to allow Alaskan natives to retain a total of 40 million acres of land and to pay them a total of \$925,000,000 for the rest of Alaska.

The provisions of the House Bill—H.R. 10367 are as follows. The bill provides 40 million acres of land consisting of:

a. 18 million acres surface and mineral estate surrounding villages.

b. 22 million acres in fee after state completes selection.

The bill provides \$425 mil-

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Conservationist Threat Seen

Senate floor action on native land claims, estimated to begin about November 1, will prove another battleground as conservationists try to tie up Alaskan lands under federal control and planning statutes, according to Sam Kito and Tim Wallis of the Fairbanks Native Association.

The conservationist fight was the main topic of their Veterans Day press conference in Fairbanks where they also refuted reports in the Fairbanks press that natives were "alienated" and trying to push non-natives out of Alaska.

"Frank Chapados' fear that natives will try to push non-natives out of Alaska within five years of a land claims settlement is absurd," DNH head Tim Wallis told the Fairbanks press in response to a remark made at a business leaders' session with Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) last Friday.

At the same meeting, Chamber of Commerce manager Wally Baer reportedly remarked that Alaskan natives were already alienated from whites. Baer referred to actions at the AFN convention this month when all whites and newsmen were banned from the convention floor.

Claims Could Reach Nixon By Thanksgiving

Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) said Monday in Anchorage that "preservationists" who oppose a land claims settlement might decide to force the acreage figure in the Senate bill so high that the Senate would not accept it.

He predicted that the Alaska Chamber of Commerce, the Alaska Miners Association, Alaska Loggers and others, all of whom have come out against various provisions of the bill, would not oppose it on the Senate floor but would wait until it reaches a Senate-House conference committee before seeking modification.

According to the Senator, the AFN had agreed not to contest the 40 million acre figure in a Senate floor fight. If they did, he said, he would not support them. Democrats Sen. Mike Gravel and Rep. Nick Begich told the AFN last month they would support any position the Federation adopted to fight for the Senate bill.

Stevens also suggested that the bill could proceed through the Senate in 10 days or so, work its way through the conference committee by mid-November and be in the President's hands for approval by Thanksgiving. A foreign aid bill filibuster this week, however, could delay claims consideration.

"They (the preservationists) hope to increase the land provisions to the point where the bill will fail. They tried a similar tactic during the statehood battle," Stevens said. In that case, he said, their logic failed. The Senate accepted a 103.5 million acre figure.

"In no way during the AFN convention had we indicated we were alienating ourselves against the non-native community," Wallis said. "In any executive session, all non-members are excused. This is a private session at which time more work gets accomplished."

"I don't know of any native person who completely segregates himself."

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SITE OF CELEBRATION—Tom Jones Pub, a Washington D.C. bar predominantly frequented by Indians, displays an AFN poster in its

window and is the site of frequent celebrations as the land claims bill passes one legislative hurdle after another.

Ivory Carvers Are Poorly Paid Artists

By MADELYN SHULMAN
Staff Writer

On a windy Saturday afternoon in Gambell, a visitor glanced into any one of a dozen or more homes would find an ivory carver at work. In a corner filled with ivory dust, an unheated attic or workbench by a window, the men work with their hands and tools, carving animals, jewelry, boats and oosiks for tourists, soldiers, gift shops and collectors.

Though the industry appears flourishing here, good ivory carving is becoming scarce for commercial sources. Some store owners in Anchorage and Fair-

banks guard their sources of ivory. When they find an outstanding carver, they will refuse to release his name for fear of competition.

Melvin Olanna, the University of Alaska traveling art upgrade consultant, is trying to convince village carvers to sign their work. This, he says increases the value of the carvings and establishes a reputation for the artist.

"Daniel Iyakitan may be the best carver in Gambell," remarked Olanna at one time. Iyakitan, a carver of swans, intricate baleen boats and other pieces, is frequently visited by tourists who land in this isolated village.

Last summer, two plane loads of visitors came to the village on tours sponsored by a University of Alaska professor who used to teach in Gambell. One major attraction of the island was the opportunity to sit and watch traditional carvers at work.

Daniel Iyakitan, whose finely detailed swans, walrus, whale and seals are known throughout Alaska, is missing most of his fingers. According to the villagers, Daniel was born with most of his hands fused together till an operation separated the bone and muscle enough to give him partial moveable digits. With these, he wields his tools.

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Fire Destroys Kake Community Center

"It's just a miracle the whole town didn't go," said Clarence Jackson of Kake, Alaska the day after fire destroyed the town's community building and threatened to destroy the entire village.

Just two weeks before, the community building was the center of activities for the Kake Potlatch, climaxing three days of activities celebrating the raising of the Kake Totem Pole. Hundreds of visitors, including Governor William A. Egan, attended the Potlatch and meetings of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program board held in the city hall, part of the community building.

The fire probably started about 5:30 a.m. on October 20 in the 60 year old community building, but was not discovered for about an hour. When it was finally discovered, the town's fire siren was not working and men had to run around the village to summon help.

Like most Indian and Eskimo villages, Kake has inadequate fire fighting equipment. An old jeep reserved for the purpose did not work when needed. An outmoded fire truck donated by Petersburg, was inoperable as well. With a brisk wind blowing

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AEC Briefs Aleuts

Despite 17 days of briefings by the AEC in 19 villages on the Aleutian chain, the Aleut people "are still afraid that something will happen "if the Atomic Energy Commission detonates its 5 megaton Cannikin blast on Amchitka.

Mrs. Lillie McGarvey, secretary treasurer of the Aleut League stated this at a press conference held by members of the seven man AEC and Environmental Protection Agency team which briefed villagers this month.

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