

Chiefs Conference...

(Continued from page 1)

flected their concern," Mr. Wallis said.

When the work was completed, the full Board of the Tanana Chiefs hand-carried their selections to Secretary of the Interior Morton's office in Washington, D.C. On the following day, meeting with the Secretary they presented their views on the disputed Rampart Dam area.

There was much discussion during the Conference on the subject of the Rampart Dam area classification. At the present time, it remains a legal problem to be litigated.

However, the Tanana Chiefs hope for a decision from the Department of the Interior as to whether they will be allowed to file on this area, making an alternate selection in the event that Rampart Dam area is eventually not available.

There has been some criticism of the lands selected by the Tanana Chiefs. Richard Frank explained that the people making the decisions tried to keep in mind the best interest as projected into the future rather than the immediate present.

The advisors consulted were local Alaskans, not outsiders. Geologists, biologists, and ecologists were asked:

"Which lands would you select if you were in the Tanana Chiefs and why would you select them?" Consideration was given to fish and wildlife resources, timber resources, and mineral resources.

"We hope we have made selections we can live by," said Frank.

It was announced that the Tanana-Chiefs had retained a Washington, D.C. attorney, Mr. Art Lazarus to represent their interests in Washington. Copies of the contract with Mr. Lazarus were distributed to each delegate.

Delegates were cautioned about responding to letters mailed to the villages from FNA, BIA, and other consulting firms, either giving information or soliciting contracts. Information has been confusing or even inadvertently in error.

Before responding to mail, villages were advised to check with the Tanana Chiefs office in Fairbanks. This was not to be interpreted as a paternalistic gesture, but to enable the Tanana Chiefs to act in full cooperation with one another and to avoid duplication of efforts.

It was pointed out "that if each village signed an individual contract, and we're talking about some 200 villages, at \$1000 each, then one firm would be making \$200,000 for doing what could be done in one effort."

Barry Jackson, attorney for the Tanana Chiefs, explained that under the terms of the Land Claims Act, no persons can commit the funds of either the regional corporations or the village corporations.

"Therefore, if you individually sign a contract, you cannot consider that the funds to pay these will come out of corporation funds."

Mr. Jackson explained that it didn't matter if you had a good contract with a good consultant or a bad contract with a bad consultant. The question is going to come up as to whether the regional corporation should pay a consultant hired before the corporation was formed.

They will be free to decide if they want to honor these contracts but they will not be legally obligated to do so.

An enrollment contract with the BIA was negotiated by Sam Kito and Tim Wallis. The Tanana Chiefs were the first to do so, setting a precedent for other regions.

An important aspect of the

contract was the granting of funds for advertising purposes, to make people aware that the roll was being taken. John Hope of the BIA discussed some of the procedures of the enrollment and explained the timetables.

There will be a total of sixty-nine enumerators for the villages assisted by fifty-three coordinators. A training program for both the enumerators and the coordinators has been initiated. It is the intent of the BIA to have all Natives in Alaska enrolled by August 1972.

Through the Health and Social Service Training Program, there will be persons traveling to the villages to explain both enrollment and the Land Act.

Schedules have been completed and sent out to the villages, along with maps marking the withdrawals prepared by the Land Department of the Tanana Chiefs. These will be made available for study.

On the second day of the Conference, John Sackett was elected new President of the Tanana Chiefs. Originally from the village of Huslia, John is now living in Anchorage, where he will graduate from the University of Alaska in Business Administration this coming May.

Sackett has served on the Board of Trustees for AMU, and also on the Board of the AFN. The past year, he held the position of Treasurer of the Tanana Chiefs.

In May, Mr. Sackett will move to Fairbanks to devote his full time to his new job.

Elected Vice-President was Tim Wallis. Lucy Carlo was voted in as Secretary and Melvin Charlie as Treasurer. This year's Executive Board will seat James Huntington of Galena, Ronnie Sam of Alatna, Jonathan Solomon of Ft. Yukon, Ernest Holmberg of McGrath, and Pat Frank of Holy Cross.

The last day of the Conference saw the important election of the Five Incorporators who will write the Articles and By-Laws of the Regional Corporation and sign it into a legal entity.

The delegates also had the role of assigning how much power they would choose to give these Incorporators.

In the end result, the final power remained vested in the full Board of the Tanana Chiefs to whom the incorporators would report back.

The body assembled chose Tim Wallis, Jules Wright, John Sackett, Sam Kito, and Roger Huntington as the Five Incorporators. Roger Huntington then made a motion that this group work out the articles and by-laws but that the actual signing be done by the older chiefs as a historical gesture.

There seemed to be some doubts as to the legal questions involved and after much discussion, John Sackett, age twenty-seven, commented, "By the time we get done with this, I'll be an old chief!"

The desire to honor the old chiefs was a commendable gesture, yet this was overwhelmingly a young man's conference. It was suggested by an onlooker that the old chiefs may be reluctant to sign their peoples into modern corporations.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference where the delegates are warmly and personally recognized and called by their given names seems a far more human community than the typical American corporate structure.

The body present voted to retain the older organization known as the Tanana Chiefs rather than merge it into the new Regional Corporation. The two corporations, one non-profit and

Leaders Hit Selection Plan...

(Continued from page 1)

ter, Executive Director, stated cautiously:

"There seem to be areas of probable misunderstanding between Federal, State, and Native interests. These need clarification. Some of the areas assigned for Native selections include mountaintops, glaciers, etc. Of course, we're not too happy with that."

"We're especially unhappy with the large amounts set aside for wildlife refuge. Generally speaking, the Native people are dissatisfied with the lands set aside for their selection and will be meeting with the Secretary of the Interior and his staff to discuss this."

Tim Wallis, Vice-President of the Tanana Chiefs Conference, felt that the "overall land withdrawals within the Tanana Chiefs region have been basically fairly good. We did not expect the Department of the Interior to make such a big withdrawal, 273 million acres. Some areas along the riverways we did not get. They did override us."

Newly elected President John Sackett agreed that in general the Tanana Chiefs were satisfied with the selections made for their region, except in the Rampart Dam decision, which they felt should have been declared a classification area.

The Executive Board has written a letter to the Department of the Interior, requesting additional withdrawals in the Tanana and Rampart area to protect the village of Tanana.

"If necessary," Sackett said, "we will request a trade."

Joe Upicksoun, President of the Arctic Slope Native Association, made this statement from Barrow: "On the withdrawals the Secretary made, Arctic Slope was short-changed 5 million acres. We were supposed to have withdrawn for us 15 million acres, three times the townships. We got 10.6 million."

"The Arctic Slope Native has learned to live with whatever the Federal government, State, or Congress does. We try to make the best of it. Of course, we have our disappointments."

"This shortage of prime lands on the Arctic Slope hurts not only the Arctic Slope Native Association but all of the Alaskan Natives, because if there are going to be any revenues off these lands, all would share. If we have non-productive lands, all of the Natives are short-changed."

The strongest statement of discontent was issued by the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska. John Borbridge, Jr., President of the Central Council had these comments:

"The ink on the Alaska Native Settlement Act is hardly dry — yet its promises to the Native people of Alaska has been largely broken by the Public Land Orders issued March 16."

"We are now put on notice by these land orders that our rights and hopes are to be served as those of the Native Americans traditionally have been served, which is to say 'dead last.' The Natives are again to subordinate

one very much a profit-making enterprise, will not be co-identical but will undoubtedly be mutually supportive."

Tim Wallis made a moving speech urging the delegates to back the men they have elected to leadership positions.

"It is time," he said, "for more political involvement with our people. In the Tanana Chiefs' area we have the opportunity to elect two representatives and one senator. We are going to have to start getting politically involved. We have to start supporting our people."

their expectations for a full measure of justice to the voracious land appetite of government."

(Continued on Page 7)

Stick Dance History...

(Continued from page 2)

place the performers in a trance, and while 20 hours of dancing leaves one physically exhausted, you are mentally at peace.

Mentioned previously, and relative to the above-mentioned reasons, the need to repay the persons assisting in the burial of the deceased relative results in the flow of self-esteem received within the village.

The transition to the western society has taken its toll on the stickdance in that there are certain customs that are no longer observed and in the fact that many of the younger native people have forgotten entirely the meaning of the ceremony. Today only the elders know all the songs and the true religious meaning of the ceremony and the trend has been to make the stickdance a carnival where everyone can get together and have a good time.

It is my hope that this paper, in its small way, will help to show the Feast for the Dead as it is — a religious ceremony commanding the respect equal to any other religion — and to instill a pride in the younger native people by showing them a small part of the great culture and heritage of which they are members.

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