

Tanana Chiefs Struggle with Tough Corporate Structure...

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Native Land Claims Act", prepared by Robert Nathan and Associates for the Alaska Native Foundation.

Barry Jackson, attorney for Tanana Chiefs, outlined the functions of DOYON, Ltd., explained the intricacies of stock ownership and transfer, and the manner in which native corporations and stock differ from that of an ordinary American profit-making entity.

President John Sackett addressed his people on the responsibilities DOYON, Ltd. has that IBM, General Mills, and General Motors do not have to worry about.

"They do not have to worry about whether their stockholders have good educational and transportation facilities, they do not have to worry about obtaining adequate housing for their people, or whether or not there is electricity in the village or adequate health facilities."

"All they have to do is make a profit and profit alone. So we have a greater burden on

us."

Tanana Chiefs will have "about \$125 million in our villages and regions and we will be owners of 13 million acres of land — the largest land owner in the state... assets far in excess that most corporations have that begin their initial stage."

"Because we have so much to lose," said Sackett, "we have a tremendous responsibility to ourselves and to our people."

With this awesome task before them, Athabaskan delegates — heavy equipment operators, trappers, fishermen, construction supervisors, fire-fighters, store-owners, students, and women leaders, urban as well as village people — sat down together to work out a future.

Education was a major and immediate topic — early childhood education, scholarships for college students, and management training for the corporation executives of the future.

Health needs were another issue high on the list. Georgi-

anna Lincoln, Tanana Chiefs' representative on the Tanana Health Service Unit, announced the intent of the Public Health Service to lease clinic facilities in 13 villages of the region.

The clinics will be constructed by individual villages and

leased to PHS, bringing income into the villages. Delegates discussed moving the service director at the Tanana Hospital into Fairbanks for better efficiency and communications, but resolved to leave the administrative head in Tanana, re-

sisting the tendency to urbanize all regional activities.

Land Chief Richard Frank and consultant Robert Jenks gave a detailed projection of land goals for the next few years, answering questions on selection procedures.

How do you identify and protect historical and cemetery sites? How do you measure a mile, a section, a township? Who owns the beds of navigable waters? How do you coordinate checkerboard selection between village and region to maximize ownership of potential mineral-rich land?

The diagrams and mechanics of checkerboarding were sufficiently involved as to suggest the possibility of Alaskan natives calling on chess expert Bobby Fisher to mastermind a land strategy.

Incorporators of DOYON, Ltd. went to great lengths to insure that corporation power

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Conflicting Dates...

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vention.

A confused and weary member stood up to ask, "Are we talking about AFN or AFN, Inc.?"

Said President John Sackett, "I hope both. I hope that within the next few months we can resolve this."

The motion to have the board act as delegates passed unanimously.

However, following the vote Horace Biederman of Eagle stood up to say, "This problem wasn't solved that's facing us."

Biederman expressed the feeling that there should be a representative from every village attending the next AFN convention.

Sackett outlined the enormous cost of sending even a small delegation to Anchorage.

Don Wright made an appearance at the three-day conference in Fairbanks and addressed a closed session of the executive board of Tanana Chiefs. There was no public announcement as to the nature of that address.

However, Wright made a statement to Tundra Times on

the history of events that led to his dismissal and on allegations about financial irregularities within the AFN organization. His statement appears on page one of this issue.

The shadow of the AFN conflict fell over delegates who had come to discuss regional issues within the Tanana Chiefs area and found themselves faced with a division of loyalties over the statewide AFN struggle.

Borbridge on Shakeup..

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issued solely by Wright, he claims, without any instruction from the board.

The board plans to clarify the confusion immediately.

"One, by cancelling this call (Wildwood) as not being anything that the board had directed at all, and then, in a more positive vein, to announce that in its meeting in Anchorage on Sept. 23-25, by formal motion, a convention was called to be held there Oct. 26-28."

"The predecessor organization to the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. was the unincorporated statewide association known at the Alaska Federation of Natives. It was that organization which assumed responsibility for the lobbying activities which culminated in the passage of the Native Land Claims Act."

"It was that same organization that in view of the fact that the Claims Act called for the formation of 12 regional corporations, moved to restructure itself accordingly."

AFN, Inc. formally assumed all of the assets, all of the debts and obligations and responsibilities of its predecessor organization.

"As a consequence," said Borbridge, "all programs, all assets, and all of the things that make an organization viable, have now moved to AFN, Inc. And in my view, it would be unnecessarily confusing were any kind of effort to be made to keep alive the previously unincorporated association."

"If Wright is relying on his presidency of this unincorporated association for his authority (to call the Wildwood convention)," Borbridge said, "I would only comment that the constitution provides that such a call as to both time and site can be made only by the board of directors and they have not chosen to do so."

The new chairman related charges about recent elections within AFN, Inc.

"There have been some hints or charges that there was either collusion or that this was all pre-planned and pre-organized. Such was not the case," he said.

"There was never any agreement between or discussion ahead of time by Mr. Hensley, myself, or any other as to who would be serving a statewide role in a restructured, reorganized AFN, Inc."

"And I think," he added, "That we were impressed by the fact that the vote was unanimous, that as of this date, we have not had any formal pro-

test by any regional corporations that this would not serve our best interests."

Borbridge noted that the board acted with a quorum present in Anchorage and issued a formal call during the three day meeting, so that absent members could be there. Wright was present at the final session and "did make several comments to the board."

"I stress this," said the new chairman, "because at that session the board carefully reviewed its actions of the first two days, read the minutes, and moved again to reaffirm all actions previously taken."

"We don't want to have a misunderstanding that we did not invite the fullest discussion of things. It's unfortunate that Mr. Wright chose not to remain for the full meeting."

Borbridge hailed the board's action as "a positive and resolute move to correct a situation and that as we move ahead, we need to resolve several matters of very basic concern to all of us."

"The entire nature of the Alaska Federation of Natives," he said, "has changed from being the spokesman in the Land Claims to being a service-oriented organization whose activities must be complementary to the regional corporations."

Borbridge said he was "particularly heartened by the willingness of Arctic Slope Native Corporation president, Joe Upiakson, to serve as vice-chairman of the board."

"Upiakson's concern," he said, "was that there had been an unnecessary competition between the regional corporations and the statewide AFN, Inc."

"We intend that this shall not happen for the future, but that we shall be able to serve the regionals and through the regionals, we should be able to serve the villages."

"Out of this, we feel that there will be a stronger organization and that communications between the villages and AFN, Inc. will be increased and sharpened considerably."

"I would certainly want to assure all of our constituents in the villages that the main thrust of our activities was to so structure the AFN, that it would serve as an organization that better serves the important people in all these activities, those who are in the villages, and those who are going to be the landowners. And I ask, on behalf of the board, for their support and their understanding as we proceed with the task ahead."

Wright Defends Self...

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presented by attorney Barry Jackson for \$9000.

"There was no money," said Wright, "to pay that bill."

"There was a motion by Willie Hensley," Wright pointed to a copy of the minutes, "to adopt Mr. Potter as comptroller."

The comptroller was to report to the board of directors only, not to the president or to Harry Carter, Wright maintained.

He then read from the minutes a full description of the comptroller's duties. The comptroller's function was to consist of "providing to the management (of AFN, Inc.): efficient accumulation, recording, and reporting of data measurement of all phases of financial operations, assignments of authority, and responsibility for the prevention of error and fraud."

The wording of the comptroller's duties passed unanimously, according to Wright.

Also at that meeting, he noted that Willie Hensley had moved to support Wildwood. Wright said he was instructed to "go full tilt to get Wildwood in operation."

Nels Anderson, he said, moved that the regions should budget Don Wright and his secretary \$4000 a month.

"They never gave me a nickel."

Wright said he was instructed by the board on June 2 to create the AFN Housing Authority and that he then "hit Wildwood and housing."

At that same meeting in June, chaired by Wright, Charlie Ewan moved to accept Potter's financial report. "Everything," said Wright, "was supposedly in order."

Wright saw his role as that of an administrator of programs.

"The board of directors were to be fully responsible for financial matters. To my dismay," he said, "I find they were not. I brought to the attention of the board that we were having grave difficulties. Work was not getting done, bookkeepers were inaccurate."

Asked if he made these observations in writing, Wright said they were made in individual conversations with board members.

He called a meeting for Aug. 4-5 in Anchorage, at which the board went into closed session. Wright stated that he told them "there was no way we could continue under the present ac-

counting."

At the August meeting, John Sackett moved to terminate Potter as comptroller and to hire a new accountant to clear up the books. In the interim, Wright said he and Carter were authorized to handle the accounting. A later motion stipulated that he alone be responsible for everything.

An accountant was hired from the Boeing Company's accounting division to straighten out the books and program the entire AFN systems on an NCR 400.

"This was done. The books are in excellent shape," said Wright.

The audit was to be completed by Sept. 15, but on Sept. 3, Wright said, "a number of board members called in to change the date of the next meeting to Sept. 23 at Wildwood."

At the instruction of the board Wright said he sent out letters announcing that meeting and that he received return receipt requested confirmations from every single board member.

Therefore he scheduled the Wildwood AFN and Rural CAP meetings for adjoining days. He was "instructed to go and address the Wildwood Rural CAP meeting on the subject of working closer to the AFN and to ask that board to answer why Rural CAP could not be run by AFN."

Said Wright: "Charlie Chong of the Seattle regional offices of Rural CAP was at Wildwood, Harry Carter is a member of the Rural CAP board. The officers of AFN were at Wildwood. George Miller was there."

"For some reason unbeknownst to me," said Wright, "John Borbridge called a meeting at the Royal Hotel in Anchorage and willfully and intentionally began to convince board members that they should dump Don Wright."

Wright called the Anchorage meeting a "rump session" and said of those present, "they are the ones that are fiscally irresponsible. They've discredited me. They've lessened, if not nullified, my chances for the State Senate. It's hard to undo a charge like this."

Wright said he has received no notice of his ouster from the board in writing. "I only heard of it through the media."

"I stand ready to answer any charge that's been made through innuendo."

Banquets..

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as arrangements are firmed up.

In the past, Tundra Times banquets have had such speakers as former Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, Vincent Price, Jack Anderson, Jeanne Dixon and others.

Governor William A. Egan and his wife have been invited. Egan will not be able to attend the Fairbanks banquet as he is scheduled to be at Sitka for the Alaska Day.

"Consequently, it will not be possible for me to attend the Fairbanks banquet," Governor Egan writes, "but I will make every attempt to be in Anchorage on Saturday, October 21 for the banquet to be held there."

The congressional delegation has been invited and it has been customary for them to be present at Tundra Times banquets.

There is a standing invitation to the state legislators. Invitational brochures are being prepared and these will be mailed out to many dignitaries and to Tundra Times' everyday friends.

The Department of the Interior's Arts and Crafts Board will be holding one of its quarterly meetings in Fairbanks and Anchorage, coinciding the meetings with the banquets.

The commissioners are: Lloyd New, chairman; Royal Hassrick, William Grove, Paul Huidermann and Howard Rock.

The Tundra Times Banquets are benefit occasions for the newspaper, the proceeds of which help the publication of the paper.

The dress for the occasions will be semi-formal. The price per ticket will be \$15 per person (fifteen dollars).

The Anchorage banquet is being coordinated by Mrs. Kelly Gay of that city.

The theme of this year's banquets: Beauty in All Cultures.