

Tundra Times Weekly Page

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

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Reginald Heber Smith Fellows Back Claims

Fellows Members Specialize in Indian Laws

Reginald Heber Smith Fellows assigned to Legal Services Programs, which work mainly with Indians, met last week in Denver, Colorado, to discuss special aspects of Indian and poverty law. The Fellows work with Legal Services Programs which serve Navajo, Sioux, Blackfeet, Cherokee, and Crow Indians, in addition to Alaskan Indian, Eskimos, and Aleuts.

One of the most significant results of this meeting was an endorsement of the Land Claims

Kenai Assn. Sympathetic to Land Claims

Flore Lekanof, Aleut League President, spoke before the monthly meeting of the Kenai Education Association meeting at Soldotna on January 23.

Affiliated with the AFN Speakers Bureau of the Office of Public Relations under the directorship of James W. Thomas, Lekanof stated, "The response from the Kenai Education Association members of the Native Land Claims efforts was very warm."

He also stressed, "Having spoken to several of the members individually after the meeting my impression was that the teachers in the Kenai Peninsula area were very sympathetic to a generous settlement by Congress."

Lekanof will also be appearing before various groups through the AFN Speakers Bureau in the future.

Bill as proposed by the Alaska Federation of Natives.

The Smith Fellowship Program is funded by the Legal Services branch of the Office of Economic Opportunity, and is a year-long program directed by the University of Pennsylvania focusing on development and analysis of emerging legal principals and remedies. The Fellows meeting in Denver were all attorneys with several years' experience in the specialized field of Indian Law.

The resolution finally adopted by the Smith Fellows closely aligned itself with the AFN position calling for the confirmation of full legal title to 40 million acres of land in Native peoples, and the payment of \$500 million dollars along with a 2 per cent overriding royalty. The resolution was adopted only after lengthy discussions dealing with the case law and principles which establish a claim to aboriginal title, the legal principle upon which the Land Claims issue revolves. The lawyers specifically recognized the legal right of the Alaskan natives to their land and to their monetary compensation.

Although the support for the resolution was unanimous, several of the Fellows questioned whether the land portion of the settlement was sufficient. This concern was based on the fears that the 40 million acre figure would not be sufficient to sustain a subsistence economy and that therefore the figure represented a decision against the continuation of a native subsis-

tence culture. A question was also raised as to whether the title to the native lands would be tax protected.

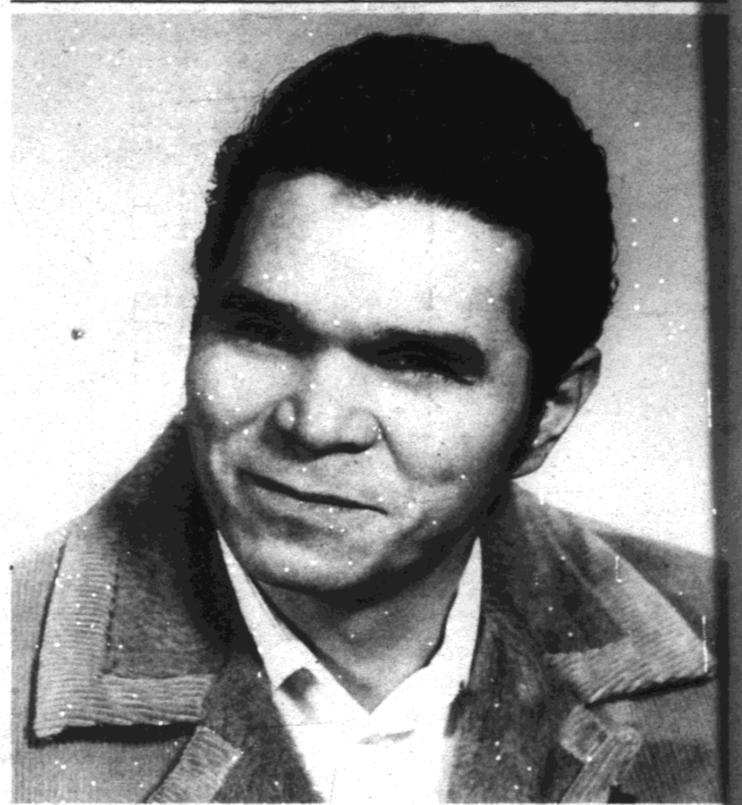
The Fellows also heard news from the Alcatraz Indian territory from Joe Bill, originally of Hooper Bay, Alaska, who is a resident of the island and a member of the Alcatraz Council. Mr. Bill indicated that the island is being held under an Indian Treaty which gave Indians a preferred right in governmental surplus property, such as Alcatraz. The island also is the site of an ancient Indian burial and spiritual ground.

Unitarian Church Of Anchorage For Land Issue

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship Church in Anchorage unanimously passed a resolution last week in support of the AFN land claims bill.

Gary Houlthaus, a spokesman for the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship and Assistant to the Dean and Lecturer at Alaska Methodist University, said that the resolution, which endorses "a just, equitable, generous and early settlement of the claims, including the principle of revenue sharing," would be sent to the Unitarian General Assembly for its consideration of endorsement.

AFN Field Coordinator Showalter J. Smith, spoke to the assembly on the land claims issue, prior to passage of the resolution.



CECIL BARNES—The Alaska Federation of Natives board member, Cecil Barnes, does not hesitate to dissent when he thinks that a subject matter is not to his liking. The AFN board is made up of such men as Barnes and the sessions become heated at times, which reflects the seriousness of matters dealt with. A Cordova Eskimo, Barnes was raised in a family of 14 children. He is married and has four children.

Know Your Leaders

A former marine with 4 battle stars in his service record from the Korean conflict, Cecil Barnes, is a young outspoken individual on the Alaska Native Land Claims

issue.

Barnes, a Chugach Eskimo from Cordova, was raised in a family of 14 children.

Barnes and his attractive wife have 4 children.

After graduating from high school, he attended radio and television school. He now is employed by Western Airlines as an electronics technician.

When the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. was becoming an entity, Barnes served as the chairman for the Constitution and By-Laws Committee of the Alaska Federation of Natives Association. He has also been the past Cook Inlet Native Association board member.

Cecil Barnes is presently the Chugach Native Association Field Representative, member of the AFN Board of Directors and the Steering Committee, and is also serving on the Rural Affairs Commission of the State.

Alfred Ketzler Addresses Kodiak Native Assn.

Deputy Director of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., Alfred Ketzler, addressed the Kodiak Area Native Association's meeting held on January 24 at Kodiak upon invitation from KANA's president Harry Carter.

The group of over 50 people heard the various specifics of the AFN land claims bill now before both Houses of Congress, Ketzler explained.

His presentation also included the "Treaty of the Yukon" which is a compromise position of the two Alaskan Senators, Mike Gravel and Ted Stevens as presented before the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee in December.

Elderly Indian Asks Some Pertinent Questions

January 23, 1970

Dear Editor:

I am a full blooded Indian 84 years of age. I was raised in the Holy Cross Mission in the Yukon territory. In those days the missionaries had to live like the Natives because there were no white people and the Russians had left. During those days at the boarding school we boys had to work as soon as we were big enough to carry a stick of wood. If we didn't work we didn't eat!

I was born after Russia sold Alaska to the United States. I left school during the Gold Rush in 1898 when the white people began to come and with them came civilization of the Native people.

When I came from the Kuskokwim I met an 80 year old Russian man by the name of Anderson. He had one son and two daughters. He was a bookkeeper for a Russian company over here. He had a lot of records which he kept and he would read them often. One day he read them to me. I told him to hold on to the records and guard them as they would be valuable one day. He said when he died he would give them to his son to keep. This he did. When his son died I inquired about the records and was told that the son had sold them to a store keeper in the village of Sleetmute. (Where the quick silver mine used to be.) If the Indians could locate the records there might be some information

that would help in the settling of the Native Land Claims issue. The following is some of the things the old Russian told me:

He was present during the purchase of Alaska. He said that the Russians could not conquer the Indians and this is why they sold Alaska to the United States. There were few Russians here and their stations were far apart. (I saw some of them in my early days of travel.) I was told how the Russians would line the Indians up along the bank of the Kuskokwim River and see how many they could kill with one shot of a muzzle-loader gun.

The Russians had a small

round house with three or four brass cannons in it. This house had small slots in the walls to shoot through and behind it was a log house for the soldiers. There were about 74,000 Indians here then according to the old Russian. So the Russians would invite the Indians to the community halls in the villages and get parents of the children drunk on whiskey. They would then give the children tobacco leaves. They killed hundreds of children in this manner.

Now the Russians committed all these atrocities and many others because they were simply outnumbered and could not con-



POINTED QUESTIONS—An old Indian, Ralph P. Dulak, formerly of Holy Cross now of Soldotna, in a letter to Anchorage Daily News asked some pointed questions about the status of native lands in Alaska. Ralph Dulak is now living in a trailer near Soldotna.

quer the Indians. So even with all the Indians they killed outright and the ones they killed by the diseases they brought, the Russians knew they were fighting a losing battle. When they seen this they took advantage of the opportunity to sell Alaska. Then all but the very old Russians went back to Russia.

Now, if the Russians could not conquer the Indians where did they get legal title to the land? How could they sell land to the United States to which they had no legal title or even aboriginal rights such as we Indians have? What it amounts to is that the Russians stole the land and the United States bought stolen land! Russia was in a dire financial crises at this time and was one way the Russians had of helping their country financially.

Why didn't the Russians give the money from the purchase of Alaska to the Indians? Why didn't the United States check into the rightful ownership of the land? When Statehood came in 1959, why did Congress allow Statehood without checking into clear title of the land? That was the time for all titles to be cleared just as the title to personal property has to be cleared before transfer of ownership is executed.

If Alaska legally became a State why does Congress allow the Natives to freeze the land and tie up business negotiations? Who can answer these questions?

Ralph P. Dulak