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Fairbanks, Alaska

CLAIMS BILL SAILS THROUGH

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Legislation in Congress: House, 307 - 16; Senate, Unanimous

By THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D.C. (December 14)—The Alaska Native Land Claims Bill received final approval from the House and Senate today and was forwarded to the President for his signature.

The House approved the bill at about 3:30 p.m. with a vote of 307 to 16. One hour later, on a point of order by Senator Mike Mansfield (D-Montana), the Senate voted unanimous consent.

Forty million acres of land in simple fee title, \$465 million in federal appropriations and \$500 million in mineral royalty are provided in the legislation.

The timing for the passage of the bill this year was critical. Senator Mansfield moved to adjourn this year's Senate at noon Wednesday. The report of the joint conference committee on the land bill had been voted into print late Monday evening.

The vote for final passage was almost anti-climatic. Little opposition was voiced on the floor where discussion seemed limited to praise and recognition for individual Senators and Congressmen who worked on the legislation.

Less than one half dozen Alaskan Natives were present in the galleries to witness the final passage. Two members of the conference committee did note certain misgivings.

Senator Henry Jackson, Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee was disappointed in the 40 million acre figure. Smaller, but more valuable, land selections

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THE LAND—The village is very poor, but the native people in it have great love for the land on which their village has been built. This is what the claims fight had been waged for. The

AFN thinks the fight has been more than needed so the native people will live a better life from here on and into the future.

—UA MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPH

Interview with Sen. Ted Stevens

By NORMA BOWKETT

FAIRBANKS—Senator Ted Stevens "would have liked to have seen greater protection for older people in the native communities" built into the native land claims bill that cleared Congress this week but, he said in an interview here yesterday, legislation as complex as this

"could not completely satisfy anybody."

Some AFN leaders, some state people, and representatives from federal agencies have reservations about this legislation, Stevens said, but "that's as it should be. The bill does reflect substantial problems raised by the state, satisfies the basic de-

Extraordinary Meeting

By MADELYN SHULMAN
Staff Writer

ANCHORAGE, Dec. 16—Its a convention different from all previous Alaska Federation of Native conventions. In place of speeches from dignitaries, small groups of native people sit in corners to pour over a 48-page document which will prove the framework of their lives during the years to come.

For this the reconvening of the sixth annual convention of

the Alaska Federation of Natives, the best attended in that organization's history is different from the others. After long years a bill has been passed by the House and Senate.

Nobody at the convention, despite its billing as a time for decision, believes the AFN will reject the settlement. While there are provisions many do not like they will try to alter them through court action and admini-

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History of the TT—

Struggle for Claims Settlement

There can be no doubt about it—passage of the land claims bill this week is the biggest story ever published in the TUNDRA TIMES, but there have been many significant stories published since the newspaper began in October, 1962.

The story itself of the struggle for the settlement of the land claims issue was actually, as were many stories in the Times, a continuing story over the years, beginning in Vol. 1, No. 1 with the report of Secre-

tary of Interior Stewart Udall's visit to Alaska and his declaration that the settlement of the historic rights and claims was the most important problem facing Alaska Natives today.

William Brandon, author of THE AMERICAN HERITAGE BOOK OF INDIANS, helped focus national attention on the problem with his letter to President John F. Kennedy in which he urged that the Interior Department "withdraw from the

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Wright: AFN to Approve Bill—

Statewide Group Head Says Bill is Good

"I think it's a pretty good bill," AFN president Don Wright commented on the Alaska Native Land Claims Bill on the opening day of the reconvened sixth annual AFN convention.

The convention, which originally convened in Fairbanks on October 9, recessed three days later till a bill would

emerge from the House-Senate Conference Committee.

Last week that bill became a reality.

"The basic requirements of the bill are not what we hoped for, but it will do a good job for the people if the people handle it okay," Wright said.

He saw no question about

the AFN convention approving it. "They will," he said.

In the coming year Wright foresaw an ever expanding role for the Alaska Federation of Natives.

During the next twelve months, he said, an active AFN board will hold monthly meet-

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