

Main Indians Eye Alaska Natives—

Leader John Stevens Keeps Wary on Claims Settlement

By LAEL MORGAN

AUGUSTA, ME.—Alaskan natives will pack a lot of power nationally once their land claims are settled by the U.S. Congress.

"The land's important but so is the money. If they're going to deal it out as a one shot deal—no power!"

That's the prediction of John Stevens, commissioner of Maine's Department of Indian Affairs, and former Governor of the Passamaquoddy Indians. He's watching the Alaskan settlement with interest because Indian power—any Indian power—is important to his own people.

There are just over 2,000 Indians in Maine: Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, Maliseet, Micmac and Cherokee. Today the statistics on their health and income read about the same as the dismal national Indian average but the Mainers consider this a vast improvement over the past two decades.

"We never came under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government because we made our treaty with the colonists," Stevens explained. "In fact, we supported the colonists. The ones who were hostile got a better deal."

From 1820 to 1927, Maine Indian affairs were directly under the state governor and council. Then, after being briefly shuffled to the Forestry Department, BIA was turned over to the state Health and Welfare Department which regarded it simply as a welfare program.

"A lot of New York tribes are pretty well off," Stevens notes. "We didn't get much land and we were even worse off than other tribes because we were controlled politically by one agency."

After serving in Korea with the Marines, Stevens returned to his reservation determined to strive for Indian independence.

"Tribal organization was more token than anything else. The tribal government was given a subsidy by Health and Welfare to be like a token thing."

Steven's father had once been a tribal representative.

"But he was no longer interested. He was disillusioned by his fight with bureaucracy. He'd given up and that made me even more determined. I campaigned door to door and became governor at the Peter Dana Point Reservation."

He served nine consecutive terms, generated considerable federal funding and finally helped wrest BIA from the welfare department.

"We realized we could utilize white people, too, in our fight," he smiles.

In 1965 the BIA became a separate office under the governor but Stevens was disappointed in the results. Indian hire was a lot of deadwood within the agency.

Last fall, when the position of commissioner was open, Stevens applied because he didn't like the looks of the other applicants. There were 85 and only two Indians.

He took a drop in salary (from his job as a Community Action Director) to take the post and has recently made headlines by threatening to resign if the Maine Legislature refuses to carry out his programs.

To the surprise of the bureaucrats, he stated firmly that he does not want more welfare but matching money for self help programs.

"We've got little industries going on all the reservations—

basket weaving—which is the most common thing with my people. We're working on a construction company trying to keep our money within the reservation. But we can't get a cent from the state."

Within the last year Maine tribes have begun issuing hunting licenses to outsiders and requiring Indian guides for reservation hunts. They're also interested in establishing their own marinas, snowmobile dealerships, motel facilities and service stations.

They have been more successful than most Indians in preserving their languages and traditions.

"We still have our ceremonial dances and speak our own languages," Stevens reports. "For five years we've had teacher aides in the school and it's worked well. In fact, the kids today are more Indian than I was."

"I can remember when I was about 10 and went to a cowboy and Indian movie. I came home and told by mother how glad I was the white man had wiped out the Indians and she said, 'hat do you think you are.'"

"It was a shocking experience to find out I was an Indian but there are people who never let you forget it."

Today he believes Indians are generally taking the right approach to maintain their individuality and gain their independence.

"It's going to take 20 years," he predicts. "It's been very vague who owns this land. We're going to see the reservations turned over to the Indians. The government is going to deal

with these communities like any other town. We're going to generate the wealth to be on our own."

National Indian movements are weak, he admits.

"But there's a movement afoot to reorganize N.C.I.A. and N.C.I.O. It's all right to be radical but you've got to know what you're doing. A lot of older people got shoved aside by the young radicals but the tide is turning again. They're listening to people with good, constructive advice."

His hope is for one strong national Indian organization, not a number of weak ones.

"It's time we started really working together in order to survive," he maintains.

Kenneth C. BAH

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Graduate-Level Psycho-Drama

Registration will begin Monday for a graduate-level psychodrama seminar at the University of Alaska, Anchorage on January 8-9.

Steve Daggett, who taught classes at the university twice before while he was administrator for the office of vocational rehabilitation at Alaska Psychiatric Institute, will return to Alaska to conduct the seminar.

Daggett, a psychodrama expert, now is a therapist for a mental health clinic in Olympia, Washington.

The one-credit seminar will

be held from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 8 and from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 9 with outside work required.

It will be a combined didactic-experiential course for graduate students who would like to develop their understanding and skills in regard to psychodrama techniques in counseling or psychotherapy.

Interested students may register Monday through Friday and the following Monday at the University registrar's office from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The ALEUT LEAGUE

wishes to congratulate the AFN, its past and present leaders, all Alaska's aboriginal peoples and all who have made the land claims settlement a reality. To each and every one we wish you a

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and a
Joyous NEW YEAR.**

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

THE ANCHORAGE CHAPTER OF THE TLINGIT AND HAIDA INDIANS OF ALASKA WILL BE OPENING ITS REGISTRATION ROLLS BEGINNING DECEMBER 18, 1971 AND CLOSING ON FEBRUARY 15, 1972 FOR ALL ELIGIBLE ADULTS OVER THE AGE OF NINETEEN YEARS OF AGE WHO WISH TO BE INCLUDED ON THE ANCHORAGE COMMUNITY ROLLS. THOSE WHO QUALIFY MUST BE PERMANENT RESIDENTS WHO LIVE NORTH OF YAKUTAT AND WHO ARE REGISTERED WITH THE CENTRAL COUNCIL. APPLICATION FORMS MAY BE OBTAINED BY WRITING THE FOLLOWING ADDRESS:

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