

'Not That Far Apart'—

Union Leaders and AFN Confab Useful

Alaska's labor unions and native groups may be a great deal closer to resolving the conflicts between them as a result of a meeting December 29 between the Alaska Federation of Natives and union leaders.

"It was probably the best meeting we've had with labor," commented AFN board member Robert Willard, who chaired the meeting. "The more we talked, the more we realized we're not that far apart."

Nine AFN board members met in Anchorage with 10 union representatives and two people from the Chugach Native Association.

A conflict between the Chugach Native Association's North Gulf Natives Inc. corporation and labor union members in Valdez early this month prompted the meeting in Anchorage.

"The labor union leaders agreed Valdez was unfortunate and never should have happened," Willard said about the picket line the Laborer's Union local established while North Gulf Natives, Inc. worked on a contract for Alyeska Pipeline, Inc.

The native workers on the project were non-union and local union members were concerned about unfair competition between companies bidding for such contracts.

Native leaders at the Anchorage meeting were concerned about union hiring hall practices which tend to discriminate against native people.

Among these is a policy giving first preference on jobs to workers who live within 40 miles of the construction site. Many rural natives, they said, would be shut out of jobs by this policy.

Another union policy Natives resented was assembling of work crews to go into a rural area for construction, while local people remained unemployed.

"As a result of this meeting and other subsequent meetings I hope the day is past when a crew will commute into someplace like Kotzebue, build a building or an airport and commute out while our people sit idly by and subsist," said Willard.

"We want to be part of the development that takes place in Alaska and unions want to participate in the development in outlying areas."

Robert Willard is executive director of the Alaska State Commission for Human Rights and heads development of an Alaska Plan for Equal Employment Opportunity in the construction industry.

A proposal introduced by AFN president Don Wright for a "shakedown period" was discussed favorably and will be reconsidered at the next meeting between the groups on January 21. This meeting will be open to the press.

During the "shakedown period" says Willard, native corporations would be able to hire their own people, skilled or unskilled.

"We don't agree with the unions that all our people have to go through training programs.

Some have skills, but may be afraid to take union and other tests."

Under Wright's proposal, trained people would move into the unions. If some people need more training, the corporation would provide it.

"DNH in Fairbanks has used untrained people very successfully in their contracts," Willard said.

Hiring from other Native groups and from union halls would be based on demand and seasonality.

"We're assuming half a work crew may want to take leave and go fishing," said Willard. "It's part of their way of life, with nothing wrong with it. Then, we'd hire people from other Native groups and from union hiring halls."

Many groups, Willard said, will have to go back to their respective organizations to discuss possible agreements. However, he seemed optimistic that some definite proposals would come out of the next meeting—after both union members and natives had a chance for discussion.

"The union members are afraid of native association corporations bidding competitively on contracts by paying lower wages to their workers," said Willard. "I don't think this will be true. As it worked out, workers in Valdez got more than union wages—due to additional bonuses."

Among the delegates who attended the meeting in Anchorage were AFL-CIO president Duane Carlson, representatives of the Teamsters and Laborers unions and union leaders from Seattle and San Francisco—the main offices of many unions in Alaska.

"It's not every day that labor goes to the native people to ask how to get jobs for natives," said Willard. "There's no doubt in my mind that the AFN and organized labor have moved closer."

Rate for Nursing Home Program Increased

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The maximum allowable rate for the Veterans Administration Community Contract Nursing Home Program in Alaska has been increased from \$19.75 to \$22.50, according to Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alaska).

The primary purpose of the VA Community Contract Nursing Home Project is to aid the veteran and his family in making the transition from a hospital to the community by providing time for them to marshal resources for the veteran's continued care.

Senator Gravel said he was informed of the rate increase by VA administrator Donald E. Johnson.

Mr. Johnson pointed out that, under the law authorizing the VA to transfer veterans who have reached maximum hospital benefits in non-VA hospitals in Alaska to approved nursing homes, the maximum per diem rate may not exceed 40 per cent of the cost of care in a VA general hospital.

"Because the cost of care in our general hospitals has increased, this new maximum daily rate has been computed for Alaska," he explained.

UW Ace Quarterback Sonny Sixkiller Passing Sensation in the Nation in '70

Alex "Sonny" Sixkiller, 19, a Cherokee from Oklahoma, who has been the passing sensation of the University of Washington football team this season, finished—with Pat Sullivan of Auburn—in front of Heisman Trophy winner Jim Plunkett in major college passing and total offense, NCAA statistics showed recently.

According to the AP, Sixkiller, the third straight sophomore to win the passing crown, did it with 186 completions in 362 attempts for 2,303 yards and 18.6 completions per game. Plunkett was six in the standings, based on 17.4 completions a game.

In a congratulatory letter to the sophomore quarterback, Commissioner of Indian Affairs Louis R. Bruce stated:

"It is achievements like yours that build my pride in the Indian young people of America. Through your efforts on the playing field, you have become an outstanding example to Indian youth as a sports figure and also as a fellow Indian youth who has achieved a coveted goal. I offer all encouragement to you to continue your good work."

A hefty six-footer weighing 184 pounds, Sixkiller is the son of Alex and Stella Sixkiller of Ashland, Ore. The family moved to the Pacific Northwest from Tahlequah, Okla., when Sonny was two years old.

Sixkiller's best game was played against Oregon State University when he threw passes for a total of 360 yards. He has also piled up a sizeable number of other records in play with the University of Washington Huskies.

In addition to his completion performances, he has thrown 13 touchdown passes, carried the ball 51 times, and scored one touchdown. His total offensive yardage has been 1,992.

The most passes he attempted was in a game against Southern California. He made 57 passes and completed 30.

Sixkiller attended public



GREAT INDIAN ATHELETE—Alex "Sonny" Sixkiller, ace sophomore Cherokee Indian, 19 year old, 184 pound University of Washington football quarterback was one of the nation's leading passers during the college football year of 1970.

—UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON Photo

schools in Ashland and starred

in football, basketball, and baseball while in high school. He is attending the University of Washington, Seattle, on a foot-

ball scholarship.

The young Indian football star has two sisters and a brother, all older, which he says is how he got his nickname.



CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN—Senator Ted Stevens meets with Alaskan Delegates to the 1970 week-long White House Conference on Children held in Washington, D.C. The Delegates are left to right in the first row: Tom Tull, Ft. Yukon, Skip Burns, Juneau; Keith Stell, Juneau; Roy Fay, Anch.; and Margaret Dindinger, Juneau. Left to right in back row: Thelma Bucholt, Anch.; Tonya Thomas, Fbks.; Senator Stevens;

Rosilee Walker, Juneau; Sadie Neokok, Barrow; Lorith Heffner, Anch.; and Arne Beltz, Anch. Held every ten years since 1909 this national conference brought together 4,000 delegates from across the country. In Alaska it was preceded by the Alaska Youth Conference held on November 30th and December 1st near Anchorage and attended by 90 representatives across the state.



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