

Tlingit-Haida Bill Passes Both House & Senate

September 1965

The bill relating to Tlingit-Haida judgments cleared both the House and Senate recently and was sent to the President.

Clarifying amendments to the Gruening-Bartlett bill were approved by both houses.

The legislation provides that judgment funds to be paid as the result of the 1959 favorable decision of the Court of Claims involving approximately 18 million acres of land in SE Alaska will not be available for advances, with the exception of certain attorney and litigation fees, until further legislation is enacted setting forth the purposes for which the funds are to be used, including per capita payments and/or community development. In the meantime the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indians is to prepare plans for use of the money. The Secretary of the Interior is to prepare a roll of citizens of Tlingit and Haida blood residing in the various local communities or areas in the United States or Canada, with the cost of the roll to come from the judgment.

The measure as it went to the White House defines those eligible as "persons of Tlingit or Haida blood residing in a local community or area in the United States or Canada who were legal residents of the Territory of Alaska on June 19, 1935, or prior thereto, or who are descendants of persons of Tlingit or Haida blood who were legal residents of the Territory of Alaska on June 19, 1935, or prior thereto."

President Signs Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Johnson signed August 30 a bill authorizing preparation of a plan for distribution of a pending court of claims judgment to the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska.

The court has determined the Indians are entitled to an award for loss of 18 million acres in Alaska. The amount will be based on the value of the land at the time of the taking.

Editorial

'Per Diem Indians'

From the start just a few short years ago, the Alaska Native population has gone far and in many directions in the fights against alcoholism and drug abuse.

A number of communities have evolved beginning programs for treatment, rehabilitation and prevention.

Although this is good, we have a very long way to go.

There is now a fine central alcoholism office, ably manned by Mr. John Keating. He will listen to us.

There is a new Office of Drug Abuse. Mary Beth Hilburn seems willing to hear us also. She is the coordinator of the State program.

The only problems facing us now lie in the many human kinds of difficulty peculiar to our own people in our own hours of stress and frustration—all this growing out of our effort to come into our own as

Nixon Pens Bill into Law

Wednesday, December 22, 1977

Tuesday Times

By MADELYN SHULMAN Staff Writer

Following the President's speech, ex-Governor and ex-Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, AFN President Don Wright and Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska) gave speeches to the convention.

"The native people did not have a legal claim, they had a moral claim," said Hickel.

"We're starting on a new era—the post settlement era," said AFN President Don Wright. "By no means is it over, it's just beginning," he said.

Senator Stevens defended the "secret meeting" two weeks ago at which he, Congressman Nick Begich, Senator Gravel and Governor Egan came together to devise an Alaska Delegation position which they would present to the whole Conference Committee.

"I'm hopeful that all of you realize the somber duty you have," Stevens said. "In recent history there has not been a settlement of this type that does not require a plan submitted in advance to Congress or to the Secretary of the Interior."

"You will carry the burden not only for your grandchildren to come but for those Indian groups in the lower 48 that still seek settlement of their claims. The eyes of the nation will be on you as you acquire substantial assets and manage your own affairs."

"There are things in this bill that some of you do not like. Some of them I put there," Stevens said.

"With that he defended provisions of the act which provide that 10 percent of the money received by regional corporations must be distributed per capita on an annual basis.

The purpose of this, Stevens claims, is that the native old people can see something of the land settlement today—not wait for the future.

"God guide you and God bless you and please remember those that will come after you and those that came before you," he ended.

The two native associations who voted against the bill have serious reservations about it. The Arctic Slope Native Association sent a protest telegram to President Nixon on Saturday.

According to the provisions of the Act, Petroleum Reserve No. 4, the North Slope Wilderness Refuges and the Prudhoe Bay Oil fields are all closed to native subsurface selections.

These provisions mean a cut off of revenue to these villages amounting to many billions of dollars.

Another strong protestor is the Washington Chapter of the AFN—which represents many Alaskan natives in the lower 48.

"The Act discriminates against the 13th region," commented George Walters, President of AFN Washington Chapter. Alaskan natives living outside Alaska may choose to enroll back to their native regional corporation or to form a 13th corporation.

Such a corporation gives them control over their own land and

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The only problems facing us now lie in the many human kinds of difficulty peculiar to our own people in our own hours of stress and frustrations—all this growing out of our effort to come into our own as individuals and as tribal units.

We were willing, just a short while ago, to sleep on a floor in order to attend meetings which would ultimately benefit our people. We somehow got to those conferences, training sessions, strategy talks, and other gatherings which had value. We shared these experiences with all our people upon our return to our homes.

We made use of skills we had acquired, the hard way, to give of ourselves to each other; with the only profit motive being group betterment.

What is happening to us? Our bright young people are becoming "per diem oriented." Personal strivings for status and salary and replacing our common responsibility for and to each other. We are willing to "let George do it" when vital program development needs are presented to us.

Despite the tendency for the larger population to group us as "Alaska Natives," and to see us as a pale red bloc, we are not. We are diverse in ethnicity and cultures—and intend to remain that way; proudly.

Can't we regain our own images to the point that we place ourselves second to our community and culture peers? Can't we again have the brotherly responsibility to ourselves necessary to growth and progress? Must we, too, sell our identity and pride in the Madison Avenue tradition?

Come now, Alaskans! Grow into what you say you are. We cannot afford to let others plan and prescribe those events and sequences of events which will determine our destinies.

There is enough intelligence in each Alaskan cultural group to use those excellent resources in Juneau for the good of the several ethnic groups in the State. Help each other become proficient in the white man's arts and crafts. See that your budding grant writers and project developers receive the training they need and then return to their homes to practice their skills. Otherwise, it will be done by outsiders who do not recognize what they see in us.

Frank Johnson Resigns

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Frank Johnson, one of the three Republican members of the Territorial House of Representatives, resigned from the Legislature last week.

His letter of resignation to Acting Governor Waino Hendrickson, dates April 15 at his home at Kake, said he had "for some time considered retiring from active duty" in his law making capacity.

Other than that, the popular first division legislator gave no reason for his resignation—the second from the Territorial House.

However, it was understood that Johnson was stepping aside to qualify for the appointment as U.S. Commissioner at Kake.

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Such a corporation gives them control (on a per capita basis) over money, but no access to land.

Earlier Saturday, Emil Notti, past president of the AFN told the convention about the days when the AFN began.

"I wrote to people we didn't know," he told the group, people like Willie Hensley. One of the early supporters was Howard Rock who gave us publicity in the TUNDRA TIMES.

Willie Hensley, Notti related, took out a 10,000 life insurance policy and made AFN the beneficiary. Delegates traveled to board meetings and conventions on their own time and money—before travel pay and per diem.

"What made us respectable," said Notti, "was when Arthur Goldberg consented to be our chief counsel." "When Arthur Goldberg, former Attorney General, former Justice of the Supreme Court came before Congress and said, 'I consider this a matter of National interest,' that made land claims serious."

"Then, the Federal Field Commission report was significant. I don't know of any of us have read that cover to cover but there is one line I remember."

"It is conceivable that the natives can prove ownership of all of Alaska."

In a ceremony marked only by a special taped message to the convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives the President of the United States signed the Alaska Native Claims Act of 1971 into law shortly before 1 p.m. Alaska Standard Time, Saturday, December 18, 1971.

Standing motionless, over 600 delegates to the Anchorage Convention of the AFN listened to President Nixon's brief message.

"I appreciate this opportunity to present my greetings and best wishes to the convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives. I want you to be among the first to know that I have just signed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

"This is a milestone in Alaska's history and in the way our government deals with natives and Indian people. It shows that institutions of government are responsive.

"As we developed this bill, Vice President Agnew and I were in close consultation with your president Don Wright. Don Wright ably and vigorously represented you in Washington. My congratulations go also to Senator Ted Stevens, to Wally Hickel, to those of both parties who helped. Best wishes in your convention."

The President's message came just a brief hour after delegates to the AFN Convention voted 511 to 56 to ask that the President sign the bill—which provides for a 40 million acre land settlement, almost one billion dollars in federal appropriations and proceeds from a 2 percent mineral royalty.

In a vote taken by regions, the Arctic and the AFN Washington chapter voted No. The vote was anticlimatic. Most native delegates seemed partially pleased over the bill—partially disappointed—partially bewildered as to where to go next now that this fight is over.