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Name and place: 6th Annual Alaska Federation of Natives Convention

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Notes: Original in 7-inch tape, master copy on CD. Produced by Roger McPherson. THESE TAPES WERE PRODUCED AS A PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM NOW DEFUNCT AND WERE BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

A man talks about how Tlingit people, and he, helped with land claims in Alaska. 20 years ago, he visited almost every community [unclear] and asked people to get organized. He didn't ask them to join the Alaska Native Brotherhood, but just for them to get organized. He told people that time will come when they will be fighting for their land rights and he'd like to repeat what some people, to whom he talked with on that trip, said to him. He took a beating in the communities in which the leaders would object him trying to help communities that wouldn't help themselves. The speaker says he didn't give up, however, and tonight he feels like he has gained his goal in having all the people there to vote in the important issue.

1:50 They didn't take a backseat when the fight was going on, and the speaker says that perhaps some people who are crying now, spent too much time fighting each other instead of working with each other. The Tlingit and Haida settled their land claims in order to help the rest of the Alaska Natives with the wider land claims bill, and they didn't "jump on the bandwagon just because picture was looking good" but they have done their part in the land claims and have lobbied in Washington. [Applause.]

3:26 Don Wright reads Anchorage Chamber of Commerce message for the Alaska Federation of Natives. The letter says that the passage of the land claims

settlement bill on December 14th is as critical to the development of the State of Alaska as was the development of the Statehood Act in 1958. They write that they recognize that the settlement is a compromise, but they remind the AFN that compromise is the basis of democratic system, and they have seen it in action in passing of the bill. The AFN in general, and the individual associations that make the statewide organization, are to be congratulated for the lobbying effort. Anchorage Chamber of Commerce along with the business community took a position regarding many of the provisions of the bill, and those weren't always compatible by the ones taken by the AFN. However, they were perceived to be in the interest of the State of Alaska. Now is the time to put aside differences and move forward as united citizens of Alaska. They need to work for the benefit of all Alaskans. The letter is signed by Russell F. Howen, the president. [Booing, laughing and applauding.]

5:28 Senator Willie Hensley will make a response for the Chamber of Commerce and say no to their assistance. When they first were talking about land rights 5 years ago, they were worried that the land will be selected by the State of Alaska, and claimed that it was all owned by Native people and they wanted back the land that was already taken from them. Of course, they would never get that. They could only have done better if they had stopped the Statehood Act, but they didn't. The language in the Statehood Act says that they would be protected and that the State would disclaim all title to any of their lands.

7:23 Hensley wonders if the State thought that the Native people wouldn't find out what their rights were before it would be too late. He tells how he went to Washington with former AFN president [Emil] Notti: They were uninvited, but they had heard about a meeting between Governor Hickel, Secretary Udall, Senators Bartlett and Gruening, and Congressman Pollock. They were going to talk about the proposed settlement that Udall and his troops were working on. Notti and Hensley walked into Senator Bartlett's office, uninvited, but Bartlett couldn't throw them out since it was Native land that they were talking about.

They revealed the contents of the bill that was meager. They were going to use the day of taking as 1867, and pay \$7.5 million dollars. They wanted to have the

Attorney General of the State of Alaska to go to court on Native peoples' behalf and give them 50,000 acres of trust land per village.

9:06 Hensley continues that it's difficult to accept the fact that they will be signing away and giving up 335 million acres of land in exchange for nearly a billion dollars and 40 million acres of land. In the region Hensley represents [and what is that?], they claimed about 40 million acres, but they'll end up with 2.5 million under the settlement, but every one of their villages have voted to approve signing of the legislation.

The settlement has always been a question of time and money. When they got Udall to impose the [land] freeze, AFN didn't have any money, and neither did the regions, but they got almost as much [money and land?] as they initially went after, but they are giving away their right to the land. They didn't get their subsistence rights protected in the language of the bill.

11:08 Hensley says that he has mixed feelings about the legislation too, but they can't go back since they spent ½ million borrowed dollars and put the political circumstances together for the legislation. Under the bill, each region is on their own unless they keep the AFN as a statewide organization. The bill is just the beginning, since with other Indian groups, the state has been the enemy. Who knows what the consequences would be if they refuse the bill and if there won't be a pipeline. They could be sent to the court of claims and they couldn't get land from there.

Hensley says that the Northwestern region of the state will be supporting the signing of the legislation – not the provisions – but with mixed feelings.

13:10 Notti speaks, saying that they are making a big decision. He suggests that they should recess and discuss the bill with their family and friends, sleep on it, and make the decision the following day.

Don Wright has a vote for recessing and acting in the morning. People vote aye, and Wright declares the convention is recessed.

14:59 [Fred Westerman sings "Just One Great River."]

18:35 Karen McPherson narrates that this has been the part one on their special [radio program] from the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention that was held in October, 1971 in Fairbanks and that was reconvened in December 16-18th in Anchorage, Alaska. This program dealt with the convention held in Anchorage and it was produced by Karen and Roger McPherson for KUAC. [End of the recording.]