

Task Force Presents Report to Governor

The Alaska Native Land Claims Task Force has submitted its report on the proposal for settlement of claims to Governor Walter J. Hickel. The report was dated January 10-16, 1968.

The Task Force proposed a four-part settlement plan consisting of:

"(a) A grant of 40 million acres of land in fee, or in trust, to village groups (compared to the 102.5 million acres given the State of

Alaska under the Statehood Act, or the much larger area encompassed in the Native claims) allocated among the villages in proportion to the number of persons on their rolls.

"(b) A grant of a 10 per cent royalty interest in outer continental shelf revenues, along the lines proposed by Secretary Udall, in lieu of the right to compensation for lands reserved or disposed of

(Continued on page 7)

TASK FORCE REPORTS TO THE GOVERNOR...

(Continued from page 1)

to third parties, with an immediate advance payment of \$20,000,000 by the Federal Government.

"(c) A grant by the state of a 5 per cent royalty interest in state selected lands, tidelands, and submerged

lands, but excluding current revenue sources from the state lands (in order to avoid direct impact on the general fund) and commencing only upon lifting the land freeze and resumption of state selection.

"(d) A terminable license to use the surface of lands under occupancy and use by Natives."

The Task Force said that its principal objectives in developing the proposal "include the avoidance of courts and litigation, the simplification of the administrative process, the early accomplishment of the settlement, the grant of present property interests, the avoidance of state and federal control, the need to avoid 'freezing the villages in history,' the spreading of the benefits from royalties widely, but recognizing private property concepts, and utilizing modern corporate forms for engaging in business enterprise by native groups."

The report said that for convenience, the four parts will be called "(a) township land grants, (b) offshore royalties, (c) state-granted royalties, and (d) surface rights."

The report then continued by working out in detail the four-part settlement proposal.

The report included the following within the Township Land Grants section:

"Your Task Force favors the continuation of the land freeze at this time, but we recognize the public interest in early resumption of state selections. We have spent many hours attempting to reconcile the opposing posi-

tions in a manner that would be fair to all.

"We have been unable to work out a method that could result in freeze lifting before the passage of the Federal Act, but we remain prepared to consider any such possible method.

"We have requested the Interior Department and your Attorney General to review this problem in hopes of working out a solution which would provide a lifting of the freeze even earlier than we here propose, which is six months after the adoption of the Federal Act."

In the Offshore Royalties section of the details, the report stated in part:

"...The royalty should not be used for per capita distribution in cash, but should be available for family plan distribution, scholarships and other direct benefits to members until the corporation or regional corporation becomes a pure business corporation. There should be a limit on such distributions to avoid dissipation of the assets of the corporation.

"The royalty shall not be a substitute for state or federal government programs now in being.

"If Congress fails to enact the offshore royalty program, then a substitute will be provided, such as a program of compensation for lands reserved or disposed of to third persons..."

In the State Granted Royalties section of the details, the following was included:

"...The royalty shall include all proceeds received

by the state from leases or other contracts on state selected lands executed after the effective date of the act, which would therefore exclude revenues from existing leaseholds and contracts and from lands finally disposed of to third parties before that date..."

Surface Rights section included:

"The existence of Native use and occupancy of lands should be recognized and may continue.

"The surface use provisions of Secretary Udall's bill should be adapted to our proposal. The period should be lengthened to 100 years..."

The report signed by the Task Force chairman Rep. Willie Hensley, had this to say in its conclusion:

"...At all times we have endeavored to find solutions

which are compatible with the needs of the federal and state governments, we well as the Natives of Alaska.

"We are aware of the responsibility placed upon us. We feel that there is now a sound legislative format which can lead us safely out of the grave difficulties presented by the Native land claims problem..."