

Hearings to Seek Implementation Of Land Claims

Senator Mike Gravel today (Feb. 22) announced that the Senate Interior Committee will hold hearings in Washington on March 2 on various matters related to the implementation of the Alaska Native Land Claims Act which became law in December. Senator Gravel will chair the hearings.

The Alaska Democrat stated that he was "extremely pleased to make the announcement" and heralded it as an opportunity for the Senate to "resolve some of the confusion which has occurred from various interpretations of the Claims Act.

Senator Gravel said that the major item to be discussed was the financing in the current fiscal year to enable the Native Corporations and the agencies of government to begin their work of land selection and Native enrollment under the terms of the Act.

The bill authorizes 12.5 million dollars in the 1972 fiscal year for this purpose.

In addition, he said that various inconsistencies and minor errors in the final bill need to be corrected and that the hearings would provide an opportunity for that to be done thoroughly.

The witnesses at the hearings will include representatives from Alaska Native organizations,

(Continued on Page 6)

Land Claims . . .

(Continued from page 1)

from the state of Alaska, and from the federal government, according to Senator Gravel.

He noted that he was "extremely optimistic" that the appropriation of 12.5 million dollars in the current fiscal year would result from the hearings.

"Alaskans should understand that I will do all that I can as chairman of these hearings to assure that these funds are made available at the earliest possible moment."

The decision to hold hearings was made this morning at the Appropriations Subcommittee, at which Senator Gravel testified in favor of the 12.5 million dollar appropriation. The Chairman of the Subcommittee, Senator Alan Bible, decided that the matter warranted fuller discussion and asked Senator Gravel to hold hearings on this and related matters. Gravel agreed and set the date of March 2, tomorrow.