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# Jackson Releases Confidential Report on Claims

Senator Henry M. Jackson (D-Wash.), Chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, this week released two reports on the Alaska Native land claims issue.

The claims of Alaska Natives

to the resources and the land of Alaska have been the source of conflict between the State of Alaska, the Natives, and the Federal government for a number of years.

During the recent Senate hear-

ings on the nomination of Governor Hickel to be Secretary of the Interior, Senator Jackson received Secretary Hickel's assurances that the current "land freeze" in Alaska would not be disturbed until Congress had an

opportunity to resolve the issue.

The first report released this week is a confidential report recommending proposed terms for a legislative settlement of the Alaska Native land claims controversy.

The second report is a heavily documented and thorough 565 page study which brings together all relevant information on the land claims issue, the social and economic condition of the Alas-

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# Sen. Jackson . . .

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ka Native, the resources of Alaska and the alternatives which might be followed in arriving at a settlement acceptable to all of the parties involved.

Jackson had requested the Federal Field Committee for Development Planning in Alaska to prepare both of these reports following field hearings on the Alaska Native land claims issue in Anchorage, Alaska, in February 1968.

The Senator said that he was "releasing the Federal Field Committee's confidential report on legislative recommendations because I feel that it is essential that the Bureau of the Budget, the Department of the Interior, the State of Alaska and the Alaska Natives have an opportunity to carefully review the Field Committee's proposed settlement before bills are introduced and before the parties involved become locked into set positions."

In releasing the reports, the Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee expressed high praise for its authors and hailed the Field Committee's acceptance and completion of the assignment as "a trail breaker in executive branch service to a legislative committee."

The Alaska-based interagency committee is headed by Rhodes scholar Joseph H. FitzGerald, who directed his staff of four research analysts and staffers from member agencies in conducting the study and preparing the reports.

"The dimensions of the analysis alone make this a unique contribution to Congressional decision making," Jackson said, "But, in addition, it is an interagency product, the result of the combined efforts of the principal federal agencies in Alaska," he said.

"And, finally," he emphasized, "it is the work of the field. We don't know all we need to know here in Washington about Alaska, so we turned to Alaska for what we needed."

The Senator said that it was his judgment that "a very important precedent was established as a result of the Field Committee's reports. Too often," he said, "the Congress acts on complex issues such as this without demanding that the Executive Branch develop and analyze all pertinent information."

"In this case, however, Congress, acting through the Senate Interior Committee, has acted on its own initiative to see that the best minds available were put to work to develop and analyze the relevant information and to make their recommendations directly to the Congress."

"The Committee's analysis," Jackson said, "stresses that consideration of claims legislation should be seen by Congress not

only as a means of settling the legal claims, but also as an opportunity to provide a foundation for social and economic advancement of Alaska Eskimos, Indians, and Aleuts, most of whom, according to the study, live under poorer circumstances than any other Americans."

Jackson characterized the Committee's study as the "most comprehensive portrayal of the Native people, the land, and the resources of Alaska ever assembled. In addition to serving the needs of his committee for factual information relating to Native land claims," Jackson said, "it would be highly useful to the Congress and executive agencies in other matters affecting Alaska such as the recently discovered oil deposits on the Arctic North Slope."

The Senator stated that he was "very concerned that a legislative settlement of the Native land claims problem should not result in a repetition of some of the problems which have been experienced by the American Indians in the lower 48 States."

He said that "a fair and generous settlement is required, but there must be provisions in the legislation which will insure that the Native peoples of Alaska get the full and continuing benefits of the settlement, and that they be given a full and fair opportunity to attain quality lives for themselves and for their children."

Jackson said that he "will allow the Department of the Interior, the Alaska Native leaders and the State of Alaska a reasonable period of time to review both reports and to prepare legislation for introduction." He said he hoped that "the concerned parties will work together and agree upon a bill which will reduce areas of disagreement."

If a reasonable agreement is not reached prior to the scheduling of hearings, the Senator said that he would introduce a bill incorporating the Federal Field Committee's recommendations so that the Senate Interior Committee could consider the measure together with any others which might be introduced.

Jackson said that his release of the Federal Field Committee's confidential recommendations for the terms of a legislative settlement did not constitute an endorsement.

"It is clear, however," he said, "that these recommendations are based on a very thorough study and they cannot be dismissed lightly. Subsequent events may require change, and it is possible that all of the parties involved may endorse and support the terms of settlement which are different than those recommended by the Field Committee."