

Editorial—

Unselfish Servant Dies

It was 25 below zero and the leaden skies hovered the cathedral where hundreds of people gathered to pay their last respects to a man who had served Alaska well during the long 35 years of public service. Highest dignitaries of the state, as well as United States senators, many Fairbanks friends, including Eskimos and Indians paid their homage. Sen. E.L. (Bob) Bartlett at 64 years old had passed on. The gathering was a revealing testimonial that Bob Bartlett had friends from all walks of life and no wonder—he was a common man on whose shoulders rested easily one of the highest offices of his land and

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Quick on the Trigger

Gov. Walter J. Hickel's sharp retort to Sec. Stewart Udall's pronouncement that he has imposed a freeze on public lands to protect native land claims is reminiscent to the early days of his tenure of the governorship of Alaska. Hickel, now a Department of the Interior secretary designate by President-elect Richard Nixon, then made statements about native land claims that were negative and which worried the native people and their leaders. Those statements were generally regarded as due to irresponsible advisory sources at the time. Gov. Hickel later did almost a complete turnabout in his attitude toward the claims and worked along with the native leaders toward solutions—a commendable and a surprising performance.

We are prone to think that something of the same thing happened last week when Gov. Hickel said he would "undo" what Sec. Udall has done.

Hickel's sharp reaction was quick-on-the-trigger type thing which seemed to have no background of careful consideration before being made public. Another one was his retort concerning U.S. Rep. Julia Butler Hansen of Washington State in which he said, "Who is Julia Butler Hansen?" That one can be likened to the saying, "Biting the finger that's feeding you." Rep. Hansen is an important member of the House appropriations subcommittee that feeds money into the Interior Department programs.

As in the early days of his governorship, Hickel is experiencing sharp reactions from the native leaders regarding his latest statement. The native leaders see Sec. Udall's action as a means of pinching the nerve center of Congress so that body will act on the perplexing problem of land claims, and which they hope will be soon. Udall's pronouncement may do just that—speeding the solution to lands. To undo it could mean serious problems. It could also stymie President-elect Nixon's wish for early action on land claims.

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which he used wisely and for the benefit of his people back home. "Mr. Alaska" served his people in the best tradition of unselfishness. He worked for all of them no matter who they were.

When the northern Alaska area native people began to make themselves felt by organizing and voicing their needs and problems, Sen. Bartlett listened. He listened well and did something about them. Through his direct efforts, Barrow people obtained the sorely needed benefits of the natural gas. Pribilof Islanders gained justice that was due them for 200 years. Sen. Bartlett tackled the unpopular, near mysterious and latent effects of radiation on finding that the Eskimos of Anaktuvuk Pass and other villages might suffer in the long run. "Mr. Alaska" spearheaded in the United States Senate the efforts to house the miserably poor of our native people. He did many other things for all the people of Alaska.

A great servant has passed on. He will be hard to

replace. His unselfishness alone is a void most men would find formidable to fill. A disservice can result from it. Careful, sober, soul-searching moments by those who have the power to fill the unexpired term of the late senator should be the order of the day. To do otherwise could mean future difficulties. "Mr. Alaska" is that hard to replace.

Men, such as Sen. Bob Bartlett, make their mark in the lives of men. Great many people are saddened by their passing. We share the burden of great sorrow borne by the brave little lady, Mrs. Vide Bartlett, and her two daughters, on the loss of an unselfish servant—Sen. E.L. (Bob) Bartlett.