

LAND TASK FORCE DRAFTING COMMITTEE MEETING AMIABLE

"The meeting with Boyko, as the representative of the State, and Assistant Secretary of the Interior Vaughan with the drafting subcommittee of the Land Claims Task Force has brought agreement on the land claims question closer than at any time in recent years," Rep. Willie Hensley, chairman of the drafting committee, evaluated the results of the meeting last week in Anchorage.

The men Hensley mentioned are: State Attorney General Edgar Boyko and Robert E. Vaughan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Interior for Public Land Management.

"The session started with good harmony with Boyko explaining the two proposed bills, one federal and one state, during which there was discussion and questions," said Hugh Nicholls, member of the drafting from Barrow.

"The three parties involved in the land issue, which is so important to the future development of Alaska, all

realize that resolution of the problem in the near future cannot be accomplished without active cooperation and a certain amount of flexibility," continued Hensley.

He said that a rigid attitude by any one of the three parties will certainly retard a settlement, or worse, completely eliminate the possibility of any solution in the foreseeable future.

"The discussions in Anchorage were fruitful," said Rep. Hensley. "Each

party has a clearer understanding of the positions of the positions of the other and it was particularly important that Mr. Vaughan was in attendance since, I believe, that the Interior Department did not have a true assessment of the position, the desires and needs of the Eskimos and Indians in Alaska which resulted in the introduction of a completely unacceptable bill earlier in the year."

Hensley said that from the presentation of Robert Vaughan at the meeting it was apparent that Secretary Udall wants to pursue his idea that royalties from the Outer Continental Shelf be used to pay for the monetary portion of the land claims.

"It is, indeed, an idea worth exploring," Hensley said, "but I think it will be difficult to sell the idea in Washington and even more difficult to try to explain this method of compensation

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to the villagers."

Hugh Nicholls said that the Anchorage meeting basically agreed on the concept of the proposed federal bill; that if all parties agreed, the following ideas were felt to be compatible with the native people:

1) To accept five to ten per cent of the oil lease royalties from the Outer Continental Shelf.

2) Accept a thousand acres per person per village for township with the option to take land and full title, or in trust and have as trustee the area tribal association if so desired.

3) To accept 25 per cent of the revenue of all state selections.

4) To accept the Department of Interior initial grant of \$20 million as an advance on royalties from the continental shelf.

5) To ask that state land selection be allowed to include additional 25 million acres to offset the 25 per cent given to the native people and out of which the native people would receive one quarter share.

6) That if the offshore plan does not go through Congress, the compensation would be for lands taken.

"There is no doubt that the State will benefit by a favorable settlement to the natives," stated Hensley, "On the other hand, I feel that the State is entirely correct in seeking to secure additional lands to compensate the lost time in making state selections under the Statehood Act."

"The State bill would," Hugh Nicholls said, "basically recognize and provide for the native people 25 per cent of the income on all state selections.

"It would also provide for

the creation of the State of Alaska Claims Commission which would be composed of seven members, four nominated by the Alaska Federation of Natives that would include one Eskimo, an Aleut, Athabascan and one from Tlingit - Haida - Tsimpshian group."

The remaining three would be appointed by the Governor of the State, one of which must be a native.

Nicholls also said that Deputy Secretary Vaughan made it clear that it was widely essential that the regional groups, or the village groups, who will be recipients of compensation, have plans for the disposition, or investment, perhaps in such things as area development.

"The general principles agreed on in Anchorage resulted from long and serious discussions and debate by all sides," said Hensley. "The entire Land Claims Task Force will be fully informed of the Anchorage drafting committee meeting in Juneau on January 11 and 12."

Nicholls and Hensley said that there was a general good atmosphere at the meeting in Anchorage.

"The momentum built up by the visit of Secretary Udall and that of the Deputy Secretary Vaughan should continue," Hensley said.

He said it was necessary that Washington officials, and others concerned, understand the need for a settlement within a reasonably short period of time.

"The native groups will do everything possible to cooperate with the State and the Interior Department, while at the same time keeping in mind their vital interests," he said.