

Governor call the Secretary!

We believe it's time for Governor Hammond and Secretary of Interior Andrus to make full use of their personal respect and friendship for each other to pull Alaska and the United States government out of a confrontation that could have disastrous effects for generations to come.

Land and its control has been the stuff of warfare throughout the history of man.

The desire for statehood on the part of Alaskans was in large part a desire to control the future of the land in which Alaskans lived as opposed to abiding by the dictates of a presidential appointee heading the Department of Interior.

Naturally, as in many legal documents, someone forgets to dot the i's and cross the t's. So it was in the Alaska Statehood Act — The Congress had not dealt adequately with the question of the land rights of the Eskimo, Indian and Aleuts — Alaska's original inhabitants.

In order to deal with the question of Native claims, Secretary of Interior Stewart Udall froze lands so that Congress could have a clean slate from which to operate. The freeze necessitated Congressional action to resolve the claims and the Land Settlement act was passed.

Unfortunately, the conservationist lobby secured Section 17(D)2 as part of the settlement Act bill that required the Secretary to withdraw up to 80 million acres for parks, refuges, forest and scenic rivers from all forms of appropriation.

This section, which should never have been a part of the Settlement Act has now embroiled Alaskans in a fight with potentially immeasurable and dangerous consequences for all Alaskans.

Instead of going to the wall in court, the immediate need is for calm to prevail and for Governor Hammond to pull in his horns and make a personal call on Andrus.

This meeting could set the stage for CONGRESSIONAL resolution of the D-2 issue. The danger of the present situation in which Alaska finds itself is that with key parties not speaking due to lack of trust, Andrus WILL EXERCISE his option of using the Antiquities Act to withdraw huge portions of Alaska.

This action may have the tendency of satisfying the conservationist lobby for a "lock up" of Alaska for use strictly by the flora and fauna. This would not satisfy Alaskans and would cause a firestorm of resentment, paranoia and litigation which will not bode well for Alaska.

A meeting could be arranged by Andrus and Hammond which CMAL, the Legislative D-2 Steering Committee, AFN and the Alaska Coalition could be invited. This gathering could set the stage for an agreement on scaling down the size of the Antiquities Act withdrawals and a commitment by the State that prudent State selections could take place. In the meantime all parties would commit to urging Congress to continue working on a legislative solution to D-2. Otherwise, we face the prospect of years of litigation and perhaps learning to live with 90 million acres of the Antiquities Act. Governor, call the Secretary.