

UDALL SUGGESTS NATIVES SHARE OFFSHORE BONUSES

U.S. Continental Shelf Income in Alaska Suggested for Sharing

In a momentous announcement this week, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall told a gathering of the native leaders in Anchorage of an idea to allow the native people of Alaska to share in the federal royalties from the oil and gas wells to be drilled in the Gulf of Alaska's continental shelf.

He said that the suggestion could provide help in the solution to the "big, tough problem" of the native land claims.

"This is a big, difficult problem and we have to make a big improvement than what we have done before," Secretary Udall said. "I am determined to be on the side of the Indians. I intend to

get on record that I am the champion of the Indian rights."

He said the real trouble in the settlement of the land question has been that when the problem was brought up in the past, it has been "swept under the rug."

"One of the reasons is that my department hasn't done its job. We have discriminated against you," he said.

The State of Alaska has 35,000 miles of coastline and its continental shelf is over 64 per cent of the total coastline mileage of the United States. The Secretary of the Interior has a complete jurisdiction over the

(Continued on Page 2)

Udall Suggests Share Bonuses

(Continued from page 1)

continental shelf.

The Secretary said that his department will call for nomination of the Gulf of Alaska "shelf" tracts for leasing in 18 months to two years.

He thought that he could sell Congress on the idea that the native people could share in the revenue royalties from the leases. He said this money received by the native people would be native run and managed.

Udall said he thought of the idea during his plane ride to Anchorage and that, of course, he has not consulted the Bureau of the Budget and the White House.

He thought, however, that from the standpoint of Congress, the idea might prove to be appealing.

The Secretary's announcement took the native leaders by surprise, as well as everyone else, and many of them said they were "jolted" and "flabbergasted" by Udall's sudden disclosure.

The leaders, however, are thinking of the idea with a cautious optimism and many of them, including legislators, think that Udall might have made a good beginning to solve the land question.

Another important development that took place at the meeting with the Secretary was that an atmosphere has been created to work on the land claims problem in a three-way effort; that the native leaders, the state, and the Interior Department would work together in drawing up a new bill.

"There should be a three-

way compromise, the native people, the State, and the Interior Department. There is a good climate in which to work," Udall said.

Prior to the meeting with the Secretary, the native land claims task force, appointed by Gov. Walter J. Hickel, had been meeting with State Attorney General Edgar Boyko and there a cautious atmosphere of cooperation on the land claims problem was established.

This was due, in most part, to the Attorney General's liberalized attitude towards the land problem.

The task force went to the extent of creating a drafting committee to work on a bill in cooperation with the State. Rep. Willie Hensley was elected chairman of the committee and the following persons were appointed to serve on the drafting committee:

Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives; Harvey Samuelson, Dillingham; Harry Franz, Kenai; Byron Mallott, first vice president of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, Yakutat; John Borbridge, Native Affairs Officer, PHS. Anchorage and Juneau;

Richard Frank, president of Fairbanks Native Association, Minto and Fairbanks; Hugh Nicholls, first vice president of Arctic Slope Native Association, Barrow; and Don Wright, president of Cook Inlet Native Association, Anchorage.

THREE-WAY EFFORT

Now that the three-way

working agreement on the land claims problem has been established, there is no reason why this arrangement should meet with opposition.

Secretary Udall made a strong bid for this eventuality when he said, "You should make a real, vigorous effort to compromise..."

Chief Andrew Isaac of Tanacross, who held the more than 200 in the audience spellbound with his speech, said, "I don't understand — why don't we get along? We got to be go together..."

The Secretary then said that "If the State, the native people, and the Interior Department work together, I think we could get a bill. If we don't, we could be caught in a cross-fire of an argument in Congress."

Udall then made a significant statement that there would be a person high in the echelon in his department who would work along with the native people and the State in working out a compromise bill.

And about his suggested idea of giving a share of the royalty income of the federal government from lease sales on the continental shelf, which the native people could use in forming viable communities, he said:

"My own people might think I'm crazy. I would like to solve this problem while I'm Secretary—and this might last for the next 14 months. I want to give you a permanent stake in your state."