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BARROW CITES LAND USES ON NORTH SLOPE

Eben Hopson, executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, reviewed Wednesday evening before the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in Barrow, testimony

which will be formally introduced before the committee in hearings today in Fairbanks.

Hopson's statement, along with other statements made by Barrow Eskimos, was read during

a presentation for the congressmen Wednesday evening in Barrow.

The presentation, attended by some 500 of the Arctic Slope Eskimos, captured the attention

of the visiting dignitaries with Eskimo songs and dances as well as a display of native crafts and other Eskimo artwork.

Speaking before the congressmen, Hopson stated, "This is our

land. From the Brooks Range to the Arctic Ocean, and from Canada to the Native village of Point Hope. It has been just a few years when you white people

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started coming in to stay. Even for the exploration of oil with the Petroleum Reserve Number Four you didn't do anything until 1945.

" . . . These claims are proven. Just look at these barren lands out of which we four thousand Eskimos made our living. You can see that we had to travel many times a hundred miles to our various camps. We occupied the whole 55 million acres."

Hopson also defended native claim to mineral rights, saying that the Eskimos used oil seepage for fuel and that Indian title has been established as a precedent whereby natives can claim lands in fee.

The Eskimo leader also attacked Governor Miller and the state for his opposition to the native position in the land claims and to abolish existing reservations so that these selections can be made.

"The judgement of the Arctic Slope Native Association is that the stubborn, greedy, dog in the manger attitude simply cannot be tolerated. It is hurtful to a settlement. It must be condemned and we do condemn it. The state must recede. The point is, however, how to make it," Hopson stated.

At this point, he announced that ASNA would file suit to prevent the state from spending monies derived from lease sale of lands on the Arctic North Slope.

"We have ordered our attorneys, Frederick Paul as chief counsel and his associates Davis, Wright, Todd, Riese and Jones to take whatever legal action is necessary to prevent the state's spending of the 900 million dollars principal or interest.

"Presently, they are concentrating on a suit against the Bank of America in San Francisco on the theory that the bank has money belonging to us, and we want it," Hopson stated.

Hopson also discussed the size of the land claim made by the Alaska Federation of Natives. He cited Governor Miller's statement the federal government has a "fair and honorable record" in dealing with native Americans and that Miller would like to "secure the same treatment for the Alaska natives."

"How Ghastly!" Hopson commented. He stated he was amazed that Miller would advocate a repetition of the history of subjugation, decimation, and segregation that American Indians

have historically received from the United States Government.

Hopson questioned the competence of the state and the Miller administration which has "no oil economist, no oil lawyer, and no constitutional lawyer."

He contrasted the mismanagement of the Miller Administration with the efforts of the Alaska Federation of Natives in hiring Justice Arthur Goldberg and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

"While we deny that our need or our competence are relevant factors to judge the amounts of land and money or both, our need is great and our competence is amply adequate for a reasonably soon full control of our own compensation," Hopson stated.

Another statement came from Sam Taalak, manager of Barrow Utilities, Inc. "I was born in a sod house at Oliktok at an acreage that is now worth \$72 million," he told congressmen.

Three Wainwright Eskimos, Weir Negovanna, James Kagak, and Samuel Agnassaga also submitted testimony: "Mr. Hopson tells us you do not believe that we traveled a hundred miles in all directions inland. You are wrong. All you got to do is look at our country to believe us. To you, you can see nothing. But we know where these animals live and how to catch them."

Thomas P. Brower, well-respected Barrow whaler and Eskimo businessman, also reviewed his statement.

"I have been asked many, many times what is there in this Arctic Slope worth living for, enduring the frigid cold weather. I would say, this land of my birth, it is a part of me, and there is much, much more that I can say," Brower stated.

Veteran Barrow whaler Warren Matumeak added, "We have lived on our land for many centuries and we will continue to live here as long as the earth orbits the sun, and we want to benefit from our own land. We are asking you people not to let anyone take any more of our land without paying for it, because, ladies and gentlemen, THIS IS OUR LAND, and we love our land."

Arctic Slope Native Association delegates from Anaktuvik Pass and Barter Island also introduced statements to be formally introduced today.

The Barter Island Eskimos, from the villages of Kaktovik,

told of how they hunted over much of the North Slope, ranging as far south as where the rivers flowed to the south.

Simon Paneak and Elijah Kak-ingak, of Anaktuvik Pass, explained of their use of the land.

Other statements by Wyman Panigeo, president of the Barrow Village Council; Nelson Ahvakana, of Barrow; and Walton Ahmaogak, who was born at Prudhoe Bay.

Ahmaogak told of how he was raised at Prudhoe Bay, where his family owned a winter house five miles from the original discovery well.

"For many years now I have been trying to get an allotment where our house was, filing first in 1963, but the government won't approve my request," he stated.

"We had graves at McIntyre Point over there. My grandmother was buried by our fish camp up the Kukparuk River, about 50 miles. The Oil Companies covered the grave with gravel for a path," Ahmaogak stated.

Joseph Upicksoun, first vice-president of the ASNA, also reviewed his statement, which he will enter formally at today's hearings in Fairbanks.

Upicksoun said his people were unified with the AFN position in seeking a land claims solution. He added that the most important provision he felt to be is the 2 per cent over-riding royalty.

"With your sagacious mind, and wisdom to understand, the 2 per cent over-riding royalties is the ties my son's children and their children will have to the lands we may lose on what we truly believe was the land of us aborigines.

"I solemnly believe that this ground, this portion of the earth's surface, the Arctic Slope Region, is my land!" Upicksoun stated.

These statements, and other aspects of the Barrow presentation, were thought to have been well received by the congressmen.

It was also generally felt that the congressmen were much better behaved at Barrow and were more receptive to natives than several other stops on their tour.

Earlier at other villages, rather than earnestly seeking native opinion, the congressmen occasionally initiated angry confrontations with their hosts.