

MALLOTT: CLAIMS BACKERS TWO YEARS LATE

RurAL CAP Director Urges Equity, Justice In Backing Claims

Byron Mallott, Executive Director of RurAL CAP, recently took part in a citizens' meeting organized for the specific objective of lending support for the Native land claims bill in this session of the U.S. Congress.

The group known as "Alaskans United" was comprised of Anchorage area business leaders and political candidates.

Byron Mallott made it quite clear that support of Native land claims should not be based on panic by local business men who believe the land claims might hold up development in the State. He feels strongly that support should be based on justice for Native Alaskans.

In his remarks, Mallott said the business leaders' "entire response is about two years too late." Mallott said he was disturbed to see no reference to the "equity and justice" of Native claims in a chamber "action" paper that was distributed at the meeting.

The chamber paper urged the

telegrams and phone calls to congressmen and to persons in the Lower 48 to solicit help for passage of the claims bill this session.

Mallott said, "There is no way the Alaska Federation of Natives, the Natives of Alaska, are going to allow passage of a bill that is not in their best interests."

The claims bill passed by the Senate provides for a land settlement of 10 million acres; the AFN's proposed bill calls for 40 million acres.

He said, "Panic action that says we'll take any kind of bill just to get the damn thing settled is not going to cut it...There's no way that just any old bill is going to get past the Congress just to satisfy people who are afraid their pocketbooks are going to get hurt."

Mallott said AFN Members of a team sent to Washington to ride herd on a claims settlement is willing to bargain, "but on the basis of the AFN bill."