

# Senate Stirring— CONGRESSIONAL ACTION ON NATIVE CLAIMS SOON

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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Congressional action to resolve the Alaskan Native land claims will begin here soon after the start of the new Congress this week with the introduction of a bill jointly sponsored by Senator Henry Jackson (D-Washington), Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-Alaska).

Senator Jackson, the chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, is reportedly anxious to move a land claims bill rapidly through the Senate.

The bill is expected to be extremely similar, if not identical, to the one which passed the Senate last year.

Members of the House Interior Committee, where the legisla-

tion sat until it died when the old Congress expired, indicate that they desire early action to resolve the claims during the first session of the House.

The time schedule for action in the House is much dependent upon the wishes of Representative Wayne Aspinall, Chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

Some members of the House Interior Committee indicate that there may be favorable sentiment within that committee to give its approval to legislation containing provisions similar to those sought by the AFN.

When interviewed by the Tundra Times on Friday, Representative Lloyd Meeds (D-Washington) stated that there may be sentiment within the committee to approve legislation granting 500 million dollars, a

two per cent overriding royalty on minerals and between 20 and 40 million acres of land to Alaskan Natives.

Representative Meeds said he did not believe that the committee could agree to the 60 million acre figure recently adopted by the AFN, although the Natives may not be wrong in requesting it.

He stressed that the major concern of the committee lies with the type of administrative procedure that would be designed to handle the proceeds of the settlement.

Other members of the committee have previously indicated that they have seriously doubted the feasibility of the corporate setup proposed for the claims settlement.

They are reported to believe

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tighter controls must be established before they can agree to the legislation.

The newest member of the Alaska Congressional delegation, Representative-elect Nick Begich feels that the House Interior Committee will be the key to passage of favorable land claims legislation. He is actively seeking membership on that committee.

Most observers are certain that the new Congress, which convenes tomorrow, will act to settle the Alaska Native land claims. Some questions remain as to how extensive will be the provisions and how soon the legislation will be passed.