

HICKEL PLEDGES TO KEEP FREEZE

Secretary-designate Commits Self Until 91st Congress Has Acted

At the confirmation hearing yesterday morning, January 16, Secretary-designate Walter J. Hickel pledged to maintain the land freeze in Alaska.

He did this at the urging of Sen. Henry M. Jackson, chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, and after

close questioning of Sen. George McGovern, chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Subcommittee.

Secretary-designate Hickel committed himself to hold the land freeze until the 91st Congress has acted to settle the native land claims.

Sen. Jackson expressed his confidence that Congress would take such action during the cur-

rent session.

During the exchange between Sen. Jackson and Secretary-designate, Mr. Hickel agreed that in the event that limited tracts of land were needed for essential public purposes, such as public roads, he would consult with and seek the consent of the congressional committee before releasing such land from the freeze.

Sen. Jackson indicated that his committee would consent to uses such as public roads but not to state selections or private use.

"This pledge," stated John Borbridge, "by Hickel to maintain the land freeze vindicates the position of the Alaska natives."

Borbridge, along with Emil Notti, Rep. Willie Hensley and Eben Hopson, is in Washington at the moment.

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Pledges . .

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Borbridge said the group has been contacting many U.S. Senators and discussed the land matter in Alaska.

Borbridge told Tundra Times that indications at the present time seem to be toward confirmation of Gov. Hickel as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Borbridge thought that confirmation hearings might be terminated by today and that Hickel, very likely, will be the next Interior Secretary.