

Attorney Tells Natives Ignore Keenan's Letter

Natives who filed Native Allotments on lands applied for by the State of Alaska recently received a letter from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources telling them to stop using the land.

However, Alaska Legal Services has advised the Natives to continue using the land and to ignore the letter from the Department, written by F.G. Keenan, director.

In a letter to Keenan, dated Nov. 9, attorney Spike Stein of Alaska Legal Services wrote:

"In recent weeks numerous clients of this office, and people with rights similar to these specific clients, have received letters from your office dealing with the conflict between Native Allotment filing and State selection. On behalf of these people I hereby protest the intent, tenor, and meaning of those letters and ask that you rescind

these letters on an individual basis...

"As you undoubtedly know, rights under the Native Allotment Act are based on continued land use and your order to cease and desist materially and adversely affect the rights of Native people filing under the Native Allotment Act. I trust that you will promptly comply with this request in the interest of avoiding unnecessary complications."

As explained by Stein, Natives have a right to a native allotment on any land they used prior to State Selection and still continue to use.

If any individual discontinues use of the land, the State might then claim that he has abandoned the land and lost his right to a Native Allotment.

The native must continue to use the land in order to protect his legal rights.