WITH THE SENATOR — Marion Bergman, of Allakaket, poses with Sen. Ted Stevens in his Washington office. Miss Bergman was one of 15 young Alaskans to work in Stevens' Capitol Hill office this summer as a youth intern.

Canadian Claims The Subject Of Hearings . . .

(Continued from page 1)

problems for oil exploration and pipeline plans in Northern Canada. The Indian claims, being heard in the court of Justice William Morrow in Yellowknife, covers some 400,000 square miles of land, including the proposed 1,200 mile transportation corridor down the MacKenzie River.

A team of federal lawyers, flown in specially from Ottawa, failed in an attempt to wrest control of the case from Morrow by seeking a writ of prohibition in the Federal Court of Canada.

That team, which had earlier been arguing against the case presented by the Indian Brotherhood of the Northwest Territories on behalf of 7,000 Indians, left Yellowknife after having its legal knuckles rapped by Federal Justice Frank Collier.

Since then, in a move that has generally bewildered lawyers watching the case, Crown Attorney Orville Troy, apparently on instruction from from Justice Minister Otto Lang has asked Morrow to be excused from further appearances.

This latest federal maneuver means the Indian's lawyers can present their evidence virtually unopposed. The closest thing to a government lawyer is an 'Amicus Curiae', or 'friend of the court', appointed by Morrow to assist him in cross examining witnesses.

The absence of federal representatives in the case puts the government in "a most unusual position," Morrow observed.

"They were determined to prevent me proceeding. Having for the moment failed in that attempt, one might have thought they would feel obliged to return here to represent the government until the proceedings are completed."

Such a move in an ordinary law suit could have entitled lawyers acting for the Indians to ask for a judgement in their favor by default, he said.

"However, it must be apparent to all that this is no ordinary law suit."

Morrow went on to observe that under the Land Titles Act, he has extensive powers to summons anyone he thinks might have bearing.

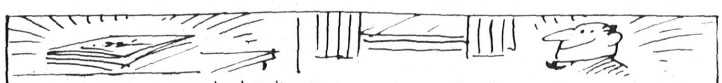
"It may be that before this inquiry has been concluded, I will find it necessary to exercise this power in respect to the government."

That was construed by some observers as a veiled warning that if the Judge deems it necessary, he will feel free to call high government officials, perhaps even of ministerial rank.

Meanwhile, Indian Brotherhood lawyers Gerry Sutton and Graham Price have been wasting no time in collecting evidence. Chiefs of many of the sixteen bands of the Northwest Territories have been called as witnesses, and the court itself will spend the rest of July and August traveling to remote settlements for testimony from old-timers who were present at the signing of unsettled treaties 8 and 11. During early August the Brotherhood is expected to call expert witnesses such as social scientists, and Morrow is expected to make judgement before the end of summer.

In the meantime, a temporary restraining order forbidding the registration of land titles remains in effect, although Morrow has been generous in providing exemptions of those in danger of suffering hardship.

He has lifted the injunction to permit several municipalities to get on with construction and development of vitally needed housing projects, and the booming transport center of Hay River has been given the green light on development of an industrial park.



"An optimist is a man who hasn't gotten around to reading the morning newspapers." (Earl Wilson)

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