

Bartlett Warns Legislature Claims Would Take Time

The Native land claims problem will become increasingly important to Alaska, until it is finally solved with justice and fairness to all, Senator Bob Bartlett told a joint session of the Alaska Legislature Tuesday.

He said anyone who expects the problem to be resolved in a few months is "gravely mistaken." Bartlett noted the Tlingit-Haida land claim is still not completely settled after 35 years.

"It will be essential that Congress approve legislation containing definitions of the

scope of the problem and then assign it to the judicial branch for the task of determining a settlement," Bartlett said.

He added that a delay in final settlement might result because Undersecretary of the Interior Charles Luce, who has been preparing administration legislation on the problem, is resigning to become chief executive officer of Consolidated Edison Co.

"As I see it," Bartlett said, "the Native population of Alaska, particularly outside of

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Bartlett...

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southeast Alaska, is in ferment.

“These peoples are no longer willing to tolerate conditions under which they have lived for centuries. They don’t want to live any longer outside of the mainstream of American and Alaskan life, and they ought not to.”

Bartlett also urged the Legislature not to be too concerned because the pilot fish protein concentrate plant will be constructed outside of Alaska.

“The important thing is that, when FPC is proved economically feasible by the pilot plant, as it will be, Alaska will reap the benefits, because this is where the major ground fish stocks used in FPC are located.”

Bartlett also covered the recently approved U.S.-Soviet consular treaty and Russian violations of the U.S. exclusive fisheries zone.