

NATIVE AFFAIRS DEPT. FATE MAY BE UP TO COMMISSION

Gov. Proposes 20-60 Native Members on Affairs Commission

Governor Walter J. Hickel will soon throw a bill into the legislature hopper to create a State Commission of Native Affairs.

And if the bill passes and the Commission, to be composed of 20 to 60 members of various ethnic groups throughout the state, is formed, then the Commission will consider the question of whether a State Department of Native Affairs should be established.

Reportedly the bill will call for the funding of meetings of the commission.

Governor Hickel had proposed the establishment of a Native Affairs Department prior to election but after he took office, he was deluged with protests from representatives of Native groups through the state.

"I don't know what reaction Tundra Times has gotten," said Allan Adasiak, special assistant to the governor, "But we have a thick file of telegrams and letters from various groups throughout the state protesting setting up the department."

Because of these protests, Adasiak indicated that the Governor had been reticent in proposing legislation.

In his State of the State message, Governor Hickel had stated that the question of whether or not the Native Affairs Department should be created would be the subject

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of hearings by the Legislative Council.

It has since been found, however, that Legislative Council hearings can only be held on pending legislation.

Most of the protests to the creation of a Native Affairs Department were that it would be discriminatory and set up a bureaucracy, similar to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, within the state government.

The bill will be presented through the rules committees of the two houses of the legislature at the request of the Governor.