

Hensley

"I am not playing politics," State Representative William Hensley said this week in reply to a charge by U.S. Representative Howard Pollack. "I would like very much to agree with Howard about something, but I can't find anything."

"If he really wanted to be our friend, he could have called and let us know about the Washington briefing on the Alaska land bill, even if he didn't set it up himself.

He also could have presented some small token of support for the federal housing bill, which was slashed, resulting in a loss of \$1,000,000 housing aid for Alaska," Hensley said.

"We need a bread and butter man in Congress," Hensley continued. "We need someone who works on Alaska's problems instead of traipsing around the country trying to make a name for

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himself in the international arena with issues like the Soviet consular treaty."

Hensley expressed surprise that natives, by implication, were being held responsible for the land freeze. "The natives had nothing to do with writing the Alaska constitution and statehood act," he pointed out. "It is mainly these two documents that are in conflict now. Before the land issue is settled, we will be accused of causing every problem in the state."

But since the leasing of land by the state has been frozen by the United States Department of the Interior, Hensley is in no hurry to see it lifted.

"If they lift the freeze, the state will select all the most favorable areas around the villages for development."

The state has to raise taxes, land freeze or not, Hensley said. "Everyone has known that for over a year. I have not been shown to my satisfaction that the freeze is heading Alaska toward financial ruin."

Hensley challenged Pollock's assertion that lands not marked for natives should be unfrozen because Congress is highly unlikely to increase the size of the land or money settlement. "As far as I'm concerned, any provision of the bill is negotiable," he said.

He also questioned Pollock's remark that the bill would provide restitution for past injustices to natives. "Native claims are not based on past injustice," Hensley said. "We have a legal right to that land. Howard's statement must be America's guilty conscience coming through."

Hensley explained that he and Notti were cautious about meeting with Pollock because they feared he might take their picture with him, to be spread around the state for political purposes.

"If Pollock wants my specific views on housing, native lands and reindeer, I'd be willing to write to him," Hensley said.

"I want to emphasize that I am not working for any party in my objections to Pollock. I simply do not feel that he has demonstrated sincere friendship."