

# Sen. Henry Jackson Schedules Harris-Kennedy Bill Hearings

By THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.  
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee Chairman Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) said this week that further hearings on Alaska Native land claims legislation are scheduled for March 16.

Senator Fred Harris (D-Okla.) requested during claims hearings on February 18 that further hearings be scheduled on a bill introduced by him which contained provisions sought by the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Informed sources indicate that these may be the last hearings scheduled before the committee begins to consider legislation in executive session.

Reaction to Senate Bill 835 introduced by Senator Harris

and nine others, is reported to be less than favorable between Alaska Senators Mike Gravel and Ted Stevens.

Sources indicate that the Alaskan Senators feel that the

Harris bill is a hurried attempt to present the AFN position and that S.B. 35, which passed the Senate last year as S.B. 1830, may be a stronger piece of legis-

(Continued on page 4)

# Harris-Kennedy Bill...

(Continued from page 1)

lation.

There is also fear that more conservative legislation may be introduced in the Senate either in the form of H.R. 3100, introduced in the House last month by Rep. Wayne Aspinall (D-Colorado), or in the form of new legislation proposed by the Administration.

AFN President Don Wright returned to Washington last week following meetings with the AFN board of directors. He is seeking office space in Washington as a base of operations for the AFN lobbying effort.

Wright told the Tundra Times that support for the Harris bill, which is endorsed by the AFN, is increasing in the Senate.

Dissatisfied with the position taken by the AFN, Arctic Slope Native Association Executive Director Charles Edwardsen, Jr. is conducting a separate lobbying effort here.

ASNA opposes the per capita distribution formula adopted by the AFN during its January 23 board meeting. Edwardsen said the ASNA position calls for distribution of settlement funds on the basis of lands claimed by regional organizations.

The opposing positions, con-

tends Edwardsen, cannot be reconciled. As long as the per capita provision remains, Edwardsen said, the North Slope will lobby against it and will make its position known to Congress.

If nothing else, Wright and Edwardsen share fears of a minimal effort from the Alaska Senators and wince at predictions of a more severe Administration proposal.

One bright note on the claims scene comes from the House. Organization of the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs last week resulted in significant representation from members known to be sympathetic toward the Alaska Native position.

Some of the committee members include Representatives Nick Begich, Ed Edmondson, Patsy Mink, and Lloyd Meads.

Although the action of the full House Interior Committee on claims legislation is the subject of a wide variety of predictions, there is speculation that the Indian Affairs Subcommittee will be more thorough and more favorable if it is delegated with most responsibility for consideration of claims legislation.