

Gov. Calls for Local Autonomy Enforcement

JUNEAU—Gov. Walter J. Hickel said last weekend that the administration plans “one-hundred per cent enforcement” of local union autonomy clauses in state construction contracts which involve no federal funding.

At the same time, the Governor said the state will continue to press the federal government—“and push as hard and as tough as we possibly can”—for agreement to the inclusion of local autonomy clauses in contracts in Alaska which involve some portion of federal funding.

In addition, Hickel said, the attorney general's office has been directed to gear up for a court test in the near future to “settle once and for all” the validity of Alaska's new local autonomy statute, which was added to the books last year by the Alaska Legislature.

Hickel forecast the tough administration policy on local autonomy, and the likelihood of a court test, as he announced that the state has complied with federal demands that local autonomy

(Continued on page 5)

Local Autonomy Enforcement

(Continued from Page 5)

clauses had to be withdrawn from two construction contracts in Alaska before the federal funds involved could be released.

Several projects, including major runway expansion at Anchorage International Airport, and highway construction projects at Ketchikan and Juneau, were placed in jeopardy when the federal Department of Transportation balked at the inclusion in matching fund state contracts of a clause requiring compliance with the state local autonomy law.

Under the agreement reached with Transportation Secretary Alan Boyd, federal funds for the projects will be released, Hickel said, on condition the state withdraw the union autonomy clause from the contracts in question.

"Let there be no mistake about this," Hickel said. "We are absolutely determined to continue this fight, and to end job discrimination against Alaskans by outside unions."

"But it is also wise to know when to retreat. We retreated on these particular contracts because we simply could not allow these vital projects to be halted by withdrawal of federal participation."

"We have complied with

the federal demands in these specific contracts, believing this best for Alaska. But nothing could be farther from the truth than to say we've given up on local autonomy," Hickel added.

"I have asked the attorney general to institute a test case to determine whether the federal government has the legal right to impose these conditions in future contracts."

"If it is determined that the state acted with legal

authority, local autonomy clauses will again be made a requirement in all state contracts in the future."

The Governor said the administration will also encourage inclusion of local hire clauses in labor-management agreements; the granting of incentives to employers who prefer Alaskans on their jobs, and "everything else within our power to insure full employment opportunities for the residents of Alaska."