

Theodore Ryberg

Box 5089

College, Alaska 99701

ASPINALL THREATENS TO BLOCK LAND BILL

By THOMAS RICHARDS, JR.
Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(August) The Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement bill reported out of the Indian Affairs Sub-

committee of the House Interior Committee last week faces a danger of being killed before reaching the floor of the house.

Informed sources close to the Interior Committee report that

the legislation, the product of a compromise carefully engineered within the committee by Alaska congressman Nick Begich, won only conditional endorsement from Interior Chairman Wayne

Aspinall (D-Colo.).

The danger facing the legislation is that Aspinall may cancel the five days of executive session which he scheduled for the full committee in mid-

September. This action would upset the critical timing necessary to bring the bill to the house floor this session.

Reportedly, Aspinall will re-

(Continued on page 6)

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(Continued from page 1)

sort to this tactic if he feels that the Alaska Federation of Natives were seeking a more substantial settlement from the Senate when that body begins work on land claims legislation

in September.

Chairman Aspinall, his colleagues indicate, is willing to move the legislation through both the Interior and Rules Committees in order to bring the bill to the floor for a vote in October.

However, Rep. Aspinall will try to block progress on the bill unless the AFN and the State of Alaska, as well as the full Interior Committee, back the proposal reported out of the subcommittee.

Prior to last weeks announcement that the Indian Affairs Subcommittee had reached agreement on the claims bill, a meeting took place with representatives from the three groups to ascertain whether all parties would back the compromise bill.

Alaska's Attorney General John Havelock, AFN President Don Wright, Interior Committee Consultant Lewis Sigler (representing Aspinall), and representatives from Rep. Begich's office and other congressional offices were present at this meeting.

All the representatives at this meeting committed support for the bill which was subsequently reported out of the subcommittee. An agreement was signed and a committee print authorized.

After the bill was reported out on August 3, Alaska Senator Ted Stevens communicated to Senate Interior Committee Chairman Henry Jackson that he had learned the AFN may lobby for a larger settlement from the Senate.

Word of this reached Rep. Aspinall. He then threatened to block House action on the bill unless AFN President Wright honored his commitment to support the House Subcommittee bill.