

JURISDICTIONAL RUN AROUND ON PET 4 RILES BARROW FOLKS

Navy: Barrow Native Allotments Allowed by BIA, BLM Not Valid

The executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, Eben Hopson, is making angry complaints against the Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of the Interior regarding the filing for native allotments in the Barrow area.

In a strongly worded letter to the cabinet officers, Hopson said that the Barrow Eskimos are being given the run around due to a jurisdictional snarl between the Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Bureau of Land Management.

About a year ago, the people of Barrow were given the greenlight to file for native allotments by the BIA and BLM even though the two agencies knew that the land to be allotted was within the boundaries of the Petroleum

Reserve No. 4.

Then just recently Barrow people received word from the Interior Department's associate solicitor indicating that no native allotments can be filed within the petroleum reserve.

"I think a little discussion is in order concerning the jurisdiction over NPR No. 4," said Eben Hopson.

Hopson said that it had been public knowledge for some 47 years that the Navy was the sole authority over the petroleum reserve. He said the associate solicitor went to great lengths bringing out the fact that Congress had indeed conveyed jurisdiction over to the Navy.

"This is public knowledge," Hopson said. "As a matter of fact, it was public knowledge

(Continued on page 6)

Riles Barrow Folks . .

(Continued from page 1)

when a year or so ago we were given the go-ahead to file for native allotments. Both the BIA and the BLM cooperated in assisting us with our filings when they knew that 99 of them were in the Naval reserve."

"Why the sudden reversal?" continued Hopson. "Leaves a lot to be discussed. Why didn't the Navy come out a year ago and say we can't file on NPR No. 4? Does this imply that because of this latest jurisdictional snarl that the Navy is in fact trying to limit the use of the land by the Eskimo?"

Hopson said that it might be interesting to research the ways in which the Barrow area land was declared a Naval reserve.

"It's clear cinch that the man who took the news to the lower 48 some 47 years ago didn't find the seeps by accident. I'll give you one guess," Hopson pointed out.

The Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 was established back in February 27, 1923.

Hopson went on to say that it was also interesting to note that although only the oil and gas are reserved that it now becomes impossible to even file for a native allotment which in itself does not include mineral rights.

Hopson told the cabinet officials that somewhere along the line that they were going to have to give whether by an act of Congress or otherwise.

"But to claim the oil and gas in NPR No. 4 and by stretching the extent of the Navy's jurisdiction over NPR No. 4 and say that you control the surface too, is pure nonsense and callous dereliction of duty and miscar-

riage of authority," charged Hopson.

He said he would dare the officials to produce an Act of Congress specifically conveying surface rights to the Navy, rather than by implication or regulation.

"How would you like to be in my shoes one time?" said Hopson. "Live on the Arctic Slope, try to work for a living, hunting for your meat on the table, your house mortgaged, own no real property, not by choice but by government regulation, and watch the State and federal government take all the land away from you and have to put up with a Secretary of the Interior unwilling or unable to make an honest effort to help you hang on to something that you felt was yours all the time..."

"It ain't easy."