

# CLAIMS VOTE EXPECTED TODAY

## Amendments Cause Confusion

WASHINGTON, D.C. (October 19)—After two hours of debate on the native land claims bill, the U.S. House of Representatives postponed debate on three vital amendments and votes on the bill and its amendments till Wednesday.

The House completed debate on the main portion of the bill about 6:30 p.m. Washington time and adjourned till tomorrow when the first order of business will be the three amendments to the land claims bill.

Activity from conservation groups, the National Rifle Association and other groups commanded the attention of most of the House members on Tuesday as telegrams poured in from all over the nation.

"Every member has recieved telegrams from all these groups and confusion is reigning," according to Paul Tendler, press secretary for Rep. Nick Begich (D-Alaska). "The Congressman is

asking for unity."

"We're hoping the bill will come out without any amendments," Tendler said.

The three amendments in question are the Rep. John Taylor (R-Penn.) amendment, which provides for comprehensive land planning and a land freeze to implement it and two amendments providing for Alaskan wildlife refuges—both introduced by Rep. John Dingell (D-Michigan).

In the amendment debate Wednesday each member is entitled to five minutes to speak on each amendment. The speeches should be over by 3:30 p.m., Tendler reported, at which time votes will be taken.

In the debate this afternoon, Congressman Wayne Aspinall (D-Colorado) Chairman of the House Interior Committee spoke in favor of the native land claims bill.

Aspinall is one of the sponsors of the house bill and is putting his weight behind it.

Congressman Begich is scheduled to speak tomorrow on the amendments. He and other Congressmen have received hundreds of telegrams from people outside the state as well as Alaskans. Most of the outside telegrams came from people in favor of the conservationist amendments.

In Alaska, the Alaska Miners Association has been conducting a last ditch publicity campaign against the land claims bill and specifically against the Saylor amendment and has urged Alaskans to telegram their protest to Congressmen Aspinall and Begich.

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# Claims . . .

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About 75 Alaskans sat in the House galleries during the two hours of land claims debate. Among them were AFN president Don Wright, executive director Harry Carter and Mrs. Nick Begich.

The house bill being considered tomorrow, H.R. 10367, provides for a land claims settlement to the Native people of Alaska of "title to 40 million acres of land, \$425,000,000 from the United States Treasury payable over a ten year period and an additional \$500,000,000 payable out of revenues received from the leasing or sale of minerals in the public lands of Alaska."

The bill provides for the Secretary of the Interior to divide Alaska into twelve geographic regions approximating the twelve regional native associations. These regions will form regional native corporations who will administer the land claims funds.

Land selection is divided into two parts. Initially, each village will select three to four townships, depending on population, per village, up to an estimated 16 or 17 million acres. After State selection authority expires in 1984 the remaining entitlement (22-24 million acres) is conveyed to the regional corporations (excluding Southeast) according to a land percentage formula.

In a dissenting view to the Report from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on the land claims bill, Cong. John Saylor attacked the size of the land settlement and the lack of comprehensive land use planning in the bill. He later introduced an amendment which would require comprehensive planning before any settlement could be distributed.

"The failure of the Alaskan Natives to document their claims is indicative of the insufficiency of such claims," Saylor charged. "If a strict test were applied in the consideration of this legislation, it is questionable whether the Natives could support an appreciable fraction of their claims. Through changes in their habits and mode of living over the last 30 to 40 years, the Natives have abandoned large portions of their ancestral lands..."

Saylor also charged that the amount of usable land in Alaska is not sufficient to cover a 40 million acre native land claims settlement and a 103 million acre state selection. Also, he charged, without comprehensive planning the land claims settlement will open up America's last wilderness to unrestricted use and ownership.