

**Editorial—**

# **Udall's Alternative**

**"INTERIOR SECRETARY UDALL VISITS ALASKA—Historic Rights and Claims Settlement Is Number One Problem Declares Official."**

The above headlines pinpointed the banner story of the fledgling newspaper—the **TUNDRA TIMES**—in its Volume 1, No. 1 on October 1, 1962. After six years and four and a half months later, (today) the headlines read, **"LBJ ASKS EARLY LAND ACTION—President Johnson Asks Congress for Prompt Claims Legislation."**

In the interview for the initial issue of this newspaper, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall furnished the following material:

**"...He said the problem of settling native rights and claims 'has been delayed too long and it is time to look it squarely in the face.'**

**" 'I do think it is something that must be decided**

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*'I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it.' Vol*

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and I hope we have the fortitude to look at the problem in the face and come up with some kind of solution. I'm not prepared to make a definitive statement on it today," he said."

"Udall said he didn't know whether the solution of the problem would be reservations, but quickly added there were several alternatives.

"He said that the Interior Department wanted to explore the alternatives and see if it could come up with a recommendation to make to Congress..."

The above remarks of Secretary Udall have proved to be prophetic as far as the present extent of effort to the land solution is concerned, which leaves us wondering whether, in consideration of alternatives, Udall, even then, had a thought of the Outer Continental Shelf revenues for payments for lands lost by native people in lieu of the Court of Claims litigation although he told the native leaders late last year he thought of the idea during the plane ride from Washington to Anchorage.

At any rate, that suggestion took a firm hold during land deliberations within the last few months with the resulting, speedy formulation of the pending land claims bill S. 2906 that calls for the utilization of Continental Shelf revenues.

Out of the several other bills introduced in Congress aimed at resolving the land situation, S. 2906 has met with general preference above all the rest, the reason being that it was thrashed out between three distinct parties representing three distinctly involved areas—the native people, the State and the Department of the Interior. The end product—the S. 2906—came closest to full agreement of the three participants.

That, in itself, was easily the most thought-provoking achievement, or development, and it has caught the fancy of those deeply concerned about the land situation in Alaska. Since it was the end product of those vitally concerned who aimed it at resolving a knotty question, we are of the opinion that this spirit of cooperation has met with the approval of president Lyndon Johnson, hence his momentous pronouncement and recommendation that prompt action be made by Congress and legislate on land claims during this session of the national lawmaking body.

The impact of President Johnson's recommendation is great and it will be a powerful impetus toward resolving the long-delayed settlement of the land situation in Alaska.

We would also like to add that Secretary of the Interior, Stewart Udall, may have found a formula to expedite the land solution in connection with the Outer Continental Shelf and we don't much care whether he came upon the idea six years ago or during his plane ride from Washington, D. C. to Anchorage last November.