

# Gravel Cautiously Optimistic House Could Pass Claims Bill

Sen. Mike Gravel was cautiously optimistic last weekend when he told Tundra Times that there might be a good chance for a native land claims bill to be reported out of the U.S. House of Representatives after it reconvenes after recess for political electioneering.

Gravel said that the claims matter was altogether a House matter at this time. Congressman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado, he said, was the key person in the House and if Aspinall acts, he was the only hope left if a claims bill is to come out

this year.

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, of which Aspinall is chairman, is expected to work on the claims matter around the middle of this month, November.

Sen. Gravel added that if a bill is out of the House Committee, the oil company people would be "going to bat for the natives" to get a bill passed this year.

He said that once a bill that is satisfactory to all concerned has been drafted, the oil indus-

try lobbyists would give it powerful impetus in the effort to have a bill passed.

Gravel pointed out that the Senate committee members' hands were tied at this time until such time the House passes a bill and hands it over to the joint conference committee of the House and Senate.

He said, however, he would be talking with such key Congressmen as Jack Haley, John Saylor, and others on the native land claims issue on individual basis.