



UNIMPRESSED—Tundra Times' clownish composer operator, Susan Samson appears unimpressed as Alaska's lone Congressman Nick Begich is using her office phone. Begich dropped into

Tundra Times office last week while spending a whole day talking and visiting his constituents. —MADELYN SHULMAN Photo

Nick Begich Says Secretary Morton Uninformed...

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Indian Affairs, the subcommittee on Public Lands, the subcommittee on National Parks and Recreation and the subcommittee on Territorial and Insular Affairs.

The Congressman was especially pleased with his appointment to the subcommittee on Indian Affairs.

"The most important single issue facing Alaska is the settlement of the native land claims. Nothing means more to Alaska than a just settlement of the land claims. The Indian Affairs subcommittee will play an active part in deciding the issue."

"As a member of this subcommittee I expect to make meaningful contributions that will enable the issue to be settled this year."

Commenting on his other appointments, Representative Begich indicated that the Public Land subcommittee formulates policy for the approximately 90 per cent of Alaska's land which is federally owned.

Alaska, he said, contains more federally owned land than any other state. The National Parks subcommittee, he said, will control the huge acreage of national parks in the state, also larger than in any other state.

The committee assignments for the Democratic members of

the House were officially announced yesterday. Republican assignments will not be officially announced till tomorrow.

"We have the smallest subcommittee in the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee," Representative Begich said about the Indian Affairs subcommittee. "It comprises eight Democrats

and five Republicans. The Democrats are by and large very, very good people."

Mr. Begich mentioned that several good friends of Alaska were on the subcommittee and foresaw a great deal of support on the land claims issue from his fellow subcommittee members.

Don Wright Berates Board...

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ference between what his firm will ask for their clients and what they get.

"We will fight to the utmost for the group's position," explained Bass, "and then help draft whatever settlement comes out of the House and Senate committees."

Attorneys, he said, do this for any client who wants something from Congress. His job is to draft the most favorable bill to his client, within terms specified by the Senate House Committee.

There is a distinct difference between advocacy and report, said Bass. While his firm will push for 60 million acres, he said, they constantly report back to the AFN Board the estimates they make of what Congress will give.

"When Ramsey Clark says he doesn't think we can get more than 10 million acres," Bass said, "that's his estimate of the feeling of the committee. It can change but evaluations like that must be made all the time."

Pipeline and Claims...

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to the settlement of the land claims of Alaska natives. This position was shared by Alaska Governor William A. Egan.

"Though the pipeline cannot realistically be built until a Native claims bill passes the Congress, the building of a pipeline is a practical necessity to a meaningful implementation of the native claims," the Governor stated.

The Governor also expressed concern for the lack of attention given the people affected by the pipeline within Alaska.

"We cannot lock up all the vast natural resources of the State of Alaska in every corner of the land, ignoring the cry of poverty, of human want, of human ignorance and disease which it is in our power to cure."

"We cannot ignore the economic loss which translates into increased unemployment, higher relief roles, increased crime and human suffering which has already resulted from the uncertainty and delay on this project," said the Governor.

Cecil Barnes, representing the Chugach Native Association, was one of a number of natives who came to Washington to testify. The Chugach Native Association represents natives living near the southern terminus of the proposed pipeline route.

Barnes objected to the absence of concern for the people who live along the route.

"There is much thought about trees and wilderness, but little about human environment and human resources," he stated.

Anticipating economic benefits from pipeline construction, the Chugach Natives formed a development corporation which was named North Gulf Natives, Inc.

"North Gulf Natives, Inc. favor building of a safe pipeline subject and subsequent to a fair and equitable settlement of the native land claims," said Barnes.

He noted that natives favor environmental protection, stating that native influence to impose a land freeze in Alaska was some indication of their desire to protect the environment.

Another spokesman, Richard Frank of Minto, opposed pipeline construction and demonstrated fear that damage may be similar to pollution caused by mining operations in the interior.

With the exception of Frank, most natives indicated they would favor construction of the pipeline should the Alaska Native Land Claims be justly resolved.

One prominent Washington attorney, respected for his expert knowledge of land law, predicted however, that conservationists might effectively block construction of the pipeline project for as long as five years.

Kotzebue Facility Asked

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) has written to the Bureau of Land Management requesting "immediate action" in providing required land for construction of combined community facilities building in Kotzebue this summer.

In a letter to BLM Director Boyd L. Rasmussen, Senator Gravel noted that the Public Health Service has been seeking to relinquish 0.858 acres in Kotzebue to the State of Alaska as a site for construction of the needed community facility.

"This public facility has been in the planning stage for many years," Senator Gravel said, "and is desperately needed by the community of Kotzebue to provide a full range of community services."

Anaktuvuk Fuel

By JACK MORRY
Anaktuvuk Pass

Anaktuvuk Pass has oil now more than they can burn. The people are very happy now that the oil delivery is done.

But in my opinion I do think the oil will not last long. But with the days very much getting warmer everyday, the people will not use very much oil for their heat.

We all want to extend our sincere thanks to the airlines that was able to haul the fuel oil, even though it cost a bit to deliver them. I hope the people are satisfied now.

Thank!

Carter AFN Director...

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University of California at Berkeley. He served as a United States Navy medical corpsman for two years after his graduation from Fairbanks High School in 1950.

For several years, Carter was Environmental Health officer at Kodiak for the Alaska Department of Health and Welfare. Among his duties, he supervised the State Seafood program for three years.

Carter has been a commercial fisherman for many years. He

was twice an unsuccessful candidate for the Alaska House of Representatives.

The new executive director was born in Fort Yukon in 1931. He and his wife Nancy have three children. Carter also has three children from a former marriage.

Carter was one of 17 applicants for the AFN executive director position. Of them, two were presented to the AFN Board of Directors for final consideration.

Critical Point...

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at the testimony by Secretary Morton, they told the AFN board.

On the day after the hearing Mr. Bass contacted other Washington officials and members of the White House staff. Till Wednesday, he said, the staff believed Morton would testify that he was generally in favor of a "good and just settlement," of the land claims issue—but not go into specific provisions.

On the Friday before the hearings (February 12), Don Wright met with Secretary Morton in Washington. According to Wright, Morton seemed helpful, concerned and favored a "good bill."

"As Morton testified," said Bass, "we could see some of the more conservative members of the committee looking up." He fears further hearings might push Senators toward a small land settlement.

Secretary Morton and members of the Senate Interior Committee, said the lawyer, do not believe in the legal "rights" of Indian title. They see the land claims settlement as a form of Indian welfare assistance. Thus, they see the land claims issue as how much land they will "give" the Natives, not how much the Natives will "retain."

As a result of the testimony by the Interior Secretary, AFN counsel is not sure of the advisability of further hearings. Senator Fred Harris of Oklahoma, who testified before the Interior Committee, asked for hearings on his bill (S-1830).

Senators Harris and Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts introduced a bill which follows the AFN position, on February 17, the day before Senate hearings began. The bill provides for fee title to 60 million acres of land, a 500 million dollar cash settlement and 2 per cent minerals royalty.

Time is an important problem for AFN strategy in the Senate, according to Mr. Bass. There is not as much support operating this session as last. Senator Henry Jackson (D-Washington),

chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, is and will be preoccupied with the important SST legislation which vitally affects his home state.

If land claims are not settled quickly, they may be caught in the mire of legislation and delayed till the thorny SST question is settled.

On the House side of the hill, the only land claims legislation which has been entered so far is the bill introduced by House Interior Committee Chairman Wayne Aspinall of Colorado.

"It is completely unacceptable," counsel says of the Aspinall bill.

They plan to submit an AFN bill in the House, one which will be almost identical to the legislation introduced by Senators Harris and Kennedy (with 10 co-sponsors including both Alaskan Senators "by request").

"Things are happening so fast that what looks good one day as far as strategy doesn't look good the next," explained Mr. Bass. "People change their minds, switch positions and the situation changes daily."

One major problem now is Secretary Morton. Each time he talks, believes Bass, the more he will pull members of the Congressional committees toward a smaller land settlement.

AFN board members are asking for the support of other Indian groups across the country in order to get President Nixon personally involved in the Alaskan native land claims question.

When the President signed the Taos land bill he called it a "turning point in our relations with the Indian people" they said.

In a letter to President Nixon which accompanied their statement, the AFN board protested Secretary Morton's apparent denial of the President's former statements of what a land claims bill would contain.

This, they said, is far from a turning point in U.S. Government-Indian relations.

AFN to Open Office in Washington

The Alaska Federation of Natives will soon open a Washington, D.C. office to aid their lobbying efforts for a native land claims bill during this session of Congress.

The office, which will be located somewhere close to the Capitol building and the Senate and House offices in downtown Washington, D.C., will be staffed by a full time secretary. At most times, AFN President Don Wright or other board members will be in Washington as well.

The AFN office will serve as an organizational center for AFN efforts to push land claims legislation. It will include duplicating equipment, telephones and will be a center available to AFN members in Washington to help in the land claims effort.

Through the office, the AFN Board hopes, they will be better able to coordinate their Washington efforts.