

Mr. HALEY. Thank you very much, Senator. We are glad to have you.

Mr. POLLOCK. I wonder now if Governor Hickel might address the committee, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HALEY. Governor, we are glad to have you with us today. I just wonder, looking over the crowd, who's keeping the store.

STATEMENT OF HON. WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

Governor HICKEL. We have it well organized.

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, I would especially like to thank Chairman Haley, Chairman Aspinall, and others who moved with such expediency to hold these hearings at my request. I know that you did this, having other pressing matters before you, especially in this year before we adjourn Congress and face the coming election.

Mr. ASPINALL. Mr. Chairman, I don't want to interrupt the Governor, because we are very glad to have him here and we are glad that he requested this; but to be perfectly frank with you, the hearings were set at the request of your Congressman, Mr. Pollock, and your Senators Bob Bartlett and Ernest Gruening. We are glad to say it coordinated with your activities and wishes but here is where the prompting came from.

Governor HICKEL. Very well.

Thank you, Howard, and Senators.

I would like to express my concern today and I might add that I have my remarks prepared and you will get copies of them but I will read them and it will take about 12 minutes. I would like to say that settlement of land claims for the natives of Alaska are long past due. As Senator Gruening said, it has been 101 years since the purchase of Alaska from Russia. I think in that 100 years there has been more than an injustice done.

The explicit deferral of this settlement began with the treaty of cession in 1867 and was reemphasized in the Alaska Statehood Act.

The report of the House of Representatives on the statehood bill by a member of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs stated the following with reference to the disclaimer clause in the Statehood Act:

"Finally the section provides that no attempt will be made to deal with the legal merits of the indigenous rights but to leave the matter in status quo for either future legislative action or judicial determination."

The U.S. Supreme Court, in 1955, in *Tee-Hit Ton Indians v. United States*, placed the sole responsibility for the resolution of the claims of the natives of Alaska on the Congress of the United States.

I appear before you today to request that immediate assumption of responsibility.

There is an obligation of history, and this forum—the Congress of the United States—has the sole authority to exercise that obligation.

We do not live at a time when we can accept the status quo of 1867.

The matter we discuss today is land—land of the United States—land of the State of Alaska—land of the natives of Alaska.