

that is low. This can be gotten out. At tidewater, at \$2 a barrel—I am not talking about the north slope, but at tidewater. That is just one field.

I don't know what is the value.

Mr. SAYLOR. Governor, that is all. You and I could sit here and discuss this matter for a long time. It has been around for a long time. I appreciate your frankness and I appreciate your coming here and testifying before the committee and giving us the benefit of your thoughts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HALEY. The gentleman from California.

Mr. TUNNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much for having come so far and having given us such excellent testimony.

I have a couple of questions I would like to ask you. I am not as familiar with this problem as some of the other members of the committee, therefore I am going to ask a couple of rather basic questions. One is, what is the basis of the claim against the United States for the \$500 million? It is my understanding that Russia took this land from the natives and that we then purchased the land from Russia for full value; at least at that time.

So what is the basic legal and moral justification for the natives now to make a claim against the citizens of the United States, after they have been recently granted statehood, for \$500 million?

Governor HICKEL. I think this could better be covered by some of the attorneys for the natives group but I will give you my opinion. They won't agree, from a legal standpoint possibly, that they were ever compensated for this land and from a moral standpoint much of Alaska at the time it was sold by the Russians, the Russians hadn't even trespassed over hardly any of it; just only on the coastlines. So in reality, when it was purchased they feel they weren't compensated at all and they have had it since Time 1.

As I said before, if they don't have a legal claim, at least they have a moral claim.

Mr. POLLOCK. If the gentleman would yield, if I might add to what the Governor has said, I think it was probably very poignantly stated in the Senate hearings last February in Anchorage when a venerable old chief got up and said to the Senate committee in broken English, "I cannot speak very well; but did it ever occur to you that maybe you purchased some stolen property from the Russians?"

Mr. SAYLOR. Who did they steal it from?

Mr. ASPINALL. If my colleague from California will yield, let us not go out on that, because we white Americans are not sitting here in too good position if we follow that.

Mr. POLLOCK. He asked what the basis of the claim was of the natives and I think the basis of the claim the Government stated very well; it was their land, the Russians came along the borders and occupied or used only a very limited part of it for trading and so forth, and sold the entire part to the United States. I think from the native point of view that they have a very valid claim.

Mr. TUNNEY. Would there have been in your mind any legal claim against the United States, or moral claim against the United States, for \$500 million if Alaska had not been granted statehood?