

Mr. NOTTI. Mr. Chairman, we would like to make individual statements and, as the questions come, we would like to refer to the person we feel could give the best answer.

Mr. HALEY. You may proceed.

Mr. NOTTI. With the permission of the chairman, I received a letter just a few minutes ago and I was asked to read it to the committee.

With your permission, I would read it.

It is addressed to the chairman and is as follows:

The Alaska native people have waited 100 years for action by the federal government on their just claims. This is too long to wait.

Alaskans are a patient people but patience wears thin.

I am pleased, therefore, and thankful that your committee, even at this late date in the session, has agreed to conduct hearings and to receive the testimony of the representatives of the Native people. I know full well it is too late for final congressional action this year, but I know that it is a good thing to make a record and that evidence received this Congress will be valuable in the next.

I do wish that it were possible for me to be present to introduce the Native leaders who are coming to Washington to testify before your committee. My illness, unfortunately, precludes that. I would like it also to be possible for me to participate in the hearings, for I would like to discuss with your committee the urgency and importance which I assign the resolution of the Native land problem.

The hearings you are holding will be an important step toward solution of the Native land claims. They should help to define issues, identify areas of agreement, and hopefully assist in bringing about a meeting of the minds. For soon, the Congress, the administration, the state and the Native people must resolve their differences. For soon, there must be action.

I know that the people of Alaska join me in thanking you for this opportunity to come before your committee and discuss native land claims. We are indeed delighted that you are conducting these hearings.

Mr. ASPINALL. You may proceed.

Mr. NOTTI. My name is Emil Notti. I am president of the Alaska Federation of Natives. Our organization represents all of the 49th State's more than 55,000 Indian, Eskimo, and Aleut people. Some of my colleagues here today will have special testimony to present on specific subjects, and we are all, of course, available for questioning and exploring in depth any fields which the committee members may bring up.

I would like to take this opportunity to express the thanks of Alaska's native people to the committee for holding these hearings. We know the press of other business that is before the Congress and appreciate that you gentlemen are concerned enough to schedule us. May the results be beneficial both to the people we represent, to our fellow Alaskans, and to the orderly development of Alaska as a major resource of people and commodities that will help shape this great Nation of ours.

There has been a quiet revolution going on in the 49th State since the fall of 1966. In October of 1966 we had our first statewide meeting of native people, some 300 representatives from all parts of Alaska.

We are here today to acquaint you gentlemen with some of what we believe are significant details that should be considered in any final draft of legislation prepared to settle this more than 100-year-old conflict. For as you all know, the Congress has reserved unto itself the settlement of any interest that Alaska's original inhabitants might have in the lands which were acquired from Russia in 1867, and, incidentally, used and occupied by native people for thousands of years prior to that time.