

Donald Mitchell oral histories, Archives and Special Collections, Consortium Library, University of Alaska Anchorage. Emil Notti interview, 1989 November 15. Transcript completed by Louisa Dennis.
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MR. MITCHELL: On the record. And this is the 15th of November. And I'm at the Alaska Native Foundation speaking with Mr. Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Native Foundation, and a former president of AFN, about the Native Claim Settlement Act in -- in the efforts of the Native community to organize itself in the early days to lobby Congress to that end. And I guess the -- as a good way to start, since hopefully this tape is going to someday end up at the university years after we're all gone, might be a little biographical information in terms of when and where you were born, and where you went to school, and how you ended up being in Anchorage in the early '60s at the time that CINA was getting organized.

MR. NOTTI: I was born in -- March 11, 1933. In the Village of Koyukuk. That's on the Yukon River. The confluence of the Koyukuk River and the Yukon. There are a 100 people in Koyukuk in 1933, there are 100 people in Koyukuk in 19-- almost 1990 now. I left the Yukon when I was 11 years old to go to a boarding school because that was the extent of the schooling system in Ruby at the time. So I went to Eklutna, which was 20 miles outside of Anchorage -- the old Eklutna boarding school operated by a Bureau of Indian Affairs. The -- the fall of 1945 they shut down the Eklutna school and moved it to an abandoned Army base in Seward, and still called it the Eklutna school. In 1948 they shut down the Seward school and moved it to the abandoned Navy base, Japonski Island in Sitka, which was (indiscernible) Mt. Edgecumbe school. And they combined Eklutna and Wrangell Institute to make one -- one bigger school for -- for Mt. Edgecumbe. After Mt. Edgecumbe in 1951, I graduated. I spent four years in the Navy. After the Navy I spent five years getting a degree in engineering and electronics. And then I spent five years around Los Angeles working as a research and design engineer and did some work on the Minutemen Guidance or test equipment system. When I returned to Anchorage, those were the days before civil rights when Indian --

MR. MITCHELL: Wait -- wait a minute. I want to stop you. When did you return to Anchorage?

MR. NOTTI: I returned to Anchorage in nineteen sixty- -- '63. I think I -- yeah, '63. That was before -- before the earthquake. Back before Civil Rights days, Indian people did not have names, you know. When you -- when you saw the hunters -- Alaska was wide open for hunting -- a lot of big name people were coming to Alaska to hunt. It was always some big name movie star and Indian guide. They -- in the newspapers, the local papers, and even a sporting -- national sporting magazines, never had names for -- for Indian people or Native people or whoever they were. They were just guides. That was in the area what I consider social injustice. And -- and there was a minuteman named Nick Gray.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, let me -- before we get to talking about Nick, where was -- how were Alaskan Natives treated in Anchorage in those days? Was there -- did you feel discrimination in, you know, the restaurant? I mean, I know that since the '40s in theory it had been against the law, but -- but was there a feeling of -- of sort of second-class citizenship or did you notice? A It -- it was noticeable. It always existed with different people. There were a lot of

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good people, but there was always people who showed a dislike for Native people. It did exist. Discrimination in restaurants and hotels and other places -- public places.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, anyway, returning to Nick Gray.

MR. NOTTI: And Nick had walked the streets in Fairbanks, and mainly on the issue of education and boarding schools. He -- he formed Fairbanks Native Association. And after he got that going he came to Anchorage where I met him. And he walked the streets in Anchorage, buttonholing people and saying we need a place to meet, and we ought to talk about some of the social injustice. And injustice being high unemployment, the worst health statistics in America, half the -- half the average age of the rest of America, three times the infant mortality, the worst tuberculosis epidemic ever recorded in the world, the worst housing conditions, low educational achievement. All -- all of these things that Nick was concerned about and --

MR. MITCHELL: Now did -- did Nick come down from Fairbanks just to organize the Anchorage community or did he have a job down here? How was he supporting himself?

MR. NOTTI: I -- I suspect that it was -- the main reason was to organize. He -- he did not have steady work, and I don't know how he supported himself. And so he -- he was instrumental in getting the first meeting of CINA going. And then under his, kind of, tutelage I became president of CINA and --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let -- let me back up a second. I -- I had heard that -- that prior to CINA that there had actually been a -- a somewhat disorganized camp of the Alaska Native Brotherhood --

MR. NOTTI: That's true.

MR. MITCHELL: -- in Anchorage.

MR. NOTTI: That's true.

MR. MITCHELL: Were you involved in that at all?

MR. NOTTI: No, I was not. Nick was involved in it, and Nick -- when I talked to him he said he loved the name Alaska Native Brotherhood to -- to be across Alaska. But the structural problems of ANB -- he decided that it was easier to start a new organization than to try to walk the power structure within ANB. So he started these Native associations. Most of them are unincorporated associations and --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, also, let me -- let me also back you up on -- in terms of the first meeting of CINA. Do you remember where that was and who else was there and --

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MR. NOTTI: There were -- the organization meeting was, I think, over here at Alaska Native hospital. There's a little meeting room there. I think Mae Stanley was there, Henrietta Ivanoff -- I don't remember her married name, but that was her maiden name. Nick Gray's brother, Clinton Gray, and Clinton Gray's wife was there. There were probably 25 people at that first meeting.

MR. MITCHELL: And basically Nick, however, was the guy that really --

MR. NOTTI: Nick --

MR. MITCHELL: -- got every out to show up to it.

MR. NOTTI: Right. And then we used -- we used CINA to raise money -- small amounts of money in various ways, and sent Nick around the state. Nick was responsible -- he was very articulate and persuasive. We sent him in to Cordova to form Chugach Natives. We sent him to Kodiak to help the KANA. We sent him into Bethel to form Kuskokwim Valley Native Associations, Tony Lewis. He -- he went and -- and tried to holster the Arctic Native Brotherhood in Nome which existed a long time, but he would help them. And so that was kind of the forerunner of AFN. He always dreamed of a statewide meeting.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, a couple things in that regard. One, when -- when -- what was the approximate date of all this? Was this in '63 that Nick got this started or is it after the earthquake in '64?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah, it could have been '64 and '65.

MR. MITCHELL: So it would have been '64 that this organizational meeting happened?

MR. NOTTI: I think that's about right, yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And then I guess the other thing that I have become quite interested in, in terms of tracking how all this works, was you mentioned that -- that you had various fundraisers that would have been able to support the logistics of getting Nick out and about. What -- what kind of activities were available in those days to raise money? Obviously it's not like going to the legislature and getting a grant the way -- the way we do it today. How did you guys support the operation?

MR. NOTTI: We would raise \$200 at a time. We would do it on -- with bake sales and dinners and just donations from people. Five, ten dollar donations. And we were able to raise a couple hundred dollars at a time.

MR. MITCHELL: And so then that was used for, like, Nick's plane tickets and --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

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MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: And then it became -- we get to AFN --

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me also back up. You indicate that -- that Nick was always very interested in trying to get the Native community organized on a statewide basis. Obviously in -- in that same area, Howard Rock in Fairbanks, if you read his early writings, he was of the similar mind. And he and Nick, I think, were probably fairly close in Fairbanks. So I guess the question is, first of all, whether that assumption was correct. Were Nick and Howard close? And to what extent do you think Nick influenced Howard's thinking? And to what extent do you think Howard influences Nick's thinking? Or do you have any feeling for that?

MR. NOTTI: Not much. They both had some concerns, and they were, I think, parallel concerns and even aspirations for a statewide movement, but I -- just how well they communicated or how closely, I don't know.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Was -- was the Tundra Times -- obviously the Tundra Times we've got going in '62 at that point. Was that a -- a major organizing vehicle by the time you guys started CINA? Did the Tundra Times have a lot of influence in the Native community, or --

MR. NOTTI: Not so much in CINA but with AFN they were instrumental.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, that's a little -- I mean -- that's a year or two later.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah, right.

MR. MITCHELL: But -- so in the earlier days it was more of a Fairbanks operation.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Okay. Well, I guess -- was -- in addition to -- to, you know, raising relatively modest amounts of money to assist Nick in his statewide organizing effort, what -- between its founding in '64 and when AFN got going in '66, what other kinds of activities were CINA involved in?

MR. NOTTI: Nick was -- was concerned about the school district. And he would meet with officials there about high dropout rates and a lot of similar things that go on today -- treatment of Native kids. He was concerned about operations of the hospital. About the -- the rural people coming in and maybe having operations that they didn't need or, I think, specifically, he was concerned one time about, kind of, routinely performing hysterectomies on people who really didn't understand that the suggestion by a doctor wasn't the law. And he was always concerned about this communications gap between the rural -- rural people and professionals. He was concerned with a place for people to get off the street and meet. Similar to what's going on today, when someone comes to town, they have no place to go, so they end up finding people on the

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street and end up in the bars. And so it becomes a cycle and no one's been able to break, even now.

MR. MITCHELL: But that's the kind of thing Nick was --

MR. NOTTI: That's the kind of --

MR. MITCHELL: -- trying to deal with.

MR. NOTTI: -- thing Nick was working on all the time.

MR. MITCHELL: Was it -- in terms of the people that were -- who were most active as -- you know, as opposed to just showing up at the normally scheduled CINA meetings, was it basically you and Nick? Was there anybody else really out doing stuff or was it pretty much the two of you?

MR. NOTTI: Well, it was Nick out front and I was the supporting role for him. And then we had a whole bunch of people in here that were active. Shirley Tucker was a local woman. Two women I mentioned before, Henrietta and Mae Stanley -- Agnes Deer, Lloyd Alvacama- -- cav- - com- -- Lloyd Ahvakana, and Lucy became active after -- right about the time of the earthquake. I can't remember -- Watson -- Dave -- Donald Watson. And a number of people as they could they participated and supported Alice Brown.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, what -- what did the -- sort of, the non-native city fathers think of CINA? Was Atwood and his people -- did they view CINA as a positive development or were there tensions about, you know, Natives getting uppity? Or was there any feeling at all about that?

MR. NOTTI: I suppose there was some concern about what we were up to. They weren't really sure. But I became aware that we were, as a group, one of the biggest meetings going on in town. Because when I started to, you know, pick up for -- for Nick, he would send me on assignments, and I would make some speeches around town. I became aware that we were -- we were one the biggest, most active groups in town. I'd go before the Republican weekly luncheon and talk to 15 people -- very influential people in town. I'd go before the Democratic people and find 25 people of the Democratic club. And we'd go to our CINA meeting, and we'd have 40 to 60 people. So it wasn't long before politicians started appearing before us on our monthly meetings and we'd have a main speaker and a lot of encouragement. But -- but it was apparent to me that we were becoming recognized as -- as someone to touch base with.

MR. MITCHELL: So when you say politicians, you mean Bartlett, and Gruening, and Ralph Rivers, and those kinds of guys?

MR. NOTTI: Barlett, Gruening, Ralph Rivers, and local -- local racers and (indiscernible), Nick Begich, and others.

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MR. MITCHELL: Right, right. Now, the -- the other thing before we actually get up to the -- the AFN area, is reading Lael Morgan's book about Howard Rock. It was interesting, there was a brief reference in her book to -- I guess it was an interview with Clint Gray, that said that at least in his judgment in a large -- to a large extent, he thought a lot of Nick's thinking had been influenced by Bill Paul. Do you recall Bill Paul being around at all at that stage of the game or Nick being in communication with him?

MR. NOTTI: I didn't know they knew each other, but William Paul was not part of that early movement. He became active with us in the AFN.

MR. MITCHELL: Right, but not in the --

MR. NOTTI: Not the early days.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, actually, I think where they would have -- he -- Al Ketzler invited Bill Paul up to the 1963 Tanana Chiefs meeting. And I know that Nick was -- was a prominent participant in that, so that's where they would have gotten hooked up. But other than that reference in Lael's book, I'd never heard that before. And I certainly hadn't seen any sign of Bill Paul at that stage of the --

MR. NOTTI: Well, Roy Peratrovich was part of that meeting in Fairbanks.

MR. MITCHELL: Uh-huh. Well, he was a -- you know -- he was, like, probably the highest ranking Native at the BIA at that point.

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I guess that does sort of take us up to '66 in the circumstances surrounding the -- the first -- what became the meeting with AFN. And I guess as a preliminary matter -- at some point after the scene, comes Albert Kaloa and the people over at Tyonek. Were they involved with Albert Kaloa or even Emil McCord or any of the Tyonek people involved early on in CINA, or how did they get in -- get hooked up with you and Nick?

MR. NOTTI: They got hooked up with us after we started the -- trying to get the first meeting up -- statewide meeting together. I'll get into that later on.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Sure. Go ahead.

MR. NOTTI: There -- there was always some feeling that there was encroachment on lifestyles in rural Alaska. And it was -- everything stemmed from rural Alaska. The -- Nick used to tell a story about years ago if you wanted to put up a fish camp, you just went up the river and when you found a likely spot, you used it. When you went trapping, you had the regular traplines, and if -- if things got trapped out, you moved over to the next valley. As long as no one was in that

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valley, you could use the land. We had unfettered use of the land. No restrictions whatsoever. No titles, no boundaries -- recognized use areas by other families, but other than that, there was no conflict. Conflict started to come with statehood. If you look at the land selection patterns in Alaska and earlier statehood selections, they selected land in the Kenai, they selected land between Anchorage and Palmer, between Palmer and Talkeetna, and between Palmer and Glennallen. And the state of Alaska is treated differently than any other state territory as it -- when it became a state. Most western states got 1 in 16 or 1 in 32 sections of land. Alaska got almost one-third of the landmass. And the reasoning was, I think, that there was strong opposition to Alaska becoming a state because we couldn't support local government. The federal government wanted the strong movement to cut Alaska loose, to become a protector like the Philippines. The Commonwealth was their own government because they were tired of supporting government in Alaska. But as a compromise, they gave Alaska one-third of the landmass. And what Alaska did with that was they were selling land to -- to run government. If you drive up the highway and every 300 feet you saw a little 8-by-10 sign that gave you a number on this lot and you could buy land from State of Alaska for 10 percent down, 10 years, no interest, and that they were converting land ownership to money to run government. So then we started getting -- getting conflicts on the use of land. They -- states sold land at the New York World's Fair --

MR. MITCHELL: Right. In '64.

MR. NOTTI: -- as wilderness sites. And the people in Tanacross and Bob Lake complained because the State of Alaska went through the graveyard and surveyed 5-acre lots. So those kinds of concerns was running through the rural community about not knowing how to deal with this encroachment. So that was part of the impetus for statewide movement. In 1966, Bob Bennett was area director in Juneau for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He got tapped to become commissioner of Washington D.C. In January of 1966, during his confirmation hearings seated before the Senate Interior Committee, Scoop Jackson was in the chair. And he said to Bob Bennett, "You're an Indian" -- Bob Bennett's Oneida. And he said, "You're an Indian. What would you do different to solve the, quote, 'Indian problem'?" And the Indian problem was for the past hundred years, Congress heard testimony about poor health statistics, about the high unemployment, the bad education, the poor housing, and just the general rundown condition of the Indian community on the reservations, mainly. He said, "What would you do different?" So Bennett started to give him an answer and Jackson stopped him and said, "No. Don't shoot from the hip." He said, "Come back in 90 days with a plan on how you're going to break the cycle." In 90 days Bennett issued his report, and I read it in April -- Bennett's 90-day report scoping the Indian problem. He devoted about one page to Alaska. And in that report on Alaska, he said the Bureau of Indian Affairs was drawing up a final solution to the land problem in Alaska, and he quoted the laws that -- that were behind his authority to do so: Statehood Act, IRAs, or Reorganization -- a number of acts. And -- and I read that and set it aside, reread it and set it aside. And finally I said, "If the BIA is going to draw out the final solution, if we have any rights in land, we ought to have something to say about it." So in July of 1966 -- or April, I wrote a letter suggesting a statewide meeting.

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MR. MITCHELL: You wrote a letter to Bennett or --

MR. NOTTI: No. I wrote a letter to people around the state that I heard of. Some of them I didn't know. I knew Tony Lewis in Bethel. I wrote to him. Jerome Trigg in Nome. Eben Hopson in Barrow. ANB president, Coper River, Oscar --

MR. MITCHELL: Craig.

MR. NOTTI: -- Oscar Craig. And so I figured we'd sit down with about 14 people and talk about this thing.

MR. MITCHELL: I'm sorry. This would have been -- this letter would have been written in -- in April of '66 or the summer of '66?

MR. NOTTI: I think -- well, I -- if I remember right, I wrote it somewhere between April and July, because in July -- I think it was July, Howard Rock got a copy of the letter.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did -- did you do this on your own or did you discuss this with Nick? Did the two of you guys sit down or how did all that come about?

MR. NOTTI: You know, I'm not sure. But --

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: -- as I remember, I -- I wrote the letter. But I -- I don't know how active Nick was at the time. He was getting sick.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: He was getting sick about that time. As a matter of fact, he might have been in the hospital.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: And so Hardrock starred a headline, A Statewide Meeting Call. And we ran these big headlines and pushed about why we should have a statewide meeting. And all of a sudden we started to get a lot of interest in it. At that point Albert Kaloa, who with Stanley McCutcheon, who was a brilliant organizer -- and he became interested in it. And it ended up that Tyonek put a lot of money -- I don't know how much money into the meeting, but they chartered airplanes, they'd take -- people would sign into the hotels. When they left they signed the bills and Tyonek pick -- picked up that meeting. All of a sudden our meeting of 14 people -- we had a -- 300 people at the first meeting.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me back up a -- a second. When -- when did you first bump in -- for lack of a more artful term, bump into Albert Kaloa and how did -- were they -- did they just show up after reading about -- about the Tundra -- in the Tundra Times about your interest in the meeting or did you have dealings with --

MR. NOTTI: No. I -- I think they called after they saw the stories and said, you know, "How can we help?" And they became -- they helped organize it. They helped write the letters, they helped -- they helped me as president of CINA at the time put the whole thing together. The -- Tyonek owned the building that we held the first meeting in.

MR. MITCHELL: And that would be across the street over here?

MR. NOTTI: At Audio Cam. It was Audio-Cam building at the time. It's now Martin Victor Furs --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: -- across from -- across from Mcdonald's, the second floor. And --

MR. MITCHELL: What were your impressions of Albert Kaloa? Was he, you know --

MR. NOTTI: Albert was one of those dynamic guys. He was a strong voice and forceful personality.

MR. MITCHELL: Did -- did he seem to have a sense -- obviously you and Nick had a sense of this land thing, and -- and Albert must have also or otherwise he wouldn't have used Tyonek's money. But did he ever talk to you about what he thought should go on with respect to land or things?

MR. NOTTI: No. His -- his -- his -- my limited contact with him was that they wanted to help. They -- they were concerned. They felt that -- that because they had come into \$11 or \$12 million, that they could spend part of that money to help the rest of Alaska get some kind of equity. And he had -- we didn't really talk about what his vision was or what it should be or look like or anything else.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, then they -- they approached you and said they'd like to help. In terms of the -- you were mentioning about how people sign their hotel checks and Tyonek later picked it up. Did -- did Tyonek pick up airfare and stuff as well? Did -- did --

MR. NOTTI: Airfares -- I'm told they chartered airplanes and brought people in.

MR. MITCHELL: How -- how did it -- it work? Did -- did people that wanted to come write to you guys and then Tyonek got in touch with them? Or was Tyonek running its own operation in terms of bringing people in?

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. NOTTI: I'm not sure.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. NOTTI: I -- I think they chartered -- it was pretty well known that Tyonek was done doing some -- well, they did some -- let it be known that they're willing to help. And people contacted them directly and I -- they helped directly. So I have no idea how much they spent or how many people they helped, but I know that it did go on.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. So I guess that takes us up to that meeting in -- in October of '66. What -- how many people ended up showing up?

MR. NOTTI: 300 -- about 300 people signed in. And at that meeting Nick Gray got off his death bed, it turned out, came out of the hospital, came down to the meeting, addressed the group and went back. And he told his niece -- Nick, Clinton Gray's daughter, Nancy, that when she took him back to the hospital he said, "Now I can die in peace," because he saw the first statewide meeting. And three days later he died -- or a week later he died. At -- at that statewide meeting -- first meeting, we put out a number of committees to look at issues. One of the committees we sent out was land committee. They appointed as chairman of that land committee a young student, Willie Hensley. And with the help of Washington D.C. Indian lawyer, Marvin Sonosky, they came back with a position paper on land.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, let me back up in a couple of directions there. One, with Sonosky -- you attended the '66 meeting?

MR. NOTTI: Yes.

MR. MITCHELL: Was -- was he up there on his own or did he have a plane?

MR. NOTTI: He was (indiscernible) invitation of Tyonek, I'm sure.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And then I guess the next obvious question is -- since the two of you were to become fairly important partners and all in these early years, when did you first bump into Willie? Was this the first time you met him, or had you known Willie in the past, or --

MR. NOTTI: No, I didn't know Willie. It was probably about that time -- I'm not sure with the events and all when it happened, but the -- around that time they had a -- the federal Land Law Review Commission --

MR. MITCHELL: Uh-huh. Public Land Review Commission.

MR. NOTTI: -- came through town. I think it was before this. That's probably where I met Willie. Willie was a student, and he -- he went and testified and I watched. And I was -- I was

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

real impressed with -- with his knowledge about land and his way of dealing with the committee. So that's probably why he ended up on the lands committee. And later on he wrote a paper about what rights do we have in land, because a constitution law student with a young professor named --

MR. MITCHELL: Rabinowitz. Right.

MR. NOTTI: Rabinowitz -- Jay Rabinowitz. So anyway, this -- this position paper we sent out -- after the convention we sent out these resolutions and papers and -- and we decided that we wanted this introduced into Congress as a resolution of land, the land issue in Alaska. So I sent these resolutions out to -- to Bartlett and Gruening and Ralph Rivers.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me -- actually, let me stop you there. Did -- at the '66 meeting, there obviously was an awful lot of -- of Native leaders from -- from the whole state there, and you're into an election year. I mean, you're into an election a month after the meeting where -- where -- did the politicians show up and discuss land at all at the '66 meeting or did they not even understand --

MR. NOTTI: They didn't show up to discuss land, but they showed up. And the meeting in October was not by accident. We purposely set it before an election. And -- and we had a lot of people come and take delegates to lunch and dinners. Mike Gravel threw a dinner. Other candidates had dinners, luncheons, group meetings, caucuses. It was a real active time. Anchorage Times -- I called the meeting to order at 10:00 in the morning. When I went out to lunch -- we're just organizing. No real issues there. And when I went out to lunch I picked up the Anchorage Times, and the headlines was Native Split. They immediately tried to drive a wedge amongst the delegates. And the story had to be prewritten, because they go to print at 10:00 in the morning.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right.

MR. NOTTI: And so they -- they were not real helpful to our cause in the beginning.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, so as the result of -- of that meeting, there was a -- an actual bill that -- that group endorsed, right?

MR. NOTTI: Well, okay. When we sent that bill out, nothing happened. In April of '67 I sent telegrams to Gruening, Bartlett, and Rivers. And -- and being young and brash I said, "I demand that you introduce this legislation."

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me -- let me back up a second. Wasn't there -- in terms of AFN getting started, didn't you guys get together -- or somebody got together in -- in Fairbanks or somewhere in, like, January or February?

MR. NOTTI: Right.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: What -- what happened up there?

MR. NOTTI: We had a meeting at the -- well, it's now the Westmark, but it was a travel -- travel -- not the Travelodge. It was Hickel's establishment over on 7th or 8th.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: We had -- we had -- we're still in fro- -- the meeting -- the purpose of the meeting was to talk about bylaws, to start a statewide meeting, because in October we agreed to have a meeting. We set a meeting in January to talk about bylaws and getting organized. In October we sent -- we made Flore Lekanof chairman of the bylaws committee to do that. And the -- the bylaws weren't ready in January. But anyway, we had a -- kind of an off meeting in Fairbanks.

MR. MITCHELL: How many people showed up in Fairbanks then?

MR. NOTTI: Oh, it must have been -- there must have been 150 or so.

MR. MITCHELL: Did -- did Tyonek --

MR. NOTTI: Help out again?

MR. MITCHELL: -- foot the bill again in terms of helping people with the travel and --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: At that meeting we had, Bob Hammond (phonetic), who was a form of -- kind of self-styled Indian specialist. He was there and gave a report. Not -- not Hammond. It was Arnold. Not Bob Arnold though. I forget his first name. Do you know the name Arnold?

MR. MITCHELL: Wait, not O -- not WCRO.

MR. NOTTI: WCIN.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, the old -- the old fish --

MR. NOTTI: The old -- the old fish lawyer --

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right.

MR. NOTTI: -- from Seattle. But he -- he somehow got involved in this thing, and he was there. And then the attorney general for the state of Alaska, Donald Burn, was there. And we had a real

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confrontation -- exciting confrontations between Don Burn and Stanley McCutcheon and -- about Native lands. That was becoming the real hot issue, about state land selections and Native rights and who had priority and whatnot. So it was after that, I think, that they hired Edgar Boyko as a specialist to -- to deal with this.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. So Boyko was not up there for this January meeting?

MR. NOTTI: I don't think so.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: I think he came in after that.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And (indiscernible), at least the paper I read, indicates that he was sort of a hardliner, right? He didn't think that Natives had many rights to anything?

MR. NOTTI: That's right. Very hardliner.

MR. MITCHELL: And -- was that Hickel's view as well? Did anybody have any contact with Hickel at that point?

MR. NOTTI: Well, February 7th -- after that meeting Hickel got on the radio, 6:00 at night, and addressed statewide address. And he -- if I remember right -- I'd like to got a copy of this, but my memory said that the speech went something like, "Just because someone's grandfather chased a moose across the tundra, doesn't give him any more rights in the land than anybody else. Just because there's old pilings stuck out in the basin, however, it doesn't mean people have rights -- any more rights than anyone else." "But we were all American citizens and had equal access to land. And we all could file for homesteads, and never mind the special rights." Boyko took the line that -- it was punitive on the part of the Democratic administration, to punish Alaska for electing a Republican governor, that the intent was to drive Alaska into bankruptcy. As a matter of fact he would say Alaska is going to be bankrupt in a few years because of the land freeze.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And I guess sort of --

MR. NOTTI: (Indiscernible.)

MR. MITCHELL: -- back to -- well, to back -- no, actually we're not. Because at least as I've been able to discern it, and it was interesting talking to Stewart about it, that there's actually a whole variety of land freezes that the -- the ones that Boyko was talking about was that when the BIA started helping the villages protest State selections -- every State selection that was covered by a Native protest by '63, '64, '65, was just going into a filing drawer in the Department of the Interior. And there was no selections being processed --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

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MR. MITCHELL: -- at that point. And then going back to your original point about how the State was living off the selling land --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: -- Boyko had a -- had a certain -- a certain validity to his opinion. Which, of course, was exactly what Udall and these people were attempting to -- to do, to sort of bludgeon them into coming to their senses, but -- so I --

MR. NOTTI: Well, that's true. And Scoop Jackson was part of that, too, because during the Hickel nomination hearings he -- he said he wanted -- in his words, "Hold everybody's toes to the fire."

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right. Which was actually a year or so later, obviously.

MR. NOTTI: Later, right.

MR. MITCHELL: But anyway -- so we -- in February, Hickel comes out with this, "Don't give them an inch," speech, and Boyko basically says the state's on its way to ruin.

MR. NOTTI: Bankruptcy.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: So we -- we were getting organized about -- well, in April -- that -- our -- our position paper that Willie Hensley shared on the committee became -- the first one to respond was Bartlett. Immediately he sent back a telegram saying, "I'm glad to introduce this bill." It became Senate Bill 2020. We were pretty happy, but none of us had any experience. It got put into Judiciary Committee where it died. About two weeks later Gruening sent a telegram that said, "I'm happy to join my colleague," and add his name to the bill. It wasn't for a month or so that the House signed off on this bill. But that is the first bill, Senate Bill 2020. That bill would have run something -- nothing -- something that hasn't been done in courts, and that is to pay for -- no, that would have been to award title to land if we could prove use and occupancy on it. We think we could have proved use and occupancy on all of Alaska, and we could have ended up owning the -- all of Alaska.

MR. MITCHELL: All right. Well, let me -- let me stop you there for a second. As -- as I understand the reports that -- that Howard wrote about the October '66 meeting, that there was sort of a fight about that. That -- that McCutcheon had come in and suggested to -- to that -- to the group that the approach that should be taken was a court of claims bill who -- where they just would have given out money. And that there was another faction that eventually prevailed, that led to S2020, in that -- that said: No. If we're going to do this, the court of claims in nego- -- in addition to giving out money, should also be ordered by Congress to give out land. And that was

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

obviously a big change, because the court of claims does not have jurisdiction to give out land unless Congress --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: -- changed the rule. But do you remember if there was any fight about that or was it always just "We want land" from the very beginning?

MR. NOTTI: I don't -- I don't remember that being a big issue, because the overwhelming feeling was we wanted title to land. So there may have been advice contrary to that, but the delegates wanted title to land. And it was never really an arguable point.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. So -- so we're in -- in March or April of --

MR. NOTTI: That's April.

MR. MITCHELL: -- April of '67 and -- and S2020 is introduced. At -- at that point in time, what are you doing? Are you working at AFN? Do you have a normal job -- the -- like, what's happening in the spring of '67?

MR. NOTTI: I was -- I was still -- still employed, but -- but it was after that that I decided that this -- too many things happening, and we needed more attention -- daily attention to the matter. So I quit my job and --

MR. MITCHELL: And what -- what had you been doing?

MR. NOTTI: At that point I was working for ASCAP.

MR. MITCHELL: AS- --

MR. NOTTI: Alaska State Community Action Program --

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, okay.

MR. NOTTI: -- which was a forerunner of RurAL CAP.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: And so I took on AFN. We had \$9 in the bank. I --

MR. MITCHELL: This would have been in April of '67, or --

MR. NOTTI: I -- I don't remember the exact date. It was spring of -- spring or summer of '67. Well, I got behind -- three months behind on the house payments. I got behind on my car

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

payments. My family literally ate beans for a week one time because we just didn't have the money. AFN was broke, but I still -- I didn't -- I felt that it had to be done. If I didn't do it -- nobody could afford to take the time, and there was no way to get to keep the organization going. So I -- I made the sacrifice to do that.

MR. MITCHELL: How was AFN -- this was obviously before the Tyonek loan. How was AFN raising money?

MR. NOTTI: We did -- we put out membership applications and scattered them around the state. There was \$2 membership fees. We tried to get everybody -- every village in Alaska, every individual to join AFN that way. And then we -- we set a quota system for -- that was individual membership. Then we set a quota system for organizations. Fairbanks Native Association, Kuskokwim Valley NB. We -- at the-- they had to donate \$500 or \$1,000, you know, which there was a lot of opposition to that because they were all having money problems at home. They didn't want to supply a central administration, but some of them did and some of them didn't, but there was always a problem. Then we -- we -- we got some money from the Ford Foundation. And -- but that got cut off right away because in '68 they changed the tax laws. With the activism in civil rights in '64 and '65 and '66, foundations were supporting civil rights drives and voter registration drives in the south, mainly. Congress changed the tax laws and forced them -- or said that they could not support political activity. And because AFN was involved in politics, Ford could not give AFN money anymore.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And how -- how did you get in -- in contact with Ford to begin with? Did they -- was there somebody up here that put that together or did they contact you because this was obviously an exciting new area?

MR. NOTTI: I think you have to verify this, but if I remember right, our contact -- our initial contact came through Vic Fisher, who was at the University of ISER at the time -- ISER. He put us in contact with the people. And the initial money came from Ford Foundation (indiscernible) and they supported us clerically and with expenses for telephone and postage.

MR. MITCHELL: So you weren't getting your salary.

MR. NOTTI: But no salary.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: But they -- they supported some of our activities. And then after some experience they gave us one grant directly, and then the laws changed. And in '69, we spun off from AFN -- AFN Charitable Trust. Which we later became Alaska Native Foundation, because it was a 501(c)(3), and then Ford Foundation put money directly into that. But that was information that was not political.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right. Well, that was the same time that the (indiscernible) was getting in all that trouble for exactly the same kind of -- kind of situation. Well, so then going back then to the -- to the spring of '67. S2020's been introduced, you've quit your job, and -- and you're working without salary at AFN. These fundraising activities are going on. I guess the Ford Foundation is starting to get involved a little bit at that point with the --

MR. NOTTI: Churches. We got \$10,000 from a Methodist church. (Indiscernible) I think it came to the intersec- --

MR. MITCHELL: Just in case that didn't get picked up, we were just talking about the fact that \$10,000 had come from the Methodist church, and I guess you were saying probably through Fred McGinnis who obviously was at that -- was he at AMU at that time?

MR. NOTTI: AMU, right.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: So there were a number of organizations that started to come and help us. But we -- we were getting nervous because we were in the newspaper everyday arguing our position and causing some discomfort to state government and others. People noticed and wanted us -- to help us.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, now, wasn't it sometime in -- I know that -- while all of these activities are going on in Alaska -- finally after all these years the Interior Department's rumbling to life back East. And I know that -- I think it was in May or June of '67 that they finally released their first version of -- of a Claims Act Bill. Did you have any involvement with -- with the Interior Department at that point in -- in developing that bill or any contact with them?

MR. NOTTI: Well, the only contact was with Udall. And he was -- he would come up here to our meetings and fly in for different -- on different -- at different times during the year and float the -- float some balloons that we always shot at. Well, I remember one time he -- he proposed 10 percent offshore --

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, that -- that was -- well we'll get to that in a -- a bit. That was -- he showed up at the -- at the fall '67 AFN convention --

MR. NOTTI: Okay.

MR. MITCHELL: -- and the Tundra Times banquet. And that's when he floated that idea that got him in a fair amount of trouble, ultimately. But in the spring of '67, you guys were not involved -
-

MR. NOTTI: No, no.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: -- in terms of having any input into the department's thinking at that point?

MR. NOTTI: No.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, then, I guess -- then he -- that takes us through the summer of '67. And I guess just to -- at that point -- or the summer of '67, AFN has been organized, you're on staff pretty much at that point, there has been an AFN bill introduced. And one version went immediately to the certain death in the Judiciary Committee, and I guess another bill was reintroduced by Bartlett later that ended up on the Interior Committee. And Udall -- I'm sorry. Yeah, Udall entered -- sent his bill up to the Hill, which was called thus 1964. And it's interesting, I found in Udall's papers a telegram from you to Udall basically saying that the department's bill was an insult to everyone's intelligence. I don't remember if you remember that. What was your guys' reaction when you saw Udall's bill?

MR. NOTTI: Well, first of all, the land wasn't big enough and there wasn't enough money. When they proposed 180 million, I remember, I sent a telegram that said: The United States think that's -- thinks that Alaska's only worth 180 million. We will guarantee the United States government 180 million if they would get out of Alaska.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. I've -- I've seen that one, too, right, where you offered to buy the whole place for 180 million.

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: I never got a response to that.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, so then that's sort of where we are on the summer of '67. And Hickel's still taking, I guess at that point, a hardline. Are there really any other things going on before we get to the fall with Udall coming up and the Hickel task force and all that?

MR. NOTTI: No. There were -- things were happening pretty fast. So a lot of things going on that wasn't apparent. I think they were gearing up to appoint the federal land use planning commission, which eventually had a bill. The groundwork was laid this rural Alaska task force which Udall funded, and all these things were just beginning to come into action.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, then that -- that does take us then into -- into the next -- the fall of '67 AFN convention. And where was that? Was that held in Anchorage or was that in Fairbanks?

MR. NOTTI: If I remember, it was in Fairbanks.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Had -- and also, I guess, when did -- when did the 100,000 bucks from Tyonek arrive? Was that in '67 or was it later than that?

MR. NOTTI: That came in late '67, because it came before Hickel became Secretary of the Interior.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And how did -- how did that work? Did -- did Albert Kaloa and -- and people -- well, actually, Kaloa at that point was -- obviously had died.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: How did that loan get arranged? Was that their idea? Did you guys go to Tyonek?

MR. NOTTI: I went to Tyonek. They came here. We had a number of meetings. AFN -- the board met. And it wasn't -- if I remember right, we were drawing them down at \$25,000. And I made that \$100,000 last almost two years -- to keep us going. Very, very careful with how we spent money.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. But -- but AFN went to Tyonek then and suggested that --

MR. NOTTI: And their attorneys of course -- it wouldn't have happened without support of their attorneys.

MR. MITCHELL: Of which is McCutcheon (indiscernible)?

MR. NOTTI: McCutcheon, yeah. And Groh.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Did -- one of the things I've been interested in and I've -- I've been trying to get a hold of Emil McCord about it, and is -- when Tyonek got the 12 million, technically it was still in the hands of the BIA. And -- and I've always been curious as to how -- I mean, we don't think anything about it now, because then -- ever since the Claims Act, the Native community's controlled its own money. You don't have to ask anybody for --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: -- which there's an argument to be made that that wasn't necessarily always a good thing. But -- but in any event, you know, back then the BIA had control of Tyonek's money. And Tyonek was making some pretty radical decisions in those days of, you know, paying all these plane tickets to no particularly good end. And 100,000 bucks is a lot of money today. And it was a whole lot of money --

MR. NOTTI: That's right.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: -- in '67. And were there -- do you recall -- were there problems with the Bureau in terms of -- of getting the 100,000 bucks, or it just -- the Bureau stayed out of it, or --

MR. NOTTI: I -- I think -- my feeling at the time was that they -- they really didn't approve of what the -- but they didn't want to say no. So we did have to have permission do to a lot of things. And my feelings at the time also was that they were -- the Village was investing their money to get it out of the control of the BIA. If they could get it all invested, then the cash flow coming -- coming back from it was -- was their own money.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: Can we stop for just a second?

MR. MITCHELL: Sure. (Brief break.)

MR. MITCHELL: So then by the '67 AFN convention, and this \$100,000 loan obviously would have been -- well, actually -- yeah. It would have been in '67, okay. Well, then I guess a couple things happened at the '67 convention. One is -- is Udall showed up.

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: And what were your impressions -- was that the first time that you'd had any dealings with Stewart, or had he been up to deal with you folks before?

MR. NOTTI: No. Well, yeah. He came -- he came up once, but I don't remember exactly why. I remember him coming into the airport and I met the plane. Ted Stevens was there, but I think he was a solicitor or attorney for one of the oil companies. I'm not sure. Maybe private practice. But I remember him being there.

MR. MITCHELL: And this would have been -- this would have been before the '67 meeting?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: And then we had contacted him by telephone on the -- these mini land freezes. He'd -- there was two -- two land freezes. One was you withdraw land around villages to protect the villages. And then before he left office, he -- he withdrew all of (indiscernible) except the pipeline.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: And so we were in contact with him. And we're trying to encourage him -- we being McCutcheon and -- and through AFN, saying, "Look, if you've got authority to withdraw

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

land around a village, you've got authority to withdraw. Which he finally became convinced that he had the power to do it, and did.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. But -- but were those kinds of conversations going on with him in '67 or was this after, into '68 before all that?

MR. NOTTI: Well, they went on for quite a while. So -- yeah -- would have -- yeah, '68. It would have been probably more in '68.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Okay. Well, he came up to the '67 convention --

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: -- and did you guys -- I assume you guys probably must have met with him privately at -- at that point? Or do you recall what his attitude was about Native Claims in '67?

MR. NOTTI: Well, he always thought that there had to be a settlement to clear title to -- to cloud of the title to land, because we were arguing that the government could not give good title to land without -- because there was a cloud on the title. And he was concerned about it. But no one knew exactly what to do about it.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, what -- it was in '60 -- it was at that visit in '67, which is when he floated this idea about using OCS revenues to pay for the Claims Act. What was your guys' thought about that at the time? Did that seem like a good idea, or --

MR. NOTTI: It was too risky. Now, there was no known oil except for Kokhanok of Alaska. So we weren't going to roll the dice on our whole future on -- we weren't going to roll the future of the Indian community on the chance of getting 10 percent of offshore revenue. I would say 10 percent -- I'm not sure if that was 10 percent of the federal share, which is 12 and a half percent. So what we're talking about is 1.25 percent.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh. And so his proposal was that you wouldn't get any set amount of money, you'd just get a percent, and if there was no revenues generated --

MR. NOTTI: You'd get nothing.

MR. MITCHELL: -- you'd get nothing.

MR. NOTTI: And I think the first proposals was for 600,000 acres or something ridiculous.

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, well --

MR. NOTTI: We considered it a small amount of land.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, I was -- as near as I've been able to figure it out, that was Gruenings' influence on the whole thing.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: It was about 50,000 acres of village, which if you did the math, came out to be about a million acres total -- a million two. Which in retrospect looks preposterous, but -- and I guess probably looked preposterous at the time.

MR. NOTTI: It did.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, in addition to Udall coming up, it was also that '67 AFN meeting when -- when Hickel sort of changed his tune a little bit, which led to organizing the Hickel task force. Had you had -- what was your -- your dealings like with Hickel and Boyko in '67? Was -- did they come in one day and just say, "Well, maybe we ought to try and cut a deal and stop all this hardline stuff," or how did all that work?

MR. NOTTI: They -- they wanted to deal with somebody, but there was nobody to deal with. AFN was trying to get organized. Well, we were organized on paper, but we didn't have money to bring people together. The organizations couldn't pay for their own people. A lot of guys paid their own way to meetings, took time off from their work, paid their own hotel bills, which they never ever recovered. But Hickel's problem was that he -- he didn't have anybody to talk to. He could talk -- he could call me as AFN, but I'd have to say, "Well, I have to wait until I get a board meeting so we can talk about it." "When's the next board meeting?" "Well, I don't know. Depends on when we can get money." So it was -- it was mostly a dependent of the state so we could deal with us that they put this task force together called rural task force, so that they could pay a way for people to meet and the state of Alaska could deal with an unified group.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Now, we -- I assume you remember the task force?

MR. NOTTI: I was chairman.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And how did -- where did -- did you guys meet in Anchorage? Did you meet in Juneau? What --

MR. NOTTI: We met in both places.

MR. MITCHELL: And -- and obviously the major accomplishment of the task force was -- was writing a bill. What was -- that I'd like to talk about it in some detail in a second -- but how did all that work? Did -- was it just -- I know that Boyko was there, you guys were all there. That Udall sent a guy named Bob Vaughn up to participate. What went on? Did people just sit and talk? Or who drafted the bill and how did all that work? Do you remember?

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. NOTTI: Well, McCutcheon was deeply involved, and he was getting legal advice from Outside experienced Indian law lawyers. Our position was -- we knew we weren't going to get all of Alaska as 2020 might have given us. We argued amongst ourself about, well, what would be a reasonable combination of land and money. We eventually ended up -- our first position was 80 million acres. And we were arguing one day about 10 percent of -- of the royalty. And we were up in the Bureau of Indian Affairs office here in town, a building on 16th and C. And the 10 percent was scary, because it sounded like an awful lot of money. I was sitting in the -- I was chairing the meeting. I was sitting in the -- wait -- wait a minute. We're -- I don't want to use 10 percent because immediately it raises a red flag. It's too much money. So I said, "Why don't we just go for two percent of the value of whatever the minimum is -- oil, minerals, or whatever." And -- and I said we'd end up with more money back because --

MR. MITCHELL: Yeah.

MR. NOTTI: -- this 2 percent of the gross and not 1.25. Ten percent of 12 and a half percent. And so we went for that. Hardly as a PR -- mostly as a PR thing. Two percent doesn't sound as scary. A benefit of going to 2 percent is that we got more money without raising as many flags. So -- so we ended up on 2 percent.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, now one of the other things is that you ended up with 40 million acres in that bill. How did that happen?

MR. NOTTI: During -- during our negotiations with the State, we -- we -- after testifying, we knew Congress was reluctant to pass a law in opposition to a governor of the State. They didn't -- they were real reluctant to do that. So we decided we needed to go arm in arm with the State Administration to Congress and say here's a bill that we can agree on, and get the State on our side to support the bill. And it would be -- would be beneficial to us to have the governor go in and say: Pass it. So in the meetings with -- with Hickel we -- we offered to go to -- just very directive, said, "If you'll -- we'll go to 40 million acres if you'll support our position." And he agreed to it.

MR. MITCHELL: Did he -- was there a lot of -- did he do that easily? Did he -- was there bluster before he did that?

MR. NOTTI: Well, no. It -- publically he did it -- or in our meeting he did it easily. But the -- but it had been prearranged by Cliff Groh. Cliff Groh was very close to Hickel. He was also an attorney for Tyonek and for AFN. And so he -- he floated the idea with Hickel first, and he came back and said, "If you bring it up Hickel will agree to it." So -- so we proposed it and Hickel agreed to it graciously, and I'm sure he's not too happy about letting -- but there's a follow-along story to that. We got down to the seat to testify and Tom was commissioner of Natural Revenue [sic].

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, Tom Kelly.

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

MR. NOTTI: Tom Kelly. We met with Tom Kelly, and -- I forget who the attorney general was at the time. And they said, "There's no way the Governor's going to support 40 million acres of land."

MR. MITCHELL: This was after Hickel had supported 40 acres.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. Yeah. About six months after.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, it would have been the -- the hearings that were in the summer of '68 then.

MR. NOTTI: So we were in -- I think it was the Sheraton Hotel, one of the big hotels in D.C., up in the room. And from 7:00 to about 11:00 we had a very needed meeting with these lieutenants of the Governor. And they were saying he'd get killed publicly. You can't support it. There's no way he can agree to do that. And we kept saying, "Look, we compromised. We went from 40 million to 80- -- from 80 million to 40 million based on his promise. We can't back out now. We're going in tomorrow morning to testify. We need his support. We're going to go back to 80 million." There were all kinds of things that -- wasn't a very pleasant meeting.

MR. MITCHELL: Which -- okay. 7 to 11 at night or in the morning?

MR. NOTTI: At night.

MR. MITCHELL: Night.

MR. NOTTI: And finally, I think it was Cliff Groh went privately down the hallway to Hickel's room and talked to Hickel and said, "Look, this is going to -- we're going to have a fist fight over there if -- if this isn't solved." So he came back and they said, "Well, Hickel will talk to us." So we walked in the room and Willie and John Borbridge and others were there, Eben probably. And he said, "What's the problem, boys?" And we said, "Well, Wally, you promised to support 40 million acres of land, and these guys are telling us that you're not going to testify to that tomorrow morning." And he said -- real quiet, he said, "Did I promise you guys I'd support 40 million acres?" I said, "Yes, Governor, you did." And he said, "Well, if I promised that, that's what I'll do." The meeting was over. We defused him real easy.

MR. MITCHELL: Was Kelly and these people in the room?

MR. NOTTI: They were there. The lieutenants were there. They did their best, you know. Sure tried -- but the -- the next morning we were shocked, because when he testified he put a caveat on it. He put conditions on 40 million acres, which we've never discussed. In his testimony he said, "I'll support 40 million acres of land. The Native people provide it." Some of that land comes out of federal reserves, forest -- forest lands, out of park lands, you know, military reserves. Whatever federal withdrawals there were, that some of that land came out of that. So

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what that would do is give the State of Alaska more flexibility in selecting lands. So we weren't real happy about that, but at least he was on record that he supported 40 million acres.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, let me back up a second on that. One of the other people that jumped ship -- I've read the press accounts of -- of the task force work, and at the final meeting when this was announced to the press that Governor Hickel had -- had agreed to 40 million acres in, like, January or February of -- of '68. Right before, I guess, Scoop Jackson came up in February of '68, so it was right before that -- that -- that Bob Vaughn, who was representing Udall at that point, told the press that he thought that -- that the department could support both the 40 million acre bill and this 2 percent business that you were talking about. And when -- when -- when the whole process got to that summer of '68 hearing cycle that you -- you just described in terms of Hickel's behavior, the department went in and it self-disowned 40 million acres. Did -- you guys disappointed in that? Do you recall any of --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. They -- we met with the people from the solicitor's office, and they were very much against it there. And we decided that we're never going to convince the bureaucrats, so we decided we needed -- that's why we needed State government. That -- that Congress would listen to the State of Alaska and to the Native people rather than the Department of Interior. So it was a deliberate choice on our part to try to sidestep them.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, I guess -- I guess my -- my question was -- was more directed toward sort of Vaughn's participation in the task force. Did -- did you guys think that -- that Vaughn had authority from -- from Udall and the department to agree to -- to the terms of the task force bill to begin with? Or did he always indicate that he was just there as an observer and -- and there were no commitments?

MR. NOTTI: I don't remember exactly. But it was my impression that he was always there kind of as an observer. Not as an authority to deal in negotiating.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Okay. Well, the other thing about the task force bill that I have become quite interested in, is that -- that the task force bill was important for a number of reasons in terms of the ultimate settlement. I mean, it was -- it abandoned the court of claims process of adjudicating individual village use and occupancy, and just set a process for -- for handing out land. It had 40 million acres in it. I mean, it looked -- in a number of ways it was quite similar to -- to the -- to the structure of -- of what became the final settlement. And it is also the first place that I've been able to find in all of these bills where the concept of using the state-chartered corporation to be the vehicle to -- to handle the land and the money appears. And I was wondering, how did all that happen? And was that debated inside the task force? Because it was obviously an important decision in retrospect.

MR. NOTTI: I think there are two things that bear on that. One was -- initially we proposed our concern was that village lifestyle -- those of us that made the transition to the cities did -- did of our free choice. And obviously the villagers were the ones that needed the help. So we proposed 95 percent of the money going to a statewide structure with one lawyer, one planning group, and

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

one, you know, investment theory to -- to help the villages. That was opposed. (Indiscernible) opposed by our own delegation. So we abandoned that.

MR. MITCHELL: When you say your own delegation, you mean --

MR. NOTTI: Stevens, mainly.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, that was --

MR. NOTTI: Later.

MR. MITCHELL: -- later. I mean, that --

MR. NOTTI: The other -- the other thing that came was we looked at -- the reservation system was not working. A hundred years of history on a reservation system, conditions hadn't changed. They were still economically way behind. And in a lot of ways, this land claims thing is a social experiment, I think. So anyway, the reservation system wasn't working. Under Eisenhower they tried something called termination. Later in the early '60s they tried something called relocation. And Jackson was part of the deal of termination. He -- he was involved with the termination of a nominee and involved in the termination of the claimant, and both of those experiments -- neither one worked. So he -- he was well aware of the Indian law and the impact, but he was looking for something -- some way to deal with this issue to end this dependence upon government, number one. And number two, to break a cycle of poverty and all the fields that go with it. So when -- and we were looking for a way out. The only thing we could come up with was we wanted to control our own destiny. We looked at the BIA controlling all the canneries in Southeast Alaska, with their loans and management and strings attached. And we used to say that we don't want some GS7 making our decisions. If we're going to fail, we're going to do it on our own. So we wanted to take title lands and control of our own money. And the only way we could see it doing that was putting it into a corporation. And they went for it.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. So -- so -- I mean, that was discussed inside the -- the Hickel task force in terms of that -- that -- the kinds of concerns that you just described.

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Because I've talked to Barry Jackson, and he was -- obviously was one of the -- the main people that actually did the typing on that bill.

MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: And -- and he couldn't really remember a whole lot of -- of discussion about it. But he also couldn't remember whether -- what he could remember, either. You know, so obviously it had been a long time ago.

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MR. NOTTI: Right.

MR. MITCHELL: But it certainly seems that that was, in retrospect, a very important decision to -- to use the state corporation. Well, let me -- I guess one of the other things I haven't asked about is, when did you guys first start going to Washington D.C.? Obviously you had never -- you had lived in Washington D.C. or were close to that area --

MR. NOTTI: In the Navy.

MR. MITCHELL: -- in the Navy, right. And I guess you went to school back East somewhere there. When was the first time as an AFN representative that -- that you guys went back?

MR. NOTTI: It was in the spring of -- it was shortly after Hickel was governor.

MR. MITCHELL: So, like, in the spring of '67 then?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. When -- when there was a meeting between Governor and Udall, I got wind of the meeting. I called a -- I called a meeting here in town with local -- using CINA, because AFN didn't have any money. So we said, "This meeting is going on. It's important that we go back there." I called Bob Bartlett and he said that it was in his office -- that -- the request for Hickel. He said -- I said, "We're concerned that you're going to talk about land that, you know, we'd like to be a part of." And he said, "Just come on back, and when you get back, come on in." So I said, "We'll get there about 2:00." He said, "Just walk in." So on a Sunday we -- we held a meeting. We raised \$1,200. And we explained the situation to about 40 people. The first woman stood up, Alice Brown, and said, "Here's my check for \$200." (Indiscernible) stood up right behind her and said, "Here's 200 more." And then people said, "Well, here's 50, here's 10, here's a hundred." You know, whatever people could -- it was direct cash. Willie Hensley and I got on a plane and flew back, flew all night. Knocking on the door of Bartlett's office, and he opened the door and we walked in and the meeting was in progress. And people were shocked. I don't know that -- it seemed to me they -- they didn't know we were coming.

MR. MITCHELL: Who was -- who was there at the meeting?

MR. NOTTI: Udall and Hickel were the main ones, and Bartlett. There was a couple of staff members.

MR. MITCHELL: And was Gruening there?

MR. NOTTI: Gruening was not there.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, what happened at -- what was the purpose of the meeting?

MR. NOTTI: Well, I think they were trying to set parameters for our settlement or what -- find out what the BIA had in mind that the State could have used. And they pass a law, you know,

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without consulting us, is my impression. So the -- the meeting kind of busted up, became kind of meaningless. There was no -- no real discussion after we arrived. So then we were back in the process of -- of all the things we did.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, did -- did you guys then just turn around and fly home or did you go meet with Udall separately or with Bartlett separately after that or --

MR. NOTTI: Well, we met -- we met with Bartlett. I don't think we met with Udall. And we weren't really in the mode of making the rounds of Congress yet, so it was a quick meeting and we came back.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. So that's the spring of '67, and then did you guys go back to Washington D.C. for the -- the '68 hearings? Was there any trip back before the '68 hearings?

MR. NOTTI: You know, I don't remember.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

MR. NOTTI: I remember making a speech though about a separate nation.

MR. MITCHELL: Up here or back there?

MR. NOTTI: In Washington State.

MR. MITCHELL: You went down to Washington.

MR. NOTTI: I went down to Washington. It was March of '68, I think it was, or '68 or '69. And we got invitations from the Northwest federated tribes to come down and talk about land claims. So on my way down I was wondering, now what can I say that's meaningful? We've been testifying for three years and Congress had hearings. And we had the bills in and tasks force were going, and all these kind of things. I said, "You know, that's part of it." But -- but we -- we go -- what led up to my speech was we go back to Washington and we'd be scheduled for a 2:00 hearing. And we go down to (indiscernible) to testify and they say, "Well, it's delayed until tomorrow." Well, why are we delayed? Because there was SST hearings. SST was a big debate in '68. SST hearings and (indiscernible). Well, there's a big march on Washington. There's civil rights and all these -- this turmoil, the Vietnam War. Everything was going on and we were just kind of at the end of the line when they got time for us. So I'm thinking to myself, "I've got to say something to -- to get their attention, like, we're serious. I want the guy in Missouri to say what the hell is this all about, you know?" So I'm thinking how to say that. So I -- in my speech I said, "The United States sends peacekeeping forces all around the world. We pretend to be the police force peacekeepers of the world. We've spent billions of dollars to reestablish the country of Israel for people who got persecuted and scattered around the world. How can they do less for people who lost all of North America? If Congress cannot see its way clear to give us 40 million acres of land, then I would propose to my board of directors that we go to the United Nations or

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

World Court and lay out our case. That -- propose to them that they set up a separate nation for Indigenous people of North America, the government themselves. And we draw a line from Anchorage to Fairbanks and east of the Canadian border. Everything north and west of that was ours." And so that was -- that's what left Alaska was our oil wells.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Exactly.

MR. NOTTI: So --

MR. MITCHELL: And did that get a lot of press?

MR. NOTTI: It did, yeah. Yeah. It was -- Stan Patty was at the -- there. He wrote a story and a PI. I -- I got the (indiscernible) and I got clippings from around the country. I don't know how people found me, but I got clippings from around the country. It got printed all over in little newspapers. C.R. Lewis got up on the floor of the Senate in Alaska and just practically called me a communist. And they did a personal editorial in the Anchorage Times titled, "Surely, Mr. Notti Jest," because I talked about closing borders and all that kind of stuff. So I think it -- it had the effect -- well, I wanted Jackson to know that I was in his backyard, meeting with his constituents, talking about our problems, so he would devote some attention to it. And I like to think I made a difference.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, now, let me ask you about that. In -- in the summer of '68, there were hearings in Washington D.C., both in front of Senator Jackson's committee, and also for the first time -- I think it was the first House hearing in front of Aspinall. Did you guys have occasion to meet with Jackson and Aspinall at that point, or did you just deal with them primarily through the formal hearing structure?

MR. NOTTI: Mostly through the formal hearings. We had one dinner with Aspinall, but he was not real sympathetic. And -- and he was outspoken about it. He was critical of us, and -- but he also wanted to solve it. Between Jackson and Aspinall they had 60 years of dealing with Indian problems. And it was that time of activism -- people all over the country were -- it was different from today. We've gone much more conservative today than we were then.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, actually I want -- I want to ask about that in a second. Well, so then up -- we have the hearings in '68. And Hickel says you can take 40 million acres, but attaches all these conditions. The Interior Department says: They can't take 40 million acres. It's at that point I think that Jackson finally gives up and gets the field committee involved in doing their study. So pretty much things are on -- are on ice again. And we go into both the 1968 AFN meeting, and also there's an election that year. So let me back up and go back to '66 and ask you what your impression was as to whether or not the Native votes had any influence in the '66 election, before we get to Gruening where it did in '68. But -- but obviously in '66 Egan got taken down by Wally Hickel. And also Ralph Rivers had been cut up pretty badly by Gravel, and then eventually lost to Pollock. Back in '66, was -- was that just happenstance? Do you think there

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was any kind of Native vote that influenced the Hickel/River situation then or was -- was that just luck?

MR. NOTTI: Well, I think for the first time in -- in '66, the Native -- you start to see an erosion of Democratic votes by Native people. And Hickel was able to -- to make some inroads into traditionally Democratic strong holds. And I think it was significant to -- for Hickel to win that he got that Native vote.

MR. MITCHELL: This would be out of the Bush?

MR. NOTTI: Out of the Bush.

MR. MITCHELL: Do you know how he did that? Did he have -- were there prominent people in the Native community who were out stumping for him, or --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. I don't remember exactly who and what areas, but I think the Middle Yukon area went for him. I'm trying to think of some of the issues, why people were mad at Egan and maybe a highway system (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: But at -- at that point the -- the land issue for Egan hadn't become --

MR. NOTTI: Not yet.

MR. MITCHELL: So enough of the problem that that was --

MR. NOTTI: Not -- not -- it was always defensible, but it wasn't the real issue. It was -- he kind of ignored the issue. He -- he didn't really have to deal with it.

MR. MITCHELL: How about Ralph Rivers?

MR. NOTTI: Ralph Rivers, I don't think he had any feeling at all for -- if he stayed in office I suspect he would have been opposed to it.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. I mean, was Gravel out making an issue of the Native land thing at that point in '66?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: He's -- he's somebody I want to talk to --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: -- at some point in terms of -- he seems to have figured out quite early that the Native community was --

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MR. NOTTI: He came on strong with support.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, then let's -- let's turn to '68 then. Obviously Gravel had a lot of Native support. And I assume that was because Gruening's attitude about land claims at that point was -- was insufficient for you guys. Is that -- what was he getting -- or what was Gruening's attitude about all of this?

MR. NOTTI: I always thought that it was strange that Gruening was a strong advocate for Israel and not an advocate for Native people in Alaska. He -- but he, again, never really had to face it. He came down to CINA and made some speeches, but his speeches were always, "I support this governor of Alaska. I supported human rights. I passed the first bill. I tore down signs in restrooms that said, 'No Filipinos, dogs, or Natives allowed.'" He did that kind of stuff, but he never really had to face the land issue. So Bartlett, Gruening, and Rivers never really dealt with it. Got a whole new team.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, how did -- how did you guys get involved with Gravel? Did you Gravel come and make a pitch on -- on land claims to -- to you folks, or --

MR. NOTTI: He was one of the guys in '66 who hosted a lunch or dinner for delegates. And he was involved as speaker of the House for formation in Human Rights Commission. He was active -- he would -- he would go to the -- to the meetings like CINA and ANB, say the right things. So he was -- he was working at it. He was concentrating on a (indiscernible) goal, (indiscernible) goal.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Then I guess sort of getting to the -- through the end of all of this for the moment, you mentioned it before you came on full time at AFN, that you had been working for the -- the predecessor agency of RurAL CAP. And -- and obviously Charlie at one point had been involved with -- with the early OEO days. And I was just curious that just about the time that that Native community was starting to get organized, it was also the time that the OEO act came on in '64. And I guess I would be curious on your views as to what the relationship was between the, one, poverty and the money and the jobs that were put out by that, and the ability of the Native community to get itself organized. Is that a -- was that an important part of it or was just -- that just happenstance, or were they --

MR. NOTTI: Well, it was happenstance, but it took off the important part of it. I know they like to think that they were the father of land claims. (Indiscernible) considered himself as the impetus behind it. While they -- they did provide money and a lot of people to attend meetings and travel and do things that were never available before, it was part of the whole national movement in human rights that they came into existence. It wasn't because of land claims. Land claims just happened to be there --

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

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MR. NOTTI: -- at that time. So they -- they did play in a role, and an important role, but -- but they weren't the -- the nucleus of it.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, I guess another way to ask the same question is -- is if the jobs that were -- were being provided to guys like yourself and Charlie and -- and others, and the -- and the EOE money that was floating through the state. If that had not been available, would the Native community still have been able to get itself as organized as it became? Or do you think that it was really the Tyonek 100,000 and the rest? I guess what I'm trying to get at is just sort of what -- what the --

MR. NOTTI: Well --

MR. MITCHELL: -- really difference was it made, if any.

MR. NOTTI: It made a difference. The Tyonek money was important to get the ball rolling. After they got the initial startup and awareness, then -- then RurAL CAPS stepped in and picked up and spent a lot of money on travel, chartered airplanes and meetings and all kinds of stuff that they -- that would not have happened without them. Even -- I think there was more RurAL CAP money in travel and meetings than there was State money, because the State budget for that -- for that rural (indiscernible) commission was -- was not all that great. 30,000 or something, you know.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, then I think maybe the -- the last thing to talk about -- and then I'd like to come back in a couple months and talk about '69 on, but the last thing that happens is -- is that everything is sort of on ice in '68. Udall comes up after the election and announces the super land freeze. And then low and behold, who gets appointed governor -- I mean, appointed secretary but -- but -- well -- well Hickel of all people. And -- and the trouble he got into both with the environmental community and also with you guys on the land freeze as well -- well, documented, but I would be curious -- obviously he had to backtrack a little bit when he went in front of Senator Jackson about the land freeze.

MR. NOTTI: I think that was a key issue in his nomination.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. And -- and I was curious as to what did -- did you guys go back and meet with Jackson, or what was your involvement in --

MR. NOTTI: We were very involved in that. December of '68 I got a call about 5:00 from Cliff Groh, and he said, "Emil, Secretary of Interior wants to meet you in his home." And it took me just a second. I said, "Okay. I'll meet, but I don't know where he lives." So he said, "I'll pick you up." So Cliff Groh came and picked me up. We drove off to Udall- -- Hickel's home. And when we walked into the -- Hickel's home, there were two people there. Bob Zonic (phonetic), from ABC News now, but he was a -- a news reporter, and Larry Fanning. And they had with them -- that they let me read -- would have been tomorrow morning's Jack Anderson column. And it said, "Hickel does not deserve to be Secretary of the Interior because of his handling of the fish

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

(indiscernible) in Bethel during the summer." And they said, "What -- what can I do about it? Could I counter that in the national media by giving them an endorsement from AFN?" And I said, "Yes. We could give you an endorsement, but first of all I got to clear it with my board." Second thing is that, "Do -- do you have any influence with NCIA?"

MR. MITCHELL: They asked you if you had any influence?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: And I said, "Yes, we do" --

MR. MITCHELL: The discussion with Emil Notti on November 15, 1989 in his office at ANF. And we were just discussing the efforts that AFN made to make sure that -- that then Governor Hickel, when he was confirmed to the Secretary of the Interior, would not undo the land freeze that Secretary Udall had imposed before he left office. And we were just discussing the fact that -
-

MR. NOTTI: Let's take a break.

MR. MITCHELL: Oh, sure. (Brief break.)

MR. MITCHELL: We're back on the record. And what we were discussing was the -- the efforts surrounding the Hickel confirmation to make sure that -- that under his administration, the department did not lift the land freeze. And we have been discussing on the other tape, that Emil Notti had gotten a call from Cliff Groh, and had been invited out to Governor Hickel's home in Anchorage to discuss whether or not AFN and -- and perhaps through AFN's influence in CAI might endorse Hickel for being secretary, and I guess that was about the time the tape went off. So maybe we can pick it up from there.

MR. NOTTI: I said, "Yeah. I probably could. So -- but the -- I need to talk to the board of directors." So I called an emergency meeting. And they said, "Take -- take three guys with you and go back to Washington D.C. and you can begin the carte blanc." Said: Unanimous vote, you can endorse, you can withhold endorsement, or you can oppose based on the testimony. And so I went back to D- -- that was 5:00 meeting.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did you talk about the land freeze when you were at Hickel's home? Did he --

MR. NOTTI: Yes. Yeah. I -- that's one of the things I said to him. I said, "Yeah, I think I could, but before I do that, what's your position on the land freeze?" And he said, "Well, I've been talking to people about that, and I'm going to project the interest in the Native people." He said, "I want the escrow money and I want to make sure they get a fair deal. So we're -- we're

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concerned. We're going to look out for them." And I said, "That's good, but -- but will you hold the land freeze?" And he said, "Well, you know, I've got -- I've got some ideas about what I can do about these things, you know." And I said, "Well, if I endorse you and you lift the land freeze, I'd look like a fool because we fought real hard to get that land freeze into holding." And I said, "I can't endorse you without public promise that you will do it." And he said, "Well, I've been -- I've got plans and I talked to people in escrow, money to do these things." So we -- I kind of left it like that. Obviously he wasn't going to answer me, so I didn't want to -- to press him, so we left. And -- and I talked to Cliff Groh on this, and I said, "Cliff, he's got to promise me to hold the land freeze." Because he was -- Cliff was real close to him. He was kind of the (indiscernible). And he said, "He -- he told you he'd look out for your interest." And I said, "Well that's not good enough." I said, "What he tells me in private is not good enough, because his record as governor was that the land freeze was illegal. What he said publicly in Seattle is he could undo it with a stroke of a pen." I said, "My word is nothing against the Governor of Alaska or Secretary of Interior. He's got to say publicly that he endorses land freeze. Then I will recommend an endorsement." And he said, "You're calling him a liar and you don't trust him." I said, "No. That's not true at all. I'm not calling him a liar and not that I don't trust him, but I need more than that. I can't just go on faith." So Cliff quit over that issue, being the AFN attorney. And I didn't -- I didn't like to see him quit because he was smart and strategist and he knew everybody that had the contacts, and he could, you know, mediate for us on tough issues. But -- but he felt real strongly that Hickel ought to be Secretary of the Interior and that I was an obstructionist. So he quit us. He didn't feel he could continue working for us. So when I left that meeting we called a special AFN meeting at 5:00. They said, "Go back to D.C." So 11:00 that night we went back to D.C. and I took John Borbridge, Willie Hensley, and Eben Hopson. That's two weeks before the nomination. We spent two weeks in D.C. on the Hickel nomination. And we would walk into the Senator's office and say -- any senator, and say, "We're from Alaska, Interior, Senator."

MR. MITCHELL: You mean Interior Committee Senator?

MR. NOTTI: Interior Committee Senator.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: And say we're from Alaska and they'd immediately pull us in.

MR. MITCHELL: So you got to see the senators as opposed to the --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah.

MR. MITCHELL: -- staff guy.

MR. NOTTI: The aides immediately took us -- in most cases, right in to see the senator. And -- and the questions were pretty much the same. They had seen movies of -- of Hickel talking to the press and they were concerned about -- and there were a lot of stories floating around about his

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<https://archives.consortiumlibrary.org/collections/specialcollections/hmc-1099/>

dealings with -- with Kenai gas wells about his involvement with -- I think it's some Texas firm that dealt with maybe ENSTAR, I'm not sure. Bought us hotels, bought a lot of things, and as we kept saying, "We don't know anything about his business dealings or about the land freeze." So we had a lot of meetings about that when it got to the hearings itself.

MR. MITCHELL: Did you -- did you have a chance to talk to Senator Jackson about this?

MR. NOTTI: We talked to Jackson. We talked to his aides. We're -- we talked to Jackson and then we talked to his aides very -- almost all of them.

MR. MITCHELL: And that was Vaness, or --

MR. NOTTI: Vaness was deeply involved in that. And he was the key head guy that we dealt with. And during the hearings, Jackson -- but first, those three-articulate hearings -- Jackson talked about the land freeze. Well, Hickel had appointed Stevens, so Stevens was a junior senator. He'd only been there a couple of months. And he was just learning the ropes. And every time Hickel got in a tight spot, Stevens would say, "Mr. Chairman, maybe I can help the Governor out." And being a lawyer he was smooth and articulate, and Hickel was -- kind of stumbled on his answers. If he wasn't briefed real well, he had a hard time -- time offering extemporaneous answer, you know, to these guys who were real experienced. So if -- Stevens helped him out an awful lot for three days. And -- (indiscernible). So let's see here. Well, hold up just a second here.

MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

MR. NOTTI: You need (indiscernible).

MR. MITCHELL: Well, let me ask you this. In order to get things --

MR. NOTTI: Sure.

MR. MITCHELL: -- back on -- the narrative back on track. Did -- when you met with Jackson and -- and Vaness before the hearings started, did -- did they make any commitments at that point as to how -- what -- what Senator Jackson's view was of the land freeze and what they were prepared to do to help you out?

MR. NOTTI: Not what they were prepared to do, but they had made it very clear that they wanted the land freeze held. And -- so we gave them all the questions we could. And we wrote out questions and gave it to the staff. The staff gave the Senator -- sitting in the audience they were reading a lot of questions verbatim to the Governor, you know, trying to pin him down, and so they -- all around this land freeze thing, and -- and -- that first day. And then the second day, we got back to the land freeze. And we're all -- during this session we'd run around back then to the door and knock on them and give them a question. And the aide would come out and give it to a senator and he'd read the question. Not just Jackson, some of the others. And -- but you

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could never pin him down because he'd have to be well briefed when he'd ask the question to -- to step in front of that question and ask the next one because he was sliding by them. So it was, kind of, not a very efficient system. The third day Jackson said, "We were going down by seniority." And he said, "Before we start the hearings, Governor," -- he said, "we've dealt with an issue for the past two days, and I thought we were done with it. But after reading the record last night I'm not too sure that we are." And he said, "I want to -- before we get started I want to ask you once more what you intend to do about the land freeze." And I thought, sitting in the audience, I said, "This is the question. This is up or down. Hickel's nomination hangs in the balance right here." And -- and he knew it. He said, "Senator, I will hold the land freeze." And then I thought Jackson overstepped his authority, but he got Hickel to agree to it. And he said, "Will you come back to this committee before you dispose of land?" And Hickel gave up his administrative responsibilities when he said he would clear any land transactions with the cit- -- with the committee.

MR. MITCHELL: And so to that extent he should have let Jackson be Secretary of the Interior?

MR. NOTTI: Right. And so that's how the land freeze was held. He pinned him down with a "yes" or "no," will you hold a land freeze.

MR. MITCHELL: Now, did -- did you guys then go out and endorse Hickel or what -- what happened?

MR. NOTTI: Well, after that we -- when it came to the public testimony part of it we marched forward and said, "Based on the testimony, we support the nomination of Walter Hickel for Secretary of Interior." We had an argument within ourselves -- amongst ourselves about how strongly we endorsed it. We don't do the rally and (indiscernible) based on the testimony we supported. So that's -- we gave -- we gave firm support but not exuberant support. And during the -- the third day we would -- we'd get down to the hearings at 7:00 in the morning just to get a seat. You know, we'd line up until they open the doors. You had to get in line in order to get a seat, so we always wanted to get a good seat. But the third day we went into the hearing room, the first two rows were blocked off. So we were in the third row as Borbridge, Hensley, and Eben Hopson, and I. And the hearings get started, and about five minutes before the hearing start in marches all these Alaska people and fill the first two rows of this -- three rows in the Senate hearing room reserved for (indiscernible) of people from Alaska who went down there to support Wally Hickel.

MR. MITCHELL: And this was Natives or non-Natives?

MR. NOTTI: (Indiscernible) from Fairbanks, Lou Williams from Ketchikan, Bob Atwood from Anchorage, Jesse Carr, Louie Dishner (phonetic), Ray Christiansen, Flore Lekanof. Some of the guys who voted for us go down there and hold the land freeze. And this is before -- before the hearings start. So he hadn't capitulated yet.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

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MR. NOTTI: So before they start, Jack Stevens said, "I would like to introduce and ask all these good Alaskans who support Hickel for Secretary of Interior to stand." So these first three rows of people stand up. We didn't stand because we hadn't arrived at that decision yet. So it was tough to sit there and have these guys look back and say, "What the hell's wrong with you? Don't you support our Governor for Secretary of Interior?"

MR. MITCHELL: Right. But -- but Ray Chris [as spoken] and Flore Lekanof stood up with everybody else?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. Well, they were part of the group.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Right. Did -- did you talk to him about that afterwards, or what did they say?

MR. NOTTI: Well, they -- they just -- they were Republicans you know, they couldn't (indiscernible) asking and they couldn't say no. John Sackett, who was at the board meeting, voted unanimously to send him back there. Then they sent telegrams saying they supported Hickel. And we'd walk into the Senator's office and he says, "What about this Native group that supports us?" We'd need -- we'd have to poo poo it.

MR. MITCHELL: And this is Tanana Chiefs?

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. And -- and so we'd have to say, "Well, you know, we -- we do represent the majority," and all this kind of stuff. But we'd have to justify our stand as well as minimize theirs. So when we came back to the next board meeting, I said, "Don't you ever do that to me again. I'm back there carrying your water, taking a lot of heat. I'm your unanimous vote. To have me do that, then you send individual telegrams saying you support Hickel. You know, on the -- whatever the issue is. So if you -- you send me out there as a spirit carrier, you got to support me." So there -- it wasn't real easy.

MR. MITCHELL: Well, I guess that's probably a good place to -- to stop for the moment. I guess the two quick follow-up questions -- one is obviously at that confirmation hearing, is when Ted Stevens really first appears in terms of the congressional process on the scene. And I guess the first question is, did you talk to -- to Ted as you were making the rounds about the land freeze and what -- what was he telling you at that point?

MR. NOTTI: Well, Hick- -- he was -- he wouldn't exactly say he didn't like the land -- or wouldn't support it, but he -- he never really gave it support. He kept saying "Well, there's got to be a way to make everybody happy and have progress in Alaska and have the economy go and still protect our rights," but he never -- he wouldn't really support us.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, what about -- was he on the scene before his appointment? Obviously he'd been in the legislature, and he'd obviously been up in Fairbanks, and I know he'd

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done some work for the Minto people at one point. Had you had any dealings with Stevens before his appointment?

MR. NOTTI: Not much. He was -- actually on both sides of the question because he represented, I think, Mobile Oil -- one of the oil companies, and then some Native groups. But he wasn't really involved in any of the formulation of policy on our positions.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. And then I guess the last thing is -- and you should have reminded me of it -- and that is, what was the role, if any, in the early days of getting this organized of the Association on American Indian Affairs and Byler and those people, were they involved at all in the CINA days or in the early AFN organizing days?

MR. NOTTI: Well, I always thought the role was pretty narrow. They raised a lot of money I'm told back in New York because of the Native land claims and Alaska. We never really helped AFN directly. We always supported Tanana Chiefs. And I think they put a lot of money into (indiscernible) Tanana Chiefs and those meetings, but not much to AFN.

MR. MITCHELL: So when you were organizing the '66 meeting, they were not involved in anything?

MR. NOTTI: No.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, I really much appreciate the time.

MR. NOTTI: Well, one other comment.

MR. MITCHELL: Sure. Go ahead.

MR. NOTTI: I think -- I think we hit a window of time in events where we maximized land and money. Five years earlier, before we were organized, I think if they'd come into Alaska and said we're going to -- just sign this piece of paper, we'll give -- we'll distribute \$50 million in Alaska, people would have went for it. I think if they had come in and said in the villages, "How would you like to have, you know, 10,000 acres around your village for your exclusive use?" They probably would have signed for it. But there was -- there was no real discovery of oil then. They -- there were a lot of work -- some people might have known, but it wasn't public knowledge. And once they hit oil we could never had gotten 40 million acres of land.

MR. MITCHELL: What about the five --

MR. NOTTI: I'm sorry.

MR. MITCHELL: What about the pipeline and Prudhoe Bay and --

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MR. NOTTI: Right. And we wouldn't have gotten that land after the fact. That was it. Today we couldn't get 40 million acres.

MR. MITCHELL: Right.

MR. NOTTI: And if they had moved earlier we -- we wouldn't have gotten the money. So I think we hit a window of maximum land and money for -- I don't think we could match it today in either instance (indiscernible). We lost a major portion of the bill. It wasn't really a negotiated settlement. It was unilateral. They went behind closed doors and came out with a bill and said, "Here it is." And in that bill we lost a major issue. That's 2 percent perpetuity.

MR. MITCHELL: Right. Well, I want to come back -- obviously, I've done a little bit of homework up through '68, and I want to be able to come back and ask you about all that, but I guess -- oh, I guess one final thing is you mentioned that -- that in terms of -- of Bill Paul's involvement, that -- that he -- you didn't see his fingerprints around early on with Nick Gray. When -- when did he -- when, or I guess if, did he become visible at AFN after the organizing meeting, or --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. It was after the organizing meeting. He started writing letters. He'd been reading about our positions and he was pointing out our errors to us. And then he would show up at our meetings, and he would testify at hearings and whatnot. I remember one time I was going back to D.C. and I said, "I want to bring Bill Paul back." And there was opposition to it.

MR. MITCHELL: Inside the AFN board?

MR. NOTTI: Inside of AFN. And they said, "Don't bring him back. He's going to hurt us." And I said, "Wait a minute. He's got a perspective that we don't agree with maybe. It doesn't agree with our position, but I think it's worthwhile to have it on the record." And so I paid his way back from AFN even though some of the key guys in AFN didn't like him. He took a position that wasn't ours, but I thought it was important.

MR. MITCHELL: Did he ever show up on your doorstep and start to cultivate you when you figured out you were a --

MR. NOTTI: Yeah. Yeah. He made a point. He -- we got -- we got to know each other pretty good.

MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Well, I probably -- that's good for November 15th and I appreciate it. And we'll see you in the spring hopefully.

MR. NOTTI: Okay. (End of audio recording.)