UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY Kallman - 343-3171

For Release MAY 4, 1964

OIL AND GAS LEASE SALE FOR TYONEK INDIAN LAND IN ALASKA SET FOR MAY 6

A Federal appellate court decision is expected to bring additional bids in a competitive sale of oil and gas leases on May 6 in Alaska for 31 tracts of Indian land comprising the 26,000-acre Tyonek Reserve (Moquawkie Reservation) near Cook Inlet, the Department of the Interior announced today.

All royalties and bonuses from the sale of rights will go to the Tyonek Indians.

The sale was scheduled for May 6 two months ago, but a court appeal then pending had caused some prospective bidders to be reluctant about competing.

Sealed bids must be received before 2 p.m. Wednesday, May 6, at the Office of the Area Field Representative, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of the Interior, 528½ Fifth Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska. All bids will be opened in public in the Lousaac Library, Fifth Avenue and F Street, Anchorage.

The Tyonek Reserve was established in 1915 for Indian use. The land lies some 50 miles from Anchorage, and is across Cook Inlet in an area of considerable oil exploration activity. In 1962 an Anchorage resident filed offers to lease almost all of the Reserve without competition under the 1920 Mineral Leasing Act, but the offers were rejected. Interior's Solicitor determined that the area was subject instead to a 1927 act governing oil and gas leasing on Indian lands. The 1927 act requires competitive bidding for leases.

The applicant appealed to the U. S. District Court at Anchorage, which upheld the Interior Department. The appeal was carried to the Ninth U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, which decided for the Government last Wednesday, April 29. Both sides waived rehearing, thus closing the case.

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