

Suit 'Reaffirms' Mayor's Kahoolawe Stand

Co-Complainant With Life Of Land

Mayor Elmer F. Cravalho believes his position as co-complainant in a suit brought to stop Navy use of Kahoolawe as a bombing target is just a reaffirmation of a position he has held for a long time.

"I don't see how I could have refused to sign a legitimate complaint in light of my past position and in light of the County Council's support of this stand," the Mayor emphasized Thursday—the day the suit was filed in Honolulu.

The other complainant in the suit is Life of the Land. The suit was filed in Federal Court by Honolulu Attorney Thomas M. Pico, Jr., and Maui Attorney Michael Cleveland.

The suit names Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, Secretary of the Navy John Chafee and Rear Admiral Thomas B. Hayward as defendants. Hayward is commandant of the 14th Naval District and commander of the Hawaiian Sea Frontier.

It charges that the use of Kahoolawe as a bombing target by the Navy is a violation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 because no "environmental impact" statement has been filed, and seeks an injunction to halt the bombing on this basis.

An "environmental impact" statement is required by the act when a Federal agency undertakes action which may significantly affect the environment.

Pico, Cleveland and Life of the Land President Tony Hodges visited Kahoolawe Wednesday with the cooperation of the Navy.

Life of the Land representatives said this trip confirmed "suspicions" which the organization held. These were:

- 1—The island is an ecological catastrophe in progress.
- 2—The goat population has

not been held in sufficient check to prevent denudation of landscape.

3—Erosion of top soil continues unchecked.

4—Soil from this erosion pollutes surrounding waters.

5—Efforts of both the Navy and Hawaii to prevent this erosion has been "close to non-existent."

6—The Navy is responsible for the destruction to the island through acts of both "omission and commission" (not instituting soil conservation measures and direct bombing).

7—There are substantial areas of the island which, if restored through revegetation, could be used for recreation.

Cravalho's position in the suit is that bombing of the desolate island may be hazardous to residents of Maui. An incident is outlined where a bomb was found—in September 1969—on land leased by Maui Factors, of which Cravalho is a major stockholder.

In the interview Thursday, Cravalho said he became involved in the suit only because Life of the Land had asked him to sign the complaint and he felt it would be hypocritical to refuse.

The Mayor said he does not know how successful the suit will be, but that at least it will focus light on the problem.

"We should not accept, at face value, the Navy statements regarding Kahoolawe," the Mayor added.

Admiral Hayward outlined the Navy's position during a speech to the Rotary Club of Maui the last part of May.

At that time Hayward stated Kahoolawe is vital to the training needs of the Navy and that it is irreplaceable. He indicated that the Navy's position in Hawaii and the security of the entire Pacific area might be adversely affected if the Navy was forced

to give up the island.

A similar posture was expressed by Chafee during a recent visit to Hawaii.

Mayor Cravalho, however, feels that this is not really the case. He said he will continue to seek the return of the island to the County.

He added that the County administration is in close contact with two of Hawaii's Congressional representatives—Senator Daniel K. Inouye and Representative Patsy T. Mink—who are seeking changes in the use of the island.

Inouye has introduced legislation seeking to prevent Navy bombing and Mrs. Mink has proposed that Kahoolawe be turned into a national park.

The County supports both of these proposals, Cravalho said.

The Mayor described the Navy's attitude as "arrogant", adding: "It has completely ignored the County . . . they just tell us when they are going to bomb."

The Navy has made no effort to discuss the issue of Kahoolawe, and "We haven't even gotten a 'go to hell' from them," he said.

The Mayor re-emphasized a point which he has made in the past, saying that the County is not asking for an "either-or" type of thing.

Cravalho explained that he believes it is possible for both the Navy and the County to use the island.

"Certainly we (County) can contemplate joint use," he said.

The County's interest in the island involves mostly recreational activities at the moment, he indicated.

When asked how far he thinks the suit against the Navy will be carried, Cravalho said, "I believe the suit will be carried some distance."

The Mayor said the County is not contemplating legal action of its own at the moment.