

'We Would Go to the People'—

Personal Contact in Campaigning

ANCHORAGE — "We decided early in this campaign," said State Senator Willie Hensley recently, "That if we had to choose before spending thousands of dollars mailing form letters and using that same money meeting the people personally, we would go to the people."

Since beginning his campaign for the U.S. House of Representatives last April, the Kotze



SEN. WILLIE HENSLEY

bue Eskimo Democrat has traveled more than 10,000 miles, meeting thousands of Alaskans from the Arctic Circle south to the Lower Kuskokwim through the populous center of the state and down to Southeast.

All the hours of the campaign trail have produced some memorable moments.

Said Hensley, "I thought the campaign was over before it got under way last spring. We were flying back from Dillingham to Anchorage when our plane developed engine trouble, and we had to make an emergency landing at Illiamna."

Most of the highlights of Hensley's travels have left more pleasant memories. There was the fund raiser in the village of Noorvik at which every resident

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Hensley . . .

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contributed.

There was also an 18-hour riverboat trip from Minto to Tanana, a three-hour cruise from Wrangell to Petersburg on the ferry Taku, and numerous flights through the mountains and fiords of Southeast in chartered single-engined aircraft.

On the 13th and 14th of August, Senator Hensley temporarily left the airplanes and riverboats behind while he drove down the highway from Fairbanks to Anchorage stopping in villages along the way to shake hands and talk issues with local residents.

Hensley also feels he has made history during this campaign, "I think I may very well be the first politician to campaign on the Kuskokwim in a riverboat with translators. And as a matter of fact, I don't think my press aide, Gordon Parker, knew when he joined our staff that part of his job would be to leap into the Kuskokwim without benefit of hipboots to push our boat off the mud flats."

Senator Hensley said the decision to expend the major energies of the campaign in meeting the people face to face was influenced by the philosophy he has followed throughout his political career.

"I have always viewed politics not as a game of power, but as a means of resolving the everyday problems of my constituents. "That's why in my eight years in the legislature I have concentrated on being a full-time legislator. And that's why I feel it is important to go to the people to hear first-hand their concerns and advice."

Hensley said he feels too many politicians have isolated themselves from the people.

"With the resignation of President Nixon," he said, "Americans have learned first-hand how government of the people, for the people, and by the people becomes a travesty when our leaders decline to seek the good counsel of their constituents."