

# Hopson successor is source of speculation

Even as Eben Hopson, the Mayor of the North Slope Borough, lay very seriously ill in the Barrow clinic, speculation was growing as to who would replace the Inuit leader in the Mayor's Office. Days before Hopson's passing, an Anchorage newspaper carried a story speculating that Acting Borough Mayor Lloyd Ahvakana or Arctic Slope Regional Corporation Board Chairman Jacob Adams were both strong contenders for the Mayor's post.

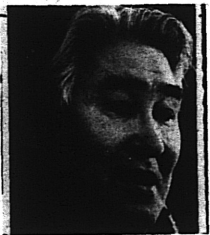
Ahvakana was designated Acting Mayor in late January by Hopson when the Mayor felt that he was unable to further devote full-time attention to his responsibilities as he fought his battle with cancer.

The retired Alaska National Guard officer joined the Hopson Administration early during the formative stages of the Borough, serving as Borough Clerk and chief administrative officer of the Borough under Mayor Hopson.

Adams, in addition to his corporate board responsibilities, is a full time staff member of ASRC, where he manages the regional corporation's land department. He also serves as Chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC), an important position to arctic slope Inuit as they continue to defend their right to take the bowhead whale for subsistence purposes in the face of strong environmentalist and commercial whaling opposition.

Another likely candidate is Billy Neakok of Barrow, who challenged Hopson for the Mayor's seat in the last Borough election. Neakok claims the position rightfully belongs to him and that Hopson was not legally entitled to run for office under provisions of the Borough Charter during the 1978 elections. Neakok says he is currently in consultation with his attorneys on the matter.

Meanwhile, Acting Mayor Ahvakana has issued a statement saying he will serve in his present capacity as requested by Hopson until the voters of the Borough go to the polls in the fall to chose a new mayor. Mentioned as other possible candidates are Barrow Mayor Nate Olemaun Jr. and Borough Public Works Director Eugene Brower. As yet, there is no indication that candidates may run from north slope communities other than Barrow. That possibility, however, is viewed as one which may develop as the fall elections draw closer.



LLOYD AHVAKANA



JACOB ADAMS



BILLY NEAKOK