

GLITTER, HUMOR AT BANQUET

Notables, Amusements Frolic Through Times Anchorage Banquet

They were all there. The notables, the congressmen, the legislators, the native leaders—all the ingredients for what is coming to be known as the event of the year in Anchorage.

Yet the evening wasn't for them. As was indicated by the decor especially created for the Tundra Times Banquet, and as was pointed out by the main speaker of the evening, all had gathered together to honor the cultural contributions of the Alaska Natives.

A tribute to the new-born, native musk ox industry was noted as Laura Bergt gracefully modeled a gown of qiviut wool, valued at \$1,000.

A unique publication, entitled, "Graphic Arts of the Alaskan Eskimo" and authored by Mrs. Dorothy Jean Ray was presented for the first time to the capacity audience that attended the banquet at the Anchorage-Westward Hotel Ballroom October 4.

Indeed, it was a tribute to native artists, yet it was certainly a lively tribute. Tundra Times Editor Howard Rock set the stage for an evening of humor.

He introduced the Governor; he introduced Mrs. Vincent Price, who sat at the Governor's left, and then proceeded: "At Mrs. Miller's left . . . At Mr. Miller's left . . ." This was certainly an indication of Editor Rock's joy at the apparent success of the dinner.

As Emil Notti, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, rose to speak, he received a standing ovation.

Notti noted: "Howard Rock has a knack for getting together the liveliest audiences. Even a comedian couldn't go wrong if he tried."

Sylvester Ayek, manager of the Anchorage A-Frame, and Jim Thomas, of Yakutat, were the masters of ceremonies.

The humorous tone of the banquet took pause briefly as

(Continued on page 6)



DRAMATIC POINT—Famed actor, Vincent Price, keynote speaker at the Tundra Times banquet last Saturday in Anchorage, dramatically drives home a point during his address on the cultures of all peoples. Price, along with General Ramsey Clark, former U.S. Attorney General, and other speakers, enthralled a crowd of 600 people that filled every seat in the spacious Anchorage-Westward Hotel Ballroom. Along with serious matters, much humor was apparent. In front of Price is Howard Rock, editor of the Tundra Times, and Emil Notti, right, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives.

—THOMAS RICHARDS, JR. Photograph

Glitter at Banquet..

(Continued from page 1)

Dr. Walter Soboleff, in a dignified and eloquent manner so much evident in Alaskan natives, said the invocation.

Those present at the feast had much to be thankful for: 250 pounds of reindeer, 175 pounds of crab, and 300 pounds of king salmon were served.

The reindeer, provided by the Northwest Reindeer Processing Company, was accompanied by a crab salad, sent to Anchorage by the Kodiak Native Association.

Governor Miller, Senator Gravel, Senator Stevens, and Congressman Pollock made brief remarks. They addressed themselves to the role of the Tundra Times as a voice for the native peoples and urged that it be supported by natives and others interested in the native position.

Former Attorney General Ramsey Clark, now working on the land claims efforts with a team of lawyers from the Goldberg firm, told the crowd of the significance of the land issue not only to natives, but to all Alaskans.

He noted that the settlement would be the last opportunity for the federal government to show justice to native Americans.

Between speakers, the emcees were not without their share of witticisms. Jim Thomas, Secretary of the Tlingit and Haida Council, reflected on the Amchitka blast:

"We know the federal government is anxious to finish with the native land claims 'problem,' but did they have to place a nuclear warhead under the Aleuts?"

Keynote speaker Vincent Price began his speech with a warning that, with increasing leisure time, people will suffer boredom unless this time is put to constructive use.

Price stated members of a society should use their leisure time in enjoyment of their art and, in Alaska, specifically in enjoyment of the contributions of native artists.

He added that, in Alaska, the native artist depends on the tourist. The tourist, Price said, is more concerned with bringing home a souvenir rather than a piece of art.

He warned that Alaska now has "artist ghettos" and, unless Alaskans consider more the contributions of the native artists, these slums shall remain.

Price spoke of another kind of art which he called the "art of journalism." He said the Tundra Times, as a voice for Alaska Natives, has a point of view "that you don't read about in other papers."

He warned here too that, unless support is given, natives may lose this voice.

His speech was long, but so captured were the occupants of that ballroom by the unique narrative style that the only sound heard was the voice of Vincent Price.

After the noted actor and art

critic concluded his speech, emcee Sylvester Ayek kept the program moving: "We were going to ask Miss Eskimo World Olympics to surprise Mr. Price with a gift, but if we could ask Mrs. Laura Bergt to model the qiviut gown, we will have that later."

One of the highlights of the evening was the first viewing of a gown, woven by Katie Tootkaylok of Mekoryuk, on Nunivak Island.

The gown, valued at \$1,000, was an intricate ivory-colored tracing of musk ox qiviut over a gold sating underdress. The gown designed by Mrs. Lillian Schell, was complimented by a laced qiviut hood.

The ivory and gold theme was further enhanced with a necklace created by Ralph Perdue, of Ralph Perdue Jewelry in Fairbanks.

Asked to comment on the gown, famed musk ox expert Professor John Teal stated, "Laura would look good in a ten cent gown."

Mrs. Bergt brought a gift for Vincent Price. She presented him with a neck scarf woven from musk ox qiviut.

The keynote speaker was presented with another gift from Miss World Eskimo Olympics Marie Irwin.

Miss Irwin, from Nenana, wearing a crown of baleen and ivory, presented Mr. Price with the gift and was rewarded with a kiss.

Next on the agenda for the evening was an exhibition of the high kick, a traditional game described by Jim Thomas as the "Eskimo version of kicking the fuzz."

Sylvester Ayek issued a public challenge to Representative Willie Hensley of Kotzebue, which Hensley responded to eagerly and remarked, "Is anybody willing to put some money on this?"

The reply was, "Yes, two per cent."

The two competitors raised both feet into the air, kicking a rolled bar of fur. The ball was placed higher until neither could kick any longer, and the match was called a draw.

As the banquet came to its closing moments, Tundra Times comptroller Professor Jim Bedford took the podium to plug Tundra Times stock and to auction off banquet decorations, as well as Vincent Price's tie.

Carl Nelson, of Juneau, won the tie with a top bid of \$50. The tie was autographed by Mr. Price and presented to Nelson. This caused someone to later remark, "Fortunately for the Tundra Times, Bedford can sell anything."

It was indeed a successful evening. Not only was it successful for the Tundra Times; it was a time for those gathered in that room to pause, and to reflect on the contributions of the culture of Alaska Natives, to pay tribute to those contributions, and to signify their gratitude.