

Walter J. Hickel Takes Exception To Primary Election System

Walter J. Hickel, Republican nominee for Governor of Alaska, delivered his keynote address to the Alaska State Republican Convention here in Fairbanks last Friday.

One of the things he took exception to was the closed primary election system under which the state elects its nominees for general election.

"We should be pleased with the great number of Republican votes we polled in the primary. Even though the opposition received a greater number of votes . . . please don't be misled," Hickel declared. "Just review the past several elections and you will see what happens."

"First," he continued, "the closed primary system that we now have in Alaska

prohibits the voter from making a free choice of candidates because he has to confine all of his votes to one side of the ballot."

"Naturally, there will be more people voting on the side that has the hottest contests. Many of the Democrat races had bitter battles in the primary resulting in a very heavy vote on that side of the ballot."

He said that those votes will not be all in the Democrat column in November, saying that since the primary and before, "the surge of disillusioned Democrats to our side has been truly amazing."

He said that these people were all Alaskans who wanted to see the future of the state run with a vision and a

plan "and not in the day-to-day crisis to crisis totally-politically-oriented administration we now have."

Hickel stated that although politics was important and in all sincerity, it must become secondary to the general welfare of all Alaskans.

"Second," he declared, "the primary does not give the independent voter an opportunity to express himself and this group makes up a substantial part of the Democrat party leaders jealously guard the closed primary in order to maintain control in spite of the fact that the majority of Alaskans have said that they want an open primary."

On the economic future of the state, the Republican candidate said that it was bright.

"The past is water under the bridge, but we will study it," he said.

"The present administration's mistakes of the past have been noted and will serve us as guidelines into that future. But it will take the imagination that we believe that we have — added to our desire and determination — to develop the future of our great state.