

ARCTIC ESKIMOS ENDORSE EGAN, BARTLETT, GRAVEL

Also Back Sen. Hopson For Sec. of State; Reject Rep. Rivers

By JASON LYTTLE

BARROW (Special)—An Alaska Native political-action group at Barrow has jumped head-on into the statewide political circus, and is inviting other Native associations in the state to do likewise.

The Arctic Slope Native Association told the Tundra Times today that they will endorse incumbents in elections for Gov-

emor and U.S. Senate, but that they will not endorse Rep. Ralph Rivers for another term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

"The ASNA considers the present incumbent Ralph Rivers, because of his advocacy of the extinction of all Native claims by national legislation, unworthy of a single Native vote," a written statement from the Association read.

The Barrow group will instead back Mike Gravel, now Speaker of the State House of Representatives, who is expected to file soon for River's seat in Washington.

Gov. Wm. Egan was endorsed in his bid for re-election to the state's highest office.

"Though at times personal loyalty has protracted persons within his administration and has outweighed adverse facts, we feel that William Egan, the incumbent Governor, is by far the best

suited man to be Chief Executive of the State of Alaska, and we therefore urge our members to vote for him. One cannot doubt his personal integrity nor minimize the general efficiency of his past terms."

The Association also endorsed Sen. Bob Bartlett for the U.S. Senate and Elen Hopson, of Barrow, in his race against incumbent Hugh Wade for the office of Secretary of State.

Hopson, a veteran legislator from Barrow, announced his intention to seek Wade's position three weeks ago in the Tundra Times.

"In discussion," the Native Association announcement said, "Elen Hopson has given assurance that when elected, he will use the influence of his office for the betterment of the bush areas of the state, the Native causes and claims, and to bring about an under-

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Eskimos Endorse . . .

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standing between the diametrically opposed views of the native and non-native people in this field."

Also endorsed was another Barrow candidate for state position, John Nusunginya. Nusunginya was recommended because of his "previous record and accomplishments on behalf of his people" while a State Representative. Nusunginya will again run for the House.

The Native group, while endorsing candidates for the 1966 elections, also took a swipe at Alaska's other U.S. Senator, Ernest Gruening, for his stand on Native land claims with the Department of the Interior.

The written release further stated:

"Insofar as land claims, the ASNA, on behalf of its members, wishes to be on record that they seek full title to the ancestral lands encompassed by their claim.

"The Association, its officers and members cannot and will not be bought off by money compensation as advocated by Senator Gruening. This is in itself comparable to the purchase of Manhattan Island by John Stuyvesant for a string of glass beads.

"We can sincerely say, no native of the Arctic Slope will be willing to take compensation money for his lands, unless he and his people are the arbiters of how the land is used, to give unmitigated protection of our game animals, migration routes, protection against pollution of out fish and streams.

"To further refute Senator Gruening's statements that land claims retard the state, let him look at Tyonek. Here native communal capital has been put to use to benefit the entire state. In process, is the development of the largest power generating plant in Alaska. Private interests would not or could not build a comparable power producing source.

"The Senator's words ring hollow in the face of the inestimable benefits to be derived from this source of inexpensive electrical energy, by the whole of Southcentral and Southeastern Alaska.

"The proof is there that a just settlement of native claims will help the state not hinder it. The additional tax revenue alone, will bolster considerably the state's precarious financial burdens.

"At present we are fighting a war in Viet-Nam to combat just such similar circumstances, namely seizure of land by a government without consent of the majority of people to whom it belongs.

"Let us give due process and recognition to our own native people's claims before we seek so far afield for causes to espouse.

"Is it any more right for a government to arbitrarily deprive its indigent population of their lands, than it is for one form of political party to impose its will by force on a country?

"The fact that our lands claimed have natural resources beyond comprehension is for us a source of self betterment, as in the Tyonek case. This wealth must and will be developed by our people, for our people, so

they may become self provident. Government supported projects cannot last forever.

"The ASNA further feels that at present the State of Alaska is financially incapable of assuming the burdens of education in the outlying districts inasmuch as there is no base for tax structure in these areas to support the schools in an adequate manner, thus placing the burden of education taxes on approximately one fifth of the state area, to support the whole.

"The native, as long as he remains landless, must therefore remain taxless; and being deprived of his land by the Federal Government, it is the responsibility of the government to either recognize his land claims so they may become taxable or provide the best of educational facilities for him in lieu thereof."

Officers of the Barrow Native Association also called for a general meeting of its members for May 20, 7:30 p.m.

Purpose of the meeting will be discussion of Native land claims and the state political outlook affecting the Alaska Native.

Three Barrow Eskimos, representing the Association, recently filed a blanket land protest for all lands north of the 68th degree parallel, running on a line roughly through the Brooks Range in Northern Alaska.

The filing protests any land selections, land sales, or transfers of title on 93 million acres of Arctic tundra, an area containing the oil-rich Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 and other lands under test-drilling by U.S. and British oil companies.

Petroleum industry sources have indicated that Alaska's Arctic Slope may contain some of the biggest crude oil reservoirs in the world.

Officers signing the Native Association release were Sam Taalak, president, Abel Akpik, Fred Kanayurak, James Nageak, Hugh Nicholls, Walton Ahmaogak, and Samuel Simmonds.