

Bad Weather Makes Staunchest Democrat Out of Frank Degnan

Frank Degnan, of Unalakleet, now feels he's one of the staunchest Democrats in the Northwest Alaska district.

He ought to be, for all his troubles in getting to the Northwest District Democratic convention held in Kotze-

bue last week.

With Kotzebue only two short plane-flights away, Degnan nevertheless decided to leave home a little early in case of bad weather.

He left Friday morning to try and reach the Saturday night convention in time.

It was a good thing he did.

First off, Degnan never reached Nome, first stop on the journey. Bad weather kept aircraft out of Nome and forced the Wien Airlines Pilatus Porter he was riding into Moses Point for the night, along with two other planes carrying passengers into Nome.

Late the next morning, Degnan finally reached Nome and climbed aboard a larger plane for the short 150 mile hop up to Kotzebue.

He wound up in Fairbanks instead.

Weather again forced all planes back from a landing at Kotzebue's airport, and Degnan's plane flew on to Fairbanks.

The next morning, the Unalakleet delegate flew back

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to Nome for another try.

Bad weather again.

He was just about to give up and go back home when a last-ditch attempt by Nome and Teller delegations to the convention got under way.

They finally made it.

The Northwest convention got off to a rocky start because of weather last week, when the Nome, Teller and Unalakleet delegates were kept out.

The convention finally got underway Sunday afternoon.

A sizeable Barrow delegation did not attend because a chartered aircraft for the trip did not show up.

Instead, Bobby Fisher, chief pilot for Arctic Research Labs at Barrow, flew key delegates to Kotzebue in a Cessna 180.

Among them were Sen. Hopson, campaigning for re-election in his home district, Sam Taalak, President of the Arctic Slope Native Association, and Abel Akpik, Secretary of the ASNA and the Barrow Improvement Board.

Senator Bob Blodgett, (D.-Teller) was also present.

Wendell Kay, opposing Gov. William Egan in the Democratic primary for Governor, flew in by private plane Saturday and left the same night. The commercial airliner carrying Gov. William Egan was unable to land because of weather, and had to fly back to Anchorage.

The only statewide candidate at the convention proper was Mike Gravel, campaigning against incumbent Rep. Ralph Rivers for Congress.