

POLITICAL BREAKTHROUGH . .

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cil.

He is a graduate of Juneau High School and attended college at Western Washington, at Bellingham. He is employed as a console operator with the State Department of Administration.

Loescher told the Tundra Times he became interested in the city council post through his involvement in the model cities program.

"I thought it was important to have people on the council who represent the citizens, and not just the businessmen. Model cities is important, and the city council is important to model cities," Loescher stated.

Although he thought it was important to have native representation on the council, Loescher said that he and his running mates did not run on a native platform.

"We didn't run on the native cause," Loescher stated. "We had abilities, and we wanted to apply them toward the betterment of the community."

He added that none of the Austin-Nelson-Loescher team had any fantastic political background. They believed they had the ability to represent those

who supported them; that they had the interest, and they believed they should not be required to offer anything more.

Nelson, prior to working for the state, was employed as a data processing technician by the city. Having worked within the city structure, he felt he understood much of the city operation, and particularly where the city was lacking.

As does Loescher, Nelson has a deep interest in the model cities program. The model cities program, Nelson felt, has a dependence on the city council, so that he wished to have a voice on the council.

The Austin-Nelson-Loescher team represented a unifying nucleus for many of the Capitol City's citizens who had never before sensed a need for involvement.

The day of elections, the Juneau Empire ran a picture of an elderly Native man who had voted in city elections for the first time.

Yet there were still close to 300 persons who were turned away from the polls.

Due to a state law requiring pre-registration, many persons

who had not voted in a recent election or hadn't registered, who thought they were registered, or who even didn't know they had to register were not allowed to vote.

A matter of coincidence, or perhaps not, the great majority of those who were turned away were Alaska Natives.

The Juneau elections may perhaps be an indication of things to come, an event of such significance that, although the popular media may hail the September lease sale as the story of the year, it could be easily overshadowed with the story of two natives in surpassing massive obstacles to achieve what many thought to be an impossible task.

Yet the elections in Juneau are also an indication that much work must be done before Alaska Natives can fully participate in exercising their right to vote. Historically, as in Juneau, natives have been disenfranchised.

And until the state election laws are changed, or until native citizens are fully informed of how to go about exercising their responsibilities, natives may remain disenfranchised.

Barrowites Cite Land Uses . . .

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started coming in to stay. Even for the exploration of oil with the Petroleum Reserve Number Four you didn't do anything until 1945.

"... These claims are proven. Just look at these barren lands out of which we four thousand Eskimos made our living. You can see that we had to travel many times a hundred miles to our various camps. We occupied the whole 55 million acres."

Hopson also defended native claim to mineral rights, saying that the Eskimos used oil seepage for fuel and that Indian title has been established as a precedent whereby natives can claim lands in fee.

The Eskimo leader also attacked Governor Miller and the state for his opposition to the native position in the land claims and to abolish existing reservations so that these selections can be made.

"The judgement of the Arctic Slope Native Association is that the stubborn, greedy, dog in the manger attitude simply cannot be tolerated. It is hurtful to a settlement. It must be condemned and we do condemn it. The state must recede. The point is, however, how to make it," Hopson stated.

At this point, he announced that ASNA would file suit to prevent the state from spending monies derived from lease sale of lands on the Arctic North Slope.

"We have ordered our attorneys, Frederick Paul as chief counsel and his associates Davis, Wright, Todd, Riese and Jones to take whatever legal action is necessary to prevent the state's spending of the 900 million dollars principal or interest.

"Presently, they are concentrating on a suit against the Bank of America in San Francisco on the theory that the bank has money belonging to us, and we want it," Hopson stated.

Hopson also discussed the size of the land claim made by the Alaska Federation of Natives. He cited Governor Miller's statement the federal government has a "fair and honorable record" in dealing with native Americans and that Miller would like to "secure the same treatment for the Alaska natives."

"How Ghastly!" Hopson commented. He stated he was amazed that Miller would advocate a repetition of the history of subjugation, decimation, and segregation that American Indians

have historically received from the United States Government.

Hopson questioned the competence of the state and the Miller administration which has "no oil economist, no oil lawyer, and no constitutional lawyer."

He contrasted the mismanagement of the Miller Administration with the efforts of the Alaska Federation of Natives in hiring Justice Arthur Goldberg and former Attorney General Ramsey Clark.

"While we deny that our need or our competence are relevant factors to judge the amounts of land and money or both, our need is great and our competence is amply adequate for a reasonably soon full control of our own compensation," Hopson stated.

Another statement came from Sam Taalak, manager of Barrow Utilities, Inc. "I was born in a sod house at Oliktok at an acreage that is now worth \$72 million," he told congressmen.

Three Wainwright Eskimos, Weir Negovanna, James Kagak, and Samuel Agnassaga also submitted testimony: "Mr. Hopson tells us you do not believe that we traveled a hundred miles in all directions inland. You are wrong. All you got to do is look at our country to believe us. To you, you can see nothing. But we know where these animals live and how to catch them."

Thomas P. Brower, well-respected Barrow whaler and Eskimo businessman, also reviewed his statement.

"I have been asked many, many times what is there in this Arctic Slope worth living for, enduring the frigid cold weather. I would say, this land of my birth, it is a part of me, and there is much, much more that I can say," Brower stated.

Veteran Barrow whaler Warren Matumeak added, "We have lived on our land for many centuries and we will continue to live here as long as the earth orbits the sun, and we want to benefit from our own land. We are asking you people not to let anyone take any more of our land without paying for it, because, ladies and gentlemen, THIS IS OUR LAND, and we love our land."

Arctic Slope Native Association delegates from Anaktuvik Pass and Barter Island also introduced statements to be formally introduced today.

The Barter Island Eskimos, from the villages of Kaktovik,

told of how they hunted over much of the North Slope, ranging as far south as where the rivers flowed to the south.

Simon Paneak and Elijah Kakigak, of Anaktuvik Pass, explained of their use of the land.

Other statements by Wyman Panigeo, president of the Barrow Village Council; Nelson Ahvakana, of Barrow; and Walton Ahmaogak, who was born at Prudhoe Bay.

Ahmaogak told of how he was raised at Prudhoe Bay, where his family owned a winter house five miles from the original discovery well.

"For many years now I have been trying to get an allotment where our house was, filing first in 1963, but the government won't approve my request," he stated.

"We had graves at McIntyre Point over there. My grandmother was buried by our fish camp up the Kukparuk River, about 50 miles. The Oil Companies covered the grave with gravel for a path," Ahmaogak stated.

Joseph Upicksoun, first vice-president of the ASNA, also reviewed his statement, which he will enter formally at today's hearings in Fairbanks.

Upicksoun said his people were unified with the AFN position in seeking a land claims solution. He added that the most important provision he felt to be is the 2 per cent over-riding royalty.

"With your sagacious mind, and wisdom to understand, the 2 per cent over-riding royalties is the ties my son's children and their children will have to the lands we may lose on what we truly believe was the land of us aborigines.

"I solemnly believe that this ground, this portion of the earth's surface, the Arctic Slope Region, is my land!" Upicksoun stated.

These statements, and other aspects of the Barrow presentation, were thought to have been well received by the congressmen.

It was also generally felt that the congressmen were much better behaved at Barrow and were more receptive to natives than several other stops on their tour.

Earlier at other villages, rather than earnestly seeking native opinion, the congressmen occasionally initiated angry confrontations with their hosts.

Miller Cautions on Salmon Harvest . .

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The difficulty is related to the short duration of the run in the Bay and the physical imitations of the industry which is adjusted to far smaller annual catches.

Miller said he was appointing the research committee in anticipation of some of the difficulties which could be posed by the record high runs.

Clarence A. "Bud" Weberg, Alaska's Director of International Fisheries, will serve as chairman

of the special advisory group.

The committee will be composed of fishermen, cannery, representatives of the U.S. State Department, Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and the Alaska Fish and Game Board. Names of the committee members will be announced within two weeks.

Miller said he wants the committee to meet as soon as possible after the appointments are made.

Congressmen . . .

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tell it like it was. We were intent on explaining this to them. Now it looks kind of bleak. I suppose this is how little they respect our claim."

After cutting the Sitka stop short, the committee lengthened their flight to Juneau in order to fly over glaciers and to take in other scenery.

Asked to comment on initial impressions of Alaskan Natives, one member of the entourage said, "I was so impressed at how nicely dressed and how clean the people were."

Somewhat more time was given for the Juneau portion of the Alaska trip, where the congressmen arrived Sunday sporting Tlingit Power buttons which were presented to them on their departure from Sitka.

The Tlingit Indians in Juneau were at first angered with the committee's schedule, which called for a 45 minute presentation Monday morning following a 2 hour cocktail party at the Governor's mansion Sunday evening.

They felt that Governor Miller and state officials would have 2 hours to voice their strong opposition to native land claims, while the natives would only have 45 minutes at most to respond.

The Tlingits were quick to challenge the prohibitive schedule and invited the congressmen to a dinner, hosted by the Tlingit and Haida Council in the Gold Room of the Baronof Hotel Sunday evening, as well as a coffee hour the following morning.

Both informally at the dinner, and not so informally at the coffee hour, at which time Chairman Wayne Aspinall actively questioned whether natives had any right to lands in Southeastern Alaska, the natives explained their position.

The native position was both explained and defended by such Indians as Bob Loescher and Carl Nelson, newly elected Juneau city councilmen, Dr. Walter Soboleff, Grand President of the Alaska Native Brotherhood, Jim Austin, president of the Juneau ANB Camp, Richard Stitt, Director of the Southeast Alaska Community Action Program, and John Borbridge, Jr., president of the Tlingit and Haida Central Council.

Late Monday morning, the congressmen left Juneau, flew over Yakutat, and landed in Anchorage. From Anchorage, they were to fly to Kenai and to the village of Tyonek.

The Tyonek natives received revenues from oil reserves discovered five years ago on the Indian reservation. The tour of the village was intended to display to the congressmen how Indians could competently manage money.

Due to weather conditions, and because the schedule did not allow the committee to wait on the weather, the tour was cancelled.

The committee over-nighted in Anchorage, and Tuesday, flew to Dillingham, Bethel and Nome. At Dillingham, the congressmen made their half-hour stop and made a brief tour of the town.

They allowed themselves more time in Bethel, the largest Eskimo town in Southeast Alaska, so

that they could meet with the townspeople.

The congressmen asked several questions. They asked for a show of hands from those familiar with the land claims bill as proposed by the Alaska Federation of Natives and approximately 25 responded.

The congressmen asked how many of these 25 were in agreement with the AFN bill. The tally revealed only seven.

To the surprise of the congressmen, most of whom are astonished at the amount of land claimed by AFN, they learned the only objection by natives to the AFN position was that there wasn't enough land claimed.

Leaving Bethel, the committee flew to Nome where they toured the King Island village and spent Tuesday night.

Wednesday, the congressmen boarded their Air Force C-130 and flew to Barrow.

Flying into Barrow Wednesday afternoon, the committee was greeted by Eben Hopson, Executive Director of the Arctic Slope Native Association; Joe Upicksoun, first vice-president of ASNA, and other north slope Eskimos.

After viewing the town, the congressmen were guests of ASNA at a dinner which was followed with Eskimo dances and presentations by Eskimo spokesmen.

Thursday morning, the committee remained on the north slope to inspect drilling rigs at Prudhoe Bay. On this portion of the tour, as well as the Kenai trip, the congressmen were hosted by oil companies.

Thursday afternoon, the congressmen arrived in Fairbanks. Yesterday evening, they attended a reception held in their honor and hosted by the Fairbanks Native Association, the Arctic Slope Native Association, and the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

As the committee began hearings today in Fairbanks, most native observers were reluctant to evaluate the tour, although they are somewhat disappointed that the schedule did not permit as comprehensive exposure to the broad spectrum of native opinion as possible.

There is, however, a note of cautious optimism.

Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives stated, "I hope that from what they have observed, the committee will see the AFN position is reasonable, justifiable, and thoughtfully put together, and deserves their consideration."

"We think that it is in the best interest of the parties in that the bill moves this year," Notti added.

It may be too early to evaluate the committee's tour; it may be even too early to judge the efforts in selling the AFN land claims position. Yet one thing is certain.

The Alaska Native Land Claims will be the final episode the United States will see in dealing with native Americans, and not until the land legislation has been signed by the President of the United States will it be known whether justice has been rendered.