

Theodore Ryberg

Box 5089

College, Alaska 99701

JAPANESE EMPEROR MAKES HISTORIC VISIT

By JIMMY BEDFORD

ANCHORAGE—In an old World War II airplane hanger, used by Americans nearly three decades ago to protect Alaska from the invading Japanese,

about 5,000 Americans gathered Sunday night to applaud the arrival of the Emperor of Japan.

Hirohito, once considered a deity, was demoted to the status of mortal man after World War

II. This was the first time he set foot on foreign soil since he became emperor in 1926.

It seemed fitting that he should stop at Elmendorf Air Force base in Anchorage, less

than five miles from the cemetery where 235 Japanese soldiers are buried, casualties of the Japanese invasion of Attu and Kiska.

Meanwhile back in the hanger

President and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon warmly welcomed the Emperor and Empress on behalf of the American people.

"Anchorage, Alaska," said
(Continued on page 6)

PRESIDENT NIXON, EMPEROR HISTORIC MEET



MOMENTOUS MOMENT—As Emperor Hirohito of Japan disembarked from the Japan Air Lines jet which took him from Tokyo to Anchorage, the President of the United States was present

to greet him and his wife. The meeting marked the first venture of a reigning Japanese emperor on foreign soil.



STOP AMCHITKA—Picketing against the planned Cannikin test along President Nixon's route through Anchorage were Mr. and Mrs. Tim Bradner.



ALASKAN HOSPITALITY—Ex-Interior Secretary Walter J. Hickel, the man President Nixon fired last November from his cabinet post, welcomed the President and Mrs. Nixon at a

reception at his extensive Turnagain Arms home Sunday. As reporters clustered about, the President and Hickel met for the first time since Hickel left the cabinet.

—Photos by JIMMY BEDFORD



WAITING FOR THEIR GUESTS—Though the moment for history would be their meeting with Emperor Hirohito, President and Mrs. Richard M. Nixon were the people Alaskans waited for.

Historic Meeting . . .

(Continued from page 1)

the President, "is approximately the same distance between Tokyo and Washington, D.C. And this fact reminds us that for the past quarter century we have built a structure of political economic and cultural ties which spans the space between our two countries."

The President expressed hope that his historic meeting would "demonstrate for all the years to come a determination of our two great peoples to work together in friendship for peace and prosperity for the Pacific and for all people in the world."

Emperor Hirohito responded by reading a prepared statement, expressing appreciation of the "manifestation of your very special good will and interest for the Japanese people and ourselves" the fact that "you have come over a long way to meet us personally" in spite of the fact that "you are so pressed with matters of state."

The emperor spoke in Japanese while the Nixons and the rest of the audience listened quietly and awaited for the translation to follow.

"I constantly raise to heart that all the Presidents of the United States, and her Government and the people, have given us unstinted assistance, materially and morally, after the end of the war, in the restoration and building up of our country," he said. "I take this opportunity to express my most sincere gratitude for it."

The Emperor was in Alaska for about 100 minutes as his Japan Airlines charter plane stopped for refueling enroute to a seven-nation tour of Europe. The plane will refuel in Anchorage again Oct. 14 on the way back to Tokyo, but His Imperial Highness will not get out.

After the brief welcoming ceremonies, the visiting royalty and the Nixons drove to the nearby home of Gen. Ruegg on the base for informal talks.

Although only 5,000 people could be on hand in hanger five for the arrival ceremonies, the affair was broadcast live into millions of homes in Japan, as well as thousands of homes in Alaska's major cities.

Shortly before midnight the Japanese visitors were again in the air and the Nixons, exhausted after a tiring day, retired for the night at the Ruegg residence.

On Monday morning President Nixon flew off into the wild blue yonder for Washington without answering any of the three burning questions affecting the Alaskan natives.

Many had speculated that during the President's 14-hour stay in Anchorage, he might call off the Amchitka blast, make a statement on Native land claims, or discuss the status of the Alaska pipeline.

He mentioned none of these.

Instead, he concentrated on making friends with the 200 guests at the Walter Hickel reception, waving at half the population of Anchorage which turned out to wave at the President, and greeting the Emperor.

At one point on Fourth Avenue, President Nixon stopped his motorcade to get out and shake hands with the people. As he did so, the crowd began streaming through the rope barriers to get a closer look and the police had a difficult time clearing the street so the entourage could get going again.

Mothers held up their children so they could see the President's car as it passed by. Many waved flags. Some carried signs such as "Welcome to the Great Land," "Hail to the Chief," and "God Bless Our President."

Not all the signs were happy ones. Many were written as a protest to Cannikin, the proposed underground nuclear test on Amchitka.

"Can Cannikin," read one sign. Another said "Bomb the Pentagon, not Amchitka." A St. Bernard wore a sign "Make puppies, not bombs."

If there were lots of protest signs, the predominate mood was frantic waving by nearly everyone as the President passed by. People even waved at the Alaska Press bus which brought up the rear of the parade following two busloads of White House photographers and journalists.

It was a day that will long be remembered by those in Anchorage on Sunday, September 26, 1971.

Robert Koweluk, an Eskimo photographer, summed up the sentiments of the day with one word: "Tremendous!"