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Fairbanks, Alaska

WHO OWNS SEA OTTER POSED



MISS WORLD ESKIMO OLYMPICS—Miss Marie Irwin of Nenana has just been crowned to become the 1969 World Eskimo Olympics queen. Wearing her ivory and baline crown, Marie is talking to Miss Audrey Ambrose, 1968 Olympics queen. Both girls wept, one for joy and one for

having to give up her year's reign. At far right is Miss Sarah Seeberg, Miss Arctic Circle who was first runner-up. Jack Silbaugh, left, of the Arctic Oil Show crowned the new queen. Miss Irwin is part Eskimo, part Indian and Caucasian.

—DIGNA JOHNSON Photograph

Legal Atmosphere Points Toward Native Ownership: Brayton

"Yet unresolved and of vital importance to the Alaskan Native population and their land claims is the fact that the sea otter is the private property of these Alaskan Natives," Larry Brayton stated in Anchorage today.

Brayton, Acting Director of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program, questioned state policy in harvesting and transplanting the fur bearing mammals. Brayton said that ownership of the sea otter rests with Alaskan Natives and that current state action is in conflict with their best interests.

Ownership of the sea mammals has been long established, said Brayton, and has yet to be challenged.

"The process began during the 54th Congress in 1889. Chapter 3, Article 1956, Title 23, of the revised statutes sets out the policy dealing with the sea otter," he said.

"It states that no one would be allowed to kill fur bearing mammals in Alaska unless directly authorized through the Treasury Department. Subsequent to this law, the Treasury Department determined that only Alaskan Natives could hunt and harvest the sea otter, a traditional right that they had from the period when the Czarist Russians owned Alaska," Brayton stated.

Russian interest in Alaska has been attributed to the sea otter,

which has long been described as the world's most prized fur bearing mammal. Last fall, a prize pelt marketed by the state sold in Seattle for \$2,300.

Four others sold for \$2,150 each. Brayton charged that, after serious depletion at the turn of the century, the sea otter again faces exploitation.

"This new exploitation is not conducted as in the past by individual White fur traders, but is part of a policy pursued by the State of Alaska," he said.

"The state has proceeded further in the traffic of this beautiful creature, for now it has not only harvested the sea otter for its valuable pelt, but is now as a matter of state policy transplanting the sea otters to other parts of Alaska and also to the lower forty-eight," charged Brayton.

He said the 1968 harvest of 500 pelts was taken from an estimated population of under 5,000 in the Amchitka area. Brayton said that these figures do not lend strength to the

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Olympics Great Despite Problems

The 1969 World Eskimo Olympics concluded its two-day program last Saturday at the Patty Gymnasium of the University of Alaska before capacity crowds in the 2,500-seat gym.

The Olympics probably experienced its finest success in its 8-year history of annual performances despite numerous difficulties met by Thomas Richards, Jr. and his Eskimo Olympics committee.

One of the first problems was that Richards took over as chairman with not much more than a month to prepare for the events.

It was first decided that the

Olympics would be held outdoors at the Alaskaland but later it was decided that it would be held indoors at the Seward Hall or the gold dome structure, the inclement weather being the factor.

At the last minute, it was found that repairs at the gold dome would not be made on time to close the open area on the lower roof damaged by fire months ago. This development threatened to leave the Olympics out in the cold.

Tom Richards and his committee were rescued by President William R. Wood of the Univer-

sity of Alaska who made the spacious Patty gym available as well as making housing and food

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Aussie Tribe Seeks Injunction On Mines Till Lands Resolved

Yirrkala Tribe, aborigines of Australia, have sued to halt all work on the \$300 million bauxite aluminum project in north-east Arnhem Land which is a very mineral rich land in Australia.

The tribe is seeking injunction to stop all work by Nabalco Mining Co. until the land rights of the aborigines have been determined.

The Yirrkala Tribe has claimed ownership to lands by reason of possession since time immemorial.

Concern on IHS Personnel Trim

A serious threat to the health and well-being of the American Indian is being posed by the current limitation of employment placed on the Indian Health Service (IHS), President Nixon has been told.

In a letter to the President, Dr. Carl Muschenheim, Chairman of the National Committee on Indian Health, of the Association on American Indian Affairs, states that the IHS, as a result of the statutory limitation in Pub-

The Australian natives are becoming organized through the efforts of the Aboriginal Rights Council which was originally started by whites in Australia.

According to The Hindu, a newspaper published in Madras, India, the Australian natives have substantial support of the white population of that country.

It was noted that the Yirrkala Tribe has substantially the same problems of the native people of Alaska.

The tribesmen are well known

as cowboys of Australia and are therefore valuable to the cattle industry.

The Australian government has a counterpart in its departments as that of the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the U. S. Government, known there as the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and has within it the Aboriginal Welfare Board.

It is reported that the aborigines of Australia have been dissatisfied with the Aboriginal Affairs Department.

Byron Mallott Chosen RurALCAP Director

Despite opposition from Republican Congressman Howard W. Pollock and Governor Keith H. Miller, Byron Mallott was named Wednesday to succeed Larry Brayton as Director of the Rural Alaska Community Action Program.

The action came Tuesday during a meeting of the RurALCAP Executive Board. With three members absent, the vote was 15-4. Mallott was recommended for the position last month by a 5-2 vote of the agency's personnel committee.

Mallott, 26, is a Tlingit Indian from Yakutat. He is a former mayor of that town and is currently on the Washington staff

of Senator Mike Gravel. He is also an officer of the Alaska Native Brotherhood.

Quick to oppose Mallott's application, was Congressman Howard Pollock. In a letter to all RurALCAP Board Members, Pollock said, "The fact of the matter is that our mutual friend, Byron, is an active partisan Democrat, who has not only sought political office previously but will unquestionably have an active political career in the future. RurALCAP must not be a political vehicle for the enhancement of the Democratic Party."

In response to Pollock's opposition, Mallott said, "For the

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