

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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record, it can be fairly well substantiated that the past three Executive Directors of RurALCAP had a closer identification as Republican partisans. I do not imply by this statement any derogation of the effectiveness or commitment of these individuals. Their accomplishments speak for themselves. Neither do I imply any partisan political sensitivity on my part; rather I feel it necessary to establish a proper perspective in this matter."

Mallott said that he construed opposition to his application from the Governor's representative on the agency's personnel committee as an indication of opposition from the Governor himself.

In a letter to Miller last month, Mallott said, "I will not ever inject partisan politics into RurALCAP activity. I have applied for the position in anticipation of being able to further assist in the ongoing effort to eradicate poverty and all the other tragic problems that accrue to that condition."

"Partisan politics have no

place in my concern for the problems for the poor," said Mallott.

Representatives of the Office of Economic Opportunity and the state indicated Tuesday that they would be willing to cooperate with Mallott in his new position.

Pollock, despite his opposition to Mallott, had indicated in his original letter that he would "endeavor to maintain an open and cordial line of communications at all times" if Mallott were chosen.

Mallott received support from Alaskan Natives on a broad scale since his application. One of thirty applicants for the position, he was the first choice of the overwhelming majority of natives on the Executive Board of the agency.

In his new post, Mallott will administer the program with a budget of \$3.5 million. Inclusive of Head Start, Native Cooperatives, vocational and adult education programs, it has been estimated that the program is in direct contact with nearly every Alaskan Native.