

# Anchorage Native Center Board Meets

The first meeting of the Advisory/Policy Board for the Anchorage Urban Native Center was held Monday, May 8, 1972, 7:30 at the new Center on 3350 Commercial Drive.

Representatives from different parts of the Greater Anchorage area were selected and interim board officers elected.

Board representatives are still required from Spenard, Muldoon, Eagle River, Eklutna, Fair-

view and Government Hill areas.

The Board is to be a composite structure, with a minimum of 51 per cent membership representative of low-income participants. The other 49 per cent is open to other Native organizations, the general public, Federal and State agencies.

The Board is to be representative of a cross section of the Greater Anchorage Area Borough within which the Anchorage Urban Native Center will be working.

When this is achieved, permanent Board officers will be elected. The Board duties will be to investigate and collect statistical data in program target areas and advise the Anchorage Urban Native Center of program priorities.

The Board will be actively involved in all phases of the Center's programs.

The next general meeting will be held May 17, 1972, 7:00 at the Center. Those wishing to participate may contact the Anchorage Urban Native Center at 274-3945 or 274-4371.

## Chena Project...

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tance of Fairbanks and stated that fear of future flooding is hampering development of Central Alaska.

Stevens added that the \$1.9 million supplement to the \$600,000 request would actually result in a savings to the taxpayer by significantly reducing the high unemployment rate in Fairbanks, thereby reducing the cost of welfare and unemployment programs.

# Jackson Interview...

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Convention?

JACKSON: How many Native delegates will come will depend on how many can put together the money. As far as strength goes, if at least one delegate can come from each district, he can cast all of the votes for that district. However, one man can only attend one committee meeting at a time. Therefore, to participate on committees, they need to be there in force.

QUESTION: What are some of the things that are going to be dealt with at this convention that you see as most vitally affecting Native interest?

JACKSON: One of the most critical issues concerns a change in the party rules to provide for a selection to the national convention at the local level rather than at the state convention. By the McGovern rules, 75 per cent of delegates are supposed to be selected at the local level. Alaska's present plan does not provide for that. At the Central District, we nominated delegates to Miami, but we did not elect them.

QUESTION: Because Native participation tends to be stronger at the local level due to transportation costs, then this change to local election of delegates would be more advantageous to Native interest, is that right?

JACKSON: Certainly. And it will also be an issue whether you apportion strictly on population or on number of democratic votes cast in the state election, or by a combination. Natives will not have as many delegates to the national convention if delegates are apportioned by population as they would have by votes cast.

QUESTION: How important is the Native vote within the convention?

JACKSON: They could swing the convention either way. As part of the Democratic party, they are a strong force.

QUESTION: Do they comprise a solid bloc? I mean by that, will they pretty much hang together on the issues?

JACKSON: Not necessarily. They did not always vote together at the District convention. On the other hand they try to keep together in order to carry more weight.

QUESTION: Is there a Native Democratic leader, who

could pull them all together?

JACKSON: No, there is no one Native leader who can do that. It will require a decision on the part of a number of them to pull together as a cohesive bloc.

QUESTION: Do the Natives tend to try to influence politicians from the outside, rather than getting in there and being involved?

JACKSON: Up until now, they did tend to go to the highest level to get influence, established contacts in Washington, and so forth. This is fine if you have limited requirements you are trying to promote. But if you have broad, long-range goals, you need a broader base of operations.

QUESTION: Do you foresee any rise in militancy among Native leaders?

JACKSON: I don't like the word "militancy". To me it's associated with a group that does not have effective power. Militancy is often an example of frustration, of lack of power. This is not true of the Alaskan Native. The Alaskan Native is becoming increasingly aware of his political power and increasingly ready to exercise that power. In most cases, this produces results. This does not imply militancy to me.

QUESTION: What do you foresee as the major issues that will arise at this convention?

JACKSON: I don't know what those issues are, to be honest, and it's important why I don't know. I see my role, if I am elected chairman, as one of moderating the convention, not of pushing through certain issues I want to see dealt with. My function is to see that the deliberative processes operate, to be sensitive to the will of the assembly. Of course, I'm aware of a few issues, but they will have to come up from the floor.

One of the big issues is whether the party can be kept together or whether it will split. The Native delegates to the convention may be critical to this. How they handle their power may determine what happens.

QUESTION: Is there a real possibility the convention could split?

JACKSON: There's the old saying: "I don't belong to an organized party. I'm a Democrat."

# Native Political Sophistication ...

(Continued from page 1)

ed the Ad Hoc's goals. "We don't want power and we don't want money. We want to make this country responsive to what it could become."

"If we don't accomplish another thing here," said Liston, "we may swing it where the Native has a solid vote."

Putting Bush Power in the driver's seat on the credential's committee, Hopson appointed State Sen. Willie Hensley of Kotzebue, Stan Harhut of Nome, Frank Degnan of Unalakleet, Al Shontz of Nome, Lawrence Davis, Joe Upicksoun of Barrow, Kathy Ostrosky of Dillingham, Andy Edge of Bethel, Frank Thurman of Galena, and Cindy Holeman, Sandra Stringer, Ed Perkowski, and Dr. Donovan Hampton, of Fairbanks.

From that point on, the first Alaskans were wooed and courted from every side by every faction present at the convention. Prominent Native leaders formed a flexible, responsive, and effective wheeling-dealing force, bargaining coolly in every corner of the convention hall in Wood Center on the University of Alaska campus.

The young Ad Hoc movement added a colorfully chaotic character to the otherwise stalled political machine. Girls in striped workmen's coveralls, Afro-headed and long-haired young men, a Pied Piper in a cape with starry planets, flowed through the crowd. The Cartoon Press issued almost-hourly satirical cartoons on the immediately relevant issues.

Their gaiety notwithstanding, they effectively held out against the party regulars, at the same time voicing their willingness to cooperate in effecting a compromise.

South Central regulars refused to be charmed. Unsmilingly, they maintained a rigid position that there could be only one delegation from each district legitimized.

"You seat one or the other."

The convention was a confrontation between youth and age and between aboriginal Americans and not-so-original Americans.

Youth asked, "Who does the country belong to? To the young, as well as to the old?"

And the Native American asked, "Who does this land, this Alaska belong to, the original inhabitants or the late-coming white man?"

The Ad Hoc's, predominantly non-Native, held out the premise that Alaska at least belongs to these first Americans and that they, the young, who are often asked to die for their country, have a right to participate in the political processes of that same country.

Former senator and territorial governor Ernest Gruening, called by many "the grand old man of the Democratic party in Alaska", addressed the delegates on the first night of the convention.

"This great experiment," he said, "is too great to lose. Our whole system is at stake."

The Alaska State Democratic Convention put that system to a stiff test in Fairbanks in the year 1972.

Gruening pleaded: "Let's make a start here and present a convention that will end in harmony and not divisiveness."

As the bulk of the convention cooled its heels in recess, the credentials committee slugged through possible solutions and envoys scurried from group to group, trying to determine what would be acceptable and what could be swallowed by whom.

Hopson, trying to hold together a disintegrating and restless body, spoke to the assem-

bled delegates, saying: "I want to inform you at this time, I've had a few objections to the progress of this convention."

"The only explanation I can make at this time," he said, "is that you're operating on Indian time."

Later, Hopson pointed out that the Indian time concept had paid off.

"Battles were fought at the edges of the convention rather than at the center."

There were rumblings that Southcentral regulars would walk out. The word "lawsuit" cropped up, as well as "restraining order", and the growing inevitability of continuing the challenge in Miami.

Congressman Nick Begich and Senator Mike Gravel spoke to the convention as the credentials committee remained behind closed doors.

The hall resounded with high-flying phrases such as: "Democracy is based on differences of opinion", "the American Dream", "strength to withstand diversity", "open participatory processes", and "toleration of internal dissent."

Nonetheless, no one looked all that certain the conflicts would be resolved. It was described by most delegates, seated and disputed, that it was a convention that could split wide open.

On the third day a cautious and inscrutable credentials committee filed out, announcing they had a report.

The first recommendation of their chairman, Dr. Hampton, was that at future conventions, it would be wise to have the credentials committee appointed prior to the convention.

The committee further recommended seating the Ad Hoc delegates from the Southeastern and the regular delegates from Southcentral, those who did not walk out of the initially convened district conventions.

A minority report, presented by Sen. Willie Hensley, informed the delegates that the majority report was arrived at only after the Southcentral regulars had been approached and had flatly refused a 70-30 per cent compromise.

An agreement could not be reached and the final motion within the committee was a tie broken by the chairman.

The chair then allowed two representatives from each wing 5 minutes each to debate the report.

A recess was declared and the bargaining began again in earnest. Loyalties and alliances shifted and re-shifted and hung finally with the predominantly Eskimo delegates from the Northwest and the Native leaders and young liberals from the Central district.

Now the convention waited to see if Bush Alaska would hang together. Would the regions be able to put together swift, fluid coalitions outside of the formality of the AFN structure?

Twice within a 15-20 minute period, the Northwest delegates caucused, while Tanana Chief's Tim Wallis and Sam Kito, with studied casualness, moved in and around to confer with Arctic Slope's Upicksoun, Sen. Hensley, Degnan, Rep. Martin Moore D-Emmonak, and other Northwest Native leaders.

"No one wants to rump a convention." The supporters of the minority report urged that no delegates be sent home, that every delegate be seated with fractional vote based on the 70-30 per cent compromise.

When the convention began to noticeably disintegrate in

floor discussions, the venerable Sen. Gruening, aged 85, majestically addressed the body.

"We have a chance," he said, "to leave the convention in harmony, in a manner that includes everybody and excludes nobody. Let's get behind this sound and reasonable proposal."

Putting it back together again, the body of unchallenged delegates voted to adopt the minority report by a vote of 68½ for to 3½ opposed.

The convention was now rolling and with a collective sigh of relief, adjourned until Monday.

Monday began with an overall feeling of anti-climax. Tired delegates struggled in and the day got off to a deceptively slow start.

The first order of business was to adopt the fractional vote of .7 and .3 recommended in the minority report for the newly combined and seated districts.

The motion carried by unanimous consent, accompanied by spontaneous applause. It was a hopeful indication of a new spirit of cooperation.

The delegates then made Hopson official permanent chairman, and elected a relatively unknown Ad Hoc, Mike Murray, as permanent secretary, both by unanimous consent.

Hopson then appointed Barry Jackson, Fairbanks attorney with strong Native connections, as chairman of the Committee on Committees.

Jackson quickly organized the delegates into committees and the remainder of the day was spent in intensive committee sessions.

As the day wore on and energies revived, new issues began to emerge out of the committee rooms, the most controversial being the nominating committee for selection of national delegates, and the committee assigned to put together a party platform.

The tenuously united delegates, interchanging ideas and testing new compromises, needed more time to again resolve their differences and make the final choices aimed at what platform Alaskan Democrats would take to Miami and who would take it.

The former Ad Hoc's, now designated only as young liberals, the party regulars, and the Native delegates exercising Bush Power once again working it out together, held over for one more day to complete this final work of the 1972 convention.

## School Gags From Tyonek Paper

Ethel: "I'm seeing spots before my eyes."

Mr. Nelson: "Have you seen a doctor?"

Ethel: "No, just spots."

Mr. Nelson asked Archie if he said his prayers before meals and Archie answered "Oh, not me, I don't have to. . . my mother is a good cook."

Mr. Nelson: "Wayne, I didn't know you were losing your hair."

Wayne: "I believe I'm getting bald from worry."

Mr. Nelson: "Worrying about what?"

Wayne: "Worrying about losing my hair."

Danny: "I thought I told you not to tell Cheeda what time I came home last night."

Little Harry: "I didn't. I just told her I was too busy eating breakfast to look at the time."

Mr. Nelson: "Doris, what's the difference between love and life?"

Doris: "Life is one crazy thing after another, and love is two crazy things after each other."

Mr. Nelson: "Edna, would you please define these words, Sundial, Nothing, Illegal, Climate."

Edna: "A Sundial is an old timer, Nothing is a peeled balloon, Illegal is a sick bird, and Climate is what you do to a tree."