

GOVERNOR...

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opinion on how they should organize, Hammond at first got into trouble by saying he didn't feel he should stick his nose into their business. When pressed, he had suggested an investment bank.

He says he was criticized but says he replied, "With a 900 million dollar financial clout capability, you people could have moved and shaken in the financial realm in a manner which would be most wondrous to behold," he laughs, then adds seriously, "But the Act itself so splintered that clout that it made it exceedingly difficult."

The governor says he would have done the same thing for the state's \$900 million. He admits that the concerns of those who say, "what happens when the front money dries up," is valid in both the state and the Native situation. It's extremely difficult to depose personnel and even cutting to the bone doesn't help much. All that means you've got to seek revenue from development that may not be as economically and environmentally sound as desired.

"I envision, and I'm sure many of the Native people do, the potential for very serious conflicts unless there's adequate planning done in advance," Hammond says. "If they are compelled to crash exploit some of the mineral resources and provinces that happen to impact adversely on the subsistence lifestyle, I'm sure there's going to be a lot of distressed people." He adds, "Really, the Native situation and how they handle their monies and their corporate structure has a very direct parallel to problems I'm confronted with on a statewide basis."

Relationship to Native Community

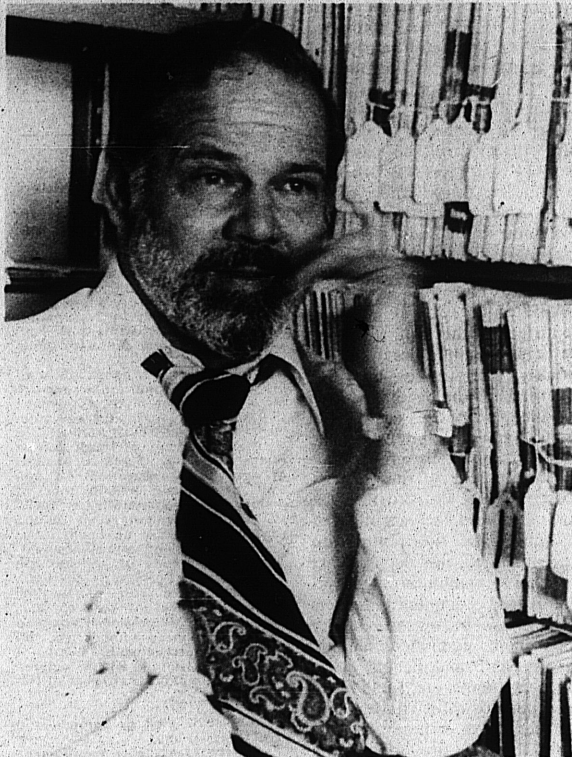
Hammond judges his relationship to the state's Natives as "very good," saying that there are good lines of communication open with Native leaders and virtually all the corporations, but emphasizing his responsibility is to the entire state. "At times I feel we've achieved perfect balance and alienated all equally," he laughs.

The easement issue is an example. "Believe you me, if I were representing the Native community solely, I would take exactly the position they have. On the other hand, there are other groups up here who want greater access, easement, and they would have no restraints whatsoever on private property holders," Hammond says. Taking credit for pushing Interior to a middle ground from only point to point easements to a "historic useage" standard, Hammond says he alienated both the Natives and those who wanted total easements, and came up with about as "rational a position as we could hope to achieve."

Imperative Native Issues

Besides the easement controversy, the governor puts coastal management high on the list of issues directly affecting

the Natives of the state. He is firm that the local people must play a prime part in the decision-making. "They will be much more astute in how it's done and accepting of constraints that they have imposed upon themselves than they will even milder constraints if somebody else attempts to impose them upon them."



LOOKING PENSIVE, GOVERNOR Jay Hammond thoughtfully ponders the state of the state during a Tundra Times interview.

Photo By BETSY BRENNEMAN

He's also willing to take the risks of public input: "It suggests to some an indecisiveness and lack of determination to direct exactly what's going to happen up here. But it doesn't do any good to stand out there in front and tell people what they're going to have imposed on them if it's not acceptable to them."

Another, little-discussed issue that Hammond says has got to be faced is the organization of local governments in the unorganized borough. He cites the Rural Educational Attendance Area (REAA) program as a way of encouraging local government without making that government assume a heavy tax burden which they cannot begin to pay.

He thinks there are ways, although complex, to balance monies and direct them more towards needs. Using the example of the state's 50 per cent funding for school construction, Hammond says that although that practice is better than the past lack of funding, the current method does not relate to need or capability of payment and there are "terrible inequities" in the system.

"One of the major impedi-

ments is the assumption of educational costs in the rural areas, and that's why most don't want to get into municipal government," he says. "We're determined to remove that burden to the maximum extent possible to where we fund, even if you are a municipality, 100 per cent of the basic education costs and needs."

received more per capita than any other community in the state, although he's not sure that's true. "Sure I don't like the idea of cutting things that would have public benefits like public education and public broadcasting in the Bethel area," he says. "Frankly, I think there are more crucial needs at the moment."

When told that one Native leader has charged that the governor has lost touch with the bush, Hammond smiles and says, "The cities say the same things. There's more resentment from the metropolitan areas that I've heard, in the belief that we have done too much for the bush." He gives another example—the \$59 million "monumental" bond issue for secondary education, which he says he accommodated after bush representatives said that was their highest priority. At the same time he told them there would have to be constraints on other areas.

"One can see why budgets expand tremendously and state government grows, for the very pressures that nobody wants to offend anybody," Hammond firmly says he sustained crucial services but did not expand on less crucial ones at this time.

"I got into this with the view that if one did what one had to do to get this state back on sound financial ground, it virtually precluded re-election," he says. "I've been amazed at what seems to be a general publicly favorable response to efforts to restrain that budget and government growth."

Off and running on what may be his favorite topic at the moment, Hammond says that when he took over, the state was spending almost double what it was earning per capita and now that's been improved. We spend about \$1,750 per capita and earn about \$1,250.

Hammond's Mandate

So, he was asked, was that your major mandate? Was that the reason you got elected? The governor replied that it was an element—that people felt "some type of planning, some type of selective growth that focused a rifle, and not a shotgun" on the situation was needed.

It was important to people, he feels, "to select good business deals that rendered a profit for the state's citizens rather than just 'everything is good, c'mon up, industrial development is great,' and then finding in many instances, that it's costing us more than its actually earning."

Hammond says he'd rather be a nice guy and could do it for two to six years, but somewhere there would be a moment of truth and the non-renewable resources would be gone.

He thinks this is especially crucial in terms of the Native community which will still be here even if everyone else takes off. Merrily expanding services without planning is a terrible disservice to the state and a terrible legacy to leave our kids, he says firmly. It's a little like the fisherman who pays his helpers by selling his gear.

Other Issues

In terms of the upcoming Presidential election, Hammond says Jimmy Carter is an "imponderable" and that Ford is a "known quantity" with whom the state has had harmonious and improved dealings.

Launching into a subject near and dear to his heart, with his wife and daughter fishing in Bristol Bay and another daughter working in a cannery

there, Hammond excitedly reported that he had just gotten the statistics which proved an old idea of his right. He had proposed a "sliding gear scale and pooling of quota permits" to limit gear in the water and increase the pay of resident fishermen. The measure was enacted in 1973 but with the advent of limited entry and misinformation of people who it benefited, the plan has been repealed. Now, says Hammond, the data is in, and although the amount of gear registered in

Bristol Bay increased markedly between 1970 and 1973, the average amount actually fished in 1970 was 250,000 fathoms while in 1973 it was 53,000—making the fishery more manageable. What is even more exciting to Hammond is that the plan really did benefit local residents and not outsiders. In prior years, the average resident catch of fish was 43 per cent. In 1973, when the measure was enacted, the catch was a nearly doubled 75 per cent.

But it was shot down, says Hammond, and it was probably the best thing that ever happened to them collectively. "There's no question in my mind that people would be down there marching with placards demanding you do it, if they understood it. But how do you get that across unless you keep people into the formulation of that, looking at alternatives."

He speaks more rapidly: "We got off on the wrong base on OCS development because we didn't get the people out there to sit down and say what they wanted to do with their area—big brother was going to do it for them." And that brings up the Kachemak Bay lease sale mess. "Very few people understand that the Supreme Court ruled this spring that the leases in Kachemak Bay were illegally tendered," Hammond says intensely.

Some said the money should be given back, but others decided it had already been done and that in the future it could not be done that way again. Then they turned it back over to a lower court where it still awaits decision.

And it was a Democratic legislature, Hammond points out, that repudiated those actions of Hammond's predecessor, Bill Egan, a Democrat, and called for renegotiation of the leases. "To those people out there who are saying, 'oh what a terrible thing, breaking commitments, and so forth, all I can say is they made commitments to Alaskans out there that said, 'we're going to hold hearings before we even contemplate leasing those lands'."

The governor continues heatedly, "They didn't do it, they broke it. So, if I'm going to keep commitments made by my predecessor, I'm going to keep them to Alaskans before I do the oil companies."

Enjoyable Job?

He's asked if he enjoys being governor, and Hammond laughingly responds, "At times." He leans back in his chair and says, "Time goes by so frantically. Weeks and months spin by so fast, almost frighteningly." Jay Hammond nods, "It's a manic-depressive thing." Then smiles, "like anything else, there are good days, and not so good days."

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