

Gov. Hickel Nods to Alaska GOP 'Favorite Son' Idea

JUNEAU—Gov. Walter J. Hickel this week said he "will be happy to cooperate with my fellow Alaska Republicans in any program that will assure party harmony" in response to a letter sent to State Republican Chairman Bob Davenny by former Anchorage Mayor Elmer Rasmuson, in which Rasmuson proposed Hickel as a favorite son candidate for President next year.

In the letter to Davenny, dated last Tuesday, Rasmuson said:

"In the interest of party unity and to benefit our entire state of Alaska I wish to make a recommendation to you and through you to the members of the Republican Party of our state.

"My conviction has developed over the past several

months but expression necessarily had to wait my going out of city office.

"Gov. Walter J. Hickel should be selected by acclaim as Alaska's favorite son candidate to the 1968 national convention for nomination of the Republican candidate for President of the United States. Agreement on this principal will maintain party unity at the next state convention and strengthen our image of action before the public.

"This procedure gives our delegation the best position at the national convention. Furthermore, in Governor Hickel, we have a candidate in whom we may take rightful pride, confident that he will command equal respect among all other favorite sons.

"This procedure may be

the first time adopted at an Alaska State Convention, but I believe that the candidate, the times and the great contribution which Alaska can make in national affairs demands a new arrangement."

In a statement issued in response to the Rasmuson letter, Hickel said:

"I've had an opportunity to read the letter sent by Mr. Rasmuson to Mr. Bob Davenny, state chairman of the Republican Party, suggesting that I be a favorite son candidate at the GOP national convention in 1968.

"The selection of a favorite son candidate would, of course, be a decision of Alaska Republicans at their state convention next year.

"I know that it is Mr. Rasmuson's intent that the Republicans of Alaska should present a united front at the national convention, and I congratulate him for his interest in maintaining party harmony.

"The designation of a party leader as a favorite son candidate has been used in the past to indicate a unity of spirit and purpose in a state delegation.

"In our case, such a step would keep our delegation free to give maximum support in the final voting, to the candidate best qualified for the job of President of the United States.

"I am confident that the man finally selected by the national convention delegates as our standard-bearer for the forthcoming presidential election will be a man most qualified for the job and a man truly capable of winning.

"I will be happy to cooperate with my fellow Alaska Republicans in any program that will assure party harmony and allow the state of Alaska the strongest possible voice in the next national convention.