

# Natives Should Run Affairs - Nick Begich

Candidate for Alaska's only seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, Democrat Nick Begich of Anchorage said in Fairbanks last week that it is high time the native people be allowed to run their own affairs.

Stopping in the Tundra Times office for a quick interview, the State Senator of eight years made the remark in reference to a U.S. Congressional bill that will release about \$7 million to the Tlingit and Haida Indians subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.

The 14,000 Indians were awarded \$7.5 million by the U.S. Court of claims in 1968 for over 16 million acres of forest lands taken from them by the federal government.

A bill to release the money without the traditional Secretarial oversight was recently defeated in a House-Senate conference committee.

Begich said that he fully agreed with a Tundra Times editorial criticizing Congress' continuation of a paternalistic attitude toward minorities.

"There is a lot of leadership talent in the native population," the 38-year old businessman and former educator said.

He emphasized that for eight years he fought for a separate State Board of Education made up entirely of rural representatives to serve all rural schools in the unorganized borough. The bill passed during the last session of the legislation.

"We should let the people who are served by the schools make the decisions affecting those schools," he said. "They have come of age to serve their own school needs."

Unopposed in the August primary, Begich called for rural representation on other boards that affect the rural population.

In Fairbanks to organize his campaign, the candidate noted that if he is successful in the election, his top priority will be in the area of public works.

The progress made thus far in electrification and water and sanitary facilities is just "a drop in the bucket," he said.

Pushed for time, the Senator did not comment on the land claims legislation.

In the November election, he will be facing either C.R. Lewis, or Frank H. Murkowski, both Republicans of Anchorage.