

2000 Attend FNA Potlatch In Fairbanks

The native potlatch last Saturday sponsored by Fairbanks Native Association was, as usual, a great success.

This annual event is growing by leaps and bounds and the 2,000 people that crowded into the Monroe High School Auditorium threatened to burst the seams making it likely that some other larger space might be sought for future potlatches.

The notable added interest this year was the presence of Governor Walter J. Hickel who was the first governor

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GOVERNOR HICKEL at the potlatch.



YOUNG Indian dancer.



INDIANS AND ESKIMOS DANCE together at the potlatch.

2,000 at Potlatch . . .

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of the state ever to attend such a function.

"The Governor had a ball," this remark was heard.

All indications showed that he did. He not only ate the potlatch food almost all of which was native cuisine, but he danced the Eskimo and Indian dances much to the delight of the audience.

The potlatch was ably emceed by Richard Frank, president of the Fairbanks Native Association, and Ralph Perdue, past president of the organization and who was largely responsible for the initial potlatch four years ago.

Richard Frank admitted some nervousness during the proceedings in the following manner:

"Last year when so many people showed up for this potlatch, I was really shaking and tonight, I'm shaking to pieces."

Shaking or not, Richard did a superlative job as the master of ceremonies.

The success of the March 16 potlatch was largely due to the overall chairmanship of Ralph Perdue who coordinated the program.

No less credit is given Mrs. Mary Smith who headed the food committee in preparing many varieties of native foods that fed 2,000 people.

"Poor Mary has been cooking and cooking and she's tired out," said Mrs. Dorothy Perdue a day before the potlatch. "She's ready to

collapse but she's still cooking—and cooking."

Other people who contributed to the success of the potlatch were: Jerry Ivey, who coordinated the entertainment; Henry Parker who handled kitchen police (KP); Mrs. Georgiana Lincoln, finance chairman; Mike Smith, sergeant at arms; and Bill Keyes who sold oodles of pop.

Native dancers came from Tanacross, Nenana, Minto, and Tanana. Barrow dancers, according to a previous announcement, were expected but they were not evident during the festival.

As a result, Eskimo dancers were poorly organized to perform for the big crowd. This lack showed when the Eskimo did dance, they had to borrow an Indian drum to get the dance going.