



THEY'RE OFF!—At the signal given by Gov. Walter J. Hickel, four native leaders are under way on a 200 yard snowshoe race held during the North American Championship Sled Dog Races held last Saturday. From left to right: Ralph Perdue, former president of the Fairbanks Native Association; Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives; Don Wright, president of Cook Inlet Native Association; and

Richard Frank, president of Fairbanks Native Association. The winner by a wide margin was Richard Frank, second, Ralph Perdue, third, Emil Notti, and last, Don Wright, who thought he spent most of his time wallowing in the deep snow after he fell several times during the race. Governor Hickel may be challenged on next year's snowshoe race.

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Snowshoe Race Challenge for Governor?

"I can do that. I would like to try that some time and I'm in good enough shape to do it. Sure I would."

That was none other than Governor Walter J. Hickel, and what was he talking about? You guessed it—the native leaders snowshoe race that took place at the starting chute of the North

American Championship Sled Dog Races last Saturday afternoon.

The race turned out to be a hilarious event and thoroughly enjoyed by the Fairbanks crowd present.

Winning convincingly over his highly touted rivals was Richard Frank of Minto and Fairbanks who won going away. He is the president of Fairbanks Native Association.

"I told you I'd run circles around those guys and I'm the oldest one of all of them," said Richard Frank happily and with a faint suggestion of a sneer at his rivals.

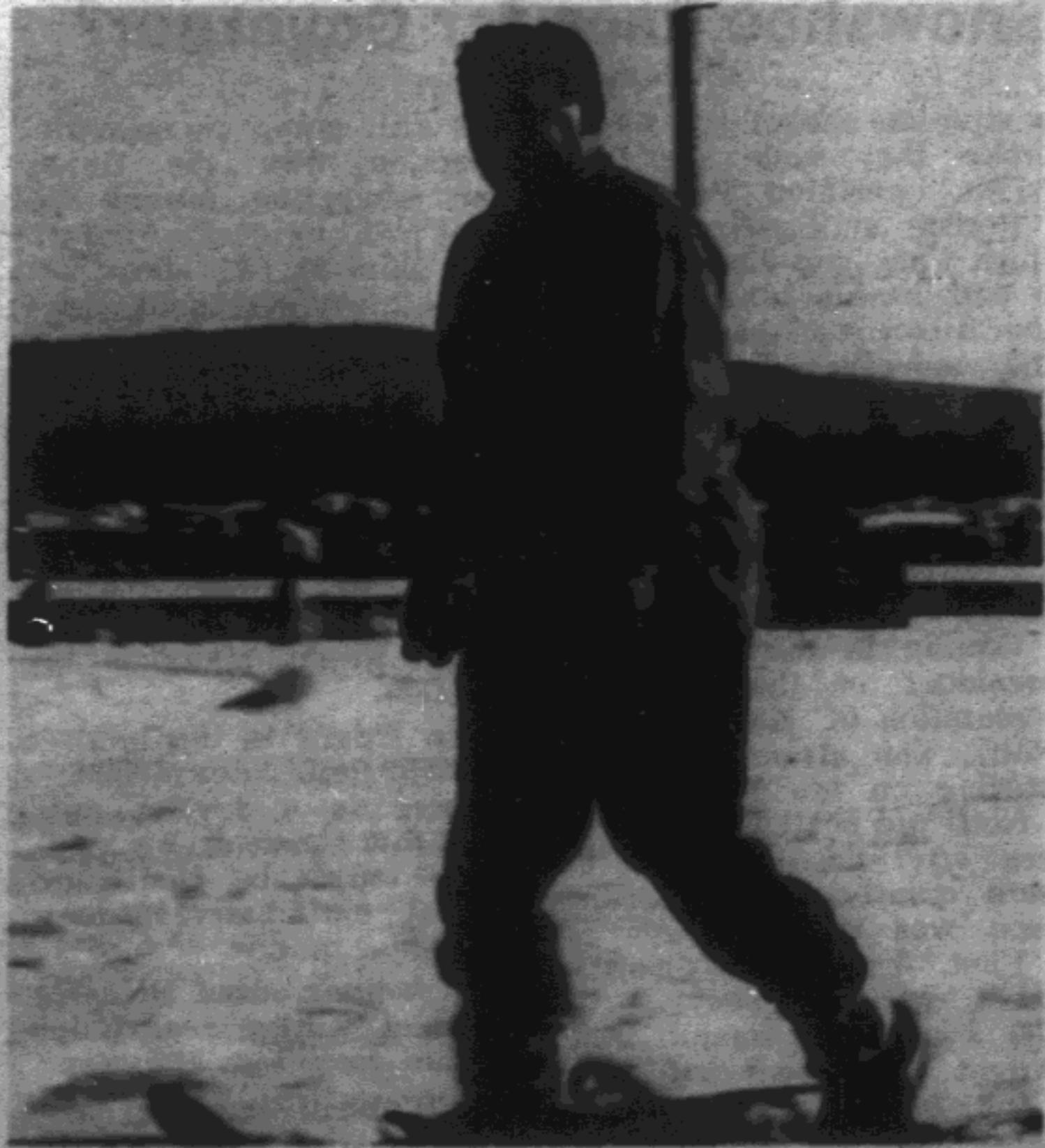
Running a rather poor second was Ralph "Light-foot" Perdue whose ptarmigan feet at the front end of his snowshoes he trained with and which supposed to make him lightfooted, according to old Indians, apparently did not work for him.

"That Richard Frank had wide snowshoes while I had narrow ones that made me break through the crust while he stayed on top. Beside s

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PARKA PARADE—Native women show off native fineries to the audience at the annual sled dog race grounds last Saturday.





LOSER—Somewhat disconsolate and beaten, Don Wright trudges back to the finish line after losing the snowshoe race to his colleagues.



GOVERNOR'S CUP—Gov. Walter J. Hickel, left, is inspecting the Governor's Cup awarded the winner of the North American Championship Sled Dog Races in Fairbanks. Holding with him is Roger Burggraf who is in charge of the racing events this year.

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Snowshoe Race for Governor?

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a strap on one of my shoes broke that made me fall down," grumbled Perdue.

Perdue indicated that Dr. Hugh Fate may have played a part in his loss because the doctor was handing out the snowshoes on a first come first served basis.

"That's why that Richard Frank got those wide snowshoes," said Perdue with an air of disgust. "Well anyway, we beat those guys from Anchorage."

Coming in third was the president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Emil Notti, who also had trouble staying on his feet.

Notti did not have much to say after the race but he said quietly, "I think the race was rigged."

Last, but by no means least, was the heaviest of the bunch the rotund Don Wright, president of the Cook Inlet Native Association.

When the next to the last racer, Emil Notti, was signalled "OVER" by Governor Hickel, Don Wright

was still going the opposite direction from the finish line struggling toward the pivot point to head for home.

"I think I fell about four times," Wright said conservatively. "Each time I fell I couldn't get up from the deep snow. I was beginning to think I needed a periscope to see what was going on up there."

"Don't you mean you came up for air through the snow four times, Don?" piped Margie Wright, sister-in-law of Don.

Don Wright is the brother of State Rep. Jules Wright.

There is a development afoot that Governor Walter J. Hickel might be challenged at next year's native leader's snowshoe race.

On hearing about Hickel's apparent willingness, Ralph Perdue made this statement:

"I'll challenge the Governor. I wish I'd known he was willing. I would have challenged him right then. After all, he's some sort of a Chief."