

Emil Notti Enters Race for Begich's Seat

Emil Notti, Democratic State Central Committee chairman, formally announced Friday his candidacy for nomination for the special U.S. House Race March 6. The Democratic convention to choose a candidate is set for this Saturday in Anchorage.

Notti, who met with about 30 delegates Friday night, spoke on his plans and goals for the future. And he flew into Fairbanks last Saturday to do the same thing. Many of the delegates he addressed were Natives and are expected to throw their support behind him.

"If it was an election, I think I could expect a great deal of backing. Because it's a convention, it's harder," Notti said Saturday concerning possible support from Natives.

He explained that many people are already committed to either Chancy Croft or Pegge Begich, the other two Democratic nominees.

But he spoke with some confidence about his chances, especially if the convention lasts for any length of time.

"The longer the vote goes, the longer it takes to select a nominee, the better chance I'll have," he said.

Besides simply giving him more time to talk to the delegates, any delay would get him past the first ballots, some of which are committed to Mrs. Begich and Croft.

"I am devoting full time to getting around where I have to get to," he said.

He added that he wasn't quite sure where that would involve, but mentioned the possibility of a live TV debate in Anchorage between himself

(Continued on page 6)

EMIL NOTTI . . .

(Continued from page 1)

and other hopefuls.

Notti is getting a late start in the campaign for several reasons.

"I was approached prior to the general election," he said, "but I thought it was premature. I kept hoping Nick would be found. Besides that, I've been kept busy with the Democratic lawsuit for about a month."

The suit was one filed by party members against Notti and the State Central Committee to prevent them from choosing a candidate. Superior Court Judge Edmond W. Burke ruled Dec. 29 that the Democrats must hold a convention for nomination.

"After the nomination, whoever the candidate is, there'll be an immediate move to get him started," Notti said in response to a question about funds.

Mentioning the \$50,000 campaign limit allowed by the government, \$30,000 of which may go for media coverage, he said, "It will be an advantage for the Democrats because the Republicans can't saturate TV and radio for months ahead. It's going to be very tightly monitored."

His press secretary pointed out that some 40 per cent of the delegates were still uncommitted. This means that, with 51 per cent necessary for a nomination, nobody really has enough commitments yet. And that strengthens Notti's chances.

Another factor is his familiarity with both Alaska and federal politics. Notti, who has worked in the Southeast doing everything from fishing to construction and railroad work, is deeply rooted in Alaska. His wife and three children are also from here.

"I know the problems in Alaska. And I've dealt with many Senators and congressmen for a four-year period. I'm not a stranger, and I think my experience dealing with people and with problems qualifies me for the job," he stated.

"So far as the priorities, we just have to take them as they come," he added. "There's so many issues in Alaska — they're all priorities. I think Alaska needs more attention."

With the convention less than a week away, campaigning is at its most intense for the Democrats. And with Friday's announcement, Emil Notti is right in the middle of it all.