

# HICKEL TO MEET WITH ASNA



**SPECIAL GUESTS** at the December 5 swearing-in ceremonies of Governor Walter J. Hickel in Juneau were Mt. Edgecumbe School

honor students Gilbert Barr and Flossie Hopson, shown above with Governor and Mrs. Hickel. Gilbert, who is from Deering, and Flossie,

from Barrow, were awarded the trip to Juneau in recognition of their scholastic abilities.

## Conference Set For January 17 In State Capitol

Representatives of the Arctic Slope Native Association will meet with Gov. Walter J. Hickel in Juneau in hope of working out a settlement on the controversial leasing of native claimed lands on the Arctic Slope.

The meeting is scheduled to take place January 17th in the Governor's office in Juneau, according to Hugh Nicholls, executive director

of ASNA.

Nicholls said the purpose of the meeting was to discuss a settlement mutually agreeable to the State and Inupiat Eskimos regarding the leasing of the land.

"We contacted the Governor feeling we should leave no stone unturned in an attempt to work out a settlement," he said.

"We're going the second mile because the question is important enough not to be allowed to be settled by default," Nicholls said.

The governor was receptive to the idea of a meeting and we have hopes that there will be a satisfactory settlement of the situation," Nicholls indicated.

Nicholls said the ASNA election was scheduled to be held Tuesday, and that official representatives would not be named until after that date. However, I am sure that both ASNA President Sam Talaak and I would be interested and willing to go despite the expense," he related.

Nicholls also said a general membership meeting was scheduled for this Saturday in Barrow to acquaint the people with the current situation, and to allow them to meet the candidates for office in the coming ASNA

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election.

The executive director of ASNA said he felt that no more should be said leaving the widest possible latitude for discussions with the Governor.

The controversy arose after Gov. Walter J. Hickel offered for lease-sale State selected lands on the Arctic Slope that were under protest and claim by ASNA. A second block of land in the Cordova area also under claim was offered.

The lands were previously removed from a scheduled sale by former Gov. William A. Egan after native groups protested, but were re-offered by Gov. Hickel shortly after he took office.

The proposed sale has brought loud protests from native association representatives from northern, western, and southcentral Alaska. Most leaders protested the manner in which the sale was brought about, and asked communication and cooperation in the future and further asked the provision be made to place such contested funds in escrow pending action and determination on native land claims.

The Arctic Slope lands were being held under tentative approval of title by the Secretary of Interior, and ASNA formally asked the secretary to remove that tentative approval several weeks ago.

In Fairbanks shortly before the first of the year Hickel stated that the Arctic Slope lands were State lands now, and that the native groups would have to get a court injunction to stop the sale.

At that time he indicated that this might bring the situation to a head and bring faster settlement of land claims.