

Pollock Charges 'Credibility Gap'; Agrees Rampart 'Down the Tube'

If an acceptable solution is not found for the Native land claims problem, the Interior Department's freeze on land transfers could mean disaster for the state of Alaska, Representative Howard W. Pollock told the Alaska Young Republican Federation Convention in Fairbanks last Saturday.

"We must reach a speedy solution so that our fine Native citizens can obtain the justice so long denied them, and the state of Alaska can progress."

Pollock, the banquet speaker at the convention, also discussed Rampart Dam and other Federal-assistance projects, the Vietnam war

credibility gap, and the future opportunities for the Republican party.

The credibility gap "is basically a lack of trust between the Federal government and the people," Pollock said. "The governing of America requires the existence of a mutual trust between the President, the Congress and the people."

The gap occurs in the Vietnam war because some information is withheld from the public for security reasons, said Pollock, adding his opinion that the reasons are not valid in some cases.

Pollock charged that a

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Rep. Pollock . . .

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similar gap—without the excuse of national security—occurs with the Department of the Interior. He said that the Department was not consulting the Native leaders or the state government in attempting to solve the land claims problem.

Claims have been on file for 30 years, and the matter has been in the office of Interior Secretary Udall for four and one-half years without action, Pollock charged.

He continued that, on two occasions, he had asked the secretary to meet with Native and State leaders, and the only answer had been that the Department is working on the problem and hadn't yet come up with a solution or a position.

Pollock noted that a comprehensive Indian development bill, prepared after months of work but without consultation with Indian groups concerned, was rejected by the Indians. He urged the department to seek advice before preparing a decision it would feel compelled to defend as final.

On Rampart Dam, Pollock agreed with Senator Bartlett that the project was "down the tube." The reason for this is that there would not be a market for all the power generated.

Power costs have been reduced in aluminum production, and the companies no longer are interested in coming to Alaska if Rampart is built. No other large user of electricity is interested in this power.

The power could not be exported because it would be cheaper to build a nuclear plant in the Pacific Northwest than to transport Rampart power there. Alaska's normal power needs would not justify the \$2 billion cost of the project.

Pollock suggested that Alaskans shift their efforts to other areas and other projects where Federal assistance could be obtained.

He mentioned such projects as extension of the Alaska Railroad to open up the Northwest, and an accelerated highway program. He also suggested smaller hydroelectric projects such as Perils Canyon that would produce less power than Rampart, but which would have a stronger chance for Congressional approval because of their lower cost.

He predicted that the report recommending against Rampart will suggest other areas where Federal assistance could aid the development of the state, and suggested that Alaskans make a similar study. "It is, in my estimation, time to look ahead to other things..." Pollock said.

Pollock attributed the Republican victory last year to a united effort by party workers, and predicted further Republican gains nationwide if the unity continues.