

Natives Celebrate ANCSA and D-2 with Banquet

December 18 was the ninth anniversary of the passage of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; to celebrate both that anniversary and the passage of the D-2 bill, Alaska Natives from many parts of the state gathered in the Howard Rock Ballroom of the Anchorage Sheraton Hotel for a banquet. The feast was sponsored by the Alaska Federation of Natives, Alaska Native Foundation, and RurAL CAP. Roger Lang was Master of Ceremonies.

Representative Lloyd Meeds (D-Washington) was a special guest for the occasion, in honor of his many years of dedication to helping Alaska Natives. He told the audience there were those who said Natives accomplished that legislation "in spite of themselves," but he thought that it was "because of themselves," instead. ANCSA, said Meeds, was a "Do-It-Yourself" project. He recalled the early days of the fight, and such persons as Nick Begich and Stanley McCutcheon, who did not live to see the fruition of what they helped start.

Guests at the head table included Willie Hensley, Sam Kito, Meeds, James Wickwire, Emil Notti, Ray Christiansen, Nelson and Mary Lou Angapak, Oliver and Annie Leavitt, and Sophie and Frank Ferguson.

There were so many people involved in the long ANCSA battle and in the D-2 one which followed that it would be impossible to name them all, but speakers made an effort. Nelson Angapak remarked that the beautiful ballroom in which the group now dines was in itself a tribute to the people who "carried the ball before it was fashionable to be Native."

As Lang remarked, the D-2 bill was "a heck of a present to Alaska Natives, with 55 to 60 per cent of the 400-page bill devoted to Native concerns." Everybody involved got some of what they wanted, but only Natives got 100 per cent of what they asked, he said.

About 150 persons were in attendance at the affair, which was by invitation.