

Sen. Thomas Supports Natives

By MARILYN RICHARDS

"I've always supported Native legislation right down the line," claims State Sen. Lowell Thomas, Jr., Republican candidate for lieutenant governor.

Thomas is also supporting the Naknek poet's candidacy for governor, Jay Hammond. "We see eye to eye and can work together as a team," Thomas says.

Under Hammond, the office of the lieutenant governor would be more than the "keeper of the seal" and administrator of elections, Thomas said.

Thomas just wound up a campaign tour of Pt. Hope, Noorvik and Kotzebue. He had co-sponsored a bill which was against the road to the Kobuk Valley, though it never made it out of the committee in the last session.

The village council of Noorvik told him they favored a local road, from the town to a gravel site 6 1/2 miles away. "That's the type of road I'm for," he says.

Thomas also favors a gas line through Alaska. The gas line could be relayed right along the oil pipeline's right of way and use the same road. He feels it would be good in terms of employment and could attract an industry, possibly in the Valdez area, that uses a lot of gas. "I'm behind the idea, not El Paso," he added.

"I wish there was some way we could tax the oil and gas and let the industry go someplace else," he said.

Thomas also backed relief for the devastated Bristol Bay and rehabilitation of those fisheries. "I wish Japan would quit harvesting with gill nets," he added.

Two years ago he co-sponsored the Uniform Alcoholism Treatment Act which made the



Lowell Thomas, Jr.

arrest for drunk in public not a criminal act. He also supported the Grant in Aid program, of which alcoholism is regarded as a sickness not a crime.

Thomas did not reveal his position on the capital move or did not take sides in the other state and U.S. Senate race. "I'll let the voters decide for themselves." He favors Republican incumbent for the U.S. House, Don Young, though Willie Hensley, the Eskimo Democrat, "is a friend."

Thomas announced he would serve, if elected, with any other Republican governor but prefers Hammond because of his experience in government.

The Anchorage state senator is currently majority leader in the Senate but is giving up a third election bid to seek the lieutenant governor nomination against a field of five other candidates.

During six of his eight years in the legislature, he was chairman of the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee and also served on Resources, State Affairs, Labor and Management, Community and Regional Affairs, Finance and Rules committees.