

GOV. TO ATTEND POTLATCH

State Chief Executive To Be Here During Native Feasting, Dances

The Chief Executive of the State, Walter J. Hickel, is going to attend the native potlatch in Fairbanks on March 16.

Ralph "Lightfoot" Perdue, local jeweler, native leader and an Athabaskan, has challenged Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Richard Frank, president of the Fairbanks Native Association, and Don Wright, president of the Cook Inlet Native Association, to a snowshoe race also on March 16.

"Jules called me and told me that the Governor is definitely going to be at the

potlatch," said Perdue. "This is the first time the governor of the State has consented to attend."

Rep. Jules Wright, R-Fairbanks, was the caller from Juneau.

The potlatch is the yearly event sponsored by the Fairbanks Native Association. Last year, the festive occasion was attended by about 1,200 people at the Monroe Auditorium.

It will again be held at Monroe this year and the admission charge will be \$2.50 per person. Native women will start serving the big feast starting at 4:30

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Gov. to Be at Potlatch . .

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p.m. on March 16.

The feasting will last until 8:00 p.m. when entertainment by native people will begin. These will consist of both Indian and Eskimo dances and other events.

"We expect a lot more people than we had last year," said Perdue. "We will again hold it open to the general public but we will try to keep it at about three quarter natives in attendance because it is primarily for them. And there is space to think about."

Perdue said there will be all kinds of native foods as well as beef, ham and such. If the potlatch feast runs true to form, there will be bear meat, beaver, moose, caribou, reindeer soup, salmon strips, whale muktuk and meat, Eskimo ice cream, Indian ice cream, baked salmon, and tasty beaver tail soup.

"We have invited dancers from Barrow, Minto, Northway and other villages," said Perdue. "We have decided to have only native dances this year and not have the modern dance as we did last year. Tyonek people have been invited and they are coming."

And the snowshoe race? The scene of the big event will be at the vicinity of the North American Championship Sled Dog Race tracks, probably where the snow is deepest.

The starting gun will sound sometime during the interim period of the big sled dog races.

"I've challenged those guys to a snowshoe race sometime ago," Perdue said, chuckling. "They want to

race a block but I said a quarter of a mile. Chickens. We'll take them out to the dog races so they won't back out."

Perdue has been training seriously and he is taking no chances. He is out to win. He is training with snowshoes complete with ptarmigan feet attached to the front ends of the race shoes.

"According to the old Indians, the ptarmigan feet on snowshoes supposed to make you lightfooted on the snow like the ptarmigan," laughed "Lightfoot" Perdue.

How has the training progressed?

"I've been getting along pretty good but my wind is still a little short," he said. "I think I'll have to cut down on my training diet—Martinis."