

Moore May Sue State...

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Moore's individual growth as a legislator and promises to provide an increasingly better quality of representation for the bush minority.

"The Bush Caucus has become extremely effective," observes Rep. Gene Guess of Anchorage who is Speaker of the House.

"Members show good mutual concern for each other problems but they are extremely selective on areas they want to push as far as a bloc vote which shows good politics."

"This year they've developed the ability to deal with administrative agencies. The rural legislator has to be more than just a lawmaker. He has to be a liaison between village agencies and the state government, where urbanites can rely on their city governments."

"The bush lawmakers have really learned to find their way around Juneau!"

"The Bush Caucus is characterized by a low profile this year," began Rep. Ed Naughton of Kodiak who heads the coalition.

"But we've demonstrated that we have the votes when we need them. A legislator came to Kodiak from Anchorage last summer and he said, 'When Ed speaks as chairman of the bush bloc, we listen because of the number of votes behind him.'"

At this stage of the legislative session, Naughton refuses to discuss specific bills his group is backing.

"It's like asking a general where he's going to attack tomorrow," he grinned. "But we are making people conscious of the problems faced by rural areas."

Sen. Ray Christiansen, veteran legislator from Bethel, agreed.

"When I first came in, no one knew anything about the bush. They used to say, 'Things can't be that bad.' Now some of the urban legislators have run for statewide office and have been to the bush. They understand better what we are talking about."

And often they vote with the bush bloc. In a recent piece of legislation the Senate vote was 17 to 3 in favor of the bush with many urban legislators voting in the majority.

"We're working about the same as we did last year but we've learned a lot more about the process of government," observed Rep. Frank Ferguson of Kotzebue. "We have more urban center legislators listening to our problems. We try to stay away from confrontation with the urban men."

Ferguson is backing a \$2 million bond issue for housing for the elderly. It wouldn't be a pioneer or retirement home but individual housing.

"It's not likely to pass this session. The concept seems to throw urban legislators," he admitted. "But at least they've begun thinking about it."

He is considerably more optimistic about the prospects of obtaining service facilities for the bush including secondary schools and a crash fire equipment program for Barrow and Kotzebue.

He has also introduced a bill for \$1.5 million to build a museum in Barrow. If it passes, Eskimo artifacts valued at over \$1 million will be returned to the state from the University of Pennsylvania.

In addition, the Kotzebue legislator is seeking state backed credit unions for villages and an investigation into freight problems.

Rep. Chuck Degnan of Unalakleet notes, "All you need to do is cough once to get things for densely populated areas. To

call attention to problems of sparsely populated areas you have to document time after time."

He feels the bush bloc has to educate the legislative majority on the problems of the rural areas.

"If you go to playing people off, one against the other, we're not going to have any progress."

And he thinks the education process is working.

"Whatever comes out of legislature this year will be influenced by the bush caucus," he maintains.

Some rural legislators think the bulk of their problems lie with the administration.

"The Democrats are out to beat themselves," observed Rep. Joe McGill of Dillingham. "The administration is not supporting the bush. I believe they're concentrating too much on oil and losing track of fisheries and our other important resources. That big budget just is not aimed at creating jobs."

"We've got too many statewide candidates. Too many chiefs and not enough Indians," complains Rep. Frank Peratrovich of Klawak.

And he agrees with McGill on fisheries.

"After fighting a foreign nation we helped build up their fisheries. Well, it's time to do for our own. I have a bill in for a revolving fund for fishermen to update their boats and gear so they can compete with other nations."

Sen. Willie Hensley of Kotzebue complains that the administration budget is tightfisted with bush areas.

"We've got to get some piece of the action in state funding," he said. "If we're going to have hard times later let's ALL have hard times. The administration has not requested funds for rural schools and they've screwed up who's responsible and where the priorities are."

"We got \$1 million for village systems under the Safe Water Act but we should have gotten \$5 million... and the Governor has not withdrawn his 20 mil tax (which is directed at rural areas)."

Hensley thinks the bush bloc is weak because it has few key committee positions but that the coalition should not be underestimated because rural legislators are in the minority.

A reapportionment plan submitted by the Governor's office would claim the seat of a rural legislator in both House and Senate. If it is upheld by the courts, Sen. Jay Hammond, of Bristol Bay, who is president of the Senate would be forced to oppose Sen. Kay Poland of Kodiak. Sen. Don Young of Fairbanks would be squeezed out of a district and Rep. Carl Moses of Unalakleet would have to oppose Rep. Joe McGill.

Attorney Gen. John Havelock claims the plan would do little damage to the effectiveness of the bush caucus, however.

"The balance between rural and urban areas is very close and redistricting will break up urban areas, with one man representing one district (instead of running at large)," he explained. "Representatives of a huge district like Anchorage will tend to view themselves as a single voting bloc. I think the Bush Caucus will move to use this leverage to make arrangements with factions of the urban bloc."

Despite a diminishing number of rural seats, Rep. Mike Bradner of Fairbanks believes the Bush Caucus will become increasingly effective.

"The rural legislator is forced to be a full time professional despite the lower wage and he

Barry Jackson: Native Vote Crucial in Election...

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as governor, Ted Stevens, Nick Begich, and the last election of Gov. Egan."

While the Native vote has been an important vote in the past, Mr. Jackson felt they had not played as strong a role in the participatory processes of the parties.

"Now we are beginning to see a massive infusion of new blood into the party structure, into the participation of the party structure, which will strengthen it. I think it's a great thing."

"In former years," he said,

"the bush suffered because they didn't have the people here. There would be people from the bush, but it would be one or two people bearing a lot or proxies."

As matters came up from the floor, he pointed out these few people would have to try to vote for their absent members. "Ten minds," said Mr. Jackson, "are better than one."

In referring to the coming state convention, Mr. Jackson

said, "If delegates from the bush show up, and I think they will, the chances of getting the proposals they want are very good. This is where their showing up makes a difference."

When only a small delegation came up, they couldn't get much through. When they show up and they know what they want, they can pretty well get what they want as long as it is reasonable."

Eskimo Political Savvy...

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proxy votes would be traded off to one powerful Fairbanks faction or the other, in return for small favors.

This year it was different. No proxy votes were cast because the people were there. They were there from Tununak, Tulaksak, Kwethluk, Napakiak, Atmanetnak, Kasigluk, Kwigillingok, Kongiganak, Quinhagak, Napakiak, Bethel and many other bush precincts.

They knew what they wanted and had come to the convention so that they could make sure the democratic party would help them get it.

The first victories were scored in the convention's various committees. George Hohman, from Bethel and spokesman for the 14th District's delegation, was chairman of the powerful Committee on Committees, which makes up the list of those who will serve on all the remaining committees.

Peter Green, from Eek, served on the Resolutions Committee, which designs resolutions to be approved by the convention. The Nominating Committee submitted the name of Lucy Crow, from Bethel, as an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Convention. Sophie Worth, of DNH Development Corporation, was nominated for vice-chairwoman of the Democratic Central District.

Lucy's nomination was approved; Sophie made a good showing but lost to Myrtle Thomas.

Thanks to strong action in the committees many resolutions and planks suggested for the state Democratic platform were aimed squarely at the bush.

An advance payment by the state of \$700,000, so construction material for Bethel Regional High School could be ordered now and shipped as soon as the rivers open up.

State funding for community complexes, which would include health facilities, a meeting hall, library and office space, and, in general, provide a home for the services supplied by the local village administration.

The holding of hearings on the Sea Mammal Bill in Bethel in Bethel, Kotzebue, Nome and Barrow. The launching of a statewide investigation of mail service. Improvement of state medical and dental care in rural Alaska.

Strict enforcement of state laws that prohibit discriminatory hiring practices. The obligation of the state to provide employment for Alaskans who are denied that opportunity by private industry.

The conducting of research on rural education. The moving of the post office at Eek closer to the village. And an appropriation of \$250,000 to the Rural Development Agency.

The most important resolution passed by the convention, according to state representative Martin Moore from Emmonak, concerned itself with the establishment of homes and proper care for the aged, close to the vicinity in which they live.

As of now only three state homes exist, in Fairbanks,

Palmer and Sitka. The first of the new homes would be built in the Yukon-Kuskokwim area where the need is greatest.

Moore was active behind the scene on this and other proposals arranging coalitions to support the 14th district delegation.

The bush delegation voted most often with the young liberal Fairbanks wing of the party, but sometimes it would vote with the party regulars, and then again, every so often it would break away and vote completely independently. No one could tell which way they were going to go.

Martin Moore would hold conferences on the floor to explain in Eskimo what the rest of the convention was doing. Unfortunately, no one was provided to translate for the convention and tell them what the Eskimos were doing.

This ability to stay well-informed and to preserve a strong sense of unity proved to be the deciding factors in a battle over the last two proposals submitted to the convention before adjournment.

One proposal would have eliminated from the Committee-on-Committees the seats due any bush delegation that failed to appear at the convention. This was successfully amended by George Hohman, so that these seats would be redistributed amongst the remaining bush districts.

The other proposal was to have the district delegations elect members for the Committee-on-Committees rather than have the convention chairman appoint them.

This would allow the delegations to elect their strongest men to the most powerful committee, without having to make "deals" with the convention chairman.

The toughest fight of the night developed over this last proposal. It was claimed that there were not enough delegates (40% of those registered at the convention) left on the floor to legally pass on the proposal. A count of the delegates was asked for.

Opponents of the proposal went to hide in the hallways, bathrooms and the bar, while its defenders came running back from the same places.

The delegation from district 14 had sat quietly all through the night, missing their plane to Anchorage, so they could wait for this vote. When the count was over, the chairman announced they had enough delegates for a vote. The proposal was quickly passed and the delegates from the Kuskokwim - Lower Yukon Delta stood on their chairs cheering and applauding.

After the convention was adjourned, a representative from each major faction made a few brief farewell remarks. Martin Moore spoke for the bush districts.

"In the past we have come to these conventions and not understood how to be effective. We have made many mistakes," and then he grinned very hard, "but we're learning."

T-H Convention

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Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, as well as election of the executive committee.

"In effect," Mr. Borbridge said, "the Council will examine in detail where it is and will project where it wants to go. Native participation in the development of Alaska has come of age," he continued, "and I believe the future will demonstrate that is a positive force that will be of benefit to all Alaskans."

Larry Peterson...

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way there and back.

In January of this year, he served on the twelve man board to reorganize the Alaska Federation of Natives.

Mr. Peterson is currently employed with ITT Arctic Services, Inc., and is also president of the Native-owned DNH Development Corporation.

The status of the 16th District is somewhat in question due to the reapportionment controversy and the subsequent suit filed against the state.

As planned, the 16th District now excludes the Fairbanks area and encompasses a very large rural area. It will be entitled to one representative and will share one senator with the 15th District.

Mr. Peterson felt that the bush people would be getting better representation. He was in Fairbanks attending the Central District Democratic Convention and will be running for the House on the Democratic ticket.

Enrollment...

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At no time in the case of an adopted child would the identity of the real parents be revealed to either the enumerator, the adoptive parents, or the child.

The regional enrollment office would not carry this information in their files and only the central enrollment office in Anchorage would have access to that information for the sole purpose of establishing degree of Native blood.

One enumerator checked as to whether he could enroll a non-Alaskan, lower 48 Indian who was presently married to an Alaskan Native and now living in a Native village. The answer was no. ONLY Alaskan Natives can be enrolled.

And so the process goes, as time and again the questions are asked, answers given, and the roll compiled in village after village.

learns more about the system he's dealing with than the urban legislator," Bradner reasons. "The Anchorage Times keeps urban legislators professing to be parttime... and they're forced to go running home and earn a wage."

"As a result the rural legislators will know how to get things done better. Knowledgeability and the time they have will outweigh the fact they have less votes."