

88-49-71

Brenda Itta

Moses Wassillie, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

Juneau, Alaska

1976

Moses Wassillie said recently Representative Brenda Itta announced that she would not be running for the legislature again. She was asked about the past legislative session. Itta said this year was a lot better than the previous year. She has learned about the legislative process and the budget itself. She has been more successful in getting things through the legislative process. She has enjoyed it. Some of the questions that they have faced with are how effective are the present programs that are existing in various departments. If they find that the programs need to be updated they do make recommendations for them to be updated to meet the needs of Alaskans. If they find that programs are outdated they recommend that those agencies be abolished. She said previous legislatures in the past ten years have not been able to do this. She said it has been a real honor to work with the Finance Committee. She has been doing a lot of investigating. They see that the bureaucracy has grown throughout the years. They have been trying to get the programs back to the people. She has been working on the bond bill for education for rural areas. This has been her priority. All these years they have seen their children separated from parents to attend school as mandated by Alaska law. A group of them in the Bush caucus have gotten together to work the package through. They will be able to get some schools built in rural areas depending upon whether the bond issue passes by the voters. The other part is being able to work with different groups on subsistence issues in rural areas. She has worked with the airport bond issue, highways, and housing problems. She has worked with Representative Guy to introduce a resolution asking the Environmental Conservation and Health and Human Services to start coordinating plans to come up with long range solutions for water and sewage problems in Bethel and Barrow.

Unidentified song

A public service announcement about signing up for benefits through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act

Brenda Itta talks about other legislation work. She said she worked on a bill updating the fisherman's fund boundaries. The people in Southeast Alaska have been fishers for a long time. There's a program called fisherman's fund for injured or sick fishers. The problem in the books was the Kotzebue, arctic and Kuskokwim areas were not included in the boundaries in the fisherman's fund. She introduced a bill to change this. The people in these areas are eligible. She also introduced a bill through the Select Committee on Education was a bill whereby different school districts including the REAAs to have school on Saturdays and longer school hours so they can apply the hours against the 180 day requirement. This

is optional. If the school districts want this they can then start school in late fall. The families in the villages can be out camping with their children. They can participate in the fall caribou hunting. The other part of the bill is they can be finished with school by April. This would allow students and employees to be off school before whaling season starts. The children can participate in the whaling hunt as well as the employees.

One of the bond issues now deals with correctional facilities. Barrow is included to have a correctional and court system and possibly a juvenile detention facility. The governor cut the budget down on NYC workers. She recommended that funds were increased.

Song by James Taylor

Brenda Itta said she chose not to run again for the state house. She related her intentions to the Kotzebue and the Barrow area. She never intended to have politics as a career. She said it has been an honor to serve. There is a lack of human resources in her district. She talked about people who work at the various entities in the village. She said there will be qualified people who will be filing from her district. She said the spiritual side of the Native people has been neglected. She thinks when a problem arises within a person it is because of the spiritual circumstances. She thinks the spiritual side of people needs to be explored. She hasn't been well received by some of the local preachers and Christians. She won't give up the beauty and the love and joy that God has given to her.

Song by Lori Jacobs

Brenda Itta talks about her views of state government. She said it lies within each of the elected leaders in the legislature and in the administration. The effectiveness of government depends on the individual. There are many people that are qualified that possess a lot of knowledge but if they don't know how to apply that knowledge for the benefit of the people then they can't afford to have those kind of leaders. They need knowledge of the process itself. They must make wise decisions that will benefit all of the people of the state. She said they need leaders with moral standards and principles that are honorable for all people. She talked about standards that are needed.