

H78-48-03

Pioneers of Alaska banquet, 1973

Palmer, Alaska

September 23, 1973

Unidentified speaker addressed the audience. Charlie Skiddles from Juneau is recognized for his 75 years in Alaska. Myrtle Branfeldt is recognized for being the oldest person at the convention.

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Beck, Bill Hoskins, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gulkins and Erma Lee Hickel are introduced.

Ellen Loughlan sings the state song, Alaska's flag.

Walter Hickel is introduced. He talked about being named an honorary member of the Ketchikan Igloo of the Pioneers of Alaska, the north country coming into its own and the challenges of Alaska. He talked about speaking with E. Gruening when Alaska finally had direct dial to the Outside. He recalled a comment by E.B. Collins when he was the first registered guest at the Sitka Pioneers' Home. E.B. Collins called it the finest roadhouse. Walter Hickel talked about the coming pipeline, opening up Prudhoe Bay, and transportation for Alaska. He spoke about Judge Wickersham coming to Alaska and bringing law and order to the territory. Judge Wickersham testified before a joint session of Congress and was instrumental in achieving the Alaska Railroad Act. The primary purpose of the railroad was to open up the country. Walter Hickel talked about a railroad to Prudhoe Bay and beyond to the Bering Straits, the production and distribution of oil in the future in Alaska, a natural gas pipeline, the potential of the offshore reserves, and the potential of recreation in Alaska. He urged the audience to stay involved in and concerned about Alaska's future.