

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, I am honored to stand and speak today on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the legislation establishing Alaska as our 49th State. I continue a tradition of sorts: A former Idaho Senator, Frank Church, stood in this same chamber 50 years ago, May 5, 1958, to be exact, to call for Alaska's statehood.

Let me begin, if I may, with the words Senator Church recited that day:

Wild and wide are my borders,
Stern as death is my sway,
And I will wait for the men who will win me--
And I will not be won in a day;
And I will not be won by weaklings,
Subtle, suave and mild,
But by men with the hearts of Vikings
And the simple faith of a child;
Desperate, strong and restless,
Unthrottled by fear or defeat,
Them I will guild with my treasure,
Them I will glut with my meat.
Send me the best of your breeding,
Lend me your chosen ones,
Them I will take to my bosom,
Them I will call my sons.

These lines come from a poem entitled, "The Law of the Yukon," and were written by Robert W. Service, a Canadian poet who traveled north, caught up in the fever of the Klondike Gold Rush. The poem was inspired by the majesty of the land of the Northwest Territories and the Alaska territory, and for Senator Church set the stage for an impassioned, intricately argued plea for Alaska's statehood.

Senator Church spoke that day of taxation without representation. He referenced the treaty by which the United States acquired Alaska which said that the inhabitants of the Territory "shall be admitted to the enjoyment of all the rights, advantages and immunities of citizens of the United States, and shall be maintained and protected in the free enjoyment of their liberty." Senator Church asked this body the question: "Can it be that ours, too, will be the error of the Roman senate, which sapped the vitality and strength from the Roman Republic, refusing to extend the right of franchise, until government became a mockery, empty of empty of principle"?

Fortunately for the United States in this matter, right prevailed that year, and those calling for Alaska's statehood were vindicated in their tireless quest.

The admission of Alaska into the Union represents a rejection of the status quo, a manifestation of the very American tendency to look beyond what is to what could be, and Alaska has

exceeded all expectations. That historic 1958 debate about Alaska's statehood mentions things familiar today which remain the backbone of Alaska's economy and, by extension, are integral to the U.S. economy, salmon, oil and natural gas to name a few. Alaska enriched our inventory of public land immeasurably: forests rich in wildlife; the majestic mountains of the Denali and the breathtaking flanks and soaring peak of Mount McKinley; glaciers of incredible beauty; rivers teeming with salmon; and bays and harbors with orcas and other ocean wildlife. Alaska holds beauty and riches beyond measure above and below the land, rivers and oceans.

Periodically, the U.S. Senate does something that, in the words of Senator Church that year, falls outside the realm of meeting exigencies of the present. When the Senate bestowed statehood upon Alaska 50 years ago this week, it grasped the brief shining moment history had granted it and looked beyond partisan politics to do something great and glorious for the good of our Nation.

I appreciate the Senator from Alaska's invitation to speak during this auspicious time in Alaska's history. I am proud of the role of Idaho lawmakers in the history of Alaska's statehood, particularly Senator Church, and also Congresswoman Gracie Pfof who also supported Alaska's statehood that year. In fact, an editorial in the Fairbanks News-Miner on May 6, 1958 called Senator Church "one of Alaska's greatest champions in Congress."

Idaho and Alaska will always have much in common. Both western Rocky Mountain States, we face similar land use, wildlife and natural resource issues and we both celebrate the staggering beauty of our land. While Idaho does have the largest amount of wilderness area in the continental United States, it is dwarfed, of course, by Alaska which has the largest amount of Federal land of any State. Idaho and Alaska lawmakers can be proud of half a century of working together for the good of our States, our constituents and the mountain west.

Congratulations, Senator **MURKOWSKI** and Senator **STEVENS**, on the birthday of your great State.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank my colleague from the State of Idaho. As he indicated, Senator Church was a great leader in the statehood fight. Idaho and Alaska have long since maintained that good relationship from five decades ago. I also recognize the comments of Senator *Murray* from Washington. The relationship our two States have had throughout the years through trade and commerce has provided issues on which we have worked jointly. Again, I thank them for taking the time to help Alaska commemorate its 50th anniversary celebration.

I will tell my colleagues, as the first Senator serving in the Senate to ever have been born in the State of Alaska--I was actually born just a little bit before statehood, born in the territory--I am fiercely passionate about my State. My mother was born in the community of Nome in the early 1930s, at a time when Alaska was pretty rough and tumble. My family on both sides was involved in the issues that led to statehood. I am very proud of how we as a State have advanced

over these 50 years. To be able to recognize that progress and then look forward with anticipation as we forge the next 50 years, a State that has so much to offer this country, not only our natural resources but the ingenuity and resourcefulness of our people, the fact that our Alaska Natives per capita serve at record numbers in our military, providing for the defense of this country, we are full participants in this great Nation. Even though our geography separates us, there is a sense of patriotism and love for this country that does not go without recognition.

I am honored to stand before the Senate today to celebrate the battle that led to statehood and the recognition of decades of good work.

I yield the floor.