

Engstrom Takes Notice Of Gruening Statement

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATE

April 10, 1968

Dear Editor:

I read with interest the statement of Senator Gruening concerning his opposition to the land freeze imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. He said that the reason for his stand was the fact that homesteaders could not get title to the land they occupy. This is not true, since homesteaders in most cases are exempted by the Secretary of the Interior from the land freeze ruling. Also land claimed by homesteaders is only a small fraction of the land affected.

The real contest is not between homesteaders and the Federal Government, but between the selections of the State of Alaska and the Federal Government. The State has received tentative approval to 18 million acres out of an entitlement of 103 million acres. It is important to get a land claims bill through Congress as soon as possible so that the native people have a chance to select some of the land that is still open.

Without the land freeze there would be no effective attempts in Congress on a land claims bill. It is my opinion that interest in native land claims legislation has only arisen because of the land freeze. Senator Gruening himself has introduced by request three different bills on this subject. Hopefully Congress will pass a land claims bill, so that the native people will soon have an opportunity to select land, and be compensated for the land taken by the State or kept by the Federal Government.

It is my opinion that we must have the land freeze, at least until Congress shows whether or not it will enact land claims legislation. Senator Gruening said that he doubted whether anything would be done this year. Then next year should be the target date. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,
Elton Engstrom

Letters to the Editor

Wainwright, Alaska
April 6, 1968

Dear Sir:

My name is Ben Hopson, Jr. I am 13 years old. My teacher's name is Mr. Fisher. I always drive dogs. I have six dogs. I haul beach coal for my Grandma and Grandpa. I also haul ice from the ice pond.

Mrs. Fisher gave me some Tundra Times today in the afternoon and I sold them already the same day. I sold all 20 of them. Five families get this Tundra Times every week. I wish you could send me 20 more Tundra Times. (What Ben means is that he wants 20 of each week's issues—Editor)

And on Christmas week I won the three-dog race. With my uncle's dogs named Benny Ahmaogak. He won all the races in December all three of them and his wife won all races too all two of the races.

When the men had the 12 miles race he timed 35 minutes with five dogs. He did not use the other eight dogs.

Sincerely yours,
Ben Hopson, Jr.