

Senator Gruening Disagrees With Gravel On Centennial Bill

U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C.
May 23, 1966

Rep. Mike Gravel
468 Aurora Drive
Anchorage, Alaska

Dear Mike:

I have just read in the May 6th issue of Tundra Times a report of an interview which a reporter for that Fairbanks newspaper had with you.

The story reports you as stating that the people in Fairbanks "seemed to think that Rivers had done much to get the \$4.6 million federal centennial bill passed."

The story goes on to say: "In this regard, Gravel pointed to a recent issue of Senator Gruening's newsletter which stated that Rep. Frank Clark, of Pennsylvania, was the one who carried the centennial bill on the floor of the house and that Rivers had assisted. The article also pointed out that the bill that passed was Sen. Bartlett's senate bill co-authored by Gruening."

Inasmuch as this report leaves the implication that I or my newsletter might downgrade the performance of Ralph Rivers in connection with the centennial legislation, I think I should make it clear to you and to the Tundra Times that I consider Representative Rivers's achievement on the centennial a truly outstanding one. Evidence of this is a telegram which I sent to Ralph immediately after the House of Representatives had acted on the Alaska centennial bill. My message was as follows:

"Heartiest congratulations on your tremendous achievement in getting the Alaska centennial bill passed by the House of Representatives today. Your victory is all the more significant in view of the many cuts which are being made this year owing to the war situation. I am particularly impressed with the fact that you were able to persuade the House to pass the bill at the \$4.6 million level which is \$1 million more than would be provided in the bill which passed the Senate after being whittled down."

I have looked up the issue of my weekly newsletter to which your statement apparently referred. I don't see how you could have interpreted it as you did. The item begins as follows:

"Rep. Ralph J. Rivers (D-Alaska) won a significant victory this week when the House of Representatives by a vote of 202 to 173 passed his H.R. 9963 to authorize federal financial participation in the observance of the Alaska purchase centennial."

The only reference to Representative Clark was as follows:

"Representative Rivers led the successful fight for passage of the bill, assisted by Rep. George H. Fallon (D-Md.), the chairman of the House Public Works Committee; Rep. John Young (D-Tex.), and Frank M. Clark (D-Pa.)."

Neither do I understand how you could quote my newsletter to the effect that the bill that passed was a Senate bill

rather than Representative Rivers's bill. As you will note from the material quoted above, the bill that passed in the House was H.R. 9963 of which Representative Rivers was the author. Because Representative Rivers succeeded in increasing the federal centennial contribution for Alaska from the \$3.6 million level provided for in the Senate bill to 4.6 million, the two measures later had to be harmonized. This was done in the Senate by amending S. 2614, a bill by Senator Bartlett and me which had already passed, in such a way as to increase the federal financial participation to the higher figure for which Ralph Rivers had won agreement in the House. The bill which passed, however, was identical with his H.R. 9963. The important fact was that it increased the federal centennial contribution by \$1 million, and this was attributable wholly to Ralph Rivers's effective efforts.

As you undoubtedly know, an appropriation matching this authorization recently passed both houses of Congress and was signed last week by the President.

With best wishes, I remain

Cordially yours,

Ernest Gruening
U. S. Senate

cc: Editor, Tundra Times
Hon. Ralph J. Rivers