

Gravel Takes Exception to Native Research

A scientific study of the Eskimo people to be conducted by the National Academy of Sciences was subjected to question by U.S. Senate candidate Mike Gravel in Anchorage.

"I have the greatest respect for anthropological or sociological studies of this nature," Gravel said, "but since the northern Eskimos are suffering from extremely dire poverty conditions right now, I cannot see the utility of spending one million dollars on a study of this kind."

Gravel said the study was reported to cost \$1,000,000, would last 5 years, and was to be conducted by American, Canadian, Danish and French scientists.

"First things come first," candidate Gravel said. "The Eskimo people will gain no immediate help or profit from a study, no matter how worthy it may be. Their needs are far more basic, they need better homes, new community centers, freezers for their fish, financing for their fishing equipment, and hundreds of other things," Gravel said. "And there is no reason the studies can't come later, or at the same time."

As an illustration, Gravel said the million dollars, most of which is U. S. tax money, could construct 135 new homes, or 4 grammar schools, or 20 freezer-barges for fish processing, or 31 D-8 tractors, or 105 community centers for the people.

"With a million dollars we could refinance the equipment of 4,000 seasonal fishermen in Eskimo Alaska," Gravel said.

"What are we doing spending millions on studies, when all the studies ever show is that the Eskimos have the highest infant mortality rate, the highest TB rate, and the lowest life expectancy rate in the nation?"

Gravel said he did not intend to criticize the National Academy of Sciences. "The Academy is doing fine work," Gravel said, "but I do feel the money would be better spent solving some of the problems rather than studying how the Eskimos have survived them."

"For a case in point, I would like to see the efforts of Senator Bob Bartlett for Native Housing receive this million dollars and add it to the other millions we are going to need to solve the terrible housing conditions of the villages," Gravel said. "I think that would be much more appropriate."