

Candidate Is a Thing, a Product

By MARILYN RICHARDS

Another election year is upon us. Times like these bring out the best and worst in people like spring brings both flowers and weeds.

These times bring redundant television and radio commercials not the old debates, barbecues and balloons of yesteryear.

John Havelock, a Democratic candidate for the U.S. House recently told a college political science class that it involves a budget of almost \$100,000 in campaigning to ensure a House seat.

Havelock explained that he, like other candidates is a product. The election campaigns are market systems for the sale of public representational services, he added.

His analogy of a man and a product is both humorous and scary. Most contemporary politicians think that way. They need to advertise to sell themselves. They have to pick an image and a market.

There are abuses of consumer services in the election system, Havelock said. Abuses include

problems of consumer protection one of which is deceptive packaging. "What you get in a politician is not what you see."

Shopping around for politicians and candidates in Alaska is like sometimes comparing hamburger and a New York cut. There's not much choice but a lot of beef! (This isn't meant to slice at Havelock you understand.)

Institutional changes in the market sale system and the delivery process must be made out what kind of changes? This opens up so many appealing possibilities.

If we elect a man, or his product image, can we expect to return him if he is not performing up to par? Could we get a one year guarantee or a refund if we are not pleased?

Should Congress establish a Complaint Department where we can try to return our old politicians for new ones; We could get our broken ones fixed or pick up spare parts, preferably in the hearts and brains departments. Or do we need a service station in Congress where we can send our representatives to get oiled,

a tune up, their batteries recharged or even a major overhaul? "It's time for your 500,000 word check up, Congress man."

Television and the modern media case the communications between the candidates and the public but other markets may open up for dispensing an image to the shoppers.

Could your picture used politician lots, discount stores where we could get them at bargain rates? How about mail order catalogs? You could find different sizes and styles of the legislator you want in different colors, styles and sizes flipping through the pages.

You could have so many choices and multiple variations too in ordering. "How about an old-fashioned farm boy type; a fat cat; an old, or young or middle-aged "people's man" in all the colors of the rainbow, and either sex?" You could match them with a cause, too. The possibilities are endless.

But the bubble may be broken. Those future sales will probably have to be regulated by the Federal Trade Commis-