

Letters to the Editor

June 20, 1968

Dear Friend the Editor:

1931, the postmaster died here in his sleep. He was a white man. Not long after that, two elderly men died and almost everybody got sick all of a sudden.

After 36 got sick, Father Mac and Mrs. Brady the nurse, came to the store for me where I was laying down on the bench behind the long six-foot stove. They asked me if I was sick, I said, "No, just lazy."

They asked me if I could help. I said yes. Some family had no wood and no water and if they did have, I had to start the fire.

Father Mac and the nurse was giving out Aspirins for 48 hours, in which time eight died, four grownups and four children.

About the third or fourth day, the mail carrier woke me up early and said I have to take the mail to Ruby, 100 miles with 500 pounds of fur. It's a bulky load, I said. I have to, he said, there was no one in town could take it.

The first 18 miles was Koyukuk. Stop for lunch but couldn't eat. Next stop was Bishop Mountain, old cabin with tank stove, no dry wood. Anyway, I just went to bed. No eat.

Next morning, I opened a can of cherries. I ate six or seven frozen ones for breakfast.

Eighteen miles to Galena where everyone was sick except Mrs. Meagan the teacher. She cooked steak for me and I couldn't eat it, so she wrapped it up and gave it to me.

The postmaster was about passed out, so she took care of the mail.

Next stop was Whiskey Creek. That's where the boss lived, Ben Durich. I told him, "Don't cook for me. I think I have the influenza." But I said I'll make it, I don't care if I die on the way.

Next morning, I just looked at the sourdough hotcakes which I been eating the year before when I carried the mail. I used to get away with half dozen.

He asked me if I could make it. I said, "Ben, call Ruby, four hours from now I'll be there."

Twenty-eight miles more. When I got to Ruby, everyone was laying down and drinking White Mule and quinine. Just the two mail carriers helped me. They had two in case one got sick or drop dead, I guess.

This will be part one. The next one will give you the reason why I'm writing this and, of course, it will have to be the mail service now.

-FRED STICKMAN, SR.

517 West 2nd Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska

June 17, 1968

LETTER TO THE EDITOR:

This is an open letter in regard to the salmon controversy between the Fishermen's Cooperative in Bethel and the State. The key question to ponder in this controversy in this—When the chips are down, is the State, as you so often hear, trying to assist in the development of the Natives of rural Alaska?

From November of 1965 until November of 1966 I lived and worked in the Eskimo village of Nunapit-chuk, thirty (30) miles west of Bethel. From November of 1966 until November of 1967 I lived and worked in Bethel. Both summers I fished with a Native for King Salmon on the Kuskokwim River. Both summers our boat registered in the top 10 for total catch and cash value. Therefore, I feel I speak with some authority and knowledge regarding the effect the Fishermen's Cooperative has had on the Native fishermen in that area.

In 1966 there were only two fish businesses (Kuskokwim Packers and Shank) where 95% of the fishermen could

sell their fish. In 1967 there were three fish businesses where they could sell their fish—the third being the Fishermen's Cooperative. Naturally, the Native I fished with sold his fish to the buyer that paid the best price—the Fishermen's Cooperative. Given the same amount of fish caught, he made a considerable amount more selling to the Cooperative. This year the same Native I fished with is fishing on the river and reliable reports are that he and others would have made considerably more selling to the Cooperative than to the other two fish buyers; that is, if the Japanese would have continued to buy the fish at the agreed upon price. But such is not the case. Because of State involvement, the Japanese refuse to buy more fish. As a result of their refusal, "8,875" pounds of quality King Salmon have

(Continued on page 5)

Letters to Editor

(continued from Page 2)

spoiled. Where does that leave the Fishermen's Coop? Where does that leave the Native fishermen?

People have stated that many Native fishermen do not want the Fishermen's Cooperative in Bethel. If this is the case, why was the Coop established in the first place and, once established, why were they selling to the Coop if better prices could be obtained elsewhere? Why are there now over 100 Native fishermen in the Coop?

People have said that there are 8 fish buyers in Bethel and that there is no reason for another—it would hurt the existing buyers. I challenge anyone to write an open letter to the paper and name more than two fish businesses, other than the Coop, that buy fish in Bethel. The two I am referring to are: Kuskokwim Packers and the Shank brothers. Other than the Fishermen's Coop there are only two docks in Bethel (in 1966, 1967 and 1968) where a fisherman can unload his fish for sale. Where are the other 6 docks? Someone tell us.

This year a Fishermen's Union was formed, independent of the Fishermen's Coop, and the Native fishermen struck for better prices from the fish buyers. Why?

The facts I have stated lead up to this—the Fishermen's Cooperative certainly helped Native fishermen earn more money for their fish caught. I know. I fished. I was there, on the Kuskokwim River, in a boat for periods of 24 hours straight, last year and the year before.

Now, given the above and other "facts", what is the answer to the question, "Is the State trying to assist in the development of the Natives of rural Alaska, or.....?"

Sincerely yours,
John Shuler

Anchorage, Alaska
June 26, 1968

Dear Sir:

It was reported yesterday that Senator Ernest Gruening has refused to sign the Fair Campaign Practices Pledge, and he further refuses to debate with his primary opponent Mike Gravel. This should be brought to the attention of all your readers, because it may be the most significant development to date in the U.S. Senate race.

The Alaska Young Democrats requested Gruening and Gravel to debate at their convention on July 13th. Gravel accepted, Gruening refused. Gruening has no real reason to refuse, and gave none.

Gruening charged on T.V. last April that Gravel (who was then not a candidate) was being aggressive. Gruening also said he "expected some mudslinging" in the campaign. But for one month now, Gravel has been campaigning on the issues. There has been no "mud-

slinging" from his camp whatsoever.

A few days ago Gravel signed the Fair Campaign Practices Pledge and urged all other Senate candidates to do so. This pledge was drawn up by a committee headed by ex-Presidents Truman and Eisenhower, in which the candidate promises to campaign on the issues instead of the personalities. Gravel signed, Gruening will not.

Gruening will not debate the issues with Gravel, and he will not sign the Fair Campaign Practices Pledge. I think all Alaskans have a right to wonder why. As a past officer in the Young Democrats, and as Chairman of the Democratic Party for Anchorage, I am asking the question for the people I represent.

And Alaskans deserve an answer from Senator Gruening.

Sincerely,
Gil Serrano