

Gruening Asks Aid for Bethel

Returning to Washington after visiting the Bethel area late last Month Sen. Ernest Gruening stirred the Senate Public Works Committee to action with a resolution requesting the U.S. Corps of Engineers to investigate river modifications and protection in the lower Kuskokwim River.

The resolution was specifically aimed at bank protection and stabilization at Bethel.

The waterfront in that far western Alaska city has been subject to serious wind and water erosion such that the business district is now threatened.

Gruening said he had written to Col. Clare F. Farley, district engineer at Anchorage, to see if previously appropriated unused funds might be re-allocated from outside the state for survey work in Alaska.

A study in 1962 by the U.S. Corps of Engineers set the cost of bank stabilization at Bethel at \$181,000. The project was not approved at that time.

Since 1962 the problem at Bethel has grown continually worse, according to Gruening.

Meeting with Sen. Gruening last month federal and state officials were unanimous in recommending riverbank stabilization as the first

essential step toward improving Bethel living conditions.

Annually the raging Kuskokwim River during breakup threatens homes, schools, and the \$6-million Alaska Native Hospital in Bethel. A second step discussed by the officials last month appeared to be moving the town to higher ground.