

# Gruening and Pollock Disagree

In a letter to Rep. Edward A. Garmatz (D-Md.), chairman of the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries, Senator Ernest Gruening last week urged enactment of his bill, S. 292, to authorize use of British Columbia ferries in coordination with the Alaska Ferry System to transport cargo to Southeastern communities of Alaska.

Senator Gruening noted that a review of testimony given on September 28 and statements made by Rep. Howard Pollock (R-Alaska) before the committee indicated a willingness to defer action on the bill pending initiation of the service to Southeast Alaska by Sea-Land Inc.

In his letter, Senator Gruening wrote, "I note, particularly, Congressman Pollock's statement that 'I have no strong feelings about whether we take action immediately on the bill or not.'". The senator continued, "In my opinion it would be a great mistake to delay congressional approval on this legislation which passed the Senate without opposition."

The Senator stated that the committee should not be misled by inference that Sea-Land service would have significant competition from use of the British Columbia ferry system or that enactment of S. 292 would have any real effect on Sea-Land service.

Senator Gruening has long championed introduction of competitive and efficient transportation service to Southeast Alaska and has stated that he is "delighted to know that Sea-Land plans to provide service to South-

east Alaska beginning in April, 1968.... It is my intention to encourage Sea-Land's entry into Southeast Alaska in every way possible."

"However," he continued, "the introduction of Sea-Land service has nothing to do with the importance of giving Alaskans the flexibility of service that would be available with the use of the British Columbia ferries in connection with the Alaska state ferries, which would be achieved by enactment of S. 292.... The provision of one service is not an argument for denial of use of the other."

Senator Gruening backed up his views with facts concerning the comparable qualities of the British Columbia ferry system and Sea-Land service:

"First of all the volume of cargo which could be expected to be shipped via ferry is inconsequential in comparison with potential capacity of Sea-Land vessels.

"Beyond the enormous differences in amounts of cargo carried by the ferries as compared with potential Sea-Land operated vessels, it must be emphasized that Sea-Land is a giant transportation company engaged preponderantly in the transportation of freight.

"The British Columbia ferry and the Alaska state ferries were designed and are operated primarily as tourist facilities, not as freight carriers. Thus, no comparison can be made between the kinds of service

between the kinds of service involved."

He explained "Nevertheless, the state ferries would carry a different type of freight than would be carried by Sea-Land—such as freight now being carried by trucks — which would amplify the service to Southeast Alaska."

The intent of S. 292 is to make available Canadian service for occasional, nonscheduled shipments. It is out of all reason to expect that such a service would ever provide competition to Sea-Land."