

GRAVEL EYES DEVELOPMENT

Dilemma of Every Citizen

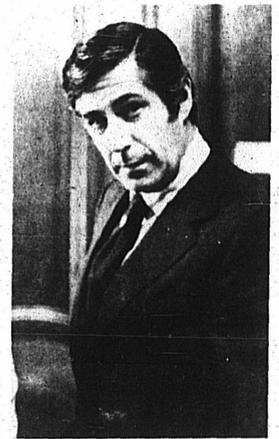
By MARGIE BAUMAN
FAIRBANKS — U. S. Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, said Saturday that the question of how much development Alaskans want is going to be "the dilemma of every single citizen in Alaska."

Gravel said he would like to see "just enough development so that we can live very well and live an enriched, meaningful life, which means, from Alaska's point of view, that we still have some more ways to go."

The Alaska Democrat, campaigning for re-election against Anchorage State Sen. C. R. Lewis, a conservative Republican, noted the role of the oil pipeline in development — in creating an economic base for many communities.

"But one of the most exciting things is the experimentation for a controlled environmental agriculture program at Wildwood," Gravel said.

"It is my hope that we can institute controlled agriculture throughout the state and bush areas, so that wherever we can find natural gas a village can have its own farming, to grow



SENATOR GRAVEL

food and diversify its dietary spectrum.

"So when you talk about growth," the Senator said.

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Senator Mike Gravel Eyes Development in State . . .

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"We're not interested in getting a lot of people to come to Alaska.

"What we are interested in is making what we have in Alaska . . . developing, exploiting it . . . to its maximum economic benefit and its minimum environmental impact. . . and that is going to be a constant see-saw," he said. "We are no longer naive enough to be in amou[r] of the simple cliché that 'growth is good,'" he said.

The problems of growth and development were one of a number of issues up for discussion as Gravel laid his campaign cards on the table for the Tundra Times.

The topics ranged from problems of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act which are still surfacing to fishing, satellite communications, local hire and the proposed surtax.

Gravel cited the legislative record of his opponent, State Sen. C. R. Lewis, as regards the Native population. He noted, for example Lewis' record of voting against prompt settlement by Congress of the land claims legislation. What Lewis did (in the 1969-70 session) was to urge prompt settlement by Congress of the land claims conformity with the principle that state participation, monetary or otherwise, would NOT be a part of

the settlement.

Lewis has voted against a number of issues which affect Alaska Native people, including legislation providing for a Native language center at the University of Alaska, funding of the bilingual education program and in the past session, against legislation to prohibit job advertisements which express limitations based on sex, age, race, religion, color or national origin.

Lewis also voted against passage in the 1973-74 session of legislation providing for protection of the subsistence usage of fish and game resources. The legislation, which passed the Senate 11-8, was to establish subsistence zones near rural communities in the state.

Gravel talked briefly about the land claims act itself; saying he felt one of the most significant points was to put administration in the hands of the Native people to avoid "a paternalistic overseeing role played by the BIA in the continued development of the claims."

Gravel said he felt "that element is the most important element in the whole act. The one that I pride myself on the most; that I feel was my biggest accomplishment with the claims," Gravel had, in 1968, campaigned on the eventual dissolution of the BIA.

Gravel also said the land claims was 'a personal legacy to the people; a personal, not a governmental legacy — and there is a fine difference."

The case in point, he said, was tendencies of the federal government to try to use land claims monies distributed to individuals to cover for programs to which they are entitled — including the food stamp program.

Gravel has introduced legislation asking that the U. S. Department of Agriculture disregard the land claims payments when considering eligibility for food stamps. His strong stand has caused Gravel criticism in some areas.

At a recent meeting, Gravel was asked by one man "if I had \$200,000, could I get food stamps?" Gravel said "no" and the man replied "well, the Natives can."

"The settlement act had nothing to do with the broad social programs of government toward its citizens," Gravel said. "The Natives are still citizens like any-

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Sen. Gravel . . .

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body else. If individual Natives need food stamps, aid to dependent children, or needs of any services of government, they are totally entitled to receive them."

The Alaska Democrat also predicted that President Ford's proposed five per cent surtax would not emerge intact from the Senate Finance Committee, of which he is a member.

Finally, Gravel acknowledged problems of communication with his constituents in the villages of rural Alaska.

"That's one reason that I have pushed so hard for satellite communications; so that everyone would be more informed," he said.

"We try to make as big an effort as we can with newsletters, press relations. A lot of it is the fault of the inability of the communications system in the bush itself.

"We don't have enough money, enough people. Even the urban areas don't devote enough money to news gathering."

Gravel's office regularly supplies the media with statements pertaining to legislation he is supporting or in opposition of, but whether the public hears or is able to read these statements depends on the space or time available of the news media and often enough, the politics of the media.