

Letters to the Editor

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

July 2, 1968

Editor
Tundra Times
Box 1287
Fairbanks, Alaska

Dear Sir:

Most newspapers in Alaska, including the Tundra Times, recently carried a letter from Gil Serrano of Anchorage stating in part that "The Alaska Young Democrats requested Gruening and Gravel to debate at their convention on July 13. Gravel accepted, Gruening refused, Gruening has no real reason to refuse, and gave none."

For the record let it be known that the Alaska Young Democrats have never asked Senator Gruening to debate with Mike Gravel. As it happens, the date of July 13, which Mr. Serrano mentioned, would be impossible because Senator Gruening will be in Washington at that time hearing testimony on the Alaska Native land claims bills as a member of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee.

Mr. Serrano in his letter also seeks to make much of the fact that Senator Gruening has not signed something called the Fair Campaign Practices Pledge.

Those who know Senator Gruening and have witnessed his successful election campaigns of 1956, 1958 and 1962 know that his campaigning has always been above question in method and in content.

Let those who need to take the pledge do so!

Sincerely yours,
George Sundborg

3307½ Spenard Road
Anchorage, Alaska
June 26, 1968

The Honorable
Walter J. Hickel
Governor of Alaska
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Governor Hickel,

I can no longer sit tight and keep my conscience passive in regards to your recent move against the sale of unprocessed fish to the Japanese freezer in Bethel, Alaska.

As a native of the Bethel area, I know the conditions in which the people there strive to make a living to better their living standards. The acuteness of the problem of failing to meet our financial needs in wintertime is especially critical during summertime when the people have an opportunity to remedy that situation without having to divert to welfare assistance from the State or Federal Governments.

I don't know the provisions of the International North Pacific Fishermens Treaty. However, it has been indicated in the newspapers that the Japanese freezer ship is planning to go to Kotzebue Sound to buy the unprocessed fish there, as it has done in the past. It appears to me that the Treaty has been violated from the first time the freezer loaded the unprocessed fish in Kotzebue Sound.

Here are a number of questions that we, the natives, would like to get answers to:

1. Why you waited to make your move against the Japanese intervention until ASCAP (not as a separate government entity) had drawn up a legitimate contract with the Japanese to buy the unprocessed fish;

2. Whether your Enterprises have any current financial interests in the buying of the unprocessed fish from Bethel; and

3. Why you indicated that the legal base for your move against the freezer was the violation of the Treaty, with no specific answers given in reference to the provisions of the Treaty, but which on the other hand was termed as "transaction of normal trade" and not a violation to the Treaty by the State Department.

It is my belief that the duty of the State Government is to ensure the well-being of all of its people. That duty should be enhanced by the provisions of assistance to soften the economic effects of unemployment or from any unsound decisions made by the officials of the State Government that would result in diversion of the people to welfare assistance. It appears to me, that, from your point of view, your previous action was emphatically the provision and the duty of the State Government to disregard the sole purpose of the Kuskokwim cooperative which, in the future, will have positive effects on the economic development of the Bethel area, if the cooperative is not dissolved due to lack of working capital.

It can require no argument to prove that the circumstances that had developed within the organization of the Kuskokwim cooperative which led to the formulation of the contract with Japan, were due to lack of efficient handling of the unprocessed

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fish without any unnecessary financial drain of the cooperative's funds.

You, as a Governor, who has the right to act and the duty of performing that act, must have, according to the dictates of reason, weighed very poorly when you made your decision against the sale of the unprocessed fish to the Japanese. Your decision, as a matter of fact, will have profound negative effects upon the welfare of the people in the Bethel area and upon the future successful operation of the Kuskokwim cooperative.

Let it be understood that I am not criticizing your past policies as a Chief Executive—wielding authority on policies over most of the administrative agencies of the State and shouldering political responsibilities. This letter is to register my disapproval of your recent move which, in my opinion, is shared by the other natives of the Bethel area.

Yours truly,
Carl Jack