

Sen. Criticizes 'Pigeon Holing'

WASHINGTON— Senator E. L. Bartlett issued a statement strongly criticizing a proposal that the House Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee "pigeon hole" a bill permitting persons shipping merchandise between the other states and Southeastern Alaska to use the Canadian ferry system.

"The suggestion for pigeon holing the bill came up after Sea-Land Service Inc. told the committee that it planned to institute weekly service to Southeastern Alaska," Bartlett said.

"For some reason that escapes me entirely, at least two Representatives at the meeting evidently thought Sea-Land's proposal relieved the need for the

bill," the Senator reported.

"It was also said that by suspending action on this bill but not killing it outright would somehow constitute a threat to pressure Sea-Land to go through with its plans for service to Southeastern Alaska," Bartlett charged.

"First, one intent of the bill was to open a new route for transporting merchandise to and from Alaska. If it made sense to open a new route without Sea-Land service, it makes sense to do so with it," Bartlett said.

"Second, no one can make me believe that the 'threat' of this bill or passage of it would in any way affect Sea-Land's plans which have progressed to the point of setting a date for initiating service," Bartlett said.

"And finally and most importantly, the advent of Sea-Land service to Southeastern Alaska will do nothing for the little man, for the private citizen who wishes to transport his belongings from the lower 48 to Southeastern. Without a change in the law, he will still have to drive his trailer or what have you to get on the Alaska State Ferry; a drive which will cost him time, money; a drive which can be dangerous in winter and impossible at

times because of snow and washouts."

"I would like to remind former backers of the bill of an incident the state used to publicize its support for such legislation. Sal Cucchiari, of Sitka, was charged with violating the law when he used the Canadian ferry to transport two house trailers part of the way to Sitka. I, for one, do not intend to sell out the interest of Mr. Cucchiari or any other individual because someone mistakenly believes it will aid a big business," Bartlett said.

"I do not believe and have never believed that passage of the bill would open up a route which would result in transportation of any considerable tonnage," Bartlett said. Its chief benefit would have been to remove a constant irritant. We need the bill."

At present, it is illegal to ship merchandise between American ports in foreign vessels.

The bill sponsored by Senator Ernest Gruening and cosponsored by Senator Bartlett, would permit goods destined for or coming from Southeastern Alaska to be shipped part way on Canadian ferries so that shippers can make use of the Alaska State ferry.