

Legislative Report:

Senator Ferguson

By request of several rural residents, I have introduced Senate Bill 117 which limits the bar hours, but still allows a municipality to adopt ordinances governing the barter, sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages within the municipality.

Major reasons for this, Alaska has the highest rates of alcohol related problems in the United States. In some local areas in the state, deaths by car accidents, snowmachine acci-

ents, drownings and suicide are as high as 84% alcohol related. Even child molesting is a significant alcohol related crime in Alaska.

Several cities in Alaska have recently instituted shorter hours for bars and liquor stores, and in turn enjoyed a substantial decrease in police and ambulance calls.

A special, one-time supplemental appropriation to the State Revenue Sharing Program, is under consideration in the Senate. The proposal, which I strongly support, will give every municipality and native village greater control on how funds are spent in their area. Each local government entity will receive \$1000.00 (one thousand dollars) per capita or \$25,000.00 (twenty five thousand dollars) whichever is greater.

Through this infusion of funds, local governments will be able to decide for themselves what projects or programs are needed to best serve their concerns. The local governments will be looked upon to fund the smaller capital projects they have requested through the Legislature. The larger capital project requests, which local governments will be unable to fund with the additional Revenue sharing, will still be considered by the legislature.

As of January 22, 1981, the Legislature was in receipt of a report from the State's Local Boundary Commission that addresses the possible annexation of an area around the City of Nome. By law, Legislative action is required to take place within 45 days, if they wish to disapprove the Boundary Commission's findings. Should no legislative action be taken within the required 45 days, the reports findings automatically take effect on March 8, 1981.