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**Ernest Gruening: A Q&A session on the Vietnam War and hopes for peace, 3/31/68**

**Summary created by: Summer Dougherty**

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The question and answer session continues.

A man asks, regarding shipping squared versus round logs overseas, whether squared logs should only come off government land or whether they should come off private land too. Gruening says he believes people have a right to do what they wish with their private land but most of Alaska's forests are in national preserves or in public domain.

A man asks whether the misrepresentation of the facts about the Tonkin Gulf incident was deliberate. Gruening says there was a good deal of evidence that the administration knew it was an unprovoked attack and that the administration was looking for an incident that would justify escalation.

A man asks whether Gruening sees any parallel between the Tonkin Gulf incident and the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Gruening says America is guilty of doing things that we denounced unsparingly when they were done in other wars by Hitler and the Japanese. He thinks that there are some differences in the attack on Pearl Harbor, which was utterly unprovoked and utterly without warning, but he does not see a great difference. He thinks there is absolutely no justification for our bombing of Vietnam.

A man asks how Gruening feels about the Pueblo incident. Gruening says the Pueblo incident is the natural result of us poking our noses where they shouldn't be.

The tape cuts out and when it comes back on again, Gruening is talking about shipping freight up from Canada.

A man asks how a specific proposal about U.S. water pollution would affect Alaska. Gruening says the proposal was a little extreme, and if followed literally, would have included the abolition of placer mining. Gruening feels that it is important to stop pollution but conditions are different in Alaska and that certain applications that seem to be applicable to the lower 48 are not necessarily applicable in Alaska. He speaks of the importance of keeping oil and sewage out of Alaska's rivers, coastal waters and estuaries. He hopes that, as a young state, Alaska will be able to avoid some mistakes older states have made regarding pollution.

A man asks how Gruening feels a specific proposed surtax. Gruening says he would vote against it if it came up in Washington because he fears it would be used for war purposes. He says he would vote for it if he could be assured it would be used on worthwhile domestic projects such as the war on poverty.

A man asks if Gruening feels his work in the Senate is for naught because Representative Pollock hasn't pushed the same legislation through the House, though Pollock denies this vehemently, saying he has a better attendance record than anyone. Gruening responds, reporting that Pollock says he voted more times than any delegate but Gruening adds that the delegates weren't allowed to vote. The audience laughs. Gruening elaborates on current legislative interaction between the Senate and the House.

A man asks whether Alaska's gold problems and the America's gold problems can be solved together and whether one will affect the other. Gruening says gold as a monetary symbol is very mysterious and complex. He says he was gratified to see the fixed limit established and that the miners are able to sell the gold at whatever price they can get. He continues that the discrimination against the gold mining industry is unique under our free enterprise system. No other commodity is compelled by law and under penalties to sell at a price that is no longer profitable as was the case for gold. He is glad to see that has changed, and hopes that it will now be profitable enough for gold miners to start working the mines again.

A man asks for a comment on Johnson's slow response and lack of action regarding the Board of the President's Commission on Civil Disorders, a recent commission report on slums and such things. Gruening says it is correct that Johnson did not comment for about a week and that when he did, all he said was that it was interesting reading. Three government officials, Vice President Humphrey, Secretary Weaver, and Wilbur Cohen rather downgraded the report. Gruening adds that the government printing office is not printing the report and that it is only available through private printers.

A man asks about Gruening feelings about the commission report. . Gruening says he thinks it is a magnificent report and we should act on it but he is afraid we won't.

A man asks Gruening's feelings on a negative income tax. Gruening thinks that it is one of those things that will probably come and that it is no more startling than unemployment compensation, which was horrifying to people when it was first broached in the Roosevelt administration. Gruening thinks that a negative income tax might be a very useful thing.

A man asks why there appears to be no effort to phase out the million and a half troops that are stationed at various places throughout the world. Gruening says that the troops should be brought home as he thinks that NATO is obsolete and that the conditions that demanded its existence are gone.

A man asks what people can do to help Gruening be reelected. Gruening answers the question lengthily, mostly by talking about how his experience may help Alaska, about improving mining in Alaska and about foreign expenditures.

A man announces that the senator has to leave, thanks the senator and says the question and answer session will now end. The audience applauds.

At about 17 minutes, the tape starts over again from the beginning.