

Sen. Bartlett Calls for Improved Monitoring on Radioactivity

WASHINGTON—Senator E.L. (Bob) Bartlett has called for improved monitoring of radioactive particle levels in the Arctic. An Atomic Energy Commission survey of three Alaska native villages—Anaktuvuk Pass, Arctic Village, and Ambler has revealed seasonal increases in the natives' "body burden" of Cesium 137, a radio-nuclide produced by atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons.

Apparently the cesium isotope is picked up by lichen and transmitted by way of caribou which feed on the plant, to man. The recorded amount of radioactivity in the body tends to increase during the season when caribou is an important part of the diet, Dr. C.L. Dunham of A.E.C. explained.

The problem, Senator Bartlett pointed out on the Senate floor, is lichen are long lived and pick up more fallout year after year.

"With the test ban treaty, it is true, absolute levels of fallout have decreased, but with China stepping up her atmospheric testing, this trend may well be reversed," Bartlett said.

Senator Bartlett told the Senate that the AEC report must serve as "a warning and move us to continued vigilance and remedial efforts."

"We still know almost nothing of the long-term effects of radiation exposure

on population groups or about what measures might be taken to alleviate its effects," the senator said. "We must continue and refine our efforts at surveillance. We must train more specialists in the

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field of radiological health."

"In the villages of Ambler, Arctic Village, and Anaktuvuk Pass, we find further incentives to work for the extension of the test ban treaty to present non-signatories and for the completion of a meaningful non-proliferation agreement," Bartlett stated.

Dr. Dunham told the senator that the Atomic Energy Commission plans to measure the ^{137}Cs body burdens at the three locations again during late July of early August.