

Oil in at 10:06 a.m. Monday —

# Oil Begins to Flow through the Trans Alaska Pipeline this week

By WILLIAM B. ARES

North Slope oil flowed into the trans-Alaska pipeline at 10:06 Monday morning at Prudhoe Bay starting up an oil production system that has been three years and billions of dollars in designing and building.

Start-up came nearly nine years to the day from the proven discovery of the vast oil field at Prudhoe Bay. And almost on time.

Scheduled to enter the pipe at 9 a.m. in the scraper building section at pump station I, it was delayed for just over an hour because of some minor problem with a flange connection. There was a small amount of oil leakage before the necessary adjustment could be completed and the long awaited signal from the control center in Valdez gave the final O.K. to start the oil flowing.

Preparations had been completed on Friday with the twin 210,000 barrel control tanks

at the pump station filled to the required levels for start-up and all necessary checking and double checking had been done. Leaving only the final permit from the Department of Interior to actually start operations. That came on Sunday. So with a few last minute briefing sessions with technicians by company officials the "pig" was inserted into the pipe and the vault looking hatch at the end of the pipe was locked into place.

This cone shaped metal and plastic batching pig as it is called will go before the oil and be tracked by sound and radio all the way to the Valdez terminal and will be replaced twice on the trip south. It separates the oil from 6 million cubic feet of nitrogen that was put in the pipe first to remove oxygen that creates a fire hazard when exposed to crude oil vapor. The pig will also be used throughout operational life of the pipeline periodically to remove any par-

affin that occurs naturally in crude oil and could build up on the sides of the pipe.

The oil is expected to reach Valdez in little over 30 days and is traveling at 1½ miles per hour. The tracking team will be keeping a 24 hour watch the entire length for any stress or signs of possible trouble.

The event also drew a large crowd of newsmen from all over the country who were given a start-up briefing and photographic tour of the pump station and other facilities on Sunday morning. Some of the press crew had a few anxious moments on the Monday tour when one of the buses supplied by the oil companies rolled over on its side. There were not injuries and only slight damage to the bus.