

Editorial—

Cannikin Seems to Be Full of Holes

We were heartened by the latest expose's against Cannikin, the Atomic Energy Commission's proposed shot at Amchitka Island that will be equivalent to five million tons of TNT (5 megatons) if it is allowed to detonate. Our feelings should be shared by the thousands of Aleuts living along the Aleutian Chain and its environs that has sustained those people for centuries. Perhaps the latest charges negative to AEC's Cannikin might be profound enough to cause cancellation of the shot by the President of the United States. We hope that they will be and that President Nixon will call off the shot.

It is now common knowledge that two of AEC's test atomic shots underground at Nevada testing grounds actually created earthquakes releasing energy ten times as great as the original power of the bomb tests. The tests were the Hardhat and the Piledriver. The Hardhat release of energy was only equivalent to 6 tons of TNT and the Piledriver 58 tons. Although small in size at detonation, they did release extra energy up to ten times their originally set of energy.

On the other hand, the proposed Cannikin explosion, if triggered, would be equivalent to 5 million tons of TNT. It would be detonated close along the widely known earthquake faults on the Aleutian Chain. If the shot reacted along the lines of the Hardhat and the Piledriver, there would seem to be highly dangerous consequences for the State of Alaska and its people, as well as endangering other countries as a result of tsunamis commonly called tidal waves.

Our own State Attorney General John Havelock has also added weight to the charges against AEC's Cannikin by strongly pointing out that the commission has not complied with the requirements of the Nixon administration's own Environmental Quality Act; that the AEC has never given the general public enough information so that the public could form its own opinions. Our own congressional delegation, Senators Mike Gravel and Ted Stevens and Congressman Nick Begich, have also strongly opposed Cannikin.

Opposition to Cannikin seems to be on the increase and it could mushroom into a greater extent because it is becoming known also that it might not really be a necessary test. People are beginning to see that the Cannikin seems to be full of holes and that its triggering should be called off.

We are heartened indeed that the Aleut people in the vast Aleutian Chain areas are finally getting the backing they have needed to help them protect their valued environment and sustenance areas they have used for centuries. We hope that they, along with Governor William Egan and his administration, our congressional delegation, various groups throughout the nation and influential individuals will be victorious in stopping the potentially dangerous Cannikin experiment.