

SACKETT'S SUMMARY

If Aleut Suit Fails: An Alternative

By JOHN SACKETT

Ildor Philemonof, president of the Aleut League, stated before the Anchorage Press Club that the five megaton bomb at Amchitka "places the Aleut natives in direct jeopardy and can cause irreparable damage to their way of life." The Atomic Energy Commission is planning the huge explosion, commonly known as the Cannikan Project, sometime in September or early October.

A suit was filed in the district court requesting a permanent injunction to halt the blast. The Aleut people are very much concerned and this was the reason a suit was filed, Philemonof said. A hearing on the suit will be held next week in Anchorage.

He stated that if the suit fails the Leagues next move will be to request the A.E.C. for as thorough a guarantee of safety as possible through the use of highly sophisticated monitoring devices and rapid evacuation if there is a radioactive leak from the blast. He noted that there are 27 active volcanoes in the Aleutian Chain and many unknown fissures in the ground surface which could allow for possible contamination.

Mr. Philemonof stated that he had talked to Dr. Merrill of the A.E.C. about the possible dangers, and everything is based on value judgements and assumptions. Dr. Merrill feels the Aleutian Chain will not be in danger and indicated that "if there are any quakes they will go to Hawaii and Japan."

In addition to a grave concern for human existence, the Aleuts are very concerned about the future of their areas resources should there be an actual or even a rumor of a radioactive leak. "Fishing is our largest industry and without it we would be poor," he said. "In addition there are numerous reindeer and sheep in the area."

Philemonof stated that the Aleut League has no funds and has had to rely upon the Legal Services for assistance in their court fight, however they were going to strive in every way possible to insure safety to their area.