

## ***Editorial Comment—***

# **The Great Heritage of The State of Alaska**

It is definitely beginning to look as if the great controversial Alaska oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez on the Gulf of Alaska is going to be built. The work on the gigantic project could begin within a year.

The project of that magnitude is going to have a major effect on the state as a whole and this will come in many levels of life among the state's population — and it will have a major effect on one of the greatest heritages of Alaska — the gigantic animal system of this great northern land.

When the pipeline construction begins, it is expected that about 18,000 people will be needed almost at once to get the project underway. It has also been estimated that this number could swell to 25,000 to provide services and supply industries for the workers on the field. Some of the workers and suppliers will, of course, be Alaskans both Native and Caucasian but a good percentage of the number could be people from other states.

Alaskans of Caucasian ancestry, those people who have lived in Alaska, say from five to 45 years or more and who have made the state their home, have come to know and respect the animal resources of Alaska. It is a well known fact that the Native people of the state have been historically taught by their elders that they should take just enough of the animals for their needs and those of their less fortunate fellow villagers. The Natives' take also takes into consideration their ability to dry, cure or store their meats with least spoilage.

We are very much concerned of how the great animal heritage is going to be handled by those empowered to protect these resources because of the very probable hunting pressure that might develop into unmanageable proportions with the increase of the Alaskan population. With all the means of hunting by plane and snowmachine, in this modern day, inadequate surveillance of this manner of hunting could make huge inroads toward overkilling of Alaska's rich resource of animals, especially caribou, moose, bear and other animals.

We are hoping, and time is short actually, that the truly responsible people of the State of Alaska, from the governor of the state down to the public, will take a hard look of how the state's magnificent animal heritage can be protected to the greatest extent possible under the probable hunting pressure that could reach alarming proportions.

We are also hoping that the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc., the regional organizations and the villages themselves will make an honest effort to be heard on what they think of the subject because they and their fellow longtime Caucasian Alaskan friends can't help but benefit far into the future if they would work toward a solution of the problem, the protection of the great heritage of the State of Alaska — the magnificent resources of animals.

H.R.