

Volpe Disloses Huge Transportation Study

Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, accompanied by a number of dignitaries, toured the Prudhoe Bay area of Alaska's North Slope Wednesday to study the area's transportation needs.

Previous to the Wednesday tour, Volpe spoke Tuesday at the University of Alaska and before a Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce luncheon. At the University, Volpe said, "I came to Alaska to listen and to learn. I want to find out, firsthand, what the problems and the potentials of this great State really are."

"What you decide will determine whether Alaska comes to look some day like the Northeast Corridor of the U.S., or instead maintains its unique char-

acter and special attractions," he stated.

Later, at the Chamber luncheon, Volpe announced a massive multi-million dollar study of a transportation corridor from Fairbanks to the North Slope.

"We expect to move ahead with a massive planning study for a new joint use transportation corridor that will move out from the Fairbanks area to the North Country," said Transportation Secretary Volpe.

Leaving Fairbanks Wednesday morning, the visitor first flew to Barrow where he received a short briefing at the Arctic Research Laboratory.

Accompanied by Mrs. Keith

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VOLPE VISITS PRUDHOE—Arriving at Prudhoe Wednesday, Secretary of Transportation John Volpe, left, was greeted by Landon Kelley, right, Atlantic Richfield's North Slope Coordinator.

Volpe was accompanied on the tour by Interior Secretary Walter Hickel, center. Volpe is in Alaska to study the state's transportation needs. —THOMAS RICHARDS, JR., Photograph

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Miller, Interior Secretary and Mrs. Hickel, and Mrs. Volpe, Volpe boarded a Lear jet and flew to Prudhoe.

Volpe inspected Atlantic Richfield's barge docking facility, where barges arriving from Canada were being unloaded of sup-

plies. Returning to ARCO's base camp, the dignitaries ate lunch in the dining hall.

The visitors boarded a 12-seater Bell helicopter for a brief flight to a drilling site, Atlantic Richfield's Southeast Eileen.

The tour of the drilling site

was lead by ARCO Drilling Superintendent Bill Congdon. The group toured buildings in which a chemical, "drilling mud," was being circulated and heated. On the drilling platform, Volpe inspected an \$18,000 diamond drill bit which had been recently discarded.

Back in the helicopter, and continuing the tour of the Prudhoe area, the visitors circled a herd of caribou that was feeding near S.E. Eileen. Waterfowl sat in numerous ponds. Volpe said that he was surprised at the amount of "drilling sites, men, and unfrozen water."

The Bell chopper headed out over the bay, over-flying barges and tug boats arriving from Canada. One ARCO official explained that, with luck, the barge operations could continue for another two weeks.

Landon Kelley, ARCO's North Slope Coordinator, pointed out more drilling sites as the chopper returned to the air strip. Near the strip, massive construction activity was underway at the new ARCO complex.

A topping plant, for refining Prudhoe oil to be used in fueling operations, is included in the complex. Other buildings—living quarters, vehicle storage space, —were also being constructed.

After returning to the air strip, Volpe said that he was "tremendously impressed" by development in the Prudhoe area. He said that he "now knows the tremendous challenge involved in getting the oil to market."