

'We are Not Here To Praise Pipeline But to Bury It'

By JENNIFER ORTIZ

"We are not here to praise the pipeline, but to bury it", were the opening remarks of Alyeska president E.L. Patton, last Thursday. And minutes later, the first section of the trans-Alaska pipeline was laid beneath the Tonsina River, 75 miles north of Valdez.

It was the perfect day; sunshine and pleasant 20 degrees weather. The workmen did not wait for the ceremonial red flag to begin their task, and before the expectant eyes of officials, press, visitors and fellow workers, side boom tractors let down into the icy 15 foot waters, the colossal 48 inch-diameter pipe; 1,900 feet of it.

Slowly, several feet of pipe disappeared into the ditch, and

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Bury Pipeline . . .

nine-ton concrete saddles weighted it down.

Thursday's ceremony, initiated officially the installation of the 800 mile pipeline which will cross the state from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez. Because of the varying soil conditions along the route, the pipe is to be alternatively buried and elevated.

Upon completion in 1977, the pipe will carry 1.2 million barrels of oil a day, until 1980, when its capacity will be 2 million barrels daily.