

Chas. Edwardson Testifies in Washington

"We conclude that this draft report is a product of massive ignorance and that it is the Arctic Slope Eskimos who will suffer and are the forgotten people."

This is the charge made by ASNA executive director Charles Edwardson testifying before the Interior Department pipeline hearing yesterday afternoon, February 16th.

"The Arctic Slope Native Association is opposed to the building of the pipeline for the recovery of the oil from its lands. The Eskimos own all of the North Slope having lived there since time memorial."

The two day hearings in Washington will examine the environmental effects of the proposed 800 mile pipeline from the North Slope to Valdez.

Charles Edwardson, Jr. told the department officials his people would oppose any pipeline till either the oil industry or the government paid them for their lands.

He opposed any settlement of the pipeline before an overall land claims settlement is reached in Congress.

"Sadly we recognize that the demands of Western Society for oil are so huge that to prevent the exploitation of the oil is impossible," he said.

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The impact report, however, mainly documented the Interior Department's ignorance of what the ultimate environmental impact of a pipeline would be, Edwardsen charged. It admitted many aspects were not yet known, with scientific tests just beginning.

The report also ignores the impact of a pipeline on the human environment, according to Edwardsen.

"The whole thrust of the draft report is its impact on things. Yes, the Eskimo is the forgotten man and the Department of the Interior is composed of sophomores who control the destiny of these forgotten people."

The ASNA executive director proposes the "Department of Interior, our guardian, require of the oil companies that if there be an oil spill that the oil companies pay the Eskimos of the North Slope \$15 per gallon for each gallon spilled."

This substitute subsistence would prevent the degrading alternative of substituting welfare—the government's only answer to loss of livelihood.

Edwardsen's angry statement, documented by over 30 pages of ASNA comments on specific portions of the environmental impact report questioned the impact of civilization on the birds, fish and animals his people depend on.

He also questioned how the government could control "erratic hunters and fishermen with respect to existing endangered species."

Secretary of the Interior Rogers Morton presided over the hearings as they began at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, Washington time.

Governor William A. Egan, who arrived in Washington on Monday, led off the testimony. He spoke in support of the pipeline with provision for ad-

ditional state participation in regulation.

Among those state officials testifying at the hearings are Natural Resources Commissioner Charles F. Herbert, Fish and Game Commissioner Wallace Noerenberg, Health and Welfare Commissioner Dr. Frederick P. McGinnis, Highways Commissioner Bruce Campbell; James Anderegg, head of the State Division of Environmental Health; Dr. Peter Morrison, director of the Institute of Arctic Biology, University of Alaska; Dr. Charles E. Behlke, director of the university's Institute of Environmental Engineering and Byron Mallott, director of the Local Affairs Agency.

The pipeline hearings are required by law to review the environmental impact statement released last month by the Interior Department on the proposed \$1 billion pipeline to carry oil from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez.

Two conservation groups have filed suit to stop the pipeline till adequate environmental controls are instituted. The hearings comprise part of the procedure required to lift these suits.

Many of the same state officials will remain in Washington to testify at Senate Interior Committee hearings on a land claims bill on Thursday.