

# House Votes "YES" On Pipeline

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW  
BUTLER

August 2, 1973, may well become as significant a date for the Alaska Native People as December 18, 1971. Last Thursday, final Congressional approval was given for construction of an oil pipeline from Prudhoe Bay to Valdez.

After ten hours of debate on the floor, the bill passed 356 to 60. The Senate bill passed two weeks previously, and the way is now clear for a new era to begin in Alaska.

The December 18 date was

the tagline for passage of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act. From the time of the discovery of large oil deposits on Alaska's North Slope, the two legislative actions, although separated by several years, have nonetheless been as inextricably linked as Siamese twins.

Early Native resistance and opposition to the pipeline dwindled as the land claims issue was increasingly tied to the development of the state's oil resources.

Gov. William Egan com-

mented on Thursday's victory: "I think this is the end of a long, long, hard pull. I hope it means we're out of the woods and we'll be able to show the construction world that we can build a pipeline that is a model for experts around the world.

Alaska's Freshman Congressman Don Young was given credit by many for having devoted the majority of his efforts in Washington to passage of the pipeline bill in the House.

Aleyska spokesman anticipated that construction could

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begin as early as next spring and would be completed within three years.

The House, in passing the bill, turned down several significant amendments: one by Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., to prohibit pipelines through national parks, wilderness areas, or wildlife refuges; the second, a proposal by Rep. John Dellenback, R-Oregon, to delete the section which bars the courts from reviewing whether Interior Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton complied with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) issuing the permit.

State Senator Willie Hensley, D-Kotzebue, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, was part of a group of Native leaders who traveled to Washington D.C. to lobby intensively for passage of the pipeline legislation.

Hensley and other native leaders were successful in attaching two amendments to the bill, one granting indemnification for person's along the right-of-way and the other providing for a guarantee on the two per cent royalties in the event production is delayed.

A lone voice in the midst of last week's celebration was that of John Sackett, head of the Interior Athabascans' Corporation, Doyon Ltd. Sackett voiced grave doubts about whether or not the long-awaited pipeline would indeed bring economic benefits to Alaska's Native people.

In the interim between passage of the Senate and House bills, Doyon, Ltd. issued a statement opposing the pipeline. Doyon charged that pipeline activity would seriously jeopardize the Native subsistence way of living and hinted that the Department of the Interior has not provided adequate protection for that way of life.

With final Congressional endorsement on the pipeline, the next formal legal step is a joint House-Senate conference committee, to unify the provisions of both versions. This procedure is expected to last several weeks and from the Conference Committee, the bill will go to the White House for the President's signature.