

"I may not agree with a word you say but I will defend unto death your right to say it." — Voltaire

Tundra Times



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Editorial—

Can Rural Schools Gain When State Takes Over ?

The State Department of Education is steadily moving toward the takeover of the school system with the phaseout of the Bureau of Indian Affairs schools in the outlying areas of Alaska. When this process began some years ago, there was excitement. The prospect of the state taking control of the school system was generally acclaimed but since that time, the excitement has died down and in its place some doubts have developed.

Within the last five years, the quality of the BIA schools in the rural areas has actually improved, thanks to the efforts of Commissioner of Indian Affairs Robert L. Bennett when he was in office and while he was Area Director of the BIA for Alaska prior to moving up to become commissioner. Bennett promised when he took over as Area Director that he would work for better qualified teachers for the rural schools saying, "You know how government wheels turn—slowly—but this should become a fact in the years ahead."

It is questionable at this time whether the quality of teaching in rural areas achieved and improved by the BIA will be maintained when the state takes over the entire system. We are not saying that all the state schools are all that bad but there are persistent opinions that some state schools leave much to be desired. For one thing, the state pays its teachers less than the BIA pays its teachers. And, too, the state system will be subject to political influences. Since large population centers, such as Fairbanks and Anchorage, have proportionately more legislative representatives in the state government, there is a chance they will get the cream while the dregs go to the outlying areas.

Arbitrary methods are also becoming apparent in the process of the state takeover of the schools. The villagers in which the schools will be taken over are not being given a chance to express their dislike or preference in the process. In the event a BIA school is enjoying a better quality schooling which could be lost with the state takeover, the villagers are not being asked whether they should, or wished, to retain the BIA system until such time the state can offer a like or better quality schooling methods.

The method smacks of being undemocratic in the country that practices democracy. This could result in retrogression from the improved status the BIA has attained in the last few years. We think there is room for the state to improve its system in the rural areas before it takes control. One way would be to pay the state teachers in amounts comparable to that the BIA is paying its teachers. If better qualified teachers are needed, this should be done. While doing so, it should also explore the much used man-wife teacher teams because, sometimes, the wife or the husband is not qualified as a teacher. Per-

HIGHLIGHTS

STIPULATIONS DEVELOPED FOR TRANS ALASKA PIPELINE

—Contractors on the TAPS pipeline project will be required to follow Equal Employment Opportunity hiring practices, particularly as related to the employment of Alaskan Eskimo and Indian native citizens.

—TAPS must post a security bond in the sum of \$5 million, with charges for any environmental damages to be paid from this fund.

—Routing of the pipeline must consider terrain, population centers, wildlife and fishery habitats, public water supplies, and hazardous geologic areas.

—TAPS must have a detailed contingency plan for controlling oil spills and possible pipeline leaks.

—The contractor (TAPS) must train construction personnel in avoiding damage to the environment, and provide crews with fire suppression training.

—Monitors will accompany pipeline construction crews.

—In areas of known seismic activity, TAPS must provide a detailed plan for detecting seismic disturbances, and coping with possible earth shifts.

—The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will have authority to inspect all phases of construction and operation and require termination of such activity for noncompliance with requirements.

—BLM will have authority to require pipeline realignment and/or modification to meet unforeseen environmental conditions.

—TAPS must apply for Special Land Use Permits from the Bureau of Land Management for all special use areas beyond the pipeline right-of-way.

—Pipeline construction activities may not interfere with settlement, mining claims, or other valid land uses by the public.

—Construction activities will not be allowed within one-half mile of any designated recreation site except with written permission.

—TAPS may regulate public access and vehicular traffic on pipeline roads to facilitate its operations, but must protect the public and wildlife from construction hazards by warnings, flagmen, or other means.

—Pollution abatement controls—including those for sediment and silt—must meet established Federal standards for Alaska. TAPS must prevent harmful heat pollution, and may use no herbicides or pesticides not approved by the Department of the Interior.

—TAPS must take special care at water crossings to avoid pollution by silt and drainage from the pipeline trench. Stream bank erosion must be avoided to protect spawning beds of migratory fish such as salmon.

—TAPS must conduct all construction operations and maintenance activities with minimum disturbance to the environment. Disturbed areas must be restored as much as practicable.

—TAPS may not create new lakes, drain existing lakes, divert natural channels or degrade water quality without written permission.

—The pipeline may have to be rerouted around areas having unstable soil conditions including permafrost, or special construction methods may be required through unstable soil areas.

—Construction vehicles may not be operated outside of the right-of-way boundaries and special use areas except in emergencies.

—Construction methods through permafrost areas must be designed to prevent melting and subsequent erosion. Moisture-laden permafrost rapidly erodes when insulating vegetation is removed, the Department explained.

—Sanitation and waste disposal practices must meet standards set by the Alaska Department of Health and Welfare, the U.S. Public Health Service, and Interior's Federal Water Pollution Control Administration.

—TAPS may not create any permanent obstruction to small water craft.

—Permanent installations such as pump stations must be designed to harmonize with the natural setting, to minimum impact on natural beauty.

—Hand-clearing must be done where heavy equipment would damage steep slopes or streams. Logs and other debris may not be allowed to block streams.

—TAPS must inform its employees and contractors of the State and Federal game and fish laws. Underwater blasting operations must be approved by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

—Except where the pipeline must cross a stream, the route must allow a 300-foot buffer strip between the pipeline and any streams. Settling basins must be used to remove silt where necessary to protect fish spawning beds.

—Passageways for fish must be provided where the pipeline crosses over a stream. In all cases the pipeline will go under the stream bed unless otherwise authorized by the Department. The line will cross beneath the mile-wide Yukon River.

—Construction may be halted to protect key wildlife areas during seasonal nesting activities and fish and game migrations.

—TAPS must report archeological, paleontological and historical sites discovered during construction, and must hire an archeologist to assure preservation of valuable discoveries.

—TAPS must observe State laws as well as Federal regulations concerning fire prevention, including spark arresters on equipment and stovepipes. The company must maintain approved fire tool caches, and water truck with pumps on each project area.

—Material sites must be contracted with the Bureau of Land Management at usual rates. Sand and gravel may be taken only from areas previously designated by BLM. Material sites must be designed to blend with natural terrain, and must be restored after excavation and replanted with vegetation.

haps he or she can work on other matters instead of teaching school.

We believe it is highly imperative that we alert the native people and their leaders to look closely on the phaseout process of the BIA schools to that of state operation. We hope we are not too overly alarmed about the situation but we believe an orderly switchover of the schooling facilities without retrogression should be the order of the day.

Announces Oil Pipeline Stipulations

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced completion of construction stipulations which will permit the Interior Department to issue a right-of-way for the Trans Alaska Pipeline System to build a petroleum pipeline across federal lands in Alaska.

The Secretary said his next action will be to go before the Interior committees in the Senate and House of Representatives to inform them of his intention to lift portions of the land freeze in Alaska, so the Department can proceed with the processing of the TAPS right-of-way application.

"We now have," Secretary Hickel said, "a set of stipulations which will insure that the wildlife and ecology of the Arctic, along with the culture and opportunities of Alaska's native citizens, will be enhanced."

The 48-inch diameter pipeline proposed by TAPS would extend from Prudhoe Bay, on the Arctic Coast of the Beaufort Sea, to Valdez, a deep water port about 800 miles to the south, on the Gulf of Alaska.

In his announcement, the Secretary said, "There were many unknown and uncertain factors which had to be considered and met before these stipulations could be finalized."

"I believe that anyone who might have criticized us for not issuing these stipulations sooner failed to realize the magnitude of this project, or the effect—potentially harmful—on the environment of Alaska if we did not first thoroughly research all of the factors involved."

"For example," Secretary Hickel added, "these stipulations require that TAPS must build the pipeline in such a manner that where it crosses hundreds of miles of permafrost—permanently frozen ground—it will be insulated or separated from the earth by various means so that the hot oil flowing through the pipe does not thaw the ground, causing the line to sag, or even to rupture."

The stipulations issued are the rules which TAPS will be required to meet in the pipeline's construction and operation. They are designed to meet all of the environmental and ecological goals set forth by the Department based on research by its own scientists, independent scientists and authorities, and public hearings in Alaska.

Persons submitting testimony at these hearings included representatives of both conservation groups and the petroleum industry.

Secretary Hickel said the Bureau of Land Management will monitor construction practices for the pipeline and associated haul roads on federal lands. In addition, the BLM has been directed by the Secretary to "see that the full authority of your bureau is brought to bear to prevent any practices which might vary from the stipulations which have now been established."

The stipulations provide that any environmental damage caused by pipeline construction may

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