

# Resources

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progress today could prove tragically irreparable tomorrow."

The group's background statement on the Arctic is both caustic and critical. At times it leads to over-simplification, but it is not irresponsible; rather it is worthy of attention. They concluded that:

"At present there is too little meaningful

ecological research of the fragile Arctic environment and no urgent demand for any of its nonrenewable resources. Therefore, a freeze should be placed on all new Arctic oil and gas extraction, and transportation (including pipelines and tankers) and northern exploration activities should be scaled down. These restraints should remain in effect for at least two years and until Canadians have enough knowledge to make a decision on the future of the Arctic."

Pollution Probe's recommendations further argue this two year period would allow time to: —Further develop new techniques or modify existing ones for exploration and extraction of non-renewable resources with minimal damage to the environment;

—Test the feasibility of various proposed techniques to transport new resources from the Arctic. We must guard against expediency dictating the transporting to resources before the technology is available to ensure that they can be moved safely;

—Conduct research into the effects of Arctic oil spills on land and at sea, and develop techniques for satisfactorily cleaning up such spills.

—Develop stand-by facilities, equipment and staff necessary to ensure adequate clean-up in case of accidental oil spills.

—Study the feasibility of off-shore drilling in the Arctic and the precautions required for its safe conduct.

—Train the Indians and Eskimos in the skills used in all phases of explorations and development of resources so that the native people can play a significant role in helping to develop the north.

—Set aside adequate parks and scientific reserves for the future.

—Negotiate fair taxes and royalties on resource production.

—Study ways of ensuring effective Canadian control of all activities in our Arctic.

—Implement effective land use planning practices common in the south but almost unheard of in the Arctic.

The little that is known about Arctic development suggests very clearly that Prime Minister Trudeau's plan of northern development should be stopped at once. The government should not be anxious to develop energy resources that will be used by the U.S. The American economy may be on the verge of energy starvation, but Canadians need not talk about "continental energy development". This would only further increase Canadian-U.S. interdependence. Besides, if we continue to increase our exports, we will create a Canadian energy crisis similar to that in the States.

The whole northern resources development may be absolutely pointless anyway. Petroleum men urge hurried development because in another 20 years the harnessing of nuclear and solar energy may make oil worthless as an energy source. Although these types of energy may not be cheap, or sufficiently abundant, the huge markets for oil won't be available then.

The government's northern pipeline and transportation system, subordinated to traditional resource exploitation interests, will serve to link the Arctic to the United States. It will create little or no supporting industries; most of the heavy equipment will be imported from the United States.

This system will also create few permanent jobs, probably destroying as many jobs in the North as it will create. Its effect on the northern environment is uncharted, and the billions of dollars would be better spent on decent housing, education and better health care.

Clearly, the question of benefits to Canadians needs re-examination other than by the government. If not, collusion between the federal government, big business and the U.S. government will leave the people of Canada the biggest losers in Canadian history.

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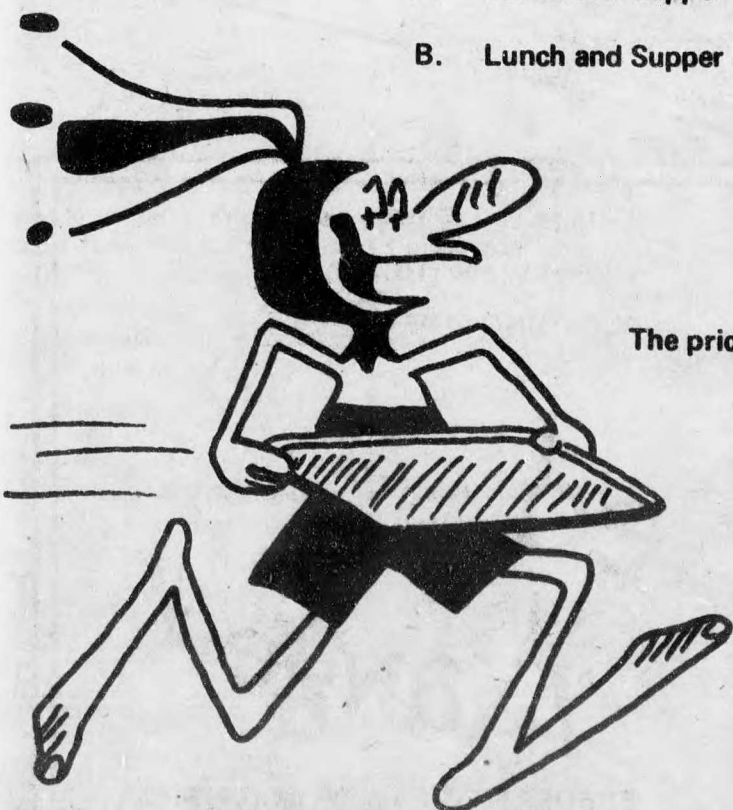
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