

north safe from danger

by Kimball Cariou

A gas pipeline from the Arctic will probably be built starting in 1975, and ecological damage resulting will be minimal, a senior engineer for Canadian Arctic Gas Studies said Tuesday night.

Douglas Rowe was the speaker at the second meeting of the Boreal Circle series for this year. He spoke on the pipeline his company proposes to build after the large audience was first shown a film concerning environmental research it has done. The film was basically factually oriented, but at times it was given to grand, sweeping statements which the crowd disliked. It showed various projects Canadian Arctic has carried out to determine how to lessen damage to the ecology, the type of equipment which they intend to use, and scenes of workmen and Indians and Inuit whose lives will be affected. Some of the projects included lowering the temperature of the gas to avoid melting the permafrost, reseeding the land which has been dug up for the pipeline, determining the effect of compressor station noise on wildlife, and finding out the movements of caribou, birds and fish.

Following the film, Rowe gave a speech accompanied by film slides. He said his company hoped to be able to ask for authority to build the pipeline by mid-1973, and that construction would begin in the winter of 1975-76 if permission were granted. He emphasized that work would be done during winters only so as to avoid unnecessary damage. The proposal involves a 48 inch pipeline down the east side of the Mackenzie River to the 60th parallel, where it would go either to Emerson, Manitoba, and then to Eastern Canada and U.S., or connect with the Alberta Gas Pipeline. Rowe said the capacity of the line would be 4,000,000,000 cubic feet per day, and some gas could begin to flow by the summer of 1977.

Regarding the ecology, he said that "environmental damage can be kept to a minimum if certain restraints are used". Leaks would be extremely rare due to the level of technology used in the construction of the line, he emphasized and if there was a leak, it would be repaired very quickly and the damaged land dug up and replaced. "Wildlife studies will

establish ways to minimize conflict between construction and wildlife" was a further point he made on the subject.

Rowe said that Canadians would be given the first chance to invest in the project, which would cost 5 billion dollars if begun on its currently scheduled time. He thinks that much of the gas will be exported to the U.S. because "the project requires the large markets of the U.S. to be financially feasible".

Following the speech and slides, there was a question period. The first questioner wanted to know whether Canadian Arctic had studied any of the alternate proposals for moving gas, such as via airplanes, balloons or trains. Rowe replied that the company had dealt with these ideas, but said "none of these proposals has the degree of feasibility inherent in them that a pipeline has". Answering a question about the noise compression feasibility inherent in them that a pipeline has". Answering a question about the noise compression stations would make, Rowe said that there are units available which operate at a lower noise level, but which were also

less efficient than the ones proposed. He said in reply to another question that the stations would be fifty to sixty miles apart, a figure which may change to as much as a hundred miles depending on many factors. The stations would either be fully automated or manned on a rotating shift basis.

Asked what the great hurry to get the gas out was, Rowe said that the main problem was a cost escalation of about a million dollars a day if the project was delayed.

A question was asked about the type of revegetation planned, and whether it was a good idea to use such plants as bluegrass. Rowe said that the intent is to use a revegetation process which will provide temporary insulation and binding layer until the natural species reinvaded the area, and that if a foreign species can do that best, it will be used.

Five thousand jobs will be provided for from 2 to 3 years, Rowe said to a questioner worried about the jobs which will be made available and hopefully as many of these as possible would be filled by natives.



Thursday, November 9, 1972

the gateway

Edmonton, Alberta vol. 63 no. 18

N.U.S. born in disunity

Regional interest proved more powerful than the potentially unifying concern for university financing, as students from across the country met to form a national students' union in Ottawa over the weekend.

A walk-out by representatives from the Atlantic provinces, and later by Quebec delegates, left the fledgling organization with only Ontario and the West as its "national" membership.

"It was apparent from the very first that the regions would have disputes with each other," Gerry Riskin, SU president, commented on returning from the conference.

Student reps from the Atlantic provinces demanded that representation be determined on a regional basis rather than on student-population.

Their plan would have given the Atlantic region 24% representation in the union with only 5 1/2% of the national student population.

The delegations remaining agreed on a plan which will allow one representative for every 5,000 students at member universities.

The newly approved constitution also stipulates that each school must hold a referendum to indicate student support before seeking membership in NUS (National Union of Students).

Riskin said that the U of A referendum will probably not be held before the March Student's Union elections.

Riskin predicted a short life for the organization. "These things have a history of falling apart. The only way to keep them alive is to have a hot issue."

The doubling tuition fees in Ontario and threats of similar increases across the country would however provide the organization with a "Hot issue" for some time, he said.

Patrick Delaney, v-p academic, who attended the conference as an

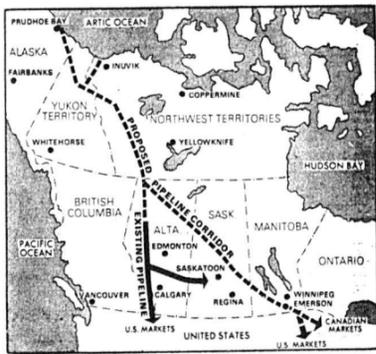
observer, was confident that if the organization could be shown to work, there would be a "good chance to convince the dissenters that it can do something."

He said that a national organization of 300,000 to 400,000 people, now all having the power of the vote, "must have political clout with any government".

"Governments, both national and provincial, are quite happy not to see a national students' union—it's the divide and conquer technique," he remarked.

Alberta currently has no representative on the central committee of NUS. Riskin said that since the U of A was the only Alberta school attending the conference, they decided to wait to select a provincial representative until other schools in the province had been consulted.

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pollution group protests

Pollution Probe at the University of Toronto recently accused Prime Minister Trudeau of "utter hypocrisy and outright deceit" with regard to his statements and schemes concerning the Mackenzie Valley Transportation Corridor. "Trudeau is prostituting the Arctic," Probe stated.

Predicting that the Prime Minister's northern vision will prove to be an irresponsible "pipe" dream, the group charged that the Mackenzie Highway is being rushed ahead without regard for environmental or social considerations in order to woo foreign oil companies to build an oil pipeline through Canada.

The highway, a 1050 mile all-weather road along the full length of the Mackenzie valley, was announced as a surprise project by Trudeau on April 28 in Edmonton. To be built as soon as possible at an initial estimate of between 70 and 100 million dollars, the highway is intended to aid in pipeline construction and "meet the expressed desires of many of the Indian people".

trudeau prostitutes arctic

However, Probe spokesman Sanford Osler charged that "safeguards designed to protect ecology are being shortcircuited and environmental committees are being called upon to rubber stamp decisions that have already been made." He said, "It's complete prostitution of the decision making process."

The charges are backed up by an extensive 20 page report which covers corridor location, technical considerations, sociological impact, environmental impact, motives and the decision making process for the road. Pointing to the fact that the 25 mile section of the highway built last winter had almost completely disappeared by this summer, the environmental group claims that information about the road and its implications is completely inadequate.

The report also reveals that highway construction has begun without approval from the environmental committee specifically commissioned to review and endorse design plans before work was to proceed.

"This is but one example of the government breaking its own rules in a rush to finish the road", said Mr. Osler. Another incident cited was the request by the Department of Public Works for a land use permit. The application was refused after going through the normal channels in Yellowknife, N.W.T. but the decision was reversed by higher authorities in Ottawa.

The report suggests that the road is being pushed through suddenly and hastily in order to entice pipeline applications from American oil companies with holdings at Prudhoe Bay, Alaska.

"Not only does the highway make subsequent pipeline construction easier and cheaper", said Mr. Osler, "but it shows that environmental and social considerations are not taken seriously and will not be allowed to delay pipeline approvals."

Dr. Robert Legget, former Director of the Division of Building Research within the National Research Council is quoted in the report on his reaction to the work done on the road last winter: "This is almost

worse than discovering the wheel. If the writer had not seen this lamentable operation, he would not have been able to believe that such a thing could happen.... It is a national disgrace."

Dr. Legget is also critical of the "undue haste" with which the road is proceeding and the lack of planning and surveying the route.

In support of its stand, the Probe report quotes several eminent Canadian scientists who have recently expressed concern over the quantity and quality of ecological work in the Arctic. Dr. Kenneth Hare, now Director-General of the Research co-ordination Directorate of the Federal Department of the Environment, wrote in August: "Qualitatively, I can say flatly that Canada's past and present scientific effort in the north is not adequate for the purposes of either resource development or environmental protection."

Similarly, Dr. Max Dunbar, a world-renowned marine ecologist, called for a moratorium on oil and mineral development.