

relations with them will facilitate Canada-US relations in the North and across the border.

Ed Shultz said the United States bureaucracy is authoritarian and arrogant in its dealings with Canadians, Indigenous Peoples and even its own citizens. "The US bureaucracy has a John Wayne, off-the-hip attitude we'll have to deal with and that's a reality. That's where forums like this are really important," he said. "We've already had a sour taste of the American influence," referring to the Alaskan Highway. He added we should not allow legislators in Washington make decisions that affect "our backyard."

The discussion turned to the environmental impact of pipelines construction. Shultz raised the question of existing hazardous waste sites in Yukon, some dating back to the construction of the Alaska Highway and World War Two. How many more would be created with new pipeline construction?

"This is the year 2001 and we're still talking about cultures being decimated by one man's decisions. We're not prepared to let that happen," said Joe Linklater, Gwich'in First Nation. He raised the issue of the social impact of development, including alcoholism and the impact of thousands of pipeline workers descending on small communities.

Simmons also alerted the roundtable to the need for clear messages and understanding among Alaskans and the Indigenous Peoples of Yukon. The pro-development side will play one party against the other, for example using the development projects of the Gwich'um First Nations against the government, in their lobbying efforts. "We don't oppose development. We're very specific about the development we're opposing," said Linklater. He emphasized the need for more meaningful consultations.

Other issues raised included the Yukon River and the salmon treaty of 1985, the Kyoto agreement and the need for a sustainable energy program instead of simply securing more natural gas resources. Bob Van Dijken of the Yukon Conservation Society cited the Soft Energy 2000 Programme of the late Seventies, which required provinces to create alternative energy consumption plans. (The concept of "soft energy" is to move from energy consumption that creates grave and persistent risks to one in which energy is renewable, with fewer risks i.e. less pollution, improved health.) "That whole vision of a soft energy path is a whole lost opportunity over the last 20 years."

Building a pipeline today has a lesser impact on the environment due to new technology, said Harley Trudeau. For Canada to meet its Kyoto agreement commitments, he said finding and exploiting new natural gas deposits could lower the rising price and divert industry from reverting to other more damaging fossil fuels that could become cheaper if there was a natural gas shortage.