

Washington State Vetoes Northern Tier Pipeline

John Spellman, governor of the state of Washington, on 8 April ended the 6-year-old debate over a pipeline that would have provided an important energy link between the West Coast and the Midwest. He decided to deny a construction permit to a consortium called the Northern Tier Pipeline Company, which planned to lay a 42-inch pipe across the northwestern United States. Four of the states in the path had already given their approval. But Spellman backed a decision made last fall by a local siting commission, ruling that the project was too risky (*Science*, 20 November 1981, page 889).

"The proposed project constituted a very real threat to Puget Sound, which is a national treasure," Spellman said. "I cannot allow the Sound, its delicate ecology, or the economy and lifestyle it supports to become endangered." Spellman referred to the fact that one 18-mile section of the pipeline was to have been buried in the bottom of Puget Sound, one of the most important fisheries on the West Coast. Environmentalists, fishermen, and recreational users of the Sound objected that an underwater oil spill would do great damage to aquatic life and to related businesses that employ thousands of Washingtonians.

Spellman's aide, Paul O'Connor, said that the company "failed to meet the burden of proof" in arguing that the project was safe. In his view, the geological research was insufficient; the currents in the Juan de Fuca strait had not been measured at the winter-time peak of intensity; and the data on underwater stresses on the pipeline were inadequate.

Had it been built, the Northern Tier pipeline would have carried up to 900,000 barrels of oil a day from Port Angeles on the coast to northern Minnesota, connecting with a midwestern distribution system. Both the Carter and Reagan Administrations backed the project as a means of strengthening the U.S. oil supply network. At present, there is no way to move oil from Alaska to the pipeline complex in the middle of the continent except by shipping it through the Panama Canal. In a crisis it might be difficult to get

oil through the Canal or to persuade other nations to swap shipments.

The Northern Tier consortium, which has already spent \$50 million on this endeavor, last week had not decided whether or not to submit a revised pipeline route, take the issue to court, or give up the ghost.

—**Elliot Marshall**

Publisher Settles Suit, Says Clone Book Is a Fake

The J. B. Lippincott Co. ended a 4-year legal battle on 7 April by announcing that it now believes a book it published, *In His Image: The Cloning of a Man*, is a fraud and a hoax. The "nonfiction" best-seller, by David M. Rorvik, purported to tell the story of how an eccentric millionaire known only as "Max" financed the cloning of a son.

The out-of-court settlement includes an apology and the payment of about \$100,000 to the plaintiff in the case, J. Derek Bromhall, a British biologist. He filed a \$7 million defamation suit in 1978, charging that the book was a hoax, that the cloning technique described in the book had been developed by Bromhall in work on rabbits, and that Rorvik used his name in the book without permission. In a technical, pretrial ruling, the judge said the book was a "hoax" because Rorvik had not come forward with the real names of his sources (*Science*, 27 February 1981, p. 902). By the time the case went to trial on 5 April, the plaintiff's charges had been reduced to invasion of privacy.

Rorvik did not take part in the settlement and still maintains that the book is true.

Interviewed by phone in San Francisco, Rorvik said Lippincott decided to settle when the plaintiff's dollar demands started to drop precipitately. "The insurers for Lippincott decided it was cheaper to settle than to go for a long, drawn-out trial. I argued against settlement. The litigation has not changed anything except to demonstrate that I remain unshaken in my position. I was like a fighter who was left with no one to fight. My opponent walked away."

Lippincott, based in Philadelphia, made \$730,000 in sales on the book,

including hardback, paperback, and foreign sales. Rorvik was to receive \$383,000 in royalties, but a certain amount of that money was set aside for legal expenses. Rorvik would not say how much. He did note, however, that the settlement money came out of Lippincott's pocket and not his. Although the terms of the settlement do not allow the public release of the dollar figure, Rorvik says, "Bromhall settled for a pittance."

In a 7 April letter of apology, Barton H. Lippincott, the chief executive officer of the company, said, "the publisher included in the book a note to the effect that it did not know whether the account was true. Lippincott concedes that it now believes the story to be untrue."

The settlement will be a deterrent to other publishers who might consider publishing a nonfiction book as if it were true, according to Arthur G. Raynes, a Philadelphia attorney who represented Bromhall. "The result," he says, "will motivate all publishers to investigate sensational claims before presenting them to the public as scientific fact."—**William J. Broad**

NAS Seeks News About Jailed Iraqi Scientists

After trying for 2 years to learn what has become of two Iraqi nuclear physicists thought to be in prison in Baghdad, a National Academy of Sciences (NAS) group has abandoned private appeals and issued a public request for help. The NAS' Committee on Human Rights on 2 April issued a report on the two men and asked the Iraqis to comment.

The missing physicists are Husain Al Sharistani, former atomic power research director and scientific adviser to the president, and Ja'afar Dhia Ja'afar, who was to have taken charge of the reactor construction program. Sharistani, a member of the out-of-favor Shi'ite sect, reportedly was arrested in 1979 on suspicion of involvement in an outlawed political party. Ja'afar was arrested when he urged the government to show leniency toward Sharistani. Iraqi officials have given no response to the appeals sent since 1980.

—**Elliot Marshall**