

There has been conflict between the old residents and the newcomers expressed in local jokes: "Happiness is 10,000 Texans moving south with an Okie under each arm" (or vice versa). Another version of the same theme is: "Put an Alyeska man and a Bechtel man on the top of the Polaris (the tallest building in Fairbanks - 11 floors) and push them both off. Who would land first? Answer: Who cares?" At one point "Yankee Go Home" was painted on cars with out-of-state number plates. Many Alaskans feel their distinctive lifestyle is being threatened. The sense of separateness is expressed in the phrase "the lower forty-eight" which covers the conterminous United States, (Hawaii is a warm place to the south where one can escape the Alaskan winter for a holiday and is not included in this terminology). There is a dividedness in the Fairbanks community. Old prejudices are exacerbated. Racial and ethnic tensions have increased. While the pre-pipeline community was not without prejudices, "the people knew where they were at"; they knew and could cope with existing attitudes and prejudices. A massive influx of newcomers with differing attitudes and prejudices increased existing tensions, as well as creating new ones.

While there is no other place quite like Fairbanks, there is much in the Fairbanks experience that should serve as a warning to other communities experiencing an impact situation. The social and economic benefits and costs are not fully accounted in Fairbanks and may not be for a very long time. Fairbanks will never be the same again for many of the social and economic changes wrought by the impact of the construction of the pipeline are permanent. There is a strong feeling emerging that the perpetrators of an impact situation ought to be made to account for the costs to local communities of their development projects. There are also suggestions that some mechanism for establishing an information centre and ensuring regular monitoring of impacts should be built into environmental assessment requirements for development projects. In the meantime, Fairbanks residents are preparing for the "bust" when pipeline construction is over, and at the same time pinning their hopes on construction of a gas line across Alaska. For the social scientist interested in impact analysis it is obvious from the Fairbanks experience that we still do not know enough about the processes of accelerated social and economic change induced by a large development project. Still less are we able to educate the communities concerned to cope with the impact stresses produced by such rapid change.