

PROTESTS BLOCK LOGGING DEAL

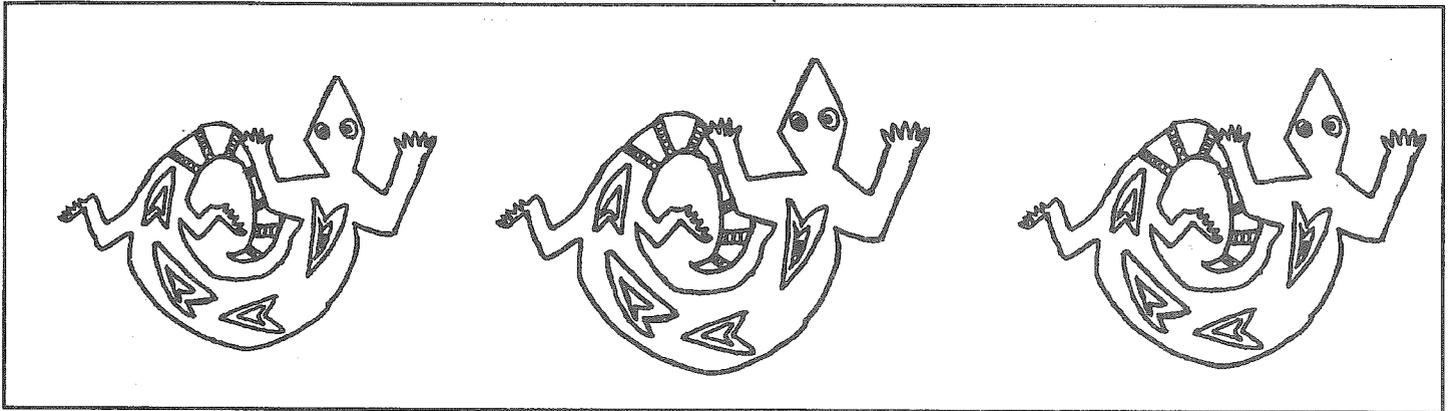
On Feb. 27 the Honduran government announced the indefinite postponement of the decision to give a 40-year logging concession to Stone Container Corporation of Chicago due to a tremendous outcry from national and international environmental and indigenous organizations and from the Honduran people. The concession would have allowed Stone to log 840,000 acres or four-million cubic meters

momentum continue to fight against the Wellington Hall Company, a US furniture manufacturer which is logging mahogany in the Mosquitia.

There were three demonstrations in Honduras organized to protest the concessions. One was organized by teacher unions and Miskito Indians, one by campesinos and one

daily influx of landless campesinos.

Although the contract between Stone and the Honduran government was shrouded in secrecy, activists obtained a leaked copy which revealed that more than 80% of Honduras could be subject to logging. The contract would have permitted Stone to cut trees anywhere outside of this area at anytime within



annually of pine forests of the Mosquitia, home to the Miskito, Tawahka, Garifuna and Pesch Indians. The Indigenous inhabitants were never consulted on this matter, which could have had disastrous effects on their lives, and an environmental impact study was never conducted.

The head of the Honduran Forestry Department (COHDEFOR), announced that "due to public and technical interest it was impossible to reach a satisfactory agreement with the Stone Container Corporation."

The rejection of the concession was announced as over 3,000 people marched against Stone in the streets of Tegucigalpa. Miskito forester Jorge Salaverri stated, during his speech in front of the capitol, that this is just the first victory for the Honduran people and the environment, and it is necessary that the

by university students. Never before in Honduras has there been this kind of solidarity and consensus on an issue which has united people of all social classes to protect the environment.

La Mosquitia covers the eastern third of Honduras and is not yet connected by roads to the highly populated interior. This has allowed the Miskito, Tawahka and Pesch Indians to retain their cultural and land base to a large extent. The population of the region is approximately 40,000, with the Miskito people constituting nearly 90%. Separating the Miskito Indians' coastal pine forest and the country's interior is one of the largest surviving Central American rainforests, the home of the Tawahka Indians. Although the Tawahka obtained "provisional guarantees" for their lands in 1989, the agreement is not being enforced and they are threatened by an almost

the next 40 years if they did not obtain sufficient pulp wood from the specified region. Stone intended to use the pulp wood for the manufacturing of paper bags, and disposable cardboard packaging.

The Honduran government and the Congress were bombarded by letters and faxes from all over the world protesting the agreement. Protest letters were sent nationally by groups as diverse as the Association of Honduran Loggers, Organization of Miskito Peoples (MASTA), Community Education for Health (EDUCSA) and the Association of Honduran Biologists. In North America, urgent action campaigns were organized by the Rainforest Action Network, Global Response, Ancient Forest Rescue, SAIIC and the Task Force on Multinational Resource Corporations.