

Call number: 01-74-06 SIDE A

Name and place: Meeting of the Alaska NORTH Commission [Northern Operation of Rail Transportation and Highways Commission]

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Notes: Originals on 7-inch reels, master copy on CD.

[The recording begins with unclear talking.] A man addresses Mr. Chairman and asks to move a motion that the presentation of Mr. Sanders should be presented to the commission in writing. Somebody seconds the motion. [Unclear talking.] At 3:38 they vote on the matter and all say aye.

3:50 A person asks [unclear] and another person says that he's not asking him [Sanders] to write all the words that he spoke but to reduce his points to writing. [Unclear talking.]

5:56 A man's voice says that he hasn't more than glanced it [not sure what]. He'd like to have more time on it, but says that it's up for the commission to decide if they want to vote on it now. [Unclear discussion.]

A man's voice asks if anybody would like to ask questions from Dr. [William Ransom] Wood. Someone says that as he understands, it is a proposal by the University of Alaska to the governor, and that the North Commission is getting between [unclear]. [Unclear talking.]

8:38 Another man addresses Mr. Chairman and tells a joke about his grandmother [unclear]. Mr. Chairman [?] says that Don Manley had a good point and that that is something he would like to have the commission's opinion on because it is based on the development of the North. He says that it's somewhat in conflict with timing and they have to weigh them together [still not sure what they are talking about]. He hasn't studied the proposal that seems to be concise and says that "you" might give a recommendation to Governor's office on their following day's meeting.

The chairman [?] asks if anybody else has comments about Mr. Smith's grandmother.

10:30 Someone asks if the department of natural resources and the department of economic development have staff to do what the university is proposing. Another man says that the department of economic development doesn't have the technical staff to pinpoint the type of development that they are speaking about. In their newly created industrial development division, they can [unclear] development specialist. They have assigned 4 development specialists to industries.

Their basic idea was that the development specialists would be promotional men that could receive ideas about development, get information together, visit the site and the people, and then come back. Then the resource and planning chief and an economist could to research on the project. After that, they would move the idea down to marketing and transportation specialists and finally, a financial specialist would work in the area of public and private financing. The idea is to put together a small package for development.

13:30 The speaker hopes that the listeners have a better idea about resources in their department. In addition, they operate the Alaska Centennial Commission, the Alaska Travel Division and a federal program that concerns economic development districts throughout the state. They don't have technical staff for mineral exploration like the Department of Natural Resources does.

Another speaker says that the Department of Natural Resources doesn't have the kind of technical people or time to go into the kind of depth that the University has proposed. The Department of Natural Resources couldn't do the whole job but they could help.

15:18 Someone addresses Mr. Chairman and says that he suspects that the governor has some influence on the University of Alaska and is sure that he has influence in the division of Mines and Minerals and Economic Development.
[Unclear talking.]

A man says that he is proud of being in the North Commission but that he wonders if the only thing they need in order to make Alaska a great country is a railroad. They have a heck of a problem in selling Alaska to the [unclear] but for most of the

people in the States, Alaska is a far off place and getting an appropriation for Alaska is more difficult than getting one for things that people know more about. They have to develop something to make people in Lower 48 see that they are a dynamic organization and not just talking, and that they don't just want a railroad, but a railroad and all the things that go with it.

18:26 If they came up with a new concept that the DOT could afford to invest in, that thing would also work outside of Alaska. They have lots of factions in Alaska and in Lower-48 who think that transportation needs would be solved by building roads, or by utilizing rivers and so on. There is no such thing as one transportation system and they have to take all things into consideration. It would be sensible to think a bit broader about what they are trying to accomplish, which is something that would improve the economy of the state and make it better for people to live in.

If they think about a combination of a railroad, an automobile road, and landing strips and a pipeline, they have a project that requires ingenuity in engineering, which is something that could capture the interest of the DOT. They would have a plan where roads, airstrips and pipelines would be factored in. The speaker asks people to take the problem to their students at the University to see what they came up with. They want to dedicate their time and effort to accomplish something and not look back a couple of years later and regret doing nothing.

23:09 They will build a railroad and they need to build a bridge. One could build a bridge that could handle automobile traffic, railroad, and a pipeline at the same time and that would be cheaper than build those things independently. Regarding surveys, one can make surveys until they have spent all their money. They have to have a publicity program that would be similar than the one that Miami did in order to make Miami as popular as it is. They have to have an enthusiastic person to write the report to explain to the people in Lower-48 how the project would benefit them. [Unclear.] The railroad would be the basic thing around which the other projects center.

25:23 A man reminds that they have a tour waiting for them and asks that the further comments be short. A man says that the North Star Borough has a statement to make and asks if there will be time for that the following day. They

have ideas about transportation on the Yukon River and want to talk about [unclear talking.]

Another man says that he thinks that one can't zero in on just a railroad and that it is needed. Transportation has to be developed with the whole picture in mind and not just one portion. For years, there has been a thought about a road to Nome that is one of the most mineralized areas of the state. That has dragged on for 20 years. A railroad would connect North Slope and Seward Peninsula.

28:30 They came up with an idea of a system of ferries and roads that would utilize the existing roads and the Yukon Drainage, that stretches from the coast to border. They would get from Eagle to Circle, from where a highway goes to Fairbanks and is almost complete until Tanana. They could utilize 220 miles of ferry system on the Yukon River, and then 200 miles of yet to be built road into the Seward Peninsula.

Throughout the years they have built their roads to federal standards and sometimes beyond the need of the state because they are developing roads that are strictly developmental and don't need to be built to a high standard. Congress authorized a study by Walter Smith [?] some years ago, which came with a recommendation that Alaska be granted money for maintenance and also for a treasury road system that could be built to a much lower standard than federal primary and secondary roads.

31:01 Sanders [?] tells that they will pledge themselves to remain sensitive for the kind of integrated development concept that he's seen emerge. He is unable to stay until the end of the conference but thinks that it's an exciting experience. His parameters include social and economic considerations and their resources are primarily human resources, but development is an integrated concept and the speaker would like to work with the federal team and with the commission. Their agency funds [?] education and training that is to develop in harmony with the kind of a thing that they see emerging from the commission. He thanks the listeners.

33:28 [Unclear talking, discussing following day's schedule.] Commission is recessed.

[End of the recording.]