

Call number: 01-74-09 PT. 1

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

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Notes: Original on 7 inch reel.

Recording begins with unclear discussion about transportation and the needs of oil companies.

7:30 A man says that they heard from the Commissioner of Highways that it would cost the state \$4 million [unclear] but the speaker thinks it's going to cost more than that. Commissioner desires to get the area open as fast as possible and they have several methods of doing that. They are going to have Fairbanks as a staging area for aircraft traffic and [have] maximum use of the winter trail that would be built before a permanent road would be built [unclear].

Another speaker says they could develop the road but cautions that they should consider how much they would be able to haul in any given time. They want to get land transportation. [Unclear discussion.]

12:26 Chairman says that Mr. Philial [sp?] has a question. Philial asks if "they" would be willing to ship overland on the winter trail for [unclear], and if the highway would be paid from tax money. [Unclear discussion.]

13:35 A man's voice tells that in 1966, a special highway fund was initiated by the Congress to fund something like \$70 million dollars over 5 years. \$14 million dollars per year were appropriated to the State of Alaska but in 1966 no monies were made available, so Alaska lost 14 million that is not recoverable. In 1967, \$5 million dollars was appropriated so they lost \$9 million. In 1968, the \$5 million dollars were frozen so they didn't get the monies appropriated in 1967 and they haven't received appropriations from the fund. In essence, they haven't got a

dime from monies that were granted by Congress. [Unclear talking. Laughter and applause.]

15:21 Another man [?] says they must “bust loose this money,” but in doing that, [unclear]. He thinks that Senator Bartlett stated it well in his letter that the uniqueness and the availability of funds in an existing railroad act of 1914, [unclear]. [Unclear talking.] The speaker would like to have every help he can to get the highway money loose.

[Unclear discussion.]

18:00 A man asks if pushing for a winter access road would jeopardize getting the railroad. A man answers that they simply have to open up the Arctic and that it isn't his intention to open up the Arctic in one or two year basis. They don't have the funds to expend 1 or 2 million dollars for a thing that only last 3 or 4 months. He hopes that they could get an arctic trail [?] and not have Washington think that they are wasting money on short-term solutions instead of looking ahead.

The oil companies realize that they have programmed their whole Arctic operation for 90 or 120 day period, which becomes quite difficult. If they had a railroad going in, they could use it year round. Railroad wouldn't be for any one thing but the surface transportation will be beneficial “from time on.” Railroads aren't obsolete but increasing – not passengerwise but for [unclear]. It's a matter of economics: They could “take it in there” by rails cheaper than by Arctic trail.

20:04 Looking at the 20 years, during which the North Slope is going to be in development state, the speaker thinks that they agree that 25 years would be an accurate number for [unclear]. What the state government is trying to do, is to not panic and do something that is only going to be open for 90 days and cost 1-2 million dollars again each year. They have to have some kind of year-round transportation and the speaker thinks that putting a highway in would be difficult from a standpoint of having to fight all of the 50 states for allocation of funds.

The speaker thinks they have the only government owned railroad in the United States and it's unique in that private enterprise hasn't objected to that. The speaker says that the federal government has obligations as owner of the Alaska

Railroad. They aren't building a new railroad, but "extending a couple of tracks."
[Laughter and applause.]

22:11 No one wants to develop the Arctic trail worse than they do, and they have so much money that they could do both. The speaker says that they are getting the survey monies with which they can accomplish two things at once. The state and DOT can jointly get the project underway and develop a long-range plan that makes economic sense. [Applause.]

23:13 Another man asks Mr. Benson how important it is for oil industry to have their maintenance items close to North Slope and if time frame is more important than distance frame. [Unclear talking.] Another man's voice addresses Mr. Benson and asks if there isn't substantial amount of resupply items that are needed in matter of hours rather than in days. [Unclear talking. Mr. Benson says that they stockpile crucial items.]

The man continues that he's an exponent between Anchorage and Fairbanks for all surface transportation. He tells how last time he was in Fairbanks, he was in Interior Airways installation and he was happy to see "the stuff going outbound by air." He was dismayed to see almost as much coming in from Anchorage by air, so he asked why the type of commodities come by air to Fairbanks when there is an all-year transportation with daily service to Fairbanks, and the answer was that there is no storage space in Fairbanks. They just couldn't store the items in Fairbanks and had to fly them from Anchorage.

26:49 Many of the questions have been directed toward interim problems, like how Fairbanks could be assured a place in the supply fixture. If there was adequate storage space in Fairbanks, would it reduce "your" supply lines and still shorten the time span. [A man says that it certainly would, unclear talking.]

28:33 There is now surface transportation by rail to Fairbanks and the speaker is searching for the reason why supply base hasn't moved north from Fairbanks. "Your volume is down." [Unclear discussion.]

The speaker continues by asking that if economy of North Slope doesn't justify a supply house moving to Fairbanks, will the introduction of the ice haul road

enhance Fairbanks's importance in the supply chain before economy in North Slope builds to the point where supply houses will move to Fairbanks. [Unclear talking.]

30:17 An unclear man's voice says that they are all aware that their Native population poses a problem. [Unclear talking.] He asks if they would make a plan to employ Native people and [unclear]. Another man's voice says that that's a part of their program and that they are charged by the state "to do this very thing." [Unclear talking.]

34:04 Mayor Boucher asks if Fairbanks indeed has been found to have insufficient warehousing for the purposes of oil industry. [Unclear talking. Applause.]

[Unclear discussion.]

40:55 A speaker says that in order to answer to Mr. Boucher, one can travel all over all kinds of mountains at the Arctic Range, but one better go through Anaktuvuk Pass if one wants to get there the easy way. [Unclear talking.] There are easier and harder routes over the range. [Unclear discussion.]

42:21 A man's voice says he has had considerable numbers flying to the Arctic and he has perfected techniques of getting through [the range]. He has found areas where terrain is [unclear] but he wants to get across all of them. [Unclear talking.] Railroads have always been grade-conscious and they don't mind doing loops around terrain in order to avoid having to have 3-4 engines [unclear]. [Unclear talking.]

He thinks they have to think how much it is going to cost, [unclear]. [Unclear talking, laughter.]

46:18 [Preceded by unclear talking.] The railroad will serve other areas besides North Slope and the entire state and its industries will benefit. [Applause.] The Chairman says that they have room for one more question.

[A man's voice says something unclear, followed by laughter and discussion.]

[Another unclear question.]

48:57 The chairman says he wants to read an answer to the question under the law that the powers and the duties [unclear] is to secure and study all the information available, relating to the path and [unclear] studies, recommendations by state, federal and local governments, specifically dealing with the human, economic and transportation problems of Northern Alaska.

The chairman adjourns the meeting until the following day.

[End of the recording.]