

Call number: 01-82-01-06 PT. 2

Name and place: Alaska Science Conference: Man to the Environment

Date: 8/27/1969

Summary created by: Varpu Lotvonen

Date of summary's creation: 3/6/2015

Series: Alaska Science Conference

Notes: Original on ?-inch reel. Master copy on CD.

[Recording begins with applause.] A person invites Dr. Joseph Fitzgerald from Atlantic Richfield Company to speak. Fitzgerald addresses his "sleepy conservationist audience" and tells that he's going to be brief and pointed. Conferences demonstrate man's capacity to translate problems into words and in discussion, words are rearranged and hopefully crystallized into a thought. He was impressed by the speakers who pinpointed some key issues.

Fitzgerald wants to go back to what Dr. Darling said about England, "its environment, its one acre per person." Great desecration around cities isn't necessary at all which is evident when one goes to England.

2:30 England has had several thousands of years of intensive occupation. It has open spaces and beauty. The environment isn't merely to be consumed but it is to be lived in and used and changed, and the English people worry about the consumption of 10 acres a day.

Fitzgerald says that one of the points Dr. Darling made and that is a point of conflict between him and Dr. Caldwell is the possibility of oil and its impact in Alaska in making systems approach to economy. Maybe one of the reasons state governments have done badly in United States is the misapplication of funds between State and Federal Government.

4:05 Fitzgerald poses the question of what oil can do. He says that Alaska's resources like fisheries and timber have never produced much [revenue] for the government of Alaska. The government that was created at Statehood has a narrow economic base and most of the big installations and land are federally owned. Oil will give state of Alaska a revenue base with which it can do things.

Fitzgerald says that there's a good possibility for Alaska to do well with oil revenues and lots of the people present are dedicated to make the government work. They also recognize that most of the state is wilderness and that it will stay that way.

5:39 Then there's the problem of making their thoughts in ecology and conservation of the environment effective, and Fitzgerald thinks it hasn't been enunciated in governmental terms. He has spent a good deal of time with U.S. Government and in regulatory field. That governs his approach to the problems. They have had great difficulty in developing policy and getting in organizations that are responsive to the environmental problems of their times. The interest in ecology wasn't enough to bring pressure on to state or federal government for affirmative action.

There's a start in the Congress today. They can't ask a single agency to enunciate the basic policies because there's no single agency that is responsible for single aspect of environmental management that they must deal with. The logical place to begin with is in the Congress. The major thrust that Fitzgerald hopes is going to occur is to get the overall comprehensive statements through the Congress.

7:44 The government is administered by agencies. People have two problems: One is the control of the government itself, and the other is the control of the private sector. With regards to the control by government, which is a big operator, one can approach it through National Science Foundation approach. The approach has great attractiveness because "budgetary control is the one that gets and keeps the attention of the mule." One has to have that kind of a control in government, and it is a purely pragmatic decision one has to make.

The second problem is in the classical field of regulation, and government regulation is a very specialized subject that is hemmed in by many laws and practices. As Fitzgerald sees it, people will probably have to lodge "this" [not sure what] as an existing agency or to create a new one. Fitzgerald thinks that the logical body is the Department of the Interior. He adds that if they reorganized Department of the Interior, they would be re-equipping it to go to next century. Today, it represents series independent principalities that are largely hangovers from the 19th Century. Machinery usually outlasts its usefulness and that is a one thing that should be carefully thought about.

10:10 Fitzgerald says that he wants to talk about the role of the state. States are challenged but something should be said about their role. Under Constitution,

states have power that isn't necessarily granted to the federal government. No state power is normally involved in regulation of economic activity. There must be some device that will bring state policies in conformity with national policies. If there isn't, there's a conflict that results in frustration of activity. Art of the government is the art of getting something done, and the art of getting something done with the government is very much eliminating the conflict so that natural range of agreement can be asserted.

People have talked about cooperative federalism which is an under-implemented term. Fitzgerald strongly feels that some joint federal-state type of a machine needs to be developed. It has never been done before and Fitzgerald thinks it's going to be hard.

12:06 Fitzgerald says that most of Alaska is owned by the federal government and people aren't willing to accept federal ownership of the land. It is an excuse for new form of colonialism.

In Alaska, colonialism is a psychological problem of major proportions. Resources are a major economic force in people's lives but they are almost entirely under the control of federal government and the question of how they are administered is a delicate one. People in the nation are going to be [unclear] to the detriment of everyone. Fitzgerald urges that great consideration should be given to that point, and he is sure that people can put together joint organizations that can accomplish "it" [what?].

He says that meetings and conferences have been useful to the government, the academic world, and to industry in Alaska. [Applause.]

14:03 A speaker thanks Dr. Fitzgerald and says that the other discussant, Mr. William J. van Ness Jr., is from Northwest Washington where he received his bachelor's degree in law. He has been a consultant to the senate and Interior Insular Affairs Committee since 1966 and he has published articles in law review. He invites van Ness to speak.

Van Ness thanks Dr. Marns [sp?]. He tells that he's involved with thinking about "where do we go from here" and he's heard about problems with population, deterioration of the quality of life in cities, pollution, and poorly designed transportation systems that they have in most of the major U.S. cities.

They have a different set of problems in Alaska, but one of the concerns that has been expressed by the speakers today is that there's a real danger that they aren't

going to learn from their past experience, from the problems they now experience in civilization in Europe and in USA. They have an opportunity to capitalize on the past failures and go to new directions.

People in Europe and in lower 49 states feel like they have a stake in Alaska. Alaska is an opportunity to do things right. They should plan cities better than elsewhere. Great resources can be developed and the technology will assist with that. Resource development can improve people's lives and especially Native Alaskans' way of life.

17:11 At that interface, as technology comes and capital pours in, they have the opportunity to do something totally different with it. They can do things differently than they have in the past. That's why there's so much focus in Alaska. One of the greatest domestic problems they face is the interface between technology and the quality of life, and what values they want to perpetuate.

They have to talk about the very real problems of regulating major development such as the oil. They are all concerned about the matters but they don't have answers so they have studied them. Some people say that they shouldn't study but do something because the people who control the technology aren't going to wait for 5 years.

There's an important gap that they have to bridge by training ecologists, but that's not the answer. Van Ness thinks that the answer is for the people in the government and industry to adopt an ecological point of view and to look beyond the specifics of what is happening.

19:51 What Senate Bill 1075, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 is trying to say, is that federal agencies should put their own house in order and state the goals and values which the federal government shares as the representatives of people. Those things that they want to strive after are part of the government process and the bill has to state those things very broadly and generally because as soon as they get down to specifics of applying them, they have two polarized views on things.

There's a responsibility to try to maximize those values and man-environment relations. It was new and important, and it was a surprise to the speaker that the federal government is concerned over quality of life, water and air pollution, and that the government now has an agency that is concerned over those things. He adds that they also have "195 others who aren't concerned about it because that's not their mission."

21:44 What has been done with the legislation has been to state the broad environmental management goals and values and to state that the law is not amended and “this” is now a part of the mandate. That means a change in how the agencies conduct their business. Many construe enabling acts to limit what they can do in terms of environmental administration and management.

Atomic energy commission is a classic example. Their concern runs to radiation safety but not to the impact of thermos pollution to waters.

It's ironic that the government is that limited and narrow in their point of view. That means that in future, when the government wants to initiate an action, they have to sit back and take an ecological overview. They have to look at all the alternatives and all the relationships and make a sophisticated judgment on government's actions.

Mr. Fitzgerald was concerned about the government economic policy and how the change in the general statute will impact the state or the community or the federal-state relations. Now there's a directive to look at the whole in terms of value that one is trying to perpetuate.

23:45 When building a dam, one objective is to generate and sell power, but the important thing is to look at how the kilowatts are going to benefit man and to whom they are going to. They also have to look at the social and economic costs of building a dam, which is the case with Rampart Dam.

There are tremendous social costs and problems that haven't been looked at. The bill would attempt to evaluate the social costs and the bill also has a number of actions forcing provisions because one of the problems of the policy is that it sounds fine and people can adhere to it, but they can also ignore it.

They all pay some adherence to policies that seem to involve the values that are widely shared, but when it comes to action, they are very often ignored.

25:30 Third section of the bill is research and intelligence function in terms of what people are doing to the environment, land base, air and water around us. If they continue the trends that are underway in Alaska, they will have to evaluate where they will be in 20-30 years and if that's where they want to be. It's especially important in developed, industrialized states to have a feel for what the trends are and what forces are pushing them.

Fourth section of the bill is that it establishes a board of environmental advisors in the office of the president and the board is patterned after the council of economic advice.

27:08 The fifth aspect of the bill is that it requires an annual environmental quality report that will establish baselines and tell whether they have made progress in a variety of areas that involve satisfaction in man-environment relationship.

He closes his speech. [Applause.]

The announcer thanks Bill and says that his criticism might be valid in that they have identified their hunger. It is nice to hear that the bill is in the mail and that they are going to “get fire started.” The time is running out, but the announcer welcomes questions for Bill.

28:11 A man’s voice says that Fitzgerald alluded to something that needs clarification. He tells that the people who are in federal government or civil service in Alaska recognize that the job is bigger than all of them and that the primary effort ought to be in collaboration between state and federal agencies. [Unclear talking, noise.] Van Ness says that that was a large bill.

In his testimony for Senate Public Works Commission last year, he testified on the problem of development in Alaska and how he thought it should be reorganized in relation to the state and how the two should be brought together. There has to be some form of equality in participation and they need organization to do it. They need new committees that can be brought together on both sides. They can’t be brought together solely under federal chairmanship and that’s why they have the dual chairmanship approach. The speaker urges them to give “us” a chance to work.

In addition, when they talk about environmental problems, they have to expand beyond state and federal levels and allow for public participation. He recommends that they draft up some proposals along those lines, but he feels that nothing happens without proper framework. Conservation is hung up on the government. They aren’t organized for it state-wide or federally, and that’s why the Van Ness touched the problem briefly this morning.

31:12 A person has a question for Prof. Caldwell: Dr. Scott implicated that decision making was the crux of the question of implementation of technology. Prof. Caldwell had mentioned policy and the speaker was hoping he would indicate how the policy decisions were made. It sounded like he was telling Alaskans what

to do with their resources. He became [unclear]. The speaker asks on what basis Prof. Caldwell assumes that these are the policy choices to be made.

He tells that he reacts as a Canadian who is caught up in the same context. He identifies with Alaskans rather than with panelists, but he's determined to [unclear] the assumption and he studied land policy in USA and in Canada for many years. He says that there's nothing in the history [unclear] in Canada or in the USA that shows that the federal government has been [unclear] in either countries. There's nothing in the previous history prior to the discovery of Prudhoe Bay, which suggests that [unclear due to feedback noise] has shown foresight.

The speaker doesn't want to exacerbate the relationships but he thinks it's a positive rather than negative thing to suggest that the condescension should stop and the state can be shown to have positive things. In many ways they could be done better and bigness doesn't guarantee superiority in decision making.

The speaker asks Prof. Caldwell on what basis a contribution can be made about the process of decision making.

33:31 Prof. Thompson [as identified later] says that he wasn't aware that his remarks were directed toward specific policies or decision processes of Alaska. He says he tried to avoid that and he doesn't consider himself competent to comment on what Alaska ought to do. He was trying to state the context in which those decisions were going to have to be made. With respect to the competence of the state, his remarks weren't meant to be condescending. He agrees that bigness doesn't necessarily mean betterness and he could document failures and inequities of federal government and the state. There has been notable examples of foresight and effectiveness in some of the states. He says that the aggregate, the record of state government in the United States, doesn't encourage the thought that Alaskan State Government can handle the situation.

Thompson continues that he can concur with the thought that there needs to be a partnership and institutional innovation. They need to combine the resources of the federal government and the state and for his part, Caldwell hopes that they can take a very positive view in demonstrating how that relationship could be effective in Alaska and set an example for Lower-48. He didn't want to leave people with negative or condescending impression. He wanted to pose a challenge in realistic terms.

36:08 The previous speaker asks Thompson to identify himself and he says he is Professor Thompson from UBC [University of British Columbia?]. The speaker

says that other questions should be asked privately and thanks the panel.
[Applause.]

[End of the recording.]