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A Conference on the Future of Alaska Session 1 (no date)

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Notes: Original on 7 inch reel, copy on CD

Dr. John Osman begins the recording by saying that they do want to adjourn at 10 [unclear if am or pm]. Dr. Osman says there will be reports from various policy planning sections. Due to the courtesy of Mr. [C.W.] Snedden, Dr. Osman says he has a number of complaint blanks that he would be glad to make available to people. Dr. Osman says it is not Brookings [Institute] policy to invite complaints. There is a crowd listening to Dr. Osman speak. There is a sprinkling of laughter in the crowd as Dr. Osman discusses potential complaints. Dr. Osman says the headlines [newspapers] may be right, and that "We are sagging a bit." Dr. Osman says he believes in intellectual work when there are major programs such as this one. He wants to remind the people that policy is a very beautiful thing. Dr. Osman suggest that regardless of the policy planning process there are a number of things going on that are making policy for people. Dr. Osman hopes that one of the products of a program like this one might make people conscious of the policy making process. In the Daily News-Miner there was a long editorial about Fairbanks going professional to bring new business. There's a development of this and a mention of the trip to Calgary and the statement is advocating a certain policy. Dr. Osman says editorials are always policy. He says there are policies on the front pages too. On the front page of the Daily News-Miner, there's a report that the mayor of Fairbanks is back from Tokyo and that there will be offices from businesses in Tokyo in Fairbanks. On an inside page of the newspaper there is a story about Alaska Airlines hoping that next summer they will have 11 flights to Siberia. This morning at breakfast, Dr. Osman says he heard 3 people talk about going to Siberia.

Dr. Osman says the people are making decisions on the issues that Mr. Dyckman [?] put before them yesterday. Dr. Osman discusses using policy to preserve the Alaskan lifestyle. He continues talking about policy and hopes that the people attending the conference will take the next couple of weeks to use the information learned at the conference to improve policy making. Dr. Osman says the last three days' goals have been to put the premises of policy into place. He says the people have made history because for the first time the citizens of a state have gathered together to generate policy [It is becoming clearer and clearer that policy is and will be the main topic of discussion]. Dr. Osman says that the people in Alaska are highly a lay people who are involved in a highly political process. Dr. Osman asks rhetorical questions such as: "What is the goal of the people of Alaska?" and "What is the civic purpose of Fairbanks?"

Dr. Osman says as they've talked together for the last couple of weeks in preparation, there have been two subjects that deserve attention. One is the development of human resources in Alaska, all of

Alaska. Dr. Osman says Alaska is going to have to slide laterally into an advanced economy. He says the next session is going to be talking about the development of human resources in an advanced economy. Dr. Osman discusses that the Fairbanks editorial talks about the infrastructure that Fairbanks is going to have to have if it's going to have development. He says it's really a "trans-for-mation". He says everyone will meet at 8 o'clock at the Westmark Hotel in the Aleutian Room. There will be a presentation. They will take the papers that have been produced and people will break up into groups and have discussion. Dr. Osman believes there needs to be less focus on environment and more on human resources development. He says there is a certificate for participating in the program from the Brookings Institution which is a center for advanced studies. It's written in letters of gold that the Brookings Institution is a center of advanced studies.

Dr. Osman says the four individuals along with him are open to discussion. Dr. Osman says he will take the brunt of the comments after the papers are read. There is Mr. D.H. Cuddy, Mr. Rasmuson, Mr. Reardon, and Mr. Harold Pomeroy. Dr. Osman says let's hear from Mr. D.H. Cuddy from Anchorage, who will read the report from that group.

Mr. Cuddy, from Alpha Group, says that the report he is sharing is purely what transpires from the meetings. No votes or decisions were made. There were just ideas exchanged. He says most members from the Alpha Group agree that most of the monies from both principal funds of 9 million dollars and its interest should be used to solve social and economic needs of the state. Though few priorities were attached to these needs many areas of concern were sited. Prominent among the concerns was expansion and upgrading of economic facilities. Of special concerns: no vocational training provisions, no kindergarten, and an inadequate secondary school system for rural Alaska. Urban enrollment outpaces current physical plants and only a low percentage of Alaska Natives are college graduates. Well-funded research institutes for marine, forestry, and polar programs are also a priority for people. A second area covers health and welfare needs. There are problems of safe water supplies and inadequate waste disposal. There are also concerns of mental health needs and alcoholic rehab, drug misuses. Expanded hospital or clinical services were also discussed. The answer for rural Alaska might be mobile medical and dental teams. For general welfare, the concept of having a minimum living standard was explored. There were disagreements about the establishments of such standards. Mr. Cuddy says there was also discussion of FHA loans and matching funds utilized for community improvement. He says many of the current programs are funded by financial institutions that are struggling under increased financial burden. It is believed that an enlarged transportation network is also a priority. Some members of the Alpha Group say that if industrial activity went unmonitored, there might be an unfavorable impact on the state. Some felt that land needs to be set aside for state park and recreation areas while continuing to select Alaska land for its commercial value. A call for full time paid legislators was made by the Alpha Group, according to Mr. Cuddy. The idea of a trust fund made up of money received was also discussed at the meeting, according to Mr. Cuddy. The trust fund would be created to benefit future generations. One suggestion is that the state's constitution forbids the creation of special funds and perpetuity. Another issue discussed was bank profits from loans. Some members agreed that banks should be given the opportunity to follow traditional methods. General consensus was reached on the subject of taxation. Possible elimination of small nuisance taxes

and a regressive business tax may be positive steps. Revenue sharing with political subdivisions might help to reduce tax burdens on individual citizens. Mr. Cuddy ends his speech at 26:25.

Mr. Elmer Rasmuson is the chairman for the Beta Group. Mr. Rasmuson begins speaking at 26:45 of the recording. Mr. Rasmuson says that since there are two bankers reporting in a row we should notice the importance of the service industry in Alaska. Mr. Rasmuson says that the excellent diction in the report is due to Herb Adams. Continuing the Alaskan lifestyle was the seminal goal among the Beta Group. Most members of the Alpha Group felt that careful use of the oil resource well would excite this lifestyle. Alaskans have a unique choice in that they can choose a mold for the future of a state. Mr. Rasmuson says it was difficult to even define what the Alaskan lifestyle actually is. He says that slowly the thinking started to take shape and Seminar Beta went to work. Mr. Rasmuson says most of the members from the workshop want Alaska to remain the way she [Alaska] is today. They want to preserve the quality of life in Alaska. Seminar Beta attempted to establish policy that would affect the future policy of all wealth. Seminar Beta began patterning lifestyles of the future, from the 1980's and beyond. The program must be daring and willing to take new looks at old paths. The group felt that the settlement to Native Lands Claims will not end poverty among Native people; rather it will be a beginning that will take many years to take a total effect. Beta Group believed that their objectives can be achieved by proper utilization of oil revenue. The 900 million bonus windfall and subsequent revenues was aimed at three major investment areas: investment to bring greatest monetary return, investment in the development of the natural resources, and investment into human resources. Mr. Rasmuson subsequently breaks the three options down. The seminar members urged a research survey program and offered the following breakdown of ingredients. Under research surveys they identified five ingredients: 1) health/education/welfare, land classification, communication, economics, and cultural. 2) State wide surveys planned to coordinate regional surveys. 3) Establish continuing seminars for continuing priority items. 4) Estimate state income and determine priority. 5) Faith in the continuing conversation in the conference entity. Mr. Rasmuson says the members of the workshop have gone through a painful process in the effort to figuring out how to begin to begin. Mr. Rasmuson begins listing the needs of the area as discussed by his "Beta Group."

At 34:00 of the recording, Jim Reardon begins discussing topics brought up by the Gamma Group. Jim Reardon is from Homer. Reardon says the reporting committee for Gamma Group decided they needed a slogan. The slogan is "Great Aims Move Mighty Alaska." There were basic topics discussed. All talks were characterized by unselfishness. Prevalent was discussion about Alaska having the ability to find their way. Gamma Group believed whatever program is adopted should meet short and long term needs. The program should also be flexible. No one in the group felt that Alaska should have a free ride. The group felt certain values were important. These values included: environment, limited population inflow, independence, serenity. The group also discussed things that are not wanted. These things include: crowded highways, traffic congestion, pollution, colonialism, restrictions on individuals, racial problems. The group believed the new wealth would allow Alaska to enhance the values and even do it faster. Another belief was that future royalties should be for all Alaskans, present and future. Investment for present problems would aid future conditions was also discussed among Gamma Group according to Mr. Reardon. Regional differences should be recognized in any investment plans.

Education seemed to underline most areas of discussion in Gamma Group. There was a special emphasis on rural schools by Gamma Group. Airports and housing were also a discussed need. Alaska fisheries are believed to have great potential for growth. Investment opportunities discussed by Mr. Reardon included the red meat industry such as reindeer. Subsidies were considered and not disregarded in Gamma Group. Interest in industry was not lacking. Some concerns were increased of population, and types of economy, and locales of industry. Revenue sharing by state to local communities was welcomed by all in Gamma Group. The group felt that available tools such as the state's government structure were adequate for the most part to handle money used. The group was reluctant to add another bureaucracy [a trust] and felt that the checks and balances of a government's department were important. They were willing to change in direction and administrations for the opportunity to have more control of the spending. It was suggested that Alaska should look into changing some government aspects for socialistic approaches. The reporting group would like to commend Warren Ziegler in leading the discussion and the editorship of Betsy Woodman was outstanding.

At 44:45 Mr. Harold Pomeroy of Soldotna is reporting for the Delta Section. Dr. Osman starts discussing Mr. Pomeroy's brother. Dr. Osman says he was Mr. Pomeroy's brother's neighbor in Westchester County, New York. Mr. Pomeroy says "Thank you for those words concerning Hugh [Pomeroy, Harold's brother]." The group Mr. Pomeroy is reporting on is the Delta Group. Mr. Pomeroy says that Delta Group's position on trusts is that they are not needed. Delta Group also says that expenditures should be made only in accordance with comprehensive long range plans. There was a concern for lack of plans to begin with. Mr. Pomeroy says he was reminded of a [Robert] Zelnick interview of the legislature council chairman Gene Geist [?]. Pomeroy says that there was a lot of discussion and attention to education. Delta Group believes in upgrading education systems on all levels. Pomeroy says that also discussed was a program of comprehensive health planning to be undertaken. The group discussed the idea that funding from extracted resources be used to fund renewable resources. Delta Group also recommends an appropriation from the state general fund to be used for developing a positive state position on a timely settlement on the Alaska Native Land Claims. On the subject of Alaska Native Land Claims, a minority of the Delta Group said that the Native Lands claims has nothing to do with these meetings and a majority claimed that the planning would be incomplete if the Alaska Native Land Claims were left out. The dangers of inflation problems were also discussed. The group believes steps should be taken to improve public management including the elected systems to achieve greater responsiveness to the public interest. Mr. Pomeroy discusses a little town out in the Yukon Valley some years ago that Dr. Defoe told Pomeroy about. The town had a one room school and they achieved some progress in their infrastructure: they were going to use oil heat instead of wood. After they installed the oil heat there was nothing for the woodcutter to do so he had to leave with his six children and they had to close the school.