

Call Number: 02-00-37

A Conference on the Future of Alaska – Cooley

Summary created by: Jacob Metoxen

Date of creation of summary: 3/13/2013

Notes: Original on 7 inch reel. Master copy on CD.

A man says "Thank you, John." There is crowd muttering in the background. Cooley says it is a pleasure to be at the conference organized by the Brookings Institution. This is the third seminar on the quality of the environment. Cooley says man's technological prowess has both negative and positive implications for his future on this earth. The specific subject assigned to Cooley is the policy of development vis-à-vis a policy of conservation, a land use policy for the future of Alaska. Cooley says he is going to look at the broader connotations of environment quality. Cooley says we must look at two culprits that have confused the real issue: development and conservation. Their popularity produced an artificial polarization of people's thinking into one or the other of these extremes. Cooley says this is a central point to this book on Alaska land policy which Cooley understands John sent out to almost everybody. In a chapter titled "Development vs. Conservation", Cooley says Alaska has seemed to have attracted a number of people who fit into both categories. The development type has the attitude of what George Rogers said "the 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue on the tundra syndrome." Cooley says that those who take the extreme development route don't realize in their zeal they maybe sacrifices the unique natural values which in the long run are the only real values for a productive Alaska. The other extreme is the immoderate preservationists. They come to Alaska to get away from the rushing industrial environment. Cooley says a state like Alaska, who was previously in a state of bankruptcy, is in no position for preservation pressed too hard. Cooley says the polarization of views must be overcome if we wish to meet the needs of people in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

8:35 Cooley suggests there is a way to balance the dichotomist way of development and conservation, it is called environmental management which is based on the recognition that society's problems have changed greatly in the past decades and that our existing economic and political institutions have not adjusted accordingly, leading people to focus on the wrong issues. Cooley says we must begin with the recognition that the economic system in the country has been extremely successful. He says there are still pockets of poverty in the country that are ethical problems that can't be solved by increasing the rate of economic growth. Cooley says the United States has moved from general poverty to general affluence but we still cling to the idea of more and faster economic growth. Cooley says the United States is beginning to recognize that the economic system also produces some serious side effects that are coming to plague us. There are consequences such as noise, pollution of litter, polluted lakes, urban and rural blight, deterioration of fish and wildlife resources. Cooley says we are beginning to realize that these side effects are having broader implications than what we originally thought. He says there is a dangerous illusion that technological man can build bigger without regard to modern environment.

Recent studies show that nuclear fallout may have implications on infant mortality rates all over the globe. Cooley says there is also the increase in carbon dioxide to the upper atmosphere that is a result of the burning of fossil fuels. He says this is alarming because of the believed "Greenhouse Effect" that will increase the temperature of the Earth's surface. Dr. Barry Commoner has pointed out in his book "Science and Survival" that "like the sorcerer's apprentice, we are acting on dangerously incomplete knowledge. We are in effect conducting a huge experiment on ourselves." Andree Sakharov [Soviet physicist] writes of the senseless despoliation of the Soviet Union caused by bureaucratic and egotistical interest. The problem with Earth hygiene according to the Soviet Union is tied to economic and social problems. The problem can't be solved on a national or local basis. Cooley says that the changing conditions force all of us to redefine our goals no matter where we live. Cooley says it is useless to try and preserve a wilderness area only to be crowded by continuous smog. Cooley says the shift won't be easy because our thought process has been programmed to think in a certain way that is geared toward an earlier era when life was much similar.

19:45 Cooley says there are healthy signs. As environmental deterioration has compounded in the last decade, complacency has become the hall mark of only those few who cannot comprehend the obvious. This has resulted in television specials, books, and magazine articles that bring up relevant issues. Cooley says there has been an awakening in the political sphere which has resulted in Congress passing a record amount of environmental legislation in the 1960's as well as in a few state legislatures. Cooley says the issues of environmental policy have become potentially as explosive as Vietnam and civil rights among students on college campuses. Cooley discusses an article out of the Christian Science Monitor by Robert Khan. The article is titled "Youth Take Over at National Environmental Conference." Cooley discusses activity at the National Conference at the United States Commission for UNESCO and how 500 civic leaders at the conference appeared to welcome the revolt regarding man and his environmental view towards survival. One of the participants at the conference was Robert O. Anderson who is board chairman of Atlantic Richfield Company. Mr. Anderson said he wouldn't be surprised if some of the activists, who fiend their efforts going toward opposing the war in Vietnam, found their next focus against projects that despoil the environment. Cooley says it's clear that the young generation abores the environmental mess they see around them and they seem bent to do something about it. Cooley says Alaska has made a quantum jump in the last third of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Cooley says that the Alaskan governmental organization is the envy of most of the states of the union. Cooley begins discussing about Alaska's financial situation. Cooley says in 1969 Alaska moved from one of the poorest states to one of the richest states in the nation in per capita terms. Cooley says that two major constraints, political and economic, have now been removed for all practical purposes from Alaska. The basic question now is "How should Alaska respond to this new found freedom?"

30:50 Cooley begins discussing the Puerto Rican experience and Operation Bootstraps. Cooley mentions a professor of law at the University of Puerto Rico, Dr. Jaro Mayda, who has written a book at Puerto Rico history. According to Dr. Mayda there are no questions concerning the actual growth of Puerto Rican gross domestic product and its favorable material consequence but the process has been one sided economically, uncontrolled environmentally, and too rapid socially. Mayda concludes that Puerto Rico today is face after less than a generation, with a serious question as to whether the community has

progressed as a culture or only as a body of income and statistics. Former govern Luis Munoz Marin is the architect of Puerto Rico's prosperity and confessed in 1967 that the eternal idea of a good life for the whole community was lost in the exclusive pursuit of economics. The cost of doing business in Puerto Rico has increased significantly. Cooley says that Dr. Mayda coined the term "eco-management", which is a way to examine all the consequences of an act both good and bad before it is actually tried.

36:38 Cooley discusses that people have the working philosophy that what happened in Puerto Rico, can't happen in Alaska. It is true that environmental deterioration hasn't occurred in Alaska like it has in many stages of other parts of the country. This is why the future of Alaska is so exciting. There is no reason for an attitude of complacency in Alaska, Cooley says. The state is now confronted with crucial environmental decisions, emanating with the great oil discoveries. Dr. Don C. Foote wrote a paper titled "Geographic Engineering in the North" and Cooley discusses how Foote listed and described 32 different concrete proposals for large scale engineering projects scattered throughout the North Polar region. Some of the projects would modify small portions of the total northern environment while others would bring vast changes to the entire North Polar regions. There are different proposals to reduce ice in the Northern Polar region to encourage year round shipping. Another proposal is to put aerosols into the atmosphere to accomplish a greenhouse effect. There are numerous proposal to excavate canals via nuclear explosives and to use the nuclear devices to attain oil. Cooley then discusses more proposals including canals, dams, storage facilities, and the North American Water and Power Alliance. NAWAPA would bring water from Canada to the United States via canals.

43:00 Cooley begins speaking about how gradualism in the Lower 48 has somewhat masked the full environmental costs of material abundance. In Alaska there has been and will be a sudden confrontation. Cooley discusses all of the different investment opportunities Alaska has gotten into and will in the future. Cooley says 25 years from now we want to say Alaska is a better place, so now we have to decide what a better place is. Cooley says three things are required to overcome a future painted by Dr. Mayda previously. These things are: the will to act in a responsible fashion toward the environment, the need for much more precise scientific and ecological knowledge to base policy decision, and new governmental institutions must be developed at the state level. Cooley refers to a concluding statement of a congressional conference on the environment held in Washington D.C. last month. It was pointed out there that if the elected representative in congress fail to respond to the public demand for a healthy environment, then the democratic process is not working. The chairman of that congressional conference was former senator Ernest Gruening. Recently the governor of California launched a state wide program for a clean environment with the charge that if we can make it work here, you'd be surprised how fast other states will follow. Cooley agrees with the notion but does not think California has a chance because the destruction has already gone so far. Cooley says there are some 200 million Americans who still own 90% of Alaska and they aren't likely to remain calmly on the sidelines if Alaskans don't accept the responsibility. The evidence at hand is that the national interest of the future of Alaska is extremely strong. The secretary of the Interior has refused to allow a private interest to reshape a significant portion of Alaska's environment without first giving careful consideration to the effects of their proposal on the national interest.