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A Conference on the Future of Alaska – Cooley

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John Osman says he arrived at 6 am and had hoped that Mr. Eaton [No first name provided] was there to help him but he wasn't. Osman says we are dealing with a historic issue. Ever since the founding of the United States, the United States has had a "Manifest Destiny." Frederick Jackson Turner stated a thesis that the whole history of the United States could be interpreted through the significance of the frontier. Jackson then said the United States is going through a new experience called the Urban Frontier. Osman says Americans were always opening up frontiers because they had to expand their markets. The ever enlarging markets are discussed by Frederick Jackson Turner, according to Osman. The volume written by Turner describes Alaska as "The New Frontier." Osman discusses how the previous evening Dick Cooley brilliantly pointed out that after almost a century, the economic restraints and political restraints that had been affecting Alaska had been removed. Osman says Alaska is no longer a colonial possession of the United States and subject to National Policy. Osman says it is time for Alaska to assert an Alaskan policy. He says the removal of the restraints has been the removal of geographical restraints. He says that the group at the conference is trying to identify the technological developments in order to trace what their significance will be for Alaska. He asks "What if tele-mobility, as discussed in the article in the Kaiser News, comes to Alaska?" It is the impact of the technological change that threatens the kind of Alaska that it has been. Osman discusses the new construction necessary to build new technology. He tells the crowd that if they did get the chance to read the book "Toward the Year 2000" by Herman Khan and Weiner, the crowd should ask themselves the significance of the technology for Alaskan development. Osman says underneath all of the planning and anticipation should a desire of everyone's part to make Alaska a desirable and unique place. He says Khan mentioned a mid-Canada corridor concept which covers Canada from Whitehorse all the way over to the James Bay. This is a completely new concept that would make Canada unique with its own character and not be a reflection of the United States. Osman discusses about how the week prior to his discussion there was a television show about Siberia which showed that what the Soviet Union is doing to develop Siberia to adapt the ecology of Siberia. One of the more important subjects concerning Alaskans is the environment. He tells Dick [Cooley] and Ed [Higvee] that in the policy planning sections, progress can be made because it is there that all of everyone in the crowd has an input. He says the wisdom about Alaska is the crowds and a policy can be created to describe what the people want Alaska to look like and how people want it to be.

At 11:10 Osman asks Dick to continue to his presentation that he started to previous day [02-00-37]. Cooley steps up to the microphone and says he would like to deal with the points: 1) of the need to

designing new political institutions that can foresee and forestall environmental crisis and 2) the knowledge inputs that must go into the political system, that if you are to achieve a balanced rational management of the northern environment. Cooley says he has five different issues that he would like discuss and how new institutions can be designed to meet the problems. First there is a need for a better definition of goals and priorities and a related need for an overall view of the dimensions of the environmental problem. The key to understanding issue number one is to realize that the environment is highly complex and interference with one part of the system has repercussions with the whole system. Cooley says if we waited for complete knowledge before modifying the environment then we would never be able to act. The second issue is that both the federal and state governments need better ways of monitoring their own activities such as road building and construction to determine the environmental impact of their activities. The problem is that in the growth of the American political system, there are a number of agencies that have been created. Each agency has been specialized and with specialized groups attempting to serve their own needs and values. There is a third issue and that is the need for institutional mechanisms to collaborate of environmental problems. The problems cut across the entire political jurisdiction and become the problem of all cases of government. The fourth issue involves case of private activities affecting the environment. There is a need for restructuring of economic incentives and penalties associated with the private activities. The objective is to minimize environmental damage by treating the problem as a user cost. Cooley says we must reciprocate the cost from the government back to those who perpetrate the environmental damages. He says reciprocating cost to those who perpetrate environmental damages has been tried in other places, including the Ruhr Valley in Germany, which had very successful working with the approach by placing user cost on those who pollute the river. The feasibility of such approaches from a legal and legislative standpoint is a crucial issue in environmental policy that needs to be explored at a greater depth. The United States has established the Environmental Defense Fund. Cooley mentioned "Nader's Raiders." The fifth point is the need for new techniques which assure more participation of private citizens in environmental decision making. Cooley asks if there is a way to create a public forum to discuss environmental issues.

At 23:25 Cooley says an intensive exploration of the 5 points he brought up is not possible within the limits of his talk so he intends to focus on steps that can be taken by the Alaskan government to get its own environmental house in order. Cooley says in the last two years there has been a concerted effort to establish a national policy for the environment. The principal advocate in Congress of a national environmental policy has been Washington Senator Henry Jackson, Chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Similar proposals to Jackson's have been advanced by Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin and Senator Edwin Muskie of Maine. All together there have been 15-20 bills introduced in Congress dealing with developing a national policy on environment. Senator Jackson has been assisted by Professor Lynton K. Caldwell, professor of political science at Indiana University. The earliest Jackson Bill that was introduced in the 90th Congress 2 years ago contained 2 basic elements. First it proposed a program of ecological research and surveys to be carried out by the Department of the Interior. Second, it proposed creation on a council of environmental quality in the Executive Office of the President. This council would provide a point within the Federal Government where responsibility of the environment as a whole could be fixed. It was designed after the highly successful council of economic advisors also lodged in the Office of the President. The council established in 1946

with the passage of the Full Employment Act of 1946, has had quite a successful life. Through the proposed Council of Environmental Quality, the President would have access to a continuing overview on the environment. Senator Jackson was able to advance his bill during the present 91st congress and with negotiations with the present Congress, the Nixon administration, and with Senator Muskie. The bill is now before a conference committee between the House and the Senate and is expected to become law very shortly as the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

At 29:50 Cooley says he would like to take a look at some of the provisions of the bill that will most likely pass. The revised bill contains three elements: first it retains a council device, but the name was changed to the Board of Environmental Advisors, the new Board of Environmental Advisors is to be composed of three full time members chosen by the President, the Board is required to submit an annual report to the President on the state and condition of the environment. One of the most important functions of the new board is the power to review and praise all federal programs and require agencies to submit information concerning the impact of their activities on the quality of the environment. It is also intended that the board will be the one place to which the public and news media will turn for objective information about particular environmental problems. The second important aspect for the Jackson administration is that it spells out a statement of environmental policy. The success of the entire legislation depends on the implementation of the goals and objectives proposed. The policy statement accepts the stewardship of the environment as a national responsibility and asserts congressional recognition of each person's fundamental and inalienable right to a healthy environment. The third major section in the legislation gives every federal agency the authority to undertake necessary programs of ecological research. This is contrast to Jackson's earlier bill which would have concentrated most federal ecological research to the department of the interior. Cooley thinks the new major section is a smarter approach. One of the existing departments in the federal structure will be designated to coordinate and oversee ecological research and to assist and advise state and local governments in developing programs and procedures of research to enhance the environment. Cooley discusses some of the problems that are still intact even with the Board of Environmental Advisors at 40:00. He says there is a need for the Congress to get its house in order so it can handle environmental policy better and he thinks the same applies to state legislature.

Cooley says the success of the Jackson bill depends on a number of variables. One is the prestige of the three men appointed by the President. Another is an interpretation of the agencies themselves. Another is the funding available for the sections dealing with research. Also, the success depends on the attitude of the President. Cooley says that there has been relatively little interest in the environment among the state governments. Cooley says the states have a bigger problem with fragmentation. Competition between states and among states for industry weakens the incentives for environmental controls. The few states that have moved toward institutionalizing environmental policy, strong political leadership has come from the governor. The Council of State Governments is an influential group among the states and it is disappointing to find the Council referring to environmental problems as the old label of "Natural Resource Issues." California in 1968 created an Environmental Quality Council to make a thorough study of environmental quality and study regional mechanisms that might formulate broad policies. The governor of Maine created a task force on the Maine environment to study for the

future. The Governor of Vermont in May 1969 established a commission on environmental quality control to prepare comprehensive environmental legislation including the establishment of a permanent environmental control commission. The governor of Kentucky fought for and won approval of a package of environmental legislation in the last two years. New York has debated the passage of a constitutional amendment to establish a state policy to protect scenic beauty. The last session of the Washington State legislature considered but did not pass a reorganization bill to combine agencies for water and air pollution control and solid waste disposal in a new department of environmental quality. Dan Evans, the governor of Washington, has been active in environmental planning through sponsorship of two conferences, "Design for Washington" and "Decisions for Progress." The listing indicates some state have contemplated trying mechanisms for environmental quality improvement.

At 50:00 Cooley runs through a range of alternatives for environmental policy. First is the problems in execute branches of the government. First is the proposal for an independent executive advisory council. Cooley says this is the approach Senator Jackson is taking. It is an independent executive advisory council. One strength of the executive advisory council is that it is located in the executive branch of government at a high enough level that it can give full consideration to the range of environmental problems facing government. The problem is that its effectiveness is limited to advice, no prestige. Another arrangement is an executive office of environmental quality. Most chief executives already have staff support agencies. This could provide staff support. Some problems include getting involved in the day to day aspects it's liable to lose and detach from long term goals. The third mechanism is an executive advisory committee. This can help to provide a periodic forum for people to share views and formulate policy for the chief executive. The problem is frequently lax and inadequate staffs. Cooley then discusses a number of other options that are currently being used but are not effective.

Cooley says recently there has been a proposal for creating a department of the environmental at the national level and is now being considered by congress. Cooley says it won't get too far. The Washington legislature has had before it a proposal for a department of environmental quality. Cooley says one thing that can be said in favor of the departmental approach is that it does provide a mechanism to bring diverse groups together for the first time. A problem with the departmental approach is that it is hard to reorganize proposals. The department is also in a location in the executive branch that makes it difficult to take an overall view when there is conflict between and among departments. Cooley then lists a number of other possible approaches including an Office of Ecological Research, and an alternative to set up office for each department to do ecological research on their own. There is a proposal for a joint committee on environmental quality modeled after the joint committee on economical reports which was created in 1946 by the council of economical advisors. The recording cuts off.