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A Conference on the Future of Alaska – Higbee

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

Higbee begins by stating that it is very difficult to follow Dick Cooley and John Eberhard [t?]. He says he would like to state a formula that simplifies an idea he raised in a previous lecture at the conference. The formula would have R standing for resources, divided by P standing for population, and in the natural environment the resources divided by population would be the abundance of nature available per capita. Higbee says the agrarian situation has been one that humanity has been confined to for the past 10,000 years. Higbee says he would like to connect three minds from the past in relation to the formula. These minds are: Malthus, Darwin, and Marx. The recording cuts out from 2:30-2:35. Higbee then discusses imagination as it was discussed by John Eberhard in a previous presentation. He says with the emergence of the Einsteinian equation, all we know is altered. Higbee says if you put resources over population numbers and the amount of resources available per capita are a function of intelligence rather than conscious nature. Higbee says intelligence now has the possibility of being infinite. If the formula is true then all thinking that was done by Malthus, Darwin, and Marx is obsolete. Malthus says that if population increased to the point where there weren't enough natural resources, there would be starvation. Darwin said the fittest would survive. Marx said if there will be survival of the fittest, it better be the worker. Higbee discusses the new technology and if it is limitless, then society needs a new social mind to deal with it. Higbee says this idea was expressed in 1904 by the historian Henry Adams. Adams believed that by the end of the 20th century, man would have unlimited control of energy. Because of this, there would be a necessary change of social minds. Higbee says the responsibility of Alaska, with such potential, is to invent a new social mind.

At 9:28, Higbee says he would like to change the theme of the discussion. Higbee discusses the globalization of economic institution. Higbee begins discussing the Chamber of Commerce in Tucson, AZ. He says there is a program which is called the "Two Plant System." The Two Plant System works by finding an operation that is going on in some other state and bring it to the border, set up the design elements on the United States side, and whatever portion of the manual labor that needs to be done is put on the Mexican side. Higbee says the closer you get to the border the easier it is to connect the systems. The twin plant system is growing effectively all along the Mexican border. What it means is the plants operating in other parts of the country find it convenient to change location. Higbee discusses the opportunity for underdeveloped countries to enjoy wealth. Higbee discusses a trip to Puerto Rico from the previous summer in which he witnessed "Operation Bootstrap." He mentions the social implications of having raw materials shipped to other countries and having the other countries perform the labor. He gives another example of the company Computer Input. The company realized

girls in the United States were getting \$500 dollars a month to punch cards and take information and transpose them to tapes and the same job could be done in Bangkok Thailand for \$50 a month. Computer Input could fly material to Bangkok and bring back the finished product within 5 days. He says the point is that our economics are globalizing. There will be no such thing as national industries. He says the Soviet Union is also globalizing their economics. Higbee discusses the relationship between industrial nations and non-industrial nations.

At 17:30. Higbee says the conclusion for the industrial world would mean that a higher level of opportunity must be provided to individuals, an upgrading of the kind of work that cannot be done by the routine worker of the underdeveloped world. Higbee begins discussing the kind of education people are getting. He says in the future one could argue that the only kind of person who would be employable and maintain in the institutional structure of American society would be of the new engineering type who come out of the professional school able to do the design work that cannot be done in the underdeveloped region. The kind of people who work in Alaska would therefore be high caliber.

At 21:20 Higbee begins discussing Robert McNamara and a speech he made in Montreal in 1967. McNamara said that between 1957 and 1967, there were 164 uprising on the part of people in the underdeveloped world. There were only two such uprising in the industrial nations. Higbee says there are possibly two explanations for that: one is that the expectations of people in the underdeveloped world are not being met by sufficiently rapidly urbanization. Higbee gives the example of the expropriations of Peru. He says there is a contradiction in the United States' foreign policy and distribution of wealth. Higbee says the United States in investing in other countries which leads to raised expectations of the people, which leads to uprising, which leads to the United States investing in military suppression. If that is kept up, an infinite amount of federal funds can be spent and get nowhere. The lack of support from the federal government makes it difficult for states to create an adequate man-made environment, according to Higbee. There is clapping and the recording ends.