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A man's voice says he has a long history with the legislative branch in Alaska but he has never run for public office.

Jack Doyle, the executive director of legislative affairs, introduces himself and says that he has had a long fascination with the branch because when he first came to Alaska in 1952, he was shocked to find that legislature had no facilities and that it was powerless. He points out to other flaws that lead to the need for statehood. He did his master's thesis in Texas about Alaska statehood movement, and came to Alaska well informed.

2:40 He worked with Governor [Ernest] Gruening. [Talks about the lack of legislature library and how he suggested establishment of legislative council.]

He introduces Steve McCutcheon who is the eldest statesman of the group. He was the chairman of the legislature at the constitutional convention. They are going to have presentations, take a break, and then open the floor for discussion and questions.

5:12 Jack Doyle [sp?] invites Steve to speak. [Steve talks about fears in Alaskan legislature, history of Alaska's days as a territory, and organic acts.]

8:15 Steve continues that around 1935, congress decided to double the size of the two houses, which helped in eliminating lobby pressure. [Talking more about lobbying and political corruption that Steve thinks is minimal.]

Talking about deciding if their legislature should be bi or unicameral and how they decided on bicameralism.

12:03 One of the other things that they did in the legislative branch was to establish salaries. They didn't write that in the constitution, wanting to avoid minutia. Their sessions weren't limited because they felt that there was such a great deal of legal work that was necessary for transition into statehood.

One of the things that were considered was that no governor had ever called for a special session of the legislature before Governor Gruening came to Alaska.

14:20 They put in a clause that allowed the legislature to call for special session if they needed. They governor was given the power to adjourn the legislature in case the houses couldn't agree with each other and sessions would be prolonged. That has never been done.

One of the major departures from bicameralism was in that they felt that the governor should be able to veto anything but the veto could be overridden too.

16:58 Another departure from bicameralism was impeachment, and the speaker hopes that it will never be used. [Talks about impeachment procedures.]

The speaker thinks that they were very serious in thinking about how their state should be governed and the speaker thinks that there was very little partisanship in constitutional convention and that was reflected in the constitutional document. He thanks the audience. [Applause.]

18:46 The chairperson thanks McCutcheon and introduces former speaker of the house and a veteran of 9 years in legislature, Tom Fink of Anchorage. Tom says that the constitution has been excellent and on big scheme, the legislature is representative of people of Alaska. They make policies and executive executes them while judicial branch settles disputes and makes sure things keep constitutional.

It's important to have a group of people with time and means to think about problems and solutions. [Talking about cases where majority rule had been thwarted.]

21:03 [Talks about the relationship between the legislature and the executive, and about the powers that can be exercised.]

[Talking about areas that might benefit from changing, like reapportionment process and length of the session. The speaker is not in favor of unlimited time in sessions.]

24:21 Another area where there are some abuse is in the area of free conference committee. [Talking about conference committee reports.]

There are advantages in meeting jointly so that neither house can defeat an action but there have been also disadvantages. The speaker thinks that the legislature should take up confirmations shortly after they are made. The person who is

waiting can't do their job properly in fear that he or she might not get confirmed if he or she crosses too many legislators.

27:18 Talking about senate forcing legislature to take action.

The speaker has wavered between thinking that the governor has too much authority over the legislature, and thinking there's too little depending on whether he has agreed or disagreed with the governor. [Laughter.] He doesn't recommend changes to the power balance.

29:11 Change to unicameralism isn't in order and they have a problem of passing too many laws. Another problem is that they aren't reviewing legislation that is before them. Unicameralism might speed up and cut back review on legislation.

The chairperson thanks Tom and introduces speaker of the house, Mike Bradner from Fairbanks.

30:20 Mike says that it would be hard to dispute that Alaska has one of the superior legislative structures [sudden break in the recording.] Legislators can see that Alaska's legislative structure is good and needs to be protected. Their legislature is the most reformed in USA.

32:48 Their problems are the typical problems of bicameral system. One of them is the free conference committee which is an inherent part of the bicameral system. It is added to the system to increase inefficiency and confusion. [More about free conference committee.]

Free conference committee bears all the objections that are usually directed toward unicameral system. What might take 60 seconds in free conference committee system might take few days in unicameral system. [More about this.]

36:04 The legislature is also often spoken of as a one unit although it isn't. There's a difference in party structure and discipline to time when constitution was created. It added efficiency to bicameral process that doesn't exist today. They have legislators who are independent thinkers but that has weakened party structure and added to inefficiency.

They have to consider having a unicameral body later in the future. As efficiency is increased, the threat of unfortunate enactments rises. That has to be balanced with a rising number of professional advocacy groups like environmental groups.

38:49 They have 20-member senate and the speaker says they were inefficient and lend themselves to personality clashes which created problems as apportionment

took place. They now have senators with areas larger than Texas, in which they lack personal contact with constituents.

They also may have to consider change in constitution that would allow them to expand senate and solve problems of apportionment and other problems. Their uniformity rule mandates that they have to have 9 committees. They have 20 senators who race between different committee assignments.

That's in stark contrast with the house where Senator Gruening had a singular assignment for house committee and most everybody else has singular assignments too. That allowed them to devote their full time to developing a state budget. [More about the budget that is used as a bargaining tool.]

41:47 [The speaker questions $\frac{3}{4}$ override provision for line item veto and talks about legislature maturing into using powers that they have. They should use veto on executive decisions more often.]

They have unicameral and bicameral portions to the legislature. There is no provision that both houses will meet together, but meetings should happen. [Example of using refusal to meet as a control strategy.]

44:29 The speaker isn't a proponent of any immediate steps toward unicameralism but he thinks that it should be considered as an option. [Talking about views to flow of legislation.] They could make the bicameral system better but they should also give some thought to the unicameral system too.

46:18 The chairperson thanks speaker Bradner and introduces a junior member to the legislature, Clark Gruening from Anchorage. Clark thanks John for the introduction.

He says he's a first-termer and that after a complete term, there are some areas that merit discussion. Pervading issue is the professional legislature and the question of who they want to represent the people. [Talking more about limiting session length and allowing more people to serve. Professional politicians use the unlimited terms to their advantage.]

Gruening says that the important decisions are often made on the last day of sessions anyway, and setting a limit would encourage people to run for legislature. They have a full time legislature already despite of session times.

51:38 Pay is an important issue in guiding what kinds of people serve in the legislature. Pay should be adequate so that people from all walks would apply

instead of just people who live off of investment income. The sessions should be limited too.

At least 35 states have constitutional limits. [More talking about limiting sessions.]

53:12 Gruening is in favor of unicameralism. The principal argument for it is accountability. The argument on the other side is that there would be lots more legislation and activity in unicameral legislature, but Gruening doesn't think that is true [explains why]. [Talking about bicameralism.]

55:57 Other way, the house might promote a popular bill that becomes trading stock in the final days of the session. "Bills go across and they sit." [In bicameral system?] In many ways, bicameral system might promote bad legislation and less consideration. Gruening is bothered by the lack of discussion on that topic. Discussion might turn people around thinking how to improve bicameral system.

[Talking about free conference committee and its pros and cons.]

The speaker thanks the audience.

58:17 The chairperson introduces the final panelist, Fred Pratt_who is from Fairbanks Daily News-Miner. Fred talks about legislators who make laws and that they tend to worry more about changes to the rules with which the laws are made. He doesn't think deadlines would be good for the legislature.

Fred says he likes to discuss unicameralism.

[End of the recording.]