

Call number: 01-79-08 PT. 6

Name: General discussion

Date and place: 10/16/1976, University of Alaska Fairbanks

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Date of summary's creation: 2/5/15

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

George Sundborg continues talking about Native people and human rights during the writing of Alaska constitution. People today still don't widely accept Alaska Native Claims Settlement that was accepted by the Congress. Sundborg says he is ashamed that they didn't give the issue more thought, but it wasn't a burning issue at the time.

Another man asks Sundborg to talk about politics of the campaigns when running for the membership and if there was a hot contest for the seats. George says that they were all trying to overdo themselves in how strong they were for statehood. It was largely a popularity contest that wasn't run on issues.

2:08 Another man says that his perception is different, and mentions that George ran for statewide office so he had more of a campaign than people who were running from the rural areas. In many places they had trouble finding 25 people who would sign for them to get on the ballot. There wasn't a great deal of interest in the bush, and the Native people didn't realize how badly off they were.

If that would happen now, there would be more thinking about the subsistence question and about the cultural program. There would be more about environmental conservation too. The speaker doesn't think that would change the parameters [of the constitution] much but give recognition to things. [The speaker reads a quote from Delegate Marston on aboriginal rights.]

4:46 Ada [?] says that she disagrees with Sundborg and tells that in Fairbanks, Alaskans were uninformed. [Tells anecdotes about people's lack of knowledge and interest. Also tells how she ended up running for a delegate from working for good of Alaska in other ways.]

9:34 A man's voice reminds people that 55 people cared enough to write a constitution together. Claus Naske introduces himself and says that people often tend to forget that when the constitution was written, Native rights weren't a big concern. The first drafts of statehood bill followed models from lower states but then many states started looking into Native rights, and from 1946 forward, all statehood bills had disclaimers that recognized some nebulous rights that Natives possessed but stated that the resolution of the rights should be left to courts. It seems to the speaker that the black people's struggle

in 1960s, as well as oil exploration and conservation all came together and made Alaska Native Claims Settlement possible. As far as he knows, Alaskans weren't concerned about Native rights at all.

12:02 A man's voice thanks Naske and says that he himself was trying to fix fish and game regulations that didn't consider population numbers. He asks for more comments.

12:40 [Unclear question.] The speaker reminds about the majority of competition being at urban areas. [Unclear comment and discussion, laughter.]

Another man continues talking about documents in resource policy and mentions many people's wish that Article 8 and the constitution in general should have Alaskan flavor to it.

14:39 He talks about how they might have to constitutionally wrestle with the issue of subsistence. Talks about how land status affects issues. He doesn't think that Alaska's constitution is going to put barriers to cooperating with federal land managers.

16:51 He thinks that good points about possible wording changes were made by Bob Weeden and Dave Marston [sps?]. A point about the flexibility of the articles was also made. The speaker thanks the audience for coming.

[End of the recording.]