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Notes: Original in 7-inch tape, master copy on CD. Produced by Roger McPherson. THESE TAPES WERE PRODUCED AS A PART OF AN EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM NOW DEFUNCT AND WERE BROADCAST OVER THE RADIO FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES.

Recording begins with applause, after which Don Wright introduces Senator Ted Stevens who gives a speech.

Stevens says he's delighted that the bill was approved and reminds people that the process has only begun. There's going to be an annual battle to keep the appropriations on schedule. Stevens talks about the responsibility for managing the property that now belongs to Alaska Native people, and says that the land claims bill isn't going to resolve itself into a workable program overnight but will require work and leadership from people who work for villages and regions.

2:44 Stevens also wants to point out that the settlement is a historic thing because in recent history, there hasn't been a settlement where the group that was involved didn't have to submit plans to the Interior Department as to how they were going to use the resources gained from the settlement. That happened in the Tlingit and Haida settlement and in other settlements that have been based on judicial decree.

The bill will be reviewed by village corporations in terms of budget and plans. BIA won't be involved with the reviewing, which is the first time. Alaska Natives carry the weight for the Indian groups in Lower-48, who are waiting to settle their claims through Indian Claims Commission. They will seek self-determination and right to manage their own affairs now.

5:19 Stevens says that he believes that there are things in the bill that not everyone will like, and some of those things were put in by Stevens himself. He says they tried to prevent conflict between Native and non-Native people by protecting the rights of the people who are legally on land in Alaska. They should go under public land laws and secure the rights they thought they would have by virtue of their compliance to the land laws.

They have also written a minimum per-capita payment of 10% into the act, which many people are opposed to. They did it to ensure that the older generations who are ineligible for many other benefits, such as scholarships and economic development programs, will receive something tangible.

7:19 There are things in the bill that Stevens doesn't like, like the 80 million acre provision, but it was something that had to be done for just settlement. Stevens says that the time for the settlement was yesterday, not today, but the tomorrow of Alaska Native peoples is in their own hands. There will be technicalities, just like after Alaska Statehood Act, where their Omnibus-bill was used to put in things that were overlooked, even after years of deliberating the bill in the Congress. The Native people will want amendments in the future AFN conferences.

Alaska's population has achieved something that no other state has accomplished before, a resolution of claims that needed resolution at a time when the economics were right. They are first ones in the world and people around the world are looking to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and if the economic base, the land management, and development will follow through.

10:23 Stevens expresses that he is pleased to have a bill that is fair and just in view of the complexities. They have a good partnership between Native and non-Native people that rivals any other state in the Union. Stevens gives God's blessing to AFN audience and closes his speech. [Applause.]

11:42 Wright introduces Neil Basset from Bureau of Land Management [later, BLM]. He says that Basset is the acting Chief of Division of Natural Resources in Anchorage. He tells that BLM is going to have a big role in implementing the bill. Their biggest task is to work with individual Native people and communities in implementing the bill as fast as they can.

Over a period of time, the government has found out that certain steps must be followed in establishing legal titles to land, such as determining valid and existing rights. Two of the best examples of this will be Native allotments in and around villages, and mining claims. It will be up to BLM to determine where these sites are and sites that are now under mining claims aren't available.

14:24 Some of the material is in the public land record, some of it is not. For example, mining claims are not necessarily recorded with BLM, and BLM will have to find and identify those.

Some things must be done, no matter how the bill is interpreted: Their land office needs to note the areas that are withdrawn until the selections are made, and that task will probably start on Monday morning. They have to prepare regulations, and to make policy decisions and legal interpretations. Basset doesn't know yet how they will do all this, and their Washington office started working on the procedures on the day the bill was passed, and there has been frequent communication between Alaskan and Washington offices.

16:00 They had agreed with BIA [Bureau of Indian Affairs] that there will be an informational program that will complement what AFN has already tried to do in talking about the provisions of the bill in the villages. BLM will provide as much information as possible. They might have traveling teams that will go to the villages to explain the provisions of the bill. [Applause.]

16:49 John Borbridge is introduced. He says it's his personal opinion that they have gone past the point where they hear some "pronouncements" that are "sincerely extended." They are going to work with BLM and BIA, but when they say what is going to happen, they must accept the way people are going to react, since it's a partnership relationship. They want to keep in mind that the agencies have a great deal to learn about the peoples' concerns.

BLM isn't presently geared up to meet the expectations, but they have prepared for this and the people know that if BLM won't perform, the Native people won't receive land. They will need supplemental workers to meet the demands. Alaska Natives' success or failure in achieving compliance with their request is going to affect "us" [Alaskans?] gravely.

18:30 It's necessary for BLM to work closely with Native people. They know that policy and administrative decisions can affect the implementation of the act. The nature of federal agencies is that many of their decisions can affect peoples' substantive rights. Borbridge wants to make a point that every agency representative realizes and hears directly from the Native people with whom they are in a partnership with. They don't need secret meetings where issues concerning Native people are discussed. They belong to the past. [Applause.]

20:34 Morris Thompson, Alaska Area Director of Bureau of Indian Affairs is introduced. [Applause.] He says he will reacquaint people with some of the things BIA was charged to perform by the Congress in the post-settlement era. Their primary responsibility is to start with a question about the roll to establish who is eligible for benefits under the act. BIA needs to make sure that every Alaska Native knows that they can enroll.

Thompson tells that he has sent out a supplemental appropriation to all regional associations. That was based on some preliminary predictions that the BIA may be involved in the roll.

22:19 Thompson talks about the background of the various bills: The House Bill charged the BIA with the responsibility of completing the roll. The Senate Bill had BIA to do a very limited roll within 6 months, and a Native commission would do the actual roll. Not until the final bill came out, did they know if they were going to do the roll. They have submitted a supplemental appropriation that requests \$1,8 million dollars to do the roll and some other things.

Their current plan is to draw the regulations for the roll, meaning, what people have to do to be eligible, and they have to develop a management system, hire and contract people. They want to contract Native people to do the roll.

Thompson says that they are going to start developing the criteria for the roll the very next day. When they have a preliminary draft ready, it will be sent to Native organizations for feedback. They are supposed to complete the roll within 2 years, and the professionals tell Thompson that it's impossible to do. They are going to just do it and Thompson thinks they will succeed and asks for support from Native people.

24:55 Two years is a short time, but they are going to get it done. The bureau doesn't want to hold up any benefits that will accrue to Native Claims recipients because of the roll. He hopes to get as much publicity to the criteria for enrollment as humanely possible. They want to figure out what one must do to be able to enroll so that they can get it done in two years and move on.

Thompson says that they have already started developing the criteria and they hope to get funded by the Congress, although they have already started assembling staff.

They think that BLM could support the regional corporations in the post-settlement era. They have submitted a proposal to Washington D.C. for some funding. They have had lots of consultations with various individuals and organizations and prior to sending the proposal to Washington D.C., they sent it to all the regional organizations in the state.

26:52 They have a 4 point program that Thompson and his group thought would be helpful for the regional corporations. He is going to outline it, but points out that it's still waiting for final approval.

First is the public information dissemination program. The purpose of the program is to try to get a better understanding of the contents of the legislation. Thompson says he has had the privilege of traveling to most of the rural areas, and tells that the Native people in the villages have a vague understanding of the bill and its content. They are hoping to hire Native people to explain the bill to village councils and people, and discuss it in the radio. The goal is to help the recipients of the benefits to be well informed.

The second portion of the program is to have some grant money for the regional corporations to assist them in early stages of development. The money could be used for training in business and land use management. BIA doesn't know if they'll get the money and don't require any region to accept it.

Third aspect of the proposal that they sent to Washington is that they requested money for contracting people to assist in collecting data on reserves and reservations and the resources they have. They need information so that reserves and reservations can choose whether they remain on their reservation status or if they accept the bill.

Fourthly, they have requested a meeting with AFN and all the state, federal and Native organizations that have legislative responsibilities in the bill. They should discuss how they are going to get the information that is required, out to the villages in a fast and efficient manner. They need to figure out, for example, how they can assist BLM, how BLM can assist them, how they can assist the regions and how the regions can assist the BIA in completing the roll.

31:23 The speaker tells that he has talked with some AFN people and they anticipate the meeting to take place in second week of January. They hope they will have the criteria for enrollment soon, because when the president signs the bill, the two years count starts. When they have the criteria, they will send it to all the regions and their attorneys. [Applause.]

[End of the recording.]