

88-49-113

Development on the Arctic Slope Native Organization

Karen McPherson, moderator

Moses Wassillie, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

1972

Performance by the Saint Lawrence Island dancers

Karen McPherson introduces the recording which was made at a meeting of governmental agencies with interest in and plans for Barrow. Members of the Arctic Slope Native Organization presented a report on its activities and progress towards self-government. Joe Upickson, Fred Paul and Larry Dineen spoke about the North Slope Borough, the Inupiat Community Corporation and the need for housing and sanitation facilities. Joe Upickson said that this had been a fine year. He said it is going to be the beginning of their people becoming very proud of their own heritage. He wanted to give the initial presentation so that they can clear the air a little bit. His heroes are the ones that he has learned from. He commented on the need for Inuit literature as there is for other tribes.

Fred Paul said they have the Inupiat community of the North Slope. It is a federally recognized tribal government. They have applied for grants. The boundaries are the same as the borough. He said the federal government requires regional planning. He commented on boundaries in the lower forty-eight states. The Inupiat community of the North Slope satisfies this regional concept. He foresees some magnificent things coming out of the IRA Corporation. They are in the process of organizing the North Slope Borough. They are confident that the litigation will end in time. They are disturbed that the oil companies are trying to prevent the creation of the borough. They take this as an assault of the Eskimos. There are no secondary schools on the North Slope and the Eskimos are tired of sending their children away for their education. He talked about the upcoming borough election. He said it is their view that the borough is capable of functioning, capable of applying for federal funds and becoming a viable unit. They have the power to tax. There is a tax base available to the North Slope of over 300 million dollars. There will be monies to engage in capital programs to build schools and other municipal facilities. There are companies today that pay no property taxes.

Larry Dineen outlined the needs of the community of Barrow. Larry Dineen said they are involved with a very special experience. The Inupiat want to maintain their cultural heritage and they are ready and willing and able to enter the Western economic aspects of life. The president has given up his normal livelihood to work on this effort. Most of the effort has been in Washington, D.C. levels and is now in the North Slope area. Oliver Leavitt, the treasurer, has decided to give up his job and devote his efforts full time on the budget. There is a difficult regional set up. They have to comply with state laws and the regional corporation structure as set up by ANCSA. They are setting up goals and objections. Budget and finance have a committee. They have to deal with corporate structure, the village structure, stocks,

distribution of dividends and lands. It will be difficult. He said they will not sell their heritage for any price. He said Barrow has a higher employment rate than other villages. They are looking at economic development activities and small business structures. He talked about housing efforts. The mayor of Barrow is also the executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association and heads the land selection and use team. He talked about water conservation in the community. There is a love and respect for the land. They have known about conservation long before the rest of the United States. He discussed education in the community. It has been an area of concern. As the borough takes over the education they will be prudent. There is concern about the needs of the teachers. They can have their children attend school in their area and not thousands of miles away.

The village will have to start and initiate these changes. He said there are problems conveying the housing needs in Barrow. They have run into problems obtaining gravel. They intend to have a hundred and fourteen homes built next year. They hope to start moving gravel this spring and to work on water and sewage. They are working on land selection. Barrow is in need of an airport complex. He discussed funding for the airport and the election. They will also be voting on being a wet or dry town. He discussed social planning for Barrow and energy infrastructure.