

88-49-128

Mitch Dementieff, Anders Sauders, and Chris Anderson testify at a hearing on subsistence hunting in Nenana, Alaska

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Series: Potlatch series

Nenana, Alaska

October 5, 1977

Buffy Sainte Marie song

Jeff Kennedy said Democratic Representatives Nils Anderson from Dillingham and Steve Cowper from Fairbanks traveled to Nenana to hear testimony on priorities for subsistence hunting legislation in Alaska. Many game animals like caribou are becoming scarcer each year. No longer is there enough to go around so the state must determine who can and who can't hunt.

Mitch Dementieff said the way Congress defines subsistence is a funny thing. He thinks it is a conscientious thing at the same time. He said last year he didn't go to work until November. He was heavily involved with subsistence activities. When he was working full time in Fairbanks he hardly fished. He said the only subsistence foods he had at that time were foods from other people. During August after leaving Fairbanks he began fishing and getting meat. He said it is difficult to define a subsistence person. He is capable of going away for employment. It is a hard thing to leave home for work. He is capable of earning a living at home by harvesting subsistence. People in Nenana may have less subsistence compared to other more remote areas in Alaska, but that does not mean that they are not dependent on subsistence. A great number of people work seasonally. Those people that need to live subsistence lifestyle are very dependent on it. With respect to fishing their resource subsistence egg quota is set by the Legislature and some people are denied a source of income. He said they have reached their quota. He talked about prices they receive for salmon eggs and some of his expenses. He has heard about some people wasting the fish but he hasn't seen that in Nenana. He said Nenana has been impacted. The number of moose has decreased and the number of bears has increased. At the same time they hunt they also fish. He said it is more difficult to get a moose locally. There are more hunters. There is congestion on the rivers. They are faced with a few fish to get to the winter, but there isn't any meat. Hardly anyone is getting a moose. He thinks it is important for the Legislature to consider prioritizing and subsistence should be the number one priority. He talked about limits on subsistence fishing.

Ted Wesley song

Andrew Sauders said he is from Clear and he has been in the state for about 12 years. He would be considered a sports hunter. He said subsistence hunting and fishing should be based on income. He doesn't see anyone earning 30-40,000 dollars a year being allowed any subsistence

rights. He said the local sportsmen's club in Clear petitioned the Alaska Fish and Game in 1970 or 72 to close the cow season in the area to preserve the moose population. It is not just sport hunting that has eliminated moose in the area. There has been mismanagement by Fish and Game. There aren't enough people to take care of the whole state. He said most sports hunters will bring out any of the meat they can carry that is usable. He said the Fish and Game has been late with restrictions on hunting. He thinks this is because of the size of the state and the limited personnel that they have and the budget that they have. He thinks it is political, too. He thinks people in the immediate area should have preference for hunting if it has to be restricted.

Doc Watson song

Chris Anderson quotes a newspaper article about subsistence hunting and nutrition. It is possible for subsistence users who eat traditional foods to have a very nutritious diet. Non-traditional food can be damaging to their metabolism.

Paul Simon song