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Bertha Peavey, Claude Demientieff

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

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Jeff Kennedy said 10,000 Native people live in Anchorage and many more pass through the city. Many find it hard to change to the large city. Bertha Peavey works for the Cook Inlet Native Association and works at the Anchorage International Airport. Bertha Peavey said she assists the Natives when they come into the Anchorage area. She gives directions for the location of her office at the airport. She said the center is for Natives on incoming flights. They are assisted in locating their destination, the baggage areas and contacting the agencies. Families relocating in Anchorage can get various information from her office. The office has the information on agencies, hospitals, hotels, food services and housing information. The other agencies that are assisting the Airport Native Assistance Center are located in Anchorage. They will assist with housing and other needs. The interviewer asked how they became interested in working at the center. Bertha Peavey said it was a new career for her. She started from the very bottom. She didn't have a location. Someone mentioned at the community action agencies office that there should be a Native assistance center. They asked if there was a Native in the Anchorage area to help Natives arriving in Anchorage. She applied and was accepted into the position. She started working at the job four and a half years ago. She enjoys her job. She is able to meet people from all over the state. Incoming and outgoing Native hospital patients have the use of wheelchairs from their office. They usually get people from the villages that are in need of wheelchairs. She meets elders at the gate and assists them. Jeff Kennedy said the first person Native people see when they arrive at the airport may be Bertha Peavey. Her services include making reservations, hotel reservations, or any kind of assistance they need is available. She speaks in Inupiaq.

Song by John Denver

A program from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Tanna Bebee said a number of reservations and villages in Alaska suffer from the isolation factor. Radio and television signals don't penetrate the more remote reservations and costly newspapers and printed materials very seldom make their way to isolated societies. In more than just a few pockets in the United States individuals live in a vacuum devoid of the daily information most citizens take for granted. To provide more of awareness of the social problems facing Indian people in this country they will attempt to show what happens to a people who must live without communication. She talked about the northern Cheyenne reservation in the southeastern section of Montana. Very little news from the outside world makes it into the reservation. Mountains and hills barricade the community from signals. Ray Spane described the dilemma facing his people. Ray Spane said they don't really know what is going

on. It slows down the process of progress. He said information is the basis of group action. They don't have any kind of people that know the same facts on the same day. He said he goes to cities to get information from various sources and for music. He doesn't have access to printed materials. Tanna Bebee said most people are bombarded with a lot of information and they have the luxury of choosing what they want to see and hear. To a community whose want of knowledge and information is so great it is staggering to realize how many social problems arise. Sickness and alcoholism rack up enormous tolls on human life on reservations. Robert Burnette from the Rosebud Reservation on South Dakota said there is a lack of Indian communication. They have non-Indian radio stations. They have a breakdown of real communications between the Sioux people. They have a small traveling newspaper. It is costly and does not reach the people like it should. Tanna Bebee said traditional communication approaches don't often work either. Even when a tribe receives electronic signals there are more than 250 Indian tribes or nations in this country. Many speak different languages or dialects. One person in the Southwest translated the Walter Cronkite show into Navajo. In the state of Washington is the McCaw tribe. When Mary Jo Butterfield returned to her reservation after working in the city she nearly went crazy. Mary Jo Butterfield said it was like a vacuum. In the city you read the newspaper and watch the news at night. When she returned to the reservation this was nonexistent. There was no news and the people are deprived of what is happening around them. It is neglectful to do business this way and to maintain any pace and progress. Tanna Bebee said it is a small wonder that Indian people are called an alienated society. When in many areas it is impossible to get an understanding of educational opportunities, knowledge of health benefits, awareness of social possibilities or the location of job opportunities.

Song by Cody Bearpaw

Jeff Kennedy said the Director of Health Authority at Tanana Chiefs Conference is leaving his position. Claude Demientieff said he will work with his people and not for his people. He will be moving to his land at Reindeer Lake. It is near his hometown of Holy Cross. He intends to write of his experiences and to learn from his father and granduncle. Claude Demientieff said he is leaving TCC because he needs a break and to complete some writing. He wants to complete his writing in the environment of his forefathers. He wishes to build his home and to prepare for the next time he works in an organization that advocates Native interests.

Song by John Denver

Jeff Kennedy talked about land easements. He said the Secretary of the Interior Thomas Kleppe recently ruled that the federal government will have easements on Alaska Native lands. Claude Demientieff said when the Secretary Kleppe made the decision to allow easements across Native lands without payment that was a decision which overruled a lot of concepts of free enterprise. If you own land or purchase land it would be compensated if there was a proposed easements. He said right now the decision is not to pay for the land so it is a tool of the federal government to acquire what the Native Claims Settlement Act entitled the Native people of Alaska to receive. Jeff Kennedy asked if the Native Americans should take part in the bi-centennial of the United States. Claude said they should participate by reminding the U.S. government how they got here and who was here. He didn't think they should celebrate in the

conquest of this country. This country is very sacred. The land is sacred. Jeff Kennedy said the state of Alaska growth policy council is asking people what should be done with the Haul Road north of the Yukon River. Claude Demientieff said he doesn't favor public access. He feels it will do great harm to the land, animals and the people who travel the road. The more they travel then the attitude toward the land is changed. It is a commodity. When land is alive then land is never barren. The land can never be owned. The land owns the people and that should prevail. He thinks access to the land would change that attitude and he doesn't think that is right. Jeff Kennedy said that Vine DeLoria, an Indian in the lower forty-eight feels that Indians should break with the United States government. He asked Claude Demientieff agrees with this. Demientieff said he agrees with the concept, but it is impossible at this point and time. There isn't a large enough Native population to do such a massive move. If the Indian Wars had been successful then a new country would have been set up. He said he'd like to speak in terms of industry. The Alaska Native Claims allowed a broad financial base to be established in regions and villages with which they could invest to control anything they chose if they are indeed to become a separate country. Claude Demientieff looks forward to the day when village corporations and regional corporations control as much of industry as much as possible such things as transportation, communication and oil. He said that is how control can be gained right now. Big business is like a third world especially the oil companies. They skip international boundaries and it is kind of insane. One wonders whether the little person has a chance in this world when looking at the big companies which control. Village corporations are in a position to do what they did 200 years ago. He said their first few years are now and now is the time to move.