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Eben Hopson - Science and circumpolar community organization

Series: Potlatch

Moe Wassillie, moderator

Eben Hopson was unable to deliver his presentation on Science and circumpolar community organization at the 27<sup>th</sup> Alaska Science Conference held in Fairbanks, Alaska on August 4-7, 1976. George Ahmaogak delivered the speech.

Eben Hopson's address discusses scientific inquiry in the arctic and scientific research being regional rather than national or industrial. He said the Inupiat comprise a single arctic regional community living under four flags in Siberia, in Alaska, in Canada, and in Greenland. They are an indigenous circumpolar community depending on a subsistence lifestyle and bound to the environment that sustains them. He discusses the discovery of oil and the need for competent arctic scientists. He said the industry of arctic science is not organized to meet regional community needs.

Song by Glen Campbell

Eben Hopson writes that sharing should be a cooperative act. They want to share their wealth of gas and oil. They as occupants of the arctic should have a say in the way fuels are extracted from their lands and should be allowed to measure environmental risks in their own language. He feels they could share knowledge about the environment. They are the experts on the ice. He believes that most arctic scientific inquiry produces little new knowledge. He believes that knowledge sharing is needed for development of arctic energy development, particularly offshore development. They need strong community organization. They need to be assured that a single set of international rules is adhered to in their offshore waters. He said governments rely on the scientists to assess the risks of oil development. They feel that a cooperative sharing with the scientific community is necessary. The threat of environmental degradation has reunited the Inupiat community. He discussed land claims and home rule in Alaska, Canada and Greenland.

Song by Joan Baez.

Eben Hopson writes about the initiation of a single arctic laboratory to monitor offshore development. He said arctic science is problem oriented and the problems are regional ones which transcend national boundaries. He talked about the Canadian Beaufort Sea Project and the involvement of the Inupiat community in international agreements with respect to oil and gas exploration and extraction.

Song by Walrus

Eben Hopson proposes that the scientific community joins the Inuit people in forming an arctic circumpolar science agenda. They should adopt a single international arctic policy through which the five arctic nations can ensure environmentally safe resource extraction.

Song by the Carpenters

Information about the registering for the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act in 1976