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The Emmonak dancers, Canadian land claims and a report by Senator Stevens.

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

1977

Series: Potlatch series

The Emmonak dancers including Tommy Moses and Willie Moore perform "The man with a sled going for driftwood." Narration by Father Jim Pool of KNOM.

Sue Pittman reports on Canadian land claims. She said in 1971 the Alaska Native Lands Claims were settled before the Alaska pipeline was constructed. In Canada a similar question is now being debated. On October 18-19th a group of Canadians in Anchorage, Alaska offered their perspectives on the question of land claims and resource development in the Canadian North. They were at a conference entitled: "Northern Change: the Canadian Experience and implications for Alaska." It was sponsored by the Arctic Institute of North America and the Alaska Humanities Forum. Pittman said the similarities to Alaska's experience of the last few years were vivid. When Prudhoe Bay oil was discovered Alaska found itself with untapped energy sources which the rest of the country wanted. Natural gas in the Mackenzie Delta has put northern Canadians in much the same position in their own country. Like Alaskans, northern Canadians would like control of their land. There is an immense variety of opinions about kind of control and when. The Canadian government represented at the conference by Keith Penner, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs, feels that the development of the non-renewable resources in the North must occur. Pittman said that Penner said that Canadian policy has evolved to a philosophy of balance between social, economic and political issues. Penner believes that economic and social development must be merged and not allowed to proceed in separate parallel courses. He said the Canadian government is committed to a process of negotiation of the land claims. They have funded Native organizations so they can do research in land occupation and land use studies. It is important they have this background. They are willing and ready to negotiate before any major development projects proceeds. Pittman said James Harvey, vice-president of Canadian Arctic Gas operations, said the Canadian land claims are outside the scope of his company's concerns. Pittman said figuring out which Canadian Natives is making what demands is no easy task for an outsider. There are many land claims issues in northern Canada – from the Indian people, the Inuit, and the Métis. She said Métis representatives talked about the need for jobs in the North and their desire that agreements about pipeline development occur immediately after settlement. No group such as the Alaska Federation of Natives speaks in Canada for a united land claims demand such as they did in Alaska. The Inuit proposal offers the possibility of a separate Eskimo territory in Canada without provincial status and a white province in part of the northern region. Yukon Indians are seeking firm control of renewable resources which would include hydroelectric potential which may be the only resource left 100 years from now. Prior to Alaska's land claims settlement it was often pointed out that since Natives here have never been defeated in war or signed treaties their claim to land was very strong. In Canada the Indians are under treaty and they have a trust agreement with the Canadian government. The Canadian Eskimos

and Métis have no such treaty. All groups have strong cases for settlement. Much of the growing demand for land claims appears to have risen from the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry chaired by Justice Tom Berger. Pittman said the Berger inquiry has spent the last two years listening to people talk about the proposed Mackenzie River pipeline. The inquiry was funded by the Canadian government to encourage public input. Native groups and others received grants to act as interveners formulating and presenting the testimony of specific groups. Opinion has been divided whether the Berger inquiry has been fulfilling its assigned task.

Jeff Kennedy said the Berger report was expected soon after the first of this year and the national energy board expects to report in May of this year the recommendations for the Mackenzie pipeline.

Joe Meeker, from Athabasca University in Edmonton, asked whether oil and gas development is or is not a reasonable basis on which to base a northern future. The whole history of oil's importance will run its course in a few decades. Oil's total chapter in all of human history will be less than a century. What are we getting for a few decades of oil's prominence and what are we giving up in exchange. He said it is possible that oil is not a good basis for the future of the north or anywhere. He asked what the values are that matter. He said human and environmental values can't be separated. Humans are animals living in their environments. The integrity of the whole has to be assured to some extent and in some manner.

Jeff Kennedy said Sue Pittman said changes in the north are inevitable for both Canadians and Alaskans with much work to be done in making future decisions

Song by Johnny Cash

Jeff Kennedy said Senator Stevens comments on the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

Senator Ted Stevens said he, Senator Abarask, and Senator Gravel held hearings in Alaska on the problem of a definition of a tribe as it affects Alaska. He talked about the implementation of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act, recruitment and training of Native and Indian youth and the benefits of the programs. Senator Stevens talked about technology that may help to find downed airplanes. He talked about the use of this satellite technology in Alaska. Senator Stevens reported on the North Pacific International Fur Seal Agreement and how it will affect Alaska. Stevens said it allows for Native subsistence needs. He talked about the countries involved in the agreement. Senator Stevens discussed how people in the Bush can take Federal Communications Commission examinations without travel to a test site.