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Roger Lang is interviewed by Catherine Van Bibber in 1977 in Fairbanks, Alaska ; Sam DeLorean is interviewed by Jeff Kennedy in 1977.

1977

Series: Potlatch series

Jeff Kennedy, moderator

Song by Burton Cummings

Roger Lang is interviewed Catherine Van Bibber. Roger Lang commented while he was attending an international education conference he was attending. Lang said problems are similar in Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Norway, Sweden and Finland. He said the composition of the seminar is from those nations. Solutions are different in each country. They are not so much problem solvers rather they are identifying problems. He said he is not an educator but a systems changer. His role in life is to manage change. He says they are sharing about how problems have been solved. They are learning from each other. They are about fifty percent educators and recipients as well as fifty percent Native and non-Native. He discussed their daily routine at the seminar. Van Bibber asked what he would like to see happen after the conference. Lang said he would like to see changes in the education delivery system. He said there are some good experiences that have been practiced in other countries. He thinks they have a contribution to make. He hopes there is a change in the systems. Education should fit the culture around it. Van Bibber asked about a change of attitude with a change of policy. Lang said certainly. He said they go through cycles. He used to be of the opinion that teachers were right. Now they are questioning that. School systems are now being measured.

Roger Lang comments about justice in the Bush. He said in Alaska there is a system of justice where the treatment of lawbreakers is different in rural Alaska than it is in urban Alaska. He talked about the differences between rural and urban justice including the lack of jury trials in rural Alaska, lack of jails in rural Alaska, lack of judges or magistrates in some places in rural Alaska. They are starting to break the mold. It will take time to create a system that fits all of Alaska and not just urban Alaska.

Song by Gordon Lightfoot

Roger Lang said rural Alaska needs rural judges, magistrates and jails. He said they need to have para-professional advocates for citizens in court. Van Bibber asked her about rehabilitation programs. Lang said this was not happening. He said in America we fool ourselves by thinking that jails are a rehabilitative effort. They have a way of separating the offender from society. He said we have a liberal parole and court system. It doesn't address proper rehabilitation. Alcohol has been recognized as a disease and there have been good efforts to establish rehabilitative programs. He said jails have made no effort to rehabilitate prisoners. Van Bibber said in the Yukon over fifty percent of the people in jail are Natives and she asked if it was the same in

Alaska. Lang said it was up to a few years ago. A lot of that was because of the alcohol problem. The jail population is probably forty percent which is different from what the Native population is in Alaska which is 26 percent of the state population. He said the Natives are not as forceful about demanding their rights and jury trials and using the system to their benefit. He said there are higher prosecution rates in Alaska Natives.

Jeff Kennedy asked if Bush justice could consist of the traditional Native concepts of justice instead of western justice. Lang said that is a difficult question. He said the Alaska Native has been very law abiding. They never took time out to study the effect of the judicial system on the Alaska Native. He said with the Bush Justice Conference there has been discussion. He said within Alaska there is a difference between rural Alaska and urban Alaska not just in the delivery of services but an actual difference. He said very few people in government have spent time or seen rural Alaska. Very few legislators have been to rural Alaska. He hopes when the state of Alaska develops its satellite communication system that it will be a tool. He said when they talk about rural social, justice and education programs they can show them what they are talking about.

Information about the Tax Reform Act and the Internal Revenue Service

The Inviting in song from Barrow

Sam Delorean is interviewed by Jeff Kennedy. Jeff Kennedy ask Sam Delorean if the conditions of Native people are similar or dissimilar throughout the world. Sam Delorean said the similarities are startling. They have had a number of meetings with people from all over the world and it is obvious that they are facing the same kinds of problems. He talked about the Sami people being included in the indigenous groups. It was a revelation to them that there were white European tribal people. Their problems, language and culture problems were the same problems that are found in Canada, the United States and South America. The powers of governments to enforce various assimilation schemes on Native people is the common thread that runs through all of the indigenous people. Kennedy asked if there are other indigenous people in conflict with other cultures besides western cultures. Lang said yes. He said if there is a tribal group in Russia or China on an area with oil the tribal group will be moved.