

2 0 T H A L A S K A S C I E N C E C O N F E R E N C E

University of Alaska
College, Alaska 99701

SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE

by

Professor George W. Rogers

Jeanne Kadin
Reporting Services
212 Lavery Building
Fairbanks, Alaska

After that introduction and after the luncheon message we had, I am thinking of running for the U. S. Senate. (Applause.) To put some of your minds at ease, not about my running for the Senate, the speaker at the luncheon actually was not elected by the people of Alaska. He was ^{rejected} evicted by the members of his own party, and if he speaks for anyone, he only speaks for the man who appointed him to the job when Bob Bartlett died. I won't say anything further on that subject.

This is not going to be a summary of the conference in the sense of my going through everything that was said and done. In the first place, I could not attend every session personally although I had friends spotted in every session who came to me and reported on them, and so on. The other thing is that I am speaking as an Alaskan on the one hand and as an economist on the other; therefore, I am a very biased commentator. What I am going to report is what has come out of this conference, in my view, rather than what went into the conference. All of you who are interested in what went into the conference have at firsthand participated or you have abstracts in your folders, or if you are interested you may obtain the full statements from the institute; or if you care to wait awhile, there will be proceedings published so I will not attempt to report on what went into the conference.

The conference, as you know, is divided into three themes, all of them centering about the change in the north. The first theme, which opened the conference, was "Petroleum Development in the North." The very first symposium that you were exposed to made it clear to us that the economics of petroleum development has many dimensions. Within the industry, there is competition between corporate and regional groups and interests which is reflected in jockeying and attempts to change the policy, legislation, and regulations. Surrounding the industry, are international, national, ^{and} Alaskan interests; there are consumer interests; there are environmental interests, and so on. Petroleum development, after we went through the first session, began to emerge as primarily a political process with forms of economical^s analysis, economic sophistry, economic propoganda, as the tools or weapons in that bigger game. 13

Now, Alaskans aren't strangers to politics; in fact, politics makes up a great deal of the way of life in Alaska. We enjoy it, and feel that we have considerable confidence in it; and on the whole we are pretty proud of the results of our political gain.^{me}

We are now engaged in a much different game, and that is the game of petroleum politics. The program presented here, given over to petroleum, if you will look critically at the presentations, they did not hold up well as sound economic

analyses. This is because they were again, as I said earlier, merely tools or weapons or pieces being moved in the political game of petroleum development. What did emerge from these sessions was not necessarily a body of facts, but an urgent warning to Alaskans that in order to play this game you have got to have your eyes wide open. We must establish our own basis of analysis, and not borrow from the industry the basis on which analyses are made; and we must establish our own objectives we wish this development to serve. In this, we must avail ourselves of the best and most reliable technical guidance that is possible for us to obtain, and we must have a clear-cut concept of what it is we want to do with the development.

I felt that if I were to single out a single paper as being the most important paper in the conference, it was a paper that was ironically given in a rather obscure panel section entitled like the miscellaneous category in your file drawer "Resources Development." In this category were such things as other minerals, environmental factors; but the paper I have reference to is one done by one of our young economists, Gregg Erickson, "Alaska's Petroleum Resource Policy, a Crisis of Direction." This piece of work holds up as a sound piece of analysis. It was done without haste, with due consideration of all factors. The industry was given advance access to the paper and was asked for their comments. It was not sprung on anyone. All these things were taken into account. It is a

remarkable piece of work, and one that deserved to be the keynote of the conference rather than being buried, as I said, in a rather obscure panel. Fortunately, during the coffee break, I was shown a copy of the "Anchorage Daily News" and the story was on the front page so it is not lost as I feared it might be. I will not take time to summarize or even comment beyond calling it to your attention.

This paper, in fact, the whole petroleum development section of the conference, has confirmed my belief that at the present time the state administration is not staffed to competently handle the Alaskan's role in this game. Now, this is not a partisan criticism. The previous Democratic administration was even less qualified to handle the same role; in part, because they hadn't had as much experience as the present administration. Contrary to Senator Stevens' remarks at noon, we Alaskans must go outside for the type of guidance we need at this time. I am not being un-Alaskan in saying this; I am being very much pro-Alaskan, and we must get, as I said earlier, the best, most reliable, and most competent guidance if we are to play this game properly. If we don't do this, then we are more or less at the mercy of the petroleum industry. I do not paint the petroleum industry as demons or devils. I really, sincerely believe that they have considerable fairness and good will toward Alaskans, and we could do worse; but if we did that, if we did nothing for ourselves, if we did not make clear what we wanted, we would be shirking the responsibility of self-

determination which is part of our being a state of the union and part of the entire democratic process. This is something we cannot afford to do on any ground you might care to analyze the subject.

There is another aspect of petroleum development, which I will touch on rather briefly, and this was embodied primarily in the chairman's statement on the role of petroleum in Alaska's development. As he stated, "Petroleum represents a quantum jump in Alaska's development, and this is what has forced us really to change our views of economics or economics of ^{scarcity} ~~scarcity~~ to a ^{Gallbraithian (view of)} ~~gall-break-in~~ economics of affluence. As Dr. Darling said this morning, "We Alaskans are faced with the important task of learning how to be rich." Secondly, we must change our concept of development from simply development for economic gain to development in its fullest sense. To refer to Dr. Dediğer's talk, "We must kick the 'Marxian syndrome', which uses scientific research and development to enhance purely economic conditions rather than the entire human condition." We now can and must, as a result of the impending development, give first priority to things other than more economic development. These other things relate to people and to the environment. So you see, the first theme is not just something tacked on to the forefront of our conference; it is something which sets up the imperatives for consideration of the other two themes -- people and the environment.

Theme two was entitled "Change in the North, the Native People" Both the title of the theme and the manner in which this session was carried out -- and I was a participant in the section -- I think reflects considerably on our shortcomings. Reflected in the papers of the panels, more possibly than the symposium itself, were the dangers and shortcomings of attempts at scientific investigation of man. I detected in some of the presentations the very common error of imposing a prefabricated model upon the subject as a means of predicting or defining social and political behavior. In part, this was done, of course, again playing the academic game of making it appear more rigorously scientific. Investigations must start, not with our specialized social science discipline, but with the subject itself. After becoming familiar with the subject as a living whole, we then should begin to select the variables or forces that are strategic to our more specialized analysis and from this formulate tailor-made models. This was very much Gunnar Mydal's advice several years ago to a conference of young economists from underdeveloped countries. He warned them against using the established body of the economic discipline in applications to their problems because it was designed to treat a particular set of problems set aside in geographic JB space, and in time. He urged them to devise their own tools of analysis which were more appropriate to the things they were facing.

There was also inherent in this section the sense of violation of human dignity and privacy to the subject, which

is involved when such things are being done. I have always detected this among my anthropologist friends, a sense of propriety or mapping out territories. This particular group of Eskimos are my people, meant in the sense that you are not to intrude upon the study of them because this is my career.

There is something else much broader than this which carried over into the symposium, and that was the exclusive concern with the native, the theme entitled "only the natives have problems; only the natives must change." John Borbridge, who was the anchor man on our panel, took us to task for this in a very scholarly and gentlemanly way; he could have done it more brutally, and was certainly entitled to do so. One of the remarks he made in regard to the native problem was: "There is a need for massive education of non-natives." It was brought forth in one of the panels that there has been no study of the non-native in Alaska. I can think of one only, which was not of the non-native, but of the non-native and native, and that was Robert Marshall's ARCTIC VILLAGE, which as I recall was published in 1931. This took a group of human beings living together, ^{and} analyzed ~~study~~, understood them as a group of human beings living together. This to me is the only proper study of man in the North and man in change.

Gunner Mydal, when he was invited to do a study on the American Negro, did so but did it on his terms. His work stands as a classic although it was published some quarter of a century ago. The title was not the American Negro, but "An

American Dilemma." In other words, he studied the non-Negro community as much or more than the Negro community. As Dr. Caldwell said this morning, "We are all being 'aculturated' in the emerging culture of the future." We are all having to build anew, not just because we are natives or non-natives, but because we are here and because the environment and conditions in which we live are changing. As John Borbridge said in his remarks, "What we should be concerned about is not just the native or non-native, but the continuing political process which we all share."

There was another aspect of this session, which I will not dwell upon, and that is the danger of stifling the natives' attempts at self-expression, self-determination, and so on, through an over-protectiveness, through an over-anxious desire to help. The "Great White Father" and the "bleeding heart" are as much a threat to the natives as the racial bigot in his eventual development. Again as John Borbridge said, "Do you really want us to share in the processes of this system?" This is the critical question.

A funny thing happened to me on the way to the symposium, I was cornered by a group of women, and growing out of this discussion of the human aspects of the North, it was another group that the planners of this conference and that you men, in general, forget, and that is women. They had a little discussion over at Moore Hall. I understand about forty or fifty were present, and their subject was "Women in the North."

They are going to be presenting to the institute or to the conference a proposal for a conference on "Woman in Alaska," and they are drawing up the plans right now, I understand, for the pre-conference planning. What they are concerned about is the fact that men make the decisions in the North and women bear the consequences. (Laughter and Applause.) I might add that this was an interracial group. There were representatives of the native and the non-native in the delegation cornering me. I am very pleased to draw your attention to one of the immediate outcomes of the conference. The conference hadn't even ended before it started producing rather significant results.

The third theme, "Impact of Development on the Environment," I will just touch on very briefly because you have just heard it. There are two things that stuck in my mind from the morning session, that is, the notion of the man and the environment as a false ^{dichotomy} economy. I gave a talk to the Sierra Club Wilderness Conference a few months ago in which I dwelt on this theme. I changed the assigned title from "Wilderness or Development" to "Wilderness and Development," and this was part of the philosophy that I was espousing at that time that we have got to stop thinking of these as two separate things; that we share the common brotherhood of all living things, and whatever damage we do to other living organisms is reflected immediately or eventually upon us or to us. The other was a political idea in which the new politics

7/8

was defined in terms of concern for the quality of life, life in the country, life in the cities, or wherever life is going on. I think these are two things we should bear in mind in our re-thinking of the change situation in the North.

The final panel, which you just heard, as the discussion was going on, my thoughts went back to Joe Fisher's first speech. I read the article which had a map which drew the pathways of exploitation which he described in his talk. It was very interesting that the area that we are now concerned with had not been penetrated prior to World War II. Exploitation had taken place along the southern and western coasts and into the interior a little bit. The Arctic slope was still virgin territory as far as development was concerned.

Now, just a few things about the science conference itself. As Frank Fraser Darling said this morning, he is a relic of the first science conference. I notice this is the twentieth conference. That is a long way back. The first one was held in Washington so I did not participate being an Alaskan. (Laughter and Applause.) The second one was held in Alaska, and so I am also a relic at least of the second science conference. I had the pleasure of greeting a lot of old friends who have since left Alaska who have returned. We talked about some of the good old days, which weren't so terribly good; but among their remarks, I noticed this resistance to change again. This takes changes in the format of the conference

itself. Some of them expressed being disturbed by the rather unscientific presentations that were being made, particularly in the symposium. We weren't citing our documentary support and this sort of thing. Also they were disturbed by the introduction of what they considered to be rather emotional or irrational forces in this conference. This is highly unscientific.

In reply to this, I think our two luncheon speakers, not the last one, the first two had a great deal to say. Dr. Dedijs, in recounting his attempts to find evidences of a scientific policy for Alaska or even evidence of a statement of goals, said that he went through something like a hundred documents, publications and found absolutely no evidence of this. We have, in the science conference and as individual scientists, deliberated in the past on the matter of a science policy for Alaska. In our individual work many of us believe we were designing goals, sorting out the possible and the probable. Some of these things weren't published. Obviously, we have failed to make ourselves heard or understood; and this failure, I believe, is measured in terms of Dr. Dedijs's inability to find evidence in published Alaska materials or in official statements by Alaskan leaders. The science conference can no longer afford to continue as a rather cozy and pleasant club for the in-group of "scientific workers" where we used to exchange shop talk. As a social scientist, I had very few

people to talk to I might add, and through publications of the annual papers and proceedings earned another Brownie point in the rather grim academic game of publish or perish.

The scientific conference must provide a means for defining and examining the key issues of Alaska, provide a forum for discussing these issues. This is precisely what we have attempted here. It must serve to inform the general public, and it must embody the concept of science serving mankind -- in this case, mankind in Alaska. Bob Scott, in his paper, quoted several people who said, in effect, that scientific detachment in this day and age is immoral, and it certainly is in Alaska. Senator Palmer said that we as scientists must get involved in politics, not directly running for office against him, but in providing him the information on which he can make sound decisions and other members of our legislature can do the same thing. Dr. Bentley Glass gave a very profound statement on the question: "Has science a future?" which he treated growth of science as though it were the growth of a biological organism, and presented a rather frightening picture of the organism dying of indigestion and smothering in the ^{effluence} affluence of its existence. I am not going to repeat that, but one of his pictures I think is particularly appropo^s of Alaska's scientific community, that is BAcon's picture of scientific activity as pioneers and smiths. The reason I am in Alaska is that we can pursue our scientific researches and

perform both roles. We can be both pioneers and smiths. We are dealing with a relatively isolated, simple system which embodies many of the forces, many of the factors found in the more complex systems that exist elsewhere, but we here can perform, as I say, both jobs. We can retain our perspective; we can find meaningful relationships between the little bits of data we are able to unearth, and we can constantly revise as smiths the system which explains this. From this, I feel that we do gain ^{insights} insites which are of considerable value applied on a broader more general scale, and again this is a matter of communications; and so the format of the Alaskan science conference has changed, and I believe will continue to change as it takes on the other responsibilities -- those of communication as well as interchange of ideas. Thank you.