

Minto Mill Shutdown Temporary

The shutdown of Minto's recently-started sawmill project is only a temporary measure, according to the Bureau of Indian Affairs here, because of mechanical difficulties with the small mill machinery.

Frank Barnette, BIA rural projects supervisor, said village men working on the mill were having trouble with the

power unit.

"The blade apparently isn't going fast enough to cut properly through the logs," he said.

Barnette said lumber coming out of the mill wasn't even, and the exact trouble source hasn't been located yet. A mechanic familiar with sawmill equipment may soon be sent down to Minto, west of Fairbanks on the Tanana River, but at present the mill is not being operated.

"We have no steady work-force for the mill yet anyway," Barnette said, "and so now even if the mill was working we would probably have

trouble finding men to work there. Almost every able-bodied man in the village is out firefighting with the BLM."

The mill project is designed to employ eight villagers. Four men will be out working in the woods, cutting trees and trimming them, getting the logs to the mill, with four others working directly at the mill.

Harold Riley and Luke Titus have been managing the project at the village.

The mill is the first project initiated by the BIA and village people with an economic development motive.