

# Need 'Trainables' -

## *Workers Needed for Post-Pipeline Era*

By MARILYN RICHARDS

Alaska's unemployment rate is twice the national average, but according to Douglas Colp, associate professor in mining engineering at the University of Alaska, there are "far more jobs than graduates" in mineral technology.

"Native Alaskans get preference treatment on hiring," says Colp.

By Native, he meant by Alaskan residence and not by race.

Dr. Chris Lambert, Jr., head of the mineral engineering department at the Fairbanks campus said, "The jobs available (on the pipeline) will evaporate but these latter continuing jobs training for maintenance, refineries and the service industries will be permanent."

Up to \$12 million would be made available by various groups for training in jobs ranging in everything from bookkeepers to bakers to truck drivers, but it would be difficult to continue that kind of employment after the pipeline flurry is over. The service industry needs "trainable people not truck drivers," Lambert said.

After the next three years, Lambert said that the need for temporary employment such as construction, shipping and drilling would be down but there will be a strong need for permanent maintenance in the refineries and research. Colp added that there will be many jobs in exploration in the hard rock mineral field.

"The mineral technology pro-

gram is valuable to the Native corporations but they aren't doing a thing suggesting there are people to be trained in this field," said Colp. The 3,500 Native hire figured in agreement with the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Alyeska Company are all only temporary construction jobs.

Both Lambert and Colp are pushing their two-year mineral technology training program. All their graduates, they said, have been successful in job placement.

"A person who graduated is not a technician or an engineer but the company that hires him can make a technician out of him," Colp said.

Lambert said that his department has contact with several oil companies who are interested in hiring "trainables." One oil company said some "troubleshooters" hired don't absorb training and that most companies don't have time to train them.

"Trainables" are in demand because they are able to absorb on the job training.

"We're not training people to be technicians but so employers will have confidence in him to be trained and employed as a foreman or engineer," said Lambert. "There's room at the top, it's the bottom that's crowded."

Colp said it is hard for a 19-year-old to make an early decision on what he wants to do in life but it's important when he makes that first step, whether or not he may be wrong, because there is still time for change.

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Citing examples, he said Rex Okakok, a graduate in mineral technology, is now a preacher. Lorry Schuerch, Kotzebue's police chief and former state trooper, told Colp if it wasn't for the mineral technology program and school, he wouldn't be where he is now. Schuerch worked at the Kennicott Mine after graduation.

The program first started out in 1965 as a one-year program and after completion of it a certificate was presented to the graduate. Colp and Lambert said that there might be possibilities for reviving the one-year program but many of the certificate holders are coming back to get their two-year diploma.

Plans for the program's expansion include summer employment after the first year is completed and on the job training. A prerequisite for the program is a high school diploma but that requirement could be waived in cases where older students are involved, Lambert said.