

Sen. Bartlett Calls for Probe of Hiring Practices in North Slope

WASHINGTON—Sen. E.L. (Bob) Bartlett has called for a state and federal investigation of employment practices on Alaska's North Slope.

Bartlett requested the U.S. Department of Labor, the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the State Department of Labor to investigate the North Slope employment situation.

Bartlett said that he had been informed that about 1,000 persons were employed on the North Slope in oil exploration, construction of airstrips, buildings and roads.

"Few of these are Alaskans," Bartlett wrote Immigration Service Commissioner Raymond F. Farrell. The senator said he understood Canadian workers were being employed.

Farrell was asked to give the senator "a report on the number of Canadians admitted for work on the North Slope, under what terms they were admitted, and where."

"It is my understanding," Bartlett said, "that a minimum of 50 Canadian laborers have been certified out of Seattle in the last six weeks."

Bartlett said that he had been informed by the oil companies that work underway on the North Slope "requires only highly-qualified persons."

But Bartlett said he had also received reports "that some of the Canadian workers are 18 to 20 years old. Obviously, I doubt that at that young age they would be considered highly qualified."

In a letter to Secretary Willard Wirtz of the U.S. Department of Labor, Bartlett asked for an investigation of wage rates being paid on the North Slope.

In addition Bartlett told Wirtz of reports which indicated that "Canadian laborers are being utilized to perform tasks which Americans are ready, willing and able to perform, and performing these tasks at wages lower than those prevailing for Americans in the area."

Bartlett requested State Labor Commissioner Thomas J. Moore to help clear up the conflicting reports of the employment situation on the North Slope.

"I think it is imperative that the facts of hiring practices of the oil companies and of the firms with which the oil companies contract to carry out exploration and construction be gathered and made public," Bartlett said.

Bartlett urged the state to join with the U.S. Department of Labor and the Immigration Service in making a detailed study on the employment situation on the North Slope.

"Mineral wealth removed from our state cannot be replaced," Bartlett said. "Work done in removing these minerals cannot be done again. I pledge every effort to ensure that the work be done, whenever and wherever possible by Alaskans."

Never read any book that is not a year old. —EMERSON