

Of Athabaskan Descent—

Melva Miller of Fairbanks Learning to Be a Welder



APPRENTICE IRONWORKER at Pump Station 1 of the trans-Alaska pipeline is Melva Miller. The Alaska resident has been working on the pipeline project for about five months. She is a graduate of Lathrop High School in Fairbanks.



MELVA MILLER, 22, is an apprentice ironworker at Pump Station 1 of the trans-Alaska pipeline. The Alaska resident has been working on the pipeline project for about five months. She is a graduate of Lathrop High School in Fairbanks.

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, Oct. 6, 1975 — "It all started out as a joke," says Melva Miller, 22, an apprentice ironworker at Pump Station 1 of the trans-Alaska pipeline. "A couple of guys in the shop suggested I come down one night and they'd teach me to weld. I immediately loved it."

Melva was working at the pump station as a bullcook, making

beds and cleaning rooms, when the chance came to work her way into an ironworker apprenticeship.

Because she is an Athabaskan Indian, Melva was eligible for several minority training programs sponsored by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, the firm responsible for the design, construction and operation of the

pipeline.

However, after that first taste of welding, she chose to remain where she was and learn the new trade at night on her own, after working a full 10-hour day as a bullcook. She later was accepted as an ironworker apprentice.

"I love welding because it's new every day; there is always something to learn," the petite Fairbanks resident says. "Welding is not difficult, but to do it well requires work and constant improvement. And I want to be good."

She has done both acetylene and arc welding at Pump Station 1, the origin station at Prudhoe Bay on the North Slope of Alaska.

Welding certification is among Melva's plans for the near future. To be certified, she must pass tests welding in horizontal, vertical and overhead positions.

The ironworker apprenticeship usually lasts three to four years, but Melva believes she can complete it sooner because of the number of hours of experience gained on the Alyeska project. Like some 2,500 other women working on the pipeline, Melva puts in 70 or more hours per week alongside her male counterparts.

As for long-term plans, Melva

may return to college or pursue the ironworker trade. "I don't know what I will do after the pipeline," she said, "but there are lots of opportunities for women ironworkers."

Tunney Would Swap Grain for Oil

The Senate Oct. 2 passed a resolution by Sen. John V. Tunney, D-Calif., to bring about an exchange of Soviet oil for American grain at a price less than that set by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Tunney and Sen. Robert Dole, R-Kan., introduced the resolution on Sept. 29, 1975, and the Senate Agriculture Committee endorsed it on Oct. 1.

The resolution was co-sponsored by Senators Bumpers, Eagleton, Hansen, Gary Hart, Hartke, Hathaway, Mansfield, Morgan, Moss, Pell, Stone, Taft and Thurmond.

The California senator said that the Soviet Union should be required to help the U.S. on the most critical American shortage, oil, in return for American assistance to the Russians on their

most pressing problem, grain.

"We are the largest grain-producing nation in the world," Tunney said. "The grain grown by American farmers is perhaps our greatest national trade resource. At the same time, the Soviet Union is now the largest oil producing nation in the world. The Soviet Union needs our grain, and we could use some of its oil, particularly if we can get it for less than OPEC prices."

The resolution calls for purchase of the Soviet oil at less than OPEC prices, recently raised by an additional 10 per cent.

Tunney said purchases of Soviet oil would substantially reduce the risk of boycott since "if the Russians cut off oil to us, we could suspend grain shipments to them."

He said such purchases also would serve as a tool to help drive down the world price of oil.

"Lessening our dependence for OPEC oil will place great pressure upon the oil cartel, which has just further increased prices above levels which already represented a completely distorted demand/supply relationship," the California senator said.

Premier Alexie Kosygin indicated that the Soviet Union is prepared to negotiate agreements with the United States on grain and oil.



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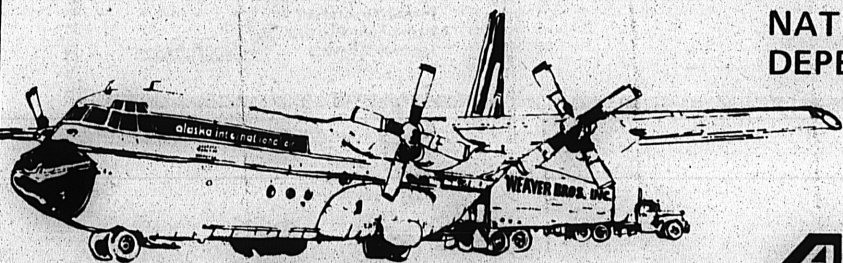


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