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TASK FORCE ON EMPLOYMENT MEETS OIL MEN

Task Force Meeting with Oil Men Sets Hope for Employment

A unique conference took place last week on October 21 in Anchorage and it was a meeting between 17 high officials of the major oil companies throughout the United States and Gov. Walter J. Hickel's task force on employment.

The employment of Alaskans in the oil industry, principally native Alaskans, was heavily stressed by the task force and the appeal touched on eloquence in deliveries of speeches.

A good portion of this was done by some of the native leaders, John Borbridge, president of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indians, Emil Notti, president of the Alaska Federation of Natives, and Don Wright, president of

the Cook Inlet Native Association.

Except for an hour of absence for an appearance elsewhere, Gov. Hickel spent the entire day at the meeting. The governor continually dwelt on the importance of hiring Alaskans, especially natives.

"Before the year is over, you are going to find this a good business," Gov. Hickel told the oil company officials. "I believe this because they know the whole Arctic. Can people live there? Men have lived in that Arctic for centuries. They have learned to utilize the Arctic. They have the willingness to work. These rural Alaskans—they want to succeed. Employ the

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Task Force Meets with Oil Men...

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people who really understand the area—the knowledge—the love of their country. These people have learned to cope with the elements."

This general vein of appeal was carried on throughout the day. The oil men listened intently and a noticeable thaw among them became evident as the meeting progressed. It was also noted that the oil company officials did not make clearly defined commitments although some hopeful statements in regard to hiring Alaskans.

"I want you to know that you have our attention," said G.L. Wilson of the Atlantic Richfield Corporation.

Wilson told the meeting that his company must now begin to look for long range operation and he hoped that oil will begin to be taken out of the North Slope by 1972.

"Continuity is starting to shape up," said Wilson.

When asked why the oil companies employ entire out-of-state crews at the outset, they replied that:

—It was necessary that this be done because such units like the oil drilling companies work on contracts, that the contracts have to be met, therefore they have their own trained personnel for this specialized job.

—That this was generally true when the companies first begin to operate but when the continuity is achieved, the companies begin to hire locally; that this phase was actually being begun in the North Slope where Alaskans and native workmen have now been hired.

Privately, some of the oil men suggested that the natives form roustabout crews or roughnecks so they can be hired when oil drilling jobs open.

A training program was dwelt upon for jobs in the oil industry. Gov. Hickel prodded to get it off the ground and said the State would help financially. He told the oil people:

"What is needed is industry teaching center. You could help to select trainees."

NATIVE SKILLS

The inherent native Alaskan's ability to work under every kind of conditions was widely pointed out to the oil company men.

Pete Shoup, Alaska manager of the Association of Pacific Fisheries, said that his organization has found it "extremely profitable to hire from Alaska." He said it was good business to generate more salaries in the state.

Dr. Max Brewer, director of the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory in Barrow, covered the advisability of hiring native people extensively.

Brewer said that out of 63 employed by ARL at the present time, 36 were native people. He said that in summer 57 per cent of the personnel, or even up to 67 per cent, were native people.

He said that positions held by them were as carpenters, mechanics, equipment operators, laborers, teletype and radio operators, aircraft mechanics, and occasional station managers for outlying camps.

Brewer pointed out that he had noticed newspaper articles stating that various oil compan-

ies plan apprentice programs for roughnecks and perhaps, eventually, drillers.

"I however, feel that this, while very desirable, overlooks the fact that normally three men are employed off the rig floor for every one man on the rig floor," Brewer stated.

He said for non-rig floor jobs natives already possess the necessary training and would not need an apprentice period.

"For some of these jobs, particularly waterhaul operators and outside labor, natives are often far better as they don't get lost in storms near as easily, are acquainted with the environment, and don't realize that they should quit work when it gets cold," Brewer said.

"They, he continued, "merely dress for the environment and work with it instead of oftentimes trying to overcome it with brute force."

Brewer pointed out that in discussions with several companies, he has found that some preconceived ideas about native workmen existed about homesickness, drinking, and language barriers.

He said that he has employed native men on ice island research localities for months at a time; that drinking was no more a problem as with anyone else; and the language barrier was almost nonexistent today.

"The thought that I wish to leave is that employment of the native people offers opportunity for the various companies, particularly those working in the bush, to obtain employees possessing skills for some jobs that surpass those skills available in the labor markets further south.

"Thus, their employment can offer real economic advantages to the companies," Max Brewer stated.

The oil company officials were impressed with the presentations of the members of task force.

William W. Keeler, of Cherokee extraction and president of the Phillips Petroleum Company and who served as chairman of the Governor's task force, summed it up for the officials:

"I've learned a lot this morning from Dr. Brewer and other gentlemen. We'll sure pledge to try to work with you, as far as we're concerned."

Keeler said that some of his prior conclusions were hasty.

"I'm going back feeling a little better," he said.

The following oil men attended the task force meeting:

Harry Pistole, manager, Western Production Division, Humble Oil and Refining Co.; L. P. Foote, manager, Los Angeles Division, Marathon Oil Co.; Paul Wollstadt, Senior Vice President

in Charge of Relations, Mobil Oil Corporation;

William T. Smith, Vice President, Denver Operations, Pan American Petroleum Corp.; O.J. Simpson, Vice President and General Manager, Western Region, Domestic Oil, Sinclair Oil Corp.; L.C. Soileau, Manager Western Operations, Standard Oil of California;

N.T. Ugrin, Vice President, Industrial Relations, Union Oil of California; Edward Johnson, Manager Collier Chemical Plant, Union Oil of California; T.J. Greer, representative, United Geophysical Corp.; a representative of the Western Geophysical Co.;

C.A. Nabors, President and General Manager, Nabors Alaska Drilling, Inc.; Bill Brewer, Area Manager for Alaska, Reading and Bates, Inc.; M.G. Rowe, President, Rowan Drilling Company, Inc.; Gordon Anderson, Executive Vice President, Santa Fe Drilling Co.

J.D. Erlewine, special assistant to the president, Western Offshore Drilling and Exploration Co.; R.F. Woidneck, Vice president, Western Offshore Drilling and Exploration Co.; and Geoff Larminie, B.P. Exploration Co., USA.

The following are members of the Governor's Task Force to further the employment of Alaskans:

William W. Keeler, President, Phillips Petroleum Co.; John Borbridge, President, Tlingit and Haida Central Council; Emil Notti, President, Alaska Federation of Natives; Howard Rock, Editor, Tundra Times. Lawrence S. Fanning, Editor and Publisher, Anchorage Daily News;

Max Brewer, director, Arctic Research Laboratory; Hugh B. Fate, Jr., dentist, Fairbanks; Norman L. Schwalb, Manager Alaska Chapter, Associated General Contractors; Pete Shoup, Alaska Manager, Association of Pacific Fisheries;

C.T. Penny, Project Manager, Kennecott Copper Corporation, who was unable to attend; Clarence Kramer, Alaska Lumber and Pulp Co., who was represented by John Daly, Ketchikan Spruce Mills;

Mel Evans, Business Manager, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 367; Harold Groothuis, Alaska Petroleum Crafts Council, Walter L. Kubley, Legislative Assistant to Gov. Walter J. Hickel;

Frank Murkowski, Commissioner, Department of Economic Development (State); Clifford R. Hartmen, Commissioner, State Department of Education; Thomas Moore, Commissioner, State Department of Labor; and Willard Bowman, Director, State Commission on Human Rights.