

Army Men Replacing Alaskan Workers Hit

WASHINGTON—Senator Mike Gravel of Alaska has again complained to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird over the "continuing practice" of replacing civilian Alaskan workers with military personnel.

In a letter sent to the Defense Department on June 4, 1970, the Senator specifically referred to the Department's reported reduction of its Army Nike Communications System Contract with the RCA Service Company by replacing contractor personnel with military personnel.

Senator Gravel first wrote Secretary Laird last May 7, concerning complaints he had received about the replacement of civilian employees by military personnel within the Department of the Air Force.

Although the Senator said he received denials that civilian employees are being replaced by the military, the Senator said "nonetheless this appears to be the policy."

Referring to the Department's replacement of civilian workers on the RCA Service Company

project, the Senator said he has received reports that the military men who are presumably replacing the present civilian workers "have never seen any of the equipment used on the site."

The Senator said this indicates that a further expense will be involved in providing these men with an extensive training period.

"Therefore, it is logical to assume that it would have to be a continuing program, inasmuch as the Army has such a large turnover of personnel. It appears as a rather senseless expenditure," the Senator said.

Senator Gravel said he is concerned over the Defense Department's lack of compliance with its own Directives, assuring that civilians would be hired to do contract work in Alaska whenever possible.

He asked Secretary Laird for his "personal review of the Nike Communications System action, in particular, and the entire Departmental policy covering civilian employment, in general."