

# Gravel Gets Firm Assurance On Jobs from Oil Companies

U.S. Senator Mike Gravel last Friday told a joint session of the

Alaska State Legislature that he had received firm assurance of

interest and cooperation from the oil industry to train and hire Alaskans.

Senator Gravel said that some time in March he will have a specific set of proposals to present to the Governor and to the Legislature for a massive assault on the unemployment question.

"I met with representatives of the oil companies that will share the cost of the pipeline, immediately after the public announcement," Senator Gravel said. "I outlined to them the intensity of our employment problem. . . the human and economic loss. I encouraged them to give a chance to show what Alaskans can do.

"That meeting led to others," Senator Gravel continued. "In recent weeks I have worked with the industry in developing necessary data on the type and number of skills that will be required in Alaska.

"The Community College at my request has prepared material for presentation to the industry, suggestions on various job training programs, cost estimates and timetables.

Senator Gravel said "From the work that has been done so far I think economics will encourage the industry to become deeply involved as full partners in a massive job training program for Alaska."

Senator Gravel discussed two other major topics during his address to the Legislature: native land claims and communications.

He said, "the time is ripe," for settlement of the land claims issue. He said that Senator Henry M. Jackson, Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, which will consider the legislation, "is committed to a settlement."

He firmly believes that there should be a generous settlement and that it should come this year.

Senator Gravel said "the land claims are valid because the nation has an obligation to the

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# ***Job Assurance . . .***

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Alaska natives and it takes on even greater urgency when we consider that the settlement, if it is adequate should spell the end to extreme poverty in rural Alaska."

If the claims are not settled rapidly Senator Gravel warned that:

"Title to the land in Alaska will be in dispute at the time of our greatest opportunity for advancement."

"The Alaska native will miss the opportunity to be in on the greatest flow of that advancement, and to grow with it."

The frustration of failure will compound the problem, increase tensions and cloud our future."

"And all Alaska will suffer deeply."

On the communications question Senator Gravel reiterated his opposition to the sale of the Alaska Communications System—a position he made public Wednesday in a letter to Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird.

The Senator said that in his opinion communications in Alaska should be based on a satellite system. He said the technology exists to supply every community in Alaska including all villages with direct television.

He said that under current plans the Alaska Communications System will offer but a fraction of the capability of a total satellite system. And that the satellite system would be no more expensive.