

Fort Wainwright's 'Project Hire' Helps

Fort Wainwright has benefited under the new Alaskanative training program, "Project Hire" through the recent hire of Messrs. John Lincoln and Dion Rivers who hold career conditional appointments with the Post Engineer as painter and carpenter, respectively.

They are among twelve natives who were selected throughout U.S. Army, Alaska, from the list of worker-trainee applicants maintained by the Alaska branch office of the Civil Service Commission. Successful trainees will be in line for future permanent appointments.

Project Hire sprang from an agreement in Washington in August between the Civil Service Commission and the Departments of Labor, Interior, and Defense regarding the need to provide employment opportunities for Alaskans at Defense installations and with other Federal agencies in this state.

The various agencies received space authorizations to be used for the conditional hire of natives at the GS-1 or Wage Board entry level as trainees for permanent positions which hopefully will become available through normal attrition following the year of training.

Throughout USARAL, 70 individuals are expected to be brought into the program between October 1969 and March 1970. In addition to the 12 trainees currently appointed under Project Hire, USARAL is training ten Alaska natives under the "Federal Host" program, a related activity funded by the

Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Of these ten persons, two are working on Fort Wainwright. Miss Mary Ann Willock is a clerk typist in the Civilian Personnel Office, and Mr. George Bennett is a refrigerator mechanic with Post Engineer.

During the past two years the U.S. Army, Alaska, has filled more than 97 per cent of all its civilian vacancies with persons living in Alaska.

It was not until November 1967 that the Civil Service Commission began identifying minority group employees of all agencies in such fashion that it could be seen what numbers of Eskimos, Aleuts, and Indians were in the Federal work force.

USARAL had, in June 1966, encouraged a statistical breakout of such information in order that the ratio of employment of these people could be seen and any need for corrective action could be seen and any need for corrective action could be detected.

During this period USARAL, in coordination with the Anchorage Federal Executive Association and the Federal Field Committee for Development and Planning in Alaska, suggested to the Department of the Army the need for special authorization and funding support for a program that could upgrade the skills of the Alaska natives.

Subsequently the Federal Host program was developed whereby Federal agencies could provide training with financial aid from BIA. This started late in 1968, and the first native to come under this program was placed by USARAL.

By mid-1969 USARAL had 41 native interns working in 16 different fields of work. Within about six months, five of them achieved permanent appointments.

By July 1969 USARAL had about half of all the trainees in the Federal Host program and had made a third of the placements.

This was a notable achievement because this command comprises slightly less than an eighth of the Federal civilian work force in Alaska and most of its jobs are concentrated in the two largest metropolitan areas of Anchorage and Fairbanks.