

# Study Pinpoints Where Jobless Are

A study just completed by Laurel L. Bland gives the numbers and locations of Alaskan Native people who are chronically unemployed or jobless. The study uses 1967 population figures for the Alaskan Natives which total 53,190.

A description of the investigation is reported which provides information about conditions that are generally talked about but have not been given in detail in the past. Until this study there has been no satisfactory way to answer questions about the number of Native people who are without jobs and where they live.

This report establishes the adult Native population in Alaska at approximately 31,915 persons who are now 16 years of age or older. It shows that 16,500 of these adults are known to be seeking jobs or are employed.

It asks, and answers, such questions as: "What about the rest of the Alaskan Native adults? Are all the rest, 75 per cent of the adult population—15,415 people—unable to work? Are they interested in getting jobs?"

According to the report, 7,710 Native adults are unable to work for a number of reasons. These range from physical disability to a desire to stay home with children or to do work that does not pay wages.

This leaves 7,705 people who are believed to be physically able, and often trained, who can work for wages.

These people would like to have good jobs which pay a decent dependable wage. The report states that of the 16,500 people who are counted on the Alaskan workforce, 3,710 of these are seldom, if ever, able to get jobs.

By adding the people who want to work and are able to take a job to those who are continually without jobs, the final figure for the number of jobless Alaskan Native adults is 11,415—a base for serious human tragedy and poverty.

The study points out that the farther north the unemployment records reach, the higher the unemployment and jobless rate climbs. This shows that the jobless Alaskan Natives are mostly Eskimos and Northern Athabascan Indians.

Joblessness in the Arctic (1969), Mrs. Bland's report, does not provide answers to the problem that her study describes. It does not give any ways that people who want and need jobs can be brought together with the people who are looking for workers.

She does point out, however, that the jobless situation may become much worse unless some solution is found. One important part of this study shows that there will be about 21,000 Native youngsters entering the working age between now and 1981.

The young people will want, and need, to support themselves and to begin new families. A workable solution must be found, Mrs. Bland said, that is fair to the youth coming into the workforce age and those who already have families to feed and provide for and have no jobs.

Next week the Tundra Times will review another study which provides a part of the answer.

It is a report which tells about the amount of workers that will be needed to build the Trans

Alaska pipeline system and suggests ways more Alaskan Natives can be given the opportunity to earn a decent wage for today's work and a guarantee there will be job opportunities tomorrow.