

Gravel's TT Report

By Mike Gravel
U.S. Senator, Alaska

Now that the trans-Alaska pipeline construction has begun, it's time to deal with two related factors: the predicted flood of Outsiders, and the need to make sure Alaskans get top priority on the pipeline work.

PIPELINE PROGRESS

Many of the construction projects are now under way.

Congress has approved the lease of Ft. Wainwright's North Post to the Alyeska pipeline company; Alyeska says they will be using the North Post of the Army base as a main staging area for actual construction of the oil pipeline.

The building of the haul road of the Yukon, coming out of Fairbanks, has begun. In addition, actual site preparation activities have been initiated. Brush is being cleared and sites are being readied for pumping stations.

ALASKA HIRE

I have made clear my solid support for an "Alaska Hire" policy on these and all future efforts connected with the pipeline.

I realize the mammoth pipeline — a total of 789 miles in length when completed — means a lot of jobs in a lot of different areas of our state. But, the fact is, we have a lot of unemployed Alaskans.

These unemployed Alaskans, in all fairness, should be given top priority on the pipeline project. An excellent means to reduce our unemployment problem is simply to "hire Alaska." That is what I have urged, and that is what I expect to happen as the project progresses.

LABOR UNION AND LABOR DEPT. BACKING

A number of the big national construction unions have told me that they intend to adopt an "Alaska Hire" policy on the trans-Alaska pipeline work.

During my stay in Alaska last

month and earlier this year, I spent a lot of time with our own local union heads. The Alaska locals are all agreed that, whenever possible, Alaskans should get hiring priority.

In addition, the U.S. Department of Labor has responded to my requests by agreeing to assist in cutting back on the number of jobseekers entering from Outside and expecting a job on the pipeline. It is good to find this kind of support coming from the department, and I'm hopeful we can enlist the support of other federal agencies in Washington on this matter.

NATIVE TRAINING AND HIRING

The permit that allows construction of the oil line states specifically that Native Alaskans are to be trained and placed on the job.

It's an enormous commitment, involving both state and federal agencies, unions and training programs.

If you are interested in employment on the pipeline project — but haven't yet heard about the Native training programs — please write to me at my office in Washington (4107 Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510), and I'll see that you are put in touch with the right office in Alaska.