

Senator Bartlett Clips Military For Dictatorial No-Beard Policy

WASHINGTON—Does the military have authority to order a civilian employe to shave off his beard?

Senator E. L. Bartlett (D-Alaska) thinks not, and submitted a statement on the Senate floor explaining his position.

The Senator's statement was directed at the firing of Dale E. Trautman from his civilian job at Clear Air Force Station, Alaska. Trautman, a resident of Clear, was dismissed because he refused to shave off a beard he grew for the Golden Days Celebration in nearby Fairbanks this summer.

Trautman and the National Federation of Federal Employes have appealed the case to the Civil Service Commission.

The Air Force said that beards interfered with recognition, diagnosis and treatment of frostbite and that the station commander acted within his authority in establishing personal appearance standards.

Senator Bartlett pointed out that in September, when Trautman was fired, there was no threat of frostbite.

He stated that the policy was in direct opposition to the experience of famous satisfied users of beards in cold climates.

Senator Bartlett said that regardless of the validity of the "break-through" in knowledge about beards, the military has no right to tell a citizen he cannot grow a beard for medical reasons. I would think that the American Medical Association, which has expressed some alarm recently about government interference in doctor-patient relationships, would do well to investigate this incident."

He said that he was "stunned"

by the thought that the military has authority to set appearance standards for civilian employes.

"I know of no law passed by Congress giving the military authority to establish personal appearance standards . . . If there is such a law on the books, let us repeal it today before we are told what kind of pants to wear or what color ties to put on.

"The latter is of deep concern to me, for I am told by some of my younger friends that my taste in ties is not in keeping with the fashion of today. Perhaps if I were a braver man I would grow a beard as well, but I am content to limit my protest to ties," he said.

The Senator said that he hoped "the clear breath of public exposure will bring a swift end to the no beard policy. Even if it does, a basic freedom of individual choice will have had a close shave."