

Fort Wainwright's 'Project Hire' Helps

Fort Wainwright has benefited under the new Alaskan native 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 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.

Special Meeting For NAACP on Sunday Nov. 23

The Fairbanks Branch, NAACP will hold a Special Meeting on Sunday, November 23 at 3:00 p.m. in the basement of the Chamber of Commerce Log Cabin, 550 First Avenue.

The guest speaker will be Mr. Carl Niemeyer, Employment-Management Relations Specialist, of the Office of Civilian Personnel, Fort Wainwright.

The main subject for discussion will be how to combat alleged racial discrimination against black students in the Fairbanks North Star Borough School Districts.

The public is cordially invited to attend.

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 Athabaskan 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.

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Letters to the Editor

(Continued from page 2)

in western Alaska—YES. A Native Pioneer Home built by the BIA, NO.

Sincerely,
Don Kemp

Stickman Wants Pioneer Home At Nulato

Nulato, Alaska
November 17, 1969

Dear Mr. Howard Rock. Dear Sir: I just wanted to let you know that I'm going to keep writing to you while I have a little lead left in my pencil, till we get our land settlement.

It's 40 below today and there is not one floor that's insulated here in the village. We bank around our houses with mud every fall. In 40 below, we have to haul wood every other day to live. Green wood for Heather stove and the next day dry wood for the cook stove. You can buy windows or doors, insulation or nothing.

This would be the ideal place for a Pioneer's Home. In the interior lot of fish year round and moose is getting to be public nuisance around here. I wouldn't like to live in Nome because there is no timber. Too open for wind, and no shelter if a man wants to take a spell.

Don't forget there is a lot of old people on the Yukon River that had a tough life like myself. Even right now I have a hell of a time and I'll be worse three years from now. I need a cook, laundry, keep house, etc.

Send Tundra Times to Washington, D.C. so they know what kind of living we have, and send me 10 extra copies here and I'll tell it for me or you.

—Fred Stickman, Sr.

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