

COMPUTERIZED CONSTRUCTION: TRAILER COMPLEX HOUSES "WHITE COLLARS" OF M-K

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Nekoma, ND - Computerization has hit on-the-job construction. A bank of computers are installed and constantly in use at the Morrison-Knudsen trailer complex.

M-K has established its construction headquarters here at the Missile Site Radar (MSR) in a 35-trailer complex.

Roughly 250 workers are established in air-conditioned offices. These workers are the top echelon of M-K personnel - project manager William Gilfillan has his office here; Doc Poteat, construction superintendent is housed here; Jim Rutherford, business manager is here.

But also here are the top engineers, project engineers, draftsmen, accountants, bookkeepers, and stenographers and secretaries.

Almost all of the top administrators and experts are M-K men brought in for the job. Others, however, were hired locally. Most of these "others" form the secretarial and stenographic pool. Where did they come from? They were hired at Grand Forks, Devils Lake, Walhalla, Langdon - from throughout the area. Some have husbands working on the job, some are housewives of the area. Most are married, but not all.

M-K personnel runs a strange gamut. For example, the giant firm has hired the Pinkerton Service to maintain security at the gates. At the PAR site south of Walhalla and near Concrete, ND, two fences enclose the site. One encloses the entire area and the other the actual sensitive site. Guards man the gates and just anyone can't go wandering inside.

At the MSR site here, where M-K headquarters is located, Pinkerton Guards are again on duty.

There is also a doctor hired by M-K. When Gilfillan was asked, "How do you hire a doctor?" he replied, "Oh he's worked for us before," the implication being the M.D. is a full-time paid employee.

M-K also maintains 24-hour duty by registered nurses. Despite the precautions of having full-time medical treatment available, M-K prides itself on the number of construction days without an accident. A large sign at the entrance tells visitors just how many days this has gone on.

The trailer complex which makes up this headquarters for M-K is a modern day office in any respect except that it is a bunch of trailers hooked together. Gilfillan told of plans to bring in seven more trailers and attach them to the current installation.

One area is set aside and environmentally controlled. There computers keep tab on what is going on. Payrolls are ground out, cost-study analyses is a daily thing, all kinds of major construction job programming is fed into the computers and answers are fed back.

Office space in Langdon, like housing, is at a premium. The Corps of Engineers currently has its office located there. Contractors are pushing ahead with Corps offices on site. The main Corps office will be located here at Nekoma just outside of the fenced-in MSR site. A subsidiary office is being constructed at the PAR site. There is a Corps project engineer and staff at each site, plus the Corps command staff. Col. Roy Beatty, area engineer for ABM construction, is the top military commander on the scene. He plans to retire later in July.

All of the Corps of Engineer's offices will be moved when the offices on site are completed. This is expected within a couple of weeks. The offices are being built as "temporary" offices.

M-K trailers will be moved away when the construction job here is finished.