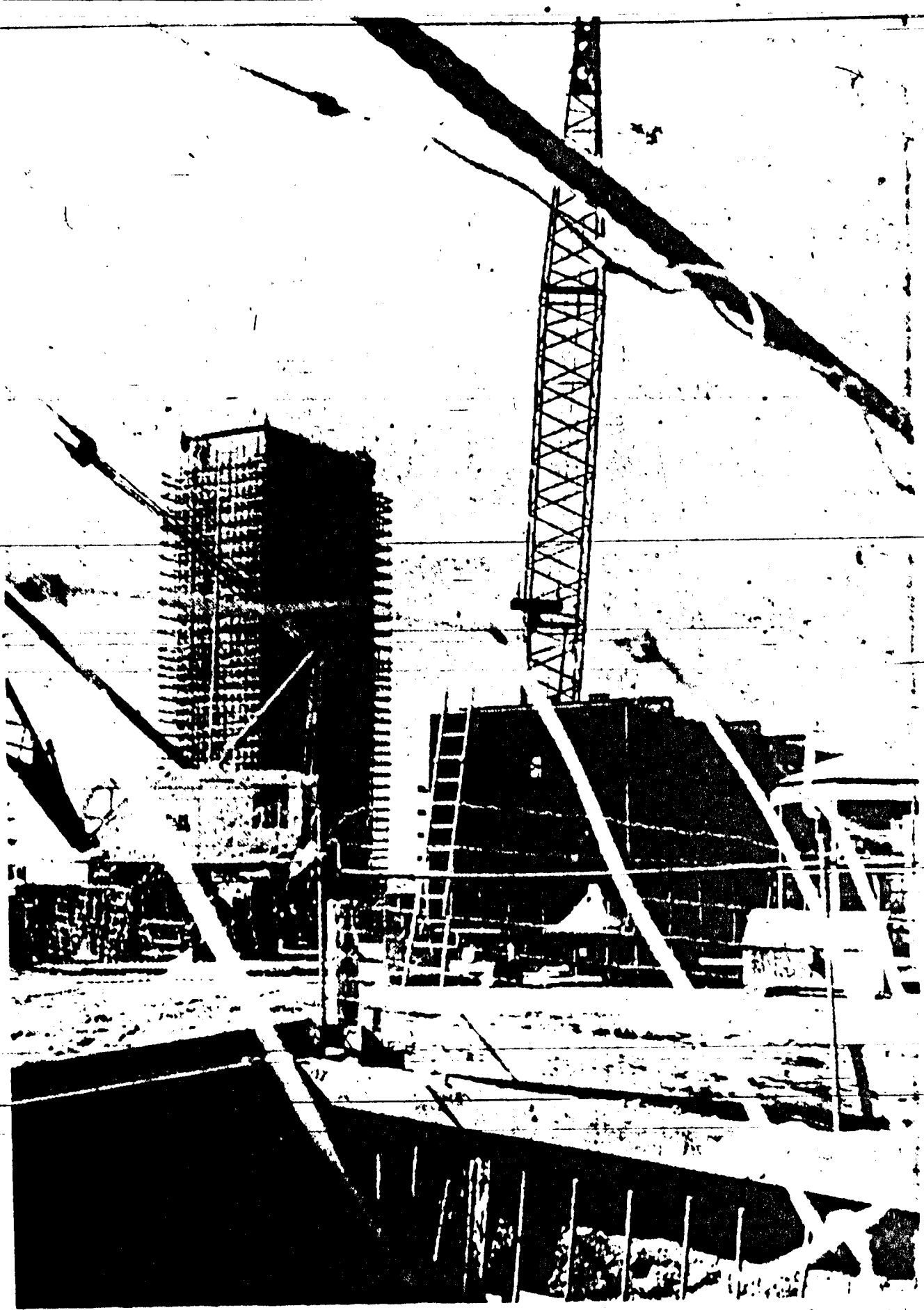
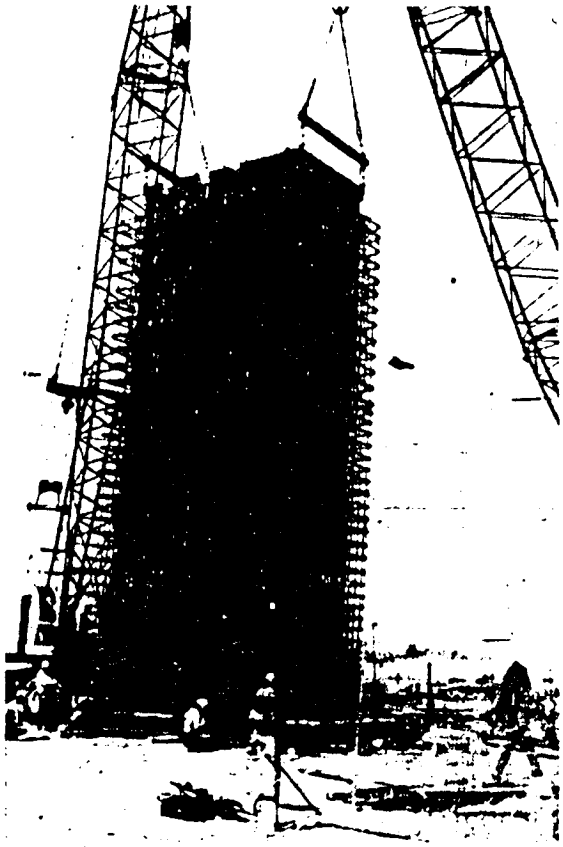
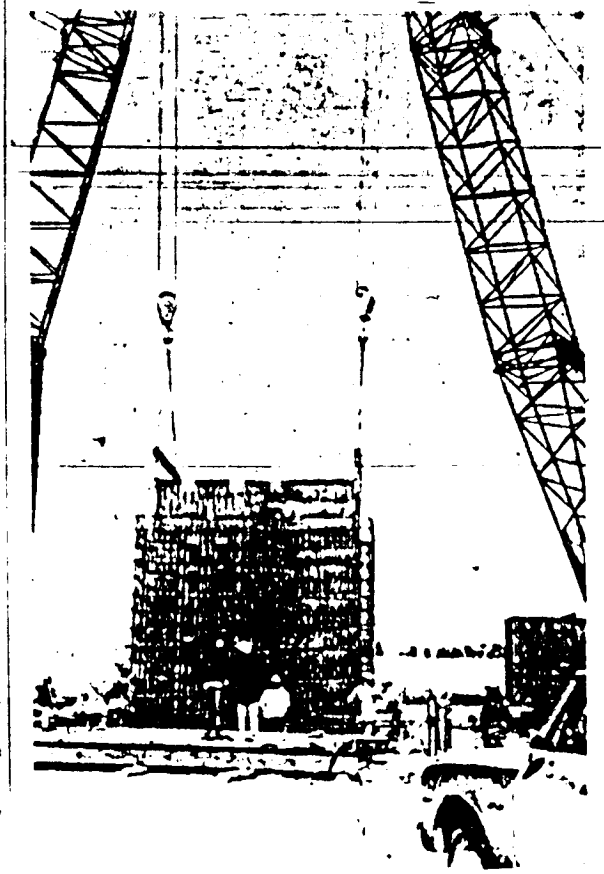


SPANNING ACROSS ONE missile hole, foreground, the "can" is readied for emplacement in another hole, background. In this picture powerful cranes are being moved into place. Crane operators will have job of delicate and perfectly timed teamwork to lower the 60-ton "can" into missile hole. (Herald Photos by Raymond)



CRANE OPERATORS HAVE moved their powerful machines in place and steel workers have tied cross bars to each end of the 60-ton can. They are so arranged that the "cans" will be carefully lowered into the hole at a five-degree angle. Here the "can" has just been broken from the pad.



TEAMWORK OF TWO crane operators was a sight to see. Working on either side of the missile tubes, they couldn't see each other but followed directions of a man on the ground. Carefully the can was lowered in the hole. Here success is assured. The tube is virtually three fourths of the way to its final resting place and everyone has breathed a sigh of relief.

LEO CARDENAS, ASSOCIATED with the Ramsey Steel firm of El Paso, Texas, which manufactured the steel tubes, stands beside one of the cans being prepared for emplacement. The anchor bolts are embedded in concrete. The plate at side is over two inches thick and weighs more than 800 pounds. Architectural engineering for the "cans" was a tricky business never before done

Nekoma, ND - Where once durum wheat waved in the wind on North Dakota prairies, today a deadly antiballistic missile field is growing.

Morrison-Knudsen, prime contractor for the combine building the $137,858,850 complex, is busily installing "cans" in the missile field here.

It was the first time ever for such an operation and was approached so very carefully by M-K and other subcontractors. The "cans" are rectangular steel tubes, reinforced by steel rebars and cocooned in concrete, in which the Sprint and Spartan missiles will be emplaced.

The "cans," there are two of them for each hole, are 43 feet, one and three-fourths inches long. The larger of the two cans is for the missile itself. The smaller is for blowout of the exhaust or blast when the missile is fired.

They were especially built for this project by Ramsey Steel of El Paso, Texas. Leo Cardenas of the El Paso firm was on hand for the massive but delicate operation.

Shipped By Rail - The cans were shipped by rail car from El Paso to this site immediately north of Nekoma. There they were placed upright on skids by powerful cranes and big, heavy steel rebars tied into place.

Construction chronology here saw M-K and other contractors hollow out a giant bowl. From the surface of that bowl, excavators bored rectangular holes just large enough and deep enough to hold the tubes.

Then the cans were readied for emplacement. Now came the tricky business of inserting the cans into the hole. First two huge cranes were jockeyed into place and set at carefully selected positions. Then with one crane on each side, lines were attached to the top of the cans. They were so attached to give the cans a five-degree cant when lifted off the base.

Crowds Watched - The whole maneuver called for delicate teamwork between the two operators. And crowds gathered around to watch in silence. Included among those watching were the big boss of the entire construction project here, William Gilfillan, project manager for M-K, and a visiting executive vice president, William McMurren, M-K's man in charge of construction in continental US.

The hole was constructed as the outside wall of the missile tomb and there were just inches to spare on each of the four sides. A crash against the wall would damage many man hours of work and cost money.

Carefully the crane operators worked and slowly let the can down to its entrance. Ever so delicately they timed their moves and slowly the big can was lowered. It weighs 60 tons. But they handled it as delicately as if it were a hollowed and decorated egg shell.

The number of missiles in the field is classified information. Suffice to say that when they have completed installation of cans they will be the only experts in the United States who have mastered the job.

Concrete Next - The next step, one which hurries crews along, is to get concrete poured around the tubes. This job must be completed before winter comes.

Then another 19-foot section will be placed on top of the 43 feet already in place. When the entire field is completed, the earth will be replaced and landscaped. There won't be much visible from above.

Except for the exit passages for the missiles and the hole from which the blast will blow out, the prairie will appear as if it reigns again. But it doesn't.