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A concentrated attack on chronic unemployment and hard core poverty among American Indians will begin next April in Madera, Calif., with the opening of an Employment Training Center directed by Philco-Ford Corp. under a $497,846 contract with the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The Center will be a major departure from other programs to increase opportunities for the unemployed. The concept involves comprehensive family training for the world of work. Recognizing that 60 percent of American families today have more than one wage-earner, the Center will provide education, training, urban adjustment orientation, and job p1acement for all family members of employable age.

Robert L. Bennett, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, announced the signing of the contract today. He said;

"This is an experiment. President Johnson has called upon us to use 'imaginative, bold approaches' to combat social and economic ills that plague many Indian families. I believe this intensive training center at Madera is an imaginative departure from our customary adult vocational training and job placement services for Indians. It focuses attention on all the elements that make a person employable -- education, specialized training, health, personal attitudes and aptitudes. For family groups, it takes into account the needs of each individual in the family, from the smallest child to the eldest dependent, providing whatever help each needs to contribute to a solid family life."

Philco-Ford's Tech-Rep Division will operate the Center, and provide personnel, services and training equipment and materials.

Family counseling, vocational counseling, pre-vocational and vocational training, as well as health services, will be part of the package for the trainees and their families, at no cost to either one. Specialized training for jobs, with job placement and follow-up, are the fundamentals of the program.

The Philco-Ford Corp. is committed to placing all trainees who complete the program. It is expected that more than one job will be generated for each family.

Scheduled to open on or about April 1, the Center will initially enroll 30 Indian families from all parts of the country. An additional 196 single trainees will be added by July 1, 1967. The first group has not yet been selected.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs entered into the contract with Philco-Ford because the Bureau does not conduct vocational training for adults. Contracts for institutional and on-the-job training have been let with several hundred accredited institutions and firms over the past 10 years.

The Madera site, a former Air Force Base, was recently declared surplus by the United States Government. It was selected by BIA as the new Employment Training Center for Indians because of its available housing and recreational facilities and other buildings easily adaptable for education and

training purposes. Other deciding factors are its accessibility, making transportation easy, and its mild climate, reducing clothing and heating costs and providing opportunity for year-round out-door activity.
