UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PROPOSES LEGISLATION PROVIDING FOR DISTRIBUTION OF $4.5 MILLION INDIAN JUDGMENT

The Department of the Interior has submitted to Congress proposed legislation providing for disposition of three judgment funds, now totaling approximately $4.5 million, recovered from the Government by the Miami Indians of Oklahoma and Indiana.

Largest of the original judgments--$4,647,467--now stands at $4,182,720 following payment of attorneys' fees and other expenses. It was awarded by the Indian Claims Commission, and appropriated by Congress, to descendants of the Miami Tribe or Nation as it existed in 1818. Today the former Nation consists of two separate and distinct groups: The Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and the Miami Indians of Indiana. The judgment was based on a claim by the Indians that they were inadequately compensated for lands ceded to the United States in Ohio and Indiana nearly 150 years ago.

In two additional judgments, the Commission awarded $349,193 (now $308,572) to the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma and $64,738 (now $56,356) to the Miami Indians of Indiana as settlement for lands in Kansas ceded to the Government in 1854.

The Judgment funds are deposited in the United States Treasury, at 4 percent interest, to the credit of the Miami Tribes.

Legislation proposed by the Department provides that the governing body of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, subject to approval by the Secretary of the Interior, shall decide precisely how it will program the Tribe's remaining judgment of approximately $308,000.

Since the Miami Tribe of Indiana, on the other hand, is not an organized body, the Department proposes a per capita distribution of approximately $56,000 among Indian beneficiaries.

Finally, the Department's proposal would authorize a per capita distribution of the $4.6 million judgment, after payment of all expenses, to those meeting rigid eligibility requirements.

Should the Department's proposal become law, adoption of specific regulations governing the preparation of membership rolls would be announced and would be published in the Federal Register at an appropriate time.

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