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A total of $65.8 million was awarded to Indian tribes in judgments handed down by the Indian Claims Commission during calendar year 1965, the Bureau of Indian Affairs reported today. Appropriations to meet the judgments were made during the year in 17 of the 24 cases.

Judgment funds from land claims settlements are held in trust for the tribes by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Programs for use of the funds are developed by tribal governing bodies and approved by the Secretary of the Interior.

During the past 5 years, the trend among tribal groups has been to put such money to work by investing in business and industry on the reservations; developing of community recreation and social services; establishing college scholarship funds; and underwriting leadership training programs.

The Indian Claims Commission, an independent tribunal, was created by Congress in 1946 to hear and determine claims of tribes, bands; and other identifiable groups of American Indians living in the United States. More than 850 claims have since been filed, of which about 35 percent have been finally adjudicated. Awards totaling more than $205 million have been granted.