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A bill to provide a means of settling claims of Alaska Natives to lands in that state is being submitted to Congress today, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall has announced.

The problem of Native Land Claims, in Alaska has been unsettled ever since an Act of May 17, 1894 provided that the Natives "shall not be disturbed in the possession of any lands actually in their use and occupation or now claimed by them, but the terms ono conditions under which such persons may acquire title to such lands is reserved for future legislation by Congress."

The Secretary described the bill as proposing "an equitable solution" to "one of the most important and difficult problems facing the State of Alaska." Claims of ownership to about 75 percent of Alaska's 365,500,000 acres have been asserted by various groups of Alaska Natives in notices filed with the Secretary of the Interior.

Alaska Natives comprise three principal groups--Indians, Aleuts, and Eskimos--who are descendants of the aboriginal occupants of Alaska. Together they compose about 20 percent of the State's total population. They live in all parts of the State, but principally in several hundred native villages scattered along the coast and inland waterways.

The Alaska Native Claims Bill, as submitted to Congress by the Department, would authorize the Secretary to grant up to 50,000 acres of federal public domain in the environs of each native village for the use and benefit of the members of the village. Reserves of land heretofore set aside for native villages would remain in effect.

Title to lands set aside to the Natives would be held in trust for 25 years. The trustee would be either the Secretary of the Interior, the state of Alaska, or a private trustee selected by the village and approved by the Secretary. State, laws, except real astute tax laws, would apply on the lands set aside for the villages.

The bill further authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to grant to village occupants 25-year hunting, fishing, and trapping permits on other federal lands beyond the village environs. Such permits could be exclusive or non-exclusive, and could be extended an additional 25 years. Hunting and fishing by natives would be subject to state and federal game laws.

In respect to Native Claims of aboriginal occupancy of areas beyond the village environs, the bill would authorize the Attorney General of Alaska to bring suit against the United States for the value of such occupancy as of 1867, the year that the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. Jurisdiction to hear the suit would be granted the United States Court of Claims, and any moneys recovered in the suit be granted the United States Court of Claims, and any moneys recovered in the suit would belong equally to the Alaska Natives. Groups of Natives who have claims pending before the Indian Claims Commission or the Court of Claims would have the option to pursue their pending claims, but if they elected to do so they could not share in any recovery made in the Attorney General's suit.

The Department of the Interior said it is not able to estimate the amount of any judgment that might be recovered for the benefit of the Alaska Natives in the Court of Claims. When the United States purchased all of Alaska from Russia in 1867, it paid $7,200,000.

The bill authorizes the appointment of a five-man commission to assist the Secretary in selecting the lands to be granted villages, preparing the village census rolls, and performing other administrative functions. Of the five members, one would be appointed from nominees submitted by native groups, end one from nominees submitted by the Governor of Alaska.

The bill provides that selections of land by the State of Alaska under the Alaska Statehood Act, as well as other public land transactions, would proceed upon the enactment of the bill even though in conflict with Native Claims. Federal lands in a village environs, however, could not be selected by the state, or otherwise disposed of, until the secretary of the Interior had determined that they would not be set aside for the benefit of the Natives of that village.