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The proposed increase of $4.8 million in welfare assistance funds reflects the continuous rise in caseload and a small increase in unit cost. An additional 500 employable assistance recipients be enrolled in the Tribal Work Experience program during fiscal year 1973.

The Bureau's budget calls for a total of $9.7 million for Indian housing assistance. While the bulk of new home construction on reservations is handled by the Department of Housing and Urban Development under a separate appropriation, Bureau of Indian Affairs funded programs will account for 530 new homes and 5,100 renovations.

The adult education and community development budget of $2.6 million will provide adult education and community development programs to help inadequately prepared adults obtain the educational skills necessary to improve both their employment opportunities and their abilities to contribute to the self-government of their communities. The funds will also help tribes to assume management over and responsibilities for programs) services and municipal functions which in the part have been provided for them.

To combat the problem of the chronically high unemployment rate- now about 40 percent with an additional 20 percent underemployed-- this budget proposes $17.3 million in funding for direct employment which would provide direct job placement efforts to over 4,080 placements in fiscal year 1973. This program is being redirected to provide training, and job opportunities on or near reservations as emphasis is placed on reservation development - assisting tribes to develop their own businesses and to bring industry to the reservations. Expansion of job development near the reservations to establish work commuting situations is also being given emphasis. To become employable many Indians need job training either school training or on-the-Job training. The 1973 budget would continue funds for these programs at $24.8 million resulting in over 6,000 job placements in that year.

Working hand-in-hand with the training and job placement programs is the new concept involving Indians called the Indian Action Team program. The general structure of the Indian Action Team program is designed to accommodate tribally developed solutions to local tribal problems in. construction and manpower training areas. Each tribe, acting through its various standing committees, may decide upon construction and training programs that meet the need of its community.

Included in the budget request is approximately $1.6 million operating costs for the preparation and coordination of the Alaska Native rolls and the increased workload for real estate services resulting from the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act., (The Alaska Native Claims Act, enacted December 18, 1971, authorizes the appropriation of $12.5 million in fiscal year 1972 and $50.0 million in fiscal year'1973.)

The natural resources

The natural resources, timber, land and water are the Indians most prized possession and must be

adequately protected while at the same time providing the maximum benefit to the Indian landowners.

To achieve this goal the Bureau has sought to provide progressive management services to the Indian people. In 1973, professional and sub professional services in the fields of forest and range management and soil conservation will be provided. The establishment of the water inventory and water rights protection office will fill a much needed function to insure that loss of this valuable natural resource natural their will not continue.

Interior Secretary Rogers C. B: Morton said today that he has asked Harrison Loesch, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Public Land Management, to go to Alaska and discuss with Governor William A. Egan, members of the State's Congressional Delegation, other State Officials, and representatives of the. Native Associations Interior's plans to implement the transfer of public land under the Alaska Native Claims Act.
"The Alaska Natives Claims Settlement Act is going to have a profound effect on Alaska and its people, both native and non-native, for the foreseeable future," Secretary Morton said.

"I believe that it provides us with an, opportunity to bring about far-reaching social changes to improve the lot of the individual natives, and to show the world that the American people are concerned with the issues of justice and fairplay. Now that the bill has passed, it, is highly important that Interior makes every effort to implement selections and to transfer titles to selected lands to the native associations in an, orderly and timely manner. To do this, we need the opinions and advice of the Governor and State Officials, the Alaska Congressional Delegation, and officials of the Alaska Federation of Natives and the Native Regional Associations."

"I am sending Harrison Loesch to Alaska to listen to what these people have to say, to explain our present thinking, and to assure them of our deep interest in the welfare of the State and its peoples."

Secretary Loesch said that he plans to hold two days of meetings in Anchorage. He will meet with Interior Officials from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Land Management on Monday morning, February 7.

On Monday afternoon Secretary Loesch will meet with Governor Egan, Attorney General Havelock, Members of the Alaska Congressional Delegation, and officials of the Native Associations.

If sufficient public interest develops Secretary Loesch will explain Interior's plans for implementing provisions of the Native Claims Bill at a public meeting in the Sidney Laurence Auditorium on Monday evening. He will also receive public comments at this time.

On Tuesday, February 8, Secretary Loesch will meet with various interest groups in individual meetings.