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An unusually large volume of legislation that will bring far-reaching benefits to American Indians was enacted by the recently adjourned 87th Congress, Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall said today.

During its first and second sessions in 1961 and 1962, Secretary Udall pointed out, Congress enacted 885 public laws and 61 of these involved Indian matters. Appropriations for the programs of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the two years totaled $358,699,000, more than half going for education and construction of schools, and for the Indian health program of the United States Public Health Service an additional $126,464,000.

Among the outstanding laws that will benefit Indians, Secretary Udall cited one increasing the authorized amount of annual appropriations for the Indian Bureau's adult vocational training program from $3.5 million to $7.5 million, another increasing the authorization for the Bureau's revolving loan fund to finance Indian economic enterprises from $10 million to $20 million, and a third which extends the life of the Indian Claims Commission for an additional five years to 1967.

In enacting the Area Redevelopment Act of 1961, Secretary Udall added, Congress explicitly made Indian reservations eligible for assistance under its provisions and many have already benefited from AHA grants for economic development studies and for worker training. In a more recent enactment Congress made Indian tribes eligible for loans from the Housing and Home Finance Agency for the construction of community facilities, such as common meeting houses and public utilities.

Under the recently enacted Federal Aid to Highways Act, the authorization for work on roads serving Indian reservations was increased from the current level of $12 million to $16 million in 1964 and $18 million in 1965.

In addition, many laws were enacted that will bring benefits to particular tribal groups.

One of these was the act authorizing the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project which will provide for the irrigation of 110,000 acres of Navajo land in northwest New Mexico. When completed, the project is expected to benefit 17,000 tribal members through new' farming opportunities and associated commercial enterprises.

Two other laws will greatly benefit the Crow Creek and Lower Brule Sioux Tribes of South Dakota in recognition of the acquisition of some of their lands for the Big Bend Dam and Reservoir on the Missouri River. In addition to direct damages and reconstruction settlements, the laws provide for rehabilitation funds totaling about $5.7 million ($3.8 million for Crow Creek and $1.9 million for Lower Brule) to help in making necessary community adjustments. The $2,250 per person figure used in determining the rehabilitation funds, Secretary Udall pointed out, is the most generous of all such land-taking settlements in the Missouri Basin.

Another law authorized financial assistance totaling $1,098,000 over a five-year period to Menominee County, Wisconsin, which is the successor to the Menominee Indian Tribe. Purpose of the grants is to

cushion the tribe’s transition to unrestricted status under a law enacted in 1954.

Federal lands totaling 71,500 acres were transferred under laws of the 87th Congress to several Indian pueblos of New Mexico, the Zuni and Jicarilla Apache Tribes of the same State, the Cocopah’s of Arizona, the Crow Creek Sioux of South Dakota, the Eastern Cherokees of North Carolina, and the Quinault’s of Washington.

Leasing of Indian lands for periods up to a maximum of 99 years was authorized on the Dania Reservation of Florida, the Southern Ute Reservation of Colorado, and the Colorado River Reservation of Arizona and California. These laws are expected to benefit the Indians by facilitating leases which involve substantial amounts of invested capital.