Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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For Immediate Release: December 16, 1967
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The Department of the interior said today it has proposed to Congress that a 1931 Act regarding the acceptance of gifts by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefits of Indians be broadened.

The present act authorizes the Secretary to accept contributions or donations for Indians for the benefit of Indian institutions or for the advancement of the Indian race. However, the language of the Act seems to limit the use of funds to institutions or to individual Indians, the Department added.

A requested amendment would permit donated funds to be used in such fields as educational curriculum research, research on special Indian social adjustment problems, projects to develop Indian communities and community leadership, museums to preserve Indian culture, and cooperative projects for housing improvement or resource development.

The amendment proposed by Interior states that the Secretary "may use donated property in accordance with the terms of the donation in furtherance of any program authorized by other provisions of the law for the benefit of Indians,"