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Legislation that would restore about 65,000 acres of land now in Federal ownership to five Indian tribal groups in California, Idaho, Montana and Washington is needed 1tin simple justice 11 to these people, the Department of the Interior said today in announcing endorsement of H. R. 3490 and S. 1757, bills that would accomplish this purpose.

The tribal groups and acreages involved are Fort Peck Reservation, Montana, 41,450.13 acres; Coeur d'Alene Reservation, Idaho, 12,877.65; Crow Reservation, Montana, 5,480.95; Spokane Reservation, Washington, 5,451; and Klamath River Reservation, California, 159.57.

All of these are scattered lands which were ceded by the tribes to the United States many years ago with the understanding that they would be sold and the proceeds deposited to the credit of the tribes in the United States Treasury. Since they have not been sold, the Department believes that they should now be restored to tribal ownership and held in trust by the United States like other reservation lands.

Similar action, the Department pointed out, was taken over 20 years ago in the case of tribes organized under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and last year in the case of the Colville Reservation of Washington. Restoration of these lands would complete the process. It would also terminate the Federal Government's right to dispose of them under the cession statutes and assure the Indians of their continued use.

The Department recommended four minor technical amendments and one substantive amendment which would authorize the tribes to sell or exchange the restored lands with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.