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Properties of the Klamath Indian Tribe of Oregon, including the 694,000-acre tribal forest, have been appraised at a "realization value" of $121,659,618, Under Secretary of the Interior Hatfield Chilson said today.

In a letter to Thomas B. Watters of Klamath Falls, management specialist supervising the Klamath termination program under the act of August 13, 1954, Under Secretary Chilson authorized Mr. Watters to proceed immediately with arrangements for a tribal election as provided in the termination statute.

In this election adult members of the tribe will decide for themselves and their minor dependents whether to remain in the tribal organization and participate in a plan of management of their share of the tribal assets or to withdraw and receive cash payment for their proportionate share of the tribal assets. The law provides for sale of a sufficient portion of the tribal property to pay off the withdrawing members.

In the letter to Mr. Watters, Under Secretary Chilson accepted the management plan for the residual tribal estate submitted by Mr. Watters, and this plan will be submitted to the members of the tribe for their consideration in determining their election to withdraw or to remain in the tribe. The plan provides for a private management trust of the tribal properties remaining after the "withdrawal" lands have been sold and the Federal trusteeship has been terminated.

The "realization value" given in the appraisal is defined as the price the tribal properties might be expected to bring if sold over a two-year period starting next August or September, as required by the law in its present form. It is also based on the assumption that approximately 70 percent of the tribal members will elect to withdraw, as indicated by a survey of tribal members made by Stanford Research Institute about two years ago.

Thus the “realization value”, Under Secretary Chilson explained, represents merely a reasonable expectation of the amount that may be realized if the law remains unchanged and approximately 70 percent of the members elect to withdraw.

As provided in the Klamath Termination Law, arrangements for the appraisal were made by the management specialists. Western Timber Services, Arcata, California, was the prime contractor.

The appraisal covered all tribal properties embraced within the 862,657-acre Klamath Reservation which was originally established under a treaty of 1864. This included 693,997 acres of forest land (predominantly ponderosa pine), 127,938 acres of rangeland, 23,421 acres of marshland, and farm, brush and wastelands as well as buildings, lookout towers and personal property belonging to the tribe.

In the appraisal the forest lands were divided into 96 logging units of varying size ranging all the way from 20 acres up to 91,000. Under the present law the forest property would have to be sold in such units as established by the management specialist.