

Around Washington -

Indian News Notes

By VINCE LOVETT

CONGRESSMAN ASKS CHANGE IN JOM FUNDING FORMULA: Rep. Albert Quie, R-Minn., discussing the 1978 Interior appropriation said: "I have been very concerned in the last year with the inequitable distribution of funds under the Johnson-O'Malley program for supplemental services....It was through my prodding that consideration was given to other possible formula for distribution of JOM supplemental funds. I am of the firm conviction that the Office of Indian Education in BIA should move ahead quickly and forcefully to implement the new formula which places a floor and a ceiling on JOM state allocations similar to those incorporated in title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act...That change would bring immediate and needed equity to the program."

MAINE LAND CLAIM SOLUTION RECOMMENDED TO PRESIDENT: The man appointed by President Carter to bring about a settlement of the Indian land claims in Maine submitted a hard-nosed recommendation July 15. Its principal purpose seems to be the ending of "adverse economic consequences" caused by the clouded ownership of as much as 12 million acres involved in claims. Judge William Gunter's proposal would give the tribes \$25 million from the Federal Government and 100,000 acres of land now owned by the state. Private owners, large and small, would be let off scot-free. If the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes would refuse this settlement, Congress would legislate an end to the tribal claims except for land held by the state. They would then get only what they might win in court for a claim to some 400,000 acres of state-held land. If the state would balk at the proposed agreement, the tribes would get the \$25 million from the Feds and would be allowed to take their claim against Maine - but no private owners - to court.

REACTIONS TO GUNTER'S RECOMMENDATION: Judge William Gunter's recommended solution to the Indian land claims in Maine was reported as "favorably received" by President Carter. Gunter, in an interview, said that the President had called his proposals "a good solution to the problem" but was still studying the report. Indian leaders did not comment but were understood to be upset and disappointed. Attorney Thomas N. Tureen said that only about 10% of the original claim would be left if private lands were excluded. Maine Attorney General Joseph Brennan said state officials were pleased that the scope of the claim has been scaled down but were still distressed at the idea of "requiring the State of Maine to contribute land." Senator James Abourezk, Chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, denounced the plan as "devoid of fairness and understanding," noting that the provision extinguishing the tribes' claim to private property recommended "that the legal rights of the Indian tribes be arbitrarily taken away by Congress."