

LAND CLAIM SOLUTION PROPOSED BY NATIVES

Alaskan Native leaders, meeting in Anchorage yesterday, decided to ask Congress to enact legislation giving the U. S. Court of Appeals jurisdiction in settling land claims against the United States.

According to Stanley McCutcheon, Anchorage attorney for the oil-rich Tyonek Indians of Cook Inlet, who are hosting the meeting, "All land claims will be made against the United States, which had original jurisdiction in land disposal. Where there is a conflict between the Natives and the State of Alaska over land areas, it will still be the responsibility of the United States to resolve the problem."

William Hensley of Kotzebue, a candidate for the State House of Representatives in the November election, was named chairman of the land committee by the assembled delegates.

In its recommendations to Congress the group asks action on land claims started by any organized or unorganized group of Alaskan Natives, or by individual Natives acting alone, be recognized.

Concerning land that has already been disposed of to a third party (withdrawals, homesteads, townsites, etc.) the group asks that the Court of Claims render judgments in the favor of Natives and that payment be made to the Natives at a fair market value.

The group also asked that

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in claims made by reason of aboriginal use, that the Court not exclude any lands that have been abandoned for any reason. This would include old-time hunting areas now not in use due to lack of game.

The recommended legislation also provided that land claim settlements can be made out of court, with the approval of the court, and

that attorneys preparing suits against the federal government have access to all information and papers that the government has.

The recommended legislation would have to be approved by both the U. S. Senate and House of Representatives, and be signed by the President before the Court of Claims would have jurisdiction.