

D.C. BLM Reviewing Tanacross Problem

The Bureau of Land Management in Washington has advised Sen. Mike Gravel that it is reviewing the entire Tanacross situation including what was brought out in a December field meeting.

"We will inform you as soon as possible concerning the problems involved with Chief Isaac and the Tanacross Village," the BLM wrote in a letter to Gravel.

Apparently Gravel had written the bureau regarding the selection of lands for the village site of Tanacross and had enclosed correspondence from Chief Andrew Isaac. Isaac is Chief of the United Crow Bands living in Tanacross—a village roughly 150 miles southeast of Fairbanks.

The "problems" referred to

in the letter center on conflicts over past and future leasing of land in the Tanacross area.

The Indians thought that their land was protected by a blanket claim filed in 1950. But when some of their land was later turned over to the state they found that their claim had been lost.

Since the land freeze, the villagers have been told by the Bureau of Land Management to file applications for claims to the land, because, even though the applications are rejected, they will be noted on the file and taken into consideration when a final land settlement is made.

However, since the rejected applications are returned and only a file copy of the rejection kept, the Indians fear that when the settlement comes there will be no description of their land on file.

In December, the Indians met with representatives of the BLM

(Continued on page 6)

TANACROSS . . .

(Continued from page 1)

the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the State Lands Division to find out why the State has taken over land that the Indians claim to be theirs by virtue of their use and occupancy of it.

However, the Tanacross villagers felt the meeting left many questions unanswered.

Gravel stated in a letter to Chief Andrew Isaac, in which he advised the chief of the answer from the BLM, that he hoped the Bureau would be able to resolve the village's problem shortly and would furnish responsive answers to the chief's questions.