

Identical Bills Would Aid Native Groups

Identical bills introduced in the Senate and House of the Seventh State Legislature would provide for "An Act creating the Alaska Regional Corporation Organizational Loan Fund."

The bills—Senate Bill 284, introduced by Donald R. Young, and House Bill 499, introduced by George H. Homan—have been referred to committee.

Under the provisions of these bills low interest loans would be made available "to promote and facilitate the creation and organization by the existing regional Alaska Native associations of the 12 regional corporations" called for in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

The Local Affairs Agency would administer the loan fund, adopt and enforce regulations and oversee the use of money borrowed from the fund.

In addition, two appropriation bills—house Bill 533, introduced by George H. Homan, and House Bill 516, introduced by the Rules Committee by request of the Office of the Governor—were introduced in the House and have also been referred to committee.

House Bill 516 calls for an appropriation of \$610,000 from the general fund to the Office of the Governor for payments required under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for the fiscal year ending in June.

And House Bill 533 calls for an appropriation of \$5,626,000 from the general fund to carry out the purposes of "An Act

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creating the Alaska Regional Corporation Organizational Loan Fund."

In the meantime, the House voted 33-3 to adopt a resolution urging the federal government to make advance funding of \$12.5 million available as soon as possible to Alaska native organizations.

The resolution, introduced by Speaker of the House Gene Guess, requests the president to release the funds from his contingency fund to insure the immediate implementation of the various sections of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

In introducing the legislation Guess said, "The federal government is trying to skirt the intent of the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement by denying advance funding to the native organizations."

Referring to a letter written by the Interior Department suggesting that the natives obtain advance money from "banks and other private financing sources" Guess said, "The national administration suddenly seems to be reluctant to participate in the native land claims settlement in the spirit in which it was passed. After the great pronouncement of signing it into law they seem to have lost interest in implementing it."

Guess continued, "Although funds are provided for in the claims act, there will be a period of time before the Congress can appropriate them. In the interim I feel that it is the most expedient method and is entirely consistent with the native land claims settlement for the federal government to advance the \$12.5 million so that the native organizations can begin to implement the claims settlement."