

Young Native Group Holds Land Seminar

By Mary Moses

Since 1954, when Alaskan Natives filed their first land claims as such, these claims have "beat around from pillar to post, and now they're back in Washington."

So says Bureau of Indian Affairs Superintendent Wallace

(Continued on Page 8)

Group Holds Seminar . . .

(Continued from Page 1)

O.Craig. "We might as well face it, that's where they are" he stated in a talk given Tuesday night at the USO. Approximately 45 Native and non-Native people attended the two-night seminar sponsored by the Alaska Native Youth Association.

Craig's talk followed a short history of the Native and claims as seen by the Bureau of Land Management, presented by BLM District Manager Robert Krum.

In his presentation, Krum pointed out that the Native land claims had been up the line of authority to the Secretary of the Interior. According to Krum, the final decision, as far as the BLM is concerned has been that no further action can be taken until Congress enacts laws defining the aboriginal rights of Alaskan Natives.

State Representative William Hensley (Kotzebue), speaking in the Wednesday night session, also pointed out the lack of law specifying the rights of Alaskan Natives. According to Hensley, "the status of the Natives in regard to land was left in limbo."

Also representing the State's point of view in the Wednesday night meeting was Joe Lawlor of the State Division of Lands.

At present, all land claims in the areas protested by any individual or group are tied up, BLM Manager Krum ex-

plained. No further action can be taken on any of these claims until a decision is handed down either in court or by act of Congress.

These protests were precipitated by the Statehood Act of 1958, which awarded the state a total of 144 million acres of land for state use. BIA Superintendent Craig stated that Native groups in Alaska felt that the Native lands question should be settled before disposition of lands by state selection.

The purpose of the seminar was to offer background information on the lands question to interested persons, directly from those actively concerned with the issue. Specific questions about the Native land rights were also answered by the speakers when possible.

The Alaska Native Youth Association plans further study into the Native land rights at future meetings. The Association's next meeting will be at Hospitality House on February 1.