

# Gravel's TT Report

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U.S. Senator, Alaska

An astounding 95 per cent of Alaska belongs to Uncle Sam — not to individuals, not to the State, but just to the federal government. Under the terms of the Land Claims Act, the government has agreed that a total of 40 million acres will be turned over to the Native Regional and Village Corporations—that's one-twelfth of all the land of Alaska. The land is to be divided in a rather complex manner. Here's how it works:

## VILLAGE LAND GRANTS

Twenty-two million acres will be turned over to the Village Corporations, to which most Alaska Natives belong. Residents will have surface rights only, all subsurface rights, such as minerals and oil, belong to the Regional Corporations.

The actual amount of land to be given to each village depends on the exact Native population of that village. Most of the village-controlled lands — 18½ million acres — will come from the 25 townships adjacent to each village. The township territory is divided in a checkerboard-like pattern, from which the village residents select their allotted lands.

## REGIONAL CORPORATION LAND GRANTS

Sixteen million acres will be turned over to the twelve Regional Corporations. These grants include both surface and

subsurface rights — covering timbering, mining, surface construction, and so forth. In addition, the Regional Corporations retain the subsurface rights to the villages' 22 million acres. Profits from mining on village land, for example, go to the entire region. The Regional Corporations, if they wish, may select part of their 16 million acres from among the unselected "checkerboard lands" in the village withdrawal areas. They will also get part of the so-called "hardship lands."

## HARDSHIP LAND GRANTS

A total of two million of the forty million acres have been classified as "Hardship Lands." All subsurface hardship land rights belong to the Regional Corporations. There are four main categories of Hardship Lands:

- Existing cemetery and historical sites, which will be retained by the Regional Corporations;

- About 23,000 acres for Native groups too small to qualify as villages (less than 25 persons);

- Another 23,000 acres for the Natives of Sitka, Kenai, Juneau, and Kodiak. These originally Native villages are now predominantly non-Native, which is the reason for this special "hardship" provision;

- Individual Natives who apply for a primary place of residence outside village withdrawal areas.