

Approved--

Longevity payments

WASHINGTON—In the waning hours of the 94th Congress' first session, legislation concerning Alaska's longevity bonus payments, and a bill amending the Alaska Claims Settlement Act received final congressional approval while other Alaskan legislation was advanced.

The House gave its final stamp of approval to the amendment added by Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, to the Social Security bill that ensures that elderly Alaskans will receive the full benefit of their \$100 monthly bonus paid by the state.

Gravel's amendment exempts the bonus from the computation of income in figuring Supplemental Security Income benefits.

The claims act amendments contains a number of provisions to alleviate problems that have arisen since passage of the act in 1971.

The bill authorizes the extension of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission until June of 1979; it would reopen the rolls for Alaska Natives who missed the original deadline for filing for participation in the claims settlement; provides the machinery for village corporations to merge with regional corporations; and a regulation establishing an escrow account for revenue received by the government for the use of lands from the time the act was passed until the natives receive title to it.

Other provisions of the bill exempts the Native corporations from securities acts, although they must file annual audits with the Secretary of Interior; requires quarterly payments by the federal government on interest to the Native Fund; ensures that Sealaska may make its land selections from National Forest Lands; provides for resolution of the Cook Inlet land selection problems; and provides that Koniag Natives may exercise rights to explore for oil

and gas on the Alaska Peninsula.

On another legislative issue, Gravel today introduced an amendment that would include the Tanana Chiefs Land Claims College, under a bill to provide for grants to certain Indian postsecondary educational institutions.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference established the "university without walls" which serves 43 villages in the interior of Alaska. Gravel's amendment would list the college to receive federal funding along with 10 other colleges in the west and mid-western United States.

Funds appropriated under the legislation would be used for development, operation and improvement of the land claims college which has courses designed to meet the personal, vocational and career goals of Alaskan Natives.

It is accredited by the Northwest Regional Accreditation Association.