

# ***Native Claims Not Income Under Social Security Act***

Tax exempt payments to Alaska Natives under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act will not be considered as income in determining eligibility for assistance under the Social Security Act.

The announcement came from Frank C. Carlucci, Undersecretary of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare and was related to the Tundra Times by the Seattle office of HEW.

Carlucci said that all Aid to Families with Dependent Children benefits and Supplemental Security Income payments previously withheld from Alaska Natives are now to be paid retroactively.

The decision itself is expected to affect thousands of Native Alaskans, both in the State of Alaska and other states, especially in the Northwest corner of the United States, Carlucci said.

The State of Alaska has been disregarding the claims payments with HEW regional concurrence, but many Natives outside the state had been declared ineligible to receive supplemental security income and aid to families with dependent children benefits shortly after receiving their claims checks.

"The new ruling carries out the intent of Congress in the settlement act and will be implemented by both the Social

Security Administration of HEW for SSI and the various state and local public assistance offices for AFDC," Carlucci said.

It is still vitally important, however, that all persons receiving money under the land claims act report those payments, said John Shively, executive vice president of the Alaska Federation of Natives Inc.

"Failure to report payments even though they will be excluded could result in charges of fraud against these welfare recipients," Shively noted in a memo to each of the 12 Native regional corporations.

"This in the long run might be far worse than some of the welfare money that the individuals might have lost had not the Department of Health, Education and Welfare ruling been made," he said.