

They Need Tribal Recognition—

Interior Eskimos Seek Status

By MARC OLSON

"We are tired of no man's land, said John Heffle, president of the Association of Interior Eskimos.

Heffle was speaking of a "tribal petition" being circulated among association members, which asserts that the Interior Eskimos are "not waiting anymore," for the government to take action on the Association's status.

Heffle said that the signers of

the petition are saying to the government, "We are a tribe, and the Association of Interior Eskimos represents us as such." The group is represented in tribal affairs by no other group, the petition says.

About seventy signatures had been gotten by the end of last week, and Heffle expected more to come, since several petitions

were still out.

The Association of Interior Eskimos is a non-profit organization, which attempts to "fill the gaps" in services to its members, who are stockholders in the corporations where they are from, but are too distant to take advantage of all the services.

The Interior Eskimos are supported by the Tanana Chiefs

in their petition, which will be sent to Washington, D.C.

The petition reads:

"We, the undersigned, being Alaska Eskimos residing in the Interior and removed from our ancestral lands hereby state and affirm that we are members of a unique Eskimo tribe within the state of Alaska and recognize only the Association of Interior Eskimos as our tribal governing body and official spokesman to represent us at all times in any and all matters before federal, State and municipal governments and agencies. That we do not wish or desire any groups, association, organizations, or any other, governing bodies as our representatives in regards to our tribal affairs."