

For Development—

Corporations Contacted

"Native tribes could lease their land claims for development by the State or private corporation," announces Hugh Nicholls, executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association.

Several corporations have been contacted and negotiations have been started towards establishing such contracts.

Under this plan, the land would be available for development, and the Native tribes would receive revenues from the leases which they could use to develop their own

economies.

"Under this method," Nicholls says, "the Natives will have the capital to enter the modern, competitive world as independent men. Thus, instead of hindering the state, the Native claims will speed up the economic growth of all its people.

"As a further advantage," he says, "this leasing can be done immediately, before the question of title on the Native claims is finally settled.

As a precedent, he points out a \$50 million a year petroleum development now

being carried out on Navajo lands in this manner.

Attorneys for ASNA are now discussing such contracts with corporations. Approval of such leases is expected by Interior Secretary Udall.

Nicholls also is interested in making such arrangements with the State of Alaska, and suggests that the plan should be subject for the Feb. 26 conference called by Governor Hickel.