

# Aleut compensation bill is \$12,000

A bill which would authorize payments of \$12,000 to Aleuts who were relocated during World War II and \$20,000 for each Japanese-American interned during the war was introduced in Congress last week.

The bill was introduced by Alaska Senators Ted Stevens and Frank Murkowski and Hawaii Senator Daniel Inouye. It would implement some of the recommendations made by the commission on wartime relocation and internment of civilians.

The commission was formed to study the circumstances surrounding the internments of Japanese-Americans during World War II. It was amended to look into the evacuation of the Aleuts, after the Aleutian Islands were invaded by the Japanese. In addition to recommending the individual payments, the commission suggested setting up an Aleut trust fund, providing federal dollars for cleaning up war debris on the Aleutians, and transferring Attu Island back to the Aleuts.

The senators' bill would authorize a \$7,000

increase in individual payments to the approximately 400 surviving Aleuts, but would place funding ceilings on other recommendations by the commission. These included setting the limits of \$38 million for cleaning up war debris on the Aleutian Islands and \$1.4 million for repairing damaged churches on the islands. The commission had set no limit on either of these recommendations.

In addition, the bill to be introduced would set up a \$5 million trust fund for the Aleuts with the Treasury Department investing the funds. The Aleuts would have access to its interest and earnings, which would be administered by the board of trustees of the Aleutian Pribilof Island Assoc. The association is composed of residents of Aleut and Pribilof villages.

The trust fund interest and earnings would be available for scholarships, the elderly and disabled, preservation of the Aleut culture and projects to improve the condition of Aleut life.

"While the commission found the Aleut evac-

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uation was necessary because some of the Aleutian islands were under attack, the Aleuts were exposed to deplorable conditions in their new locations," Murkowski said. "I am pleased to be introducing this bill and hope it will help redress some of the wrongs imposed upon both the Aleuts and Japanese-Americans."

"There is no question but that a number of people suffered injustice during relocation of the Aleuts in World War II," Stevens said. "This

bill allows a modest amount of compensation for the losses suffered by the Aleuts, losses in many cases upon which no amount can replace."

The report found that typical housing for the Aleuts consisted of an abandoned gold mine or fish cannery, where medical care was scarce. As a result, some 10 percent of the Aleuts died during their stay in the camps. Many of those who were able to return after the war found their homes and villages destroyed.