

Agnew Assures Indian Leaders—

Consultation on BIA Status

Members of the National Council on Indian Opportunity and other Indian leaders will be consulted before any change is made in the position of the Bureau of Indian Affairs in the federal government.

This is the message received by Mrs. Laura Bergt, member

of the NCIO, from Vice President Spiro T. Agnew.

"In the President's State of the Union Message he outlined reorganization of the Federal Government," Agnew said in a telegram Mrs. Bergt received Tuesday. "I wish to advise you that no decision has been made

as to where the BIA will be relocated in this reorganization.

"This decision will be made after consultation with the Indian leaders throughout the country. I shall look to you and other Indian members of the Council to assist us in determining the issue."

The NCIO, composed of eight Indian members and eight members of the President's cabinet, will meet in Washington later in February. Vice President Agnew will chair the meeting.

Since last summer, the Council has emphasized holding nationwide hearings on the President's July, 1970 message on Indian Affairs and on subsequent proposed legislation. The last hearing was held in Spokane, Washington in January.

Two hearings were held in Alaska last fall, one in Anchorage and the other in Fairbanks.

NCIO members have traveled to each of the regional hearings, in order to become acquainted with Indian problems in areas other than their own.