

# S.E. Timber Cutting Questioned

ANCHORAGE— John Borbridge, Jr., President of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indians of Alaska, sent letters last week to the Secretary of Agriculture, Clifford M. Hardin, and the Secretary of the Interior, Walter J. Hickel, calling attention to the fact that while travelling around Southeastern Alaska recently, he has received several expressions of concern from Native leaders about timber cutting on lands in the vicinity of certain Native villages that are proposed for grant to the Natives in the settlement bills now being considered by Congress, including the bill sponsored by the Administration.

In these letters, Mr. Borbridge pointed out that if the merchantable timber has been stripped from the lands prior to their transfer to the villages, the value of the lands in the hands of the Natives will be greatly reduced.

He asked both Secretaries to advise him with respect to timbering and other exploitive operations in progress or in contemplation on lands within any township in which a Native village is located or on lands within any township which shares a border or corner with such a township and to take such steps as are necessary to prevent such acti-

vities in the future.

Commenting on his action, Borbridge said, "If the exploitation of lands being considered for transfer of full title to the

villages is allowed to go on while Congress is acting on the claims settlement legislation, the Natives may find themselves the owners of little but stumps and tailings."