

Calif. Indians Sue BIA, PHS

Officials of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Public Health Service misspent 2.4 million dollars of flood-relief funds according to a suit that nineteen Yurok Indians filed today in San Francisco federal court.

Congress appropriated the 2.4 million to aid hundreds of North Coast California Indians who needed new homes and water and sanitation systems after the floods of 1964-65.

Many Yuroks did not receive new homes, however. They had to leave the Hoopa Extension, which is their homeland.

Yuroks who did receive \$8,300 homes now find them falling apart.

All-electric houses were built in a village that is twenty miles from the nearest electric lines.

Dangerously inadequate and unhealthful water and sanitation systems installed by the Public Health Service also anger the Indians. They provide no water in the summer and contaminated water in winter. No water is ever available for gardening or fire

fighting.

This does not surprise the Yuroks. They charge the Eureka office of PHS with chronic incompetence in the construction of Indian water and sanitation systems.

The Indians' lawsuit seeks an order directing the BIA, the PHS, and the home builders to provide what Congress intended—decent housing, water, and sanitation for all who lost their homes in the flood.

Monetary damages are demanded for poor health and other injuries caused by the bad housing, water, and sanitation. Finally, the Indians want a court appointed trustee to supervise the Eureka PHS office and end its incompetence.

California Indian Legal Services, an OEO funded law firm, represents the Yuroks. CILS lawyer Neil Levy filed the suit.