WHO IS ENTITLED TO ALASKA'S WEALTH

Last October, every man, woman, and child residing in Alaska received a check for \$1,394.54 as his/her dividend for living in that State. The windfall comes from dividends from Alaska's Permanent Fund, fed by Alaska's huge oil and mineral revenues. This year's total income of more than \$'\frac{1}{2}\$. billion brought the Permanent Fund to a gigantic \$22.1 billion. We would suggest (though not in Anchorage) that this huge sum should belong to every American living anywhere in the States, rather than to a chosen few. The capitalization of these windfalls into higher rents helps to make Alaska one of our most expensive states in which to live.

A novel incident took place in Alaska when the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that, where land was "Indian country," the Indians theoretically could issue whatever taxes, land use regulations, environmental restrictions and social welfare laws it wanted, according to Kim Murphy, LA. Times staff writer.

Ms. Murphy quotes Alaska Attorney Gen.. Bruce Bothelho, "The prospect of 100 or more communities viewing themselves as sovereign enclaves beyond the reach of State regulatory power is a shocking kind of experience. Half the tribes in the entire United States today are in Alaska."

Bothelho complained that this decision could leave the state with full jurisdiction over less than 3% of the privately held land. The Federal government now owns over 65% of the 589,757 acres in Alaska, and the State owns most of the rest. Indian country covers over 56 million acres in the lower 48 states, and tribes exert extensive authority on Indian lands, with particular emphasis on the operation of gambling casinos.

Alaskans thought that their Indian problems were settled by the 1971 Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act which allotted the natives huge acreage and \$962.5 million in exchange for surrendering their native aboriginal claims. The land was given to various Indian-owned corporations, some of which are economic giants. But most Indians still are in large part dependent on welfare, with alcoholism and crime rampant.

Inasmuch as the native Indians never recognized any private ownership of land before the white men came, it may be difficult to understand how they could assert claims to title, in fee simple, to any land. But we remember the ancient story of the railroad agent who bargained with an Indian chief relative to certain tribal land needed for a railroad crossing. Asked what the chief wanted for the land, the Chief said, "one-million dollars." The railroad agent said: "Chief, that land is not worth anything like that. It's no good for farming, it's no good for grazing, it's no good for anything." The Chief replied: "It's heap good for railroad." Location, location, location