

INDEX TO THE INDIAN CLAIMS COMMISSION DECISIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Indian Claims Commission was created by the Act of August 13, 1946 (605 Stat. 1060, 25 U.S.C. §70a *et seq.*) to hear claims of "any Indian tribe, band, or other identifiable group of American Indians" against the United States. The Act provides broad grounds for recovery, including claims based on "unconscionable consideration" for tribal lands which were taken and "claims based on fair and honorable dealing not recognized by any existing rule of law or equity."

Prior to the passage of the Indian Claims Commission Act, there was no forum for most of these claims except for those few which had been heard under special jurisdictional acts passed by the United States Congress which granted jurisdiction to the Court of Claims to hear claims of specific tribes.

The Indian Claims Commission was given jurisdiction over claims accruing through August 13, 1946. By the filing deadline (August 13, 1951) 370 original petitions had been filed and assigned docket numbers. Many of these petitions contained several claims and were broken down into separate dockets bringing the total number of dockets to be considered to 610.

The Commission was originally established for a ten year period, five years in which to file the claims and five years in which to hear them. However, the Commission's life has since been extended four times. The most recent five year extension will end on April 10, 1977. In its

1972 Annual Report the Commission reported that 168 of the 610 dockets have been dismissed, 188 settled with money judgments totalling over \$408,800,000 and that 254 dockets still remain to be finally adjudicated.

The purpose of the Indian Claims Commission Decisions Index is to provide access for purposes of legal research to those claims filed before the Indian Claims Commission which have been heard and decided. A special subject index was developed by the Native American Rights Fund to identify claims according to areas of Indian law. Each claim filed before the Commission has been catalogued under one or more of these subject areas. The Index is divided into three main sections providing access by subject areas of Indian law, by tribe, and by the Commission's own docket numbers.

This first edition of the Indian Claims Commission Decisions Index covers the decisions of the Commission beginning with Volume 1 and ending with Volume 29. It includes all of the decisions handed down up through March 1973. The Index will be updated annually by pocket part until 1977. At that time a second revised edition will be published.