

HERE and THERE

### LITTLE KNOWN RULE HELPS THE U.S. INDIANS

Washington: A little-noticed federal court ruling implements, at least partially, one of the central demands of militant American Indians who occupied the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs here last month.

The ruling by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco two months ago in effect requires the federal government to provide aid to all Indians - "Throughout the United States" - whether or not they live on reservations.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs consistently has applied federal funds and programs only to the Indians who live on reservations. A major goal of the Indians demonstrating at the B.I.A. was to secure such benefits for nearly half-a-million "urban Indians" - about half the total Indian population in the U.S.

The government, distressed by the court ruling, says such broad distribution of available money would dilute assistance programs so much that neither reservation nor urban Indian could receive meaningful help.

The suit involved in the ruling was brought two years ago by Ramon Ruiz and his wife, Anita.

Denied B.I.A. aid, Ruiz filed suit in the U.S. district court in Arizona. He lost the case, but the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the decision, holding that the Snyder Act, passed by Congress in 1921, requires the B.I.A. to spend money appropriated by Congress "for the benefit, care and assistance of In-

dians, throughout the U.S." and not just those living on reservations.

Under the ruling, any Indian may apply for B.I.A. program assistance, which ranges from welfare to educational and other social benefits - a situation which, according to government lawyers, "puts Indian programs in an undefended position."

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### INDIAN ACT CHANGES DEMANDED BY WOMEN

Jeanette Lavell gained support from the first national conference on Indian rights for Indian women for her supreme court case scheduled for March.

On the final day of the three-day meeting, delegates established a committee to organize intervention in the case of the 29-year-old Ojibway woman who lost her status as a registered Indian when she married a white Toronto student last December.

According to the federal Indian Act, an Indian woman who marries a non-Indian, and her children are scratched from the official Indian register.

The federal court in October, 1971, ruled that Mrs. Lavell was wrongly deprived of her rights under the Bill of Rights.

In another motion accepted by the convention, the federal government was urged to "reform its laws so that the meaning of the word Indian be a person who is the descendant of the original peoples of Canada."

"Indian people themselves," the motion continued, "should be able to determine who is Indian."

Reformation of the federal laws was recommended in a third resolution. Children of non-status Indian women, or the children of unwed Indian women "should no longer be enfranchised," the conference decided.

The resolution went on to