

FISH GEAR PLAN RUNS INTO SNAG

Board Member Thorall, Big Fisheries Industry Protesting Limitation

Governor Walter J. Hickel's and State Fish and Game's recent proposal to limit fishing gear in the Bristol Bay area is apparently heading into considerable opposition from the out-of-state commercial fishing industry as well as from Alaskan fishermen.

Ivan Thorall of the Fairbanks Advisory Committee to the State Fish and Game Board, returned recently from attending the Board meeting in Sitka and reported that there was considerable confusion about and opposition to the Governor's proposal.

"The commercial fishing industry operators indicated that their opposition was on the grounds of discrimination in favor of the native people and resident fishermen, and claimed the industry could not operate profitably under the plan," Thorall stated, "and would go to court if necessary to test the constitutionality of the plan if it is adopted and promulgated into the regulations."

Resident fishermen of the

Bristol Bay area also objected to the proposal thinking it would put them out of business or force them to move to other areas.

Out-of-the-area fishermen objected because the plan might cause more fishermen and gear to move into their areas which are already overgeared.

Thorall, speaking only for himself at the Sitka hearing because he has not been provided time to consult his committee, entered a protest on behalf of the people of the Interior and the Arctic.

He told the hearing that although it was important to develop some action to correct the situation in Bristol Bay, it was also important that the opinions of all the people be heard especially on matters pertaining to native rights.

He suggested that the Board examine the Anti-trust laws in an effort to prevent the industry from bringing up "outside" help under a guaranteed income contract that, he said, results in unemployment among the

(Continued on page 6)

Plan Hits Snag . . .

(Continued from page 1)

residents of the area.

"This guaranteed income and a company-owned boat enables the industry to pay less per fish to the non-residents and makes the venture profitable but discriminates against the residents, puts them out of work, and is in violation of the Anti-Trust laws," said Thorall.

Concerning the percentage of native blood required to qualify for extra points under the Governor's plan, Thorall pointed out that a person born in a distressed area, such as Bristol Bay, might be just a little bit short of the native blood required and still not be able to protect his rights in modern society.

"Whereas, in other areas," Thorall said, "people with more than the required percentages are damn well able to look out for themselves. If this is to go to courts, it may be a poor place to try to establish these percentages and rights where only the right to fish is in question."

Regarding the provision of

the proposal to penalize a fisherman for each conviction of a violation of the fishery regulations since 1960, of which 443 are recorded, Thorall asked:

"How is one to know but what the man in most dire need is not also the one with the most convictions. Doesn't this put the man in double jeopardy?"

"After being convicted as much as seven years ago, and having paid the penalty at that time, now comes another penalty that may well be much more severe than the first."