

Isaac: Spear Fish in Muddy Waters?

TANACROSS—Andrew Isaac, traditional chief of the Tana-

cross Indians, predicts a winter of hardship for his people due to new fishing regulations and an influx of white hunters in his area.

Two days ago he was notified by the state Fish and Game Department at Tok that Indians will no longer be allowed to use dip nets and fish wheels.

"The commissioner down there tells me we've got to spear the fish. I don't have a spear, though I guess I could make one," the hearty old chief speculated. "But I think I'm going to have to have the commissioner show me how to spear those fish in our muddy water.

"We're not selling our fish. We take what we need for food. That way—with spears—I don't think we can get enough for all the people. I ask why they closed the dip net and he said it was to protect the pike. The Fish and Game themselves killed the pike. Put some dope in Deadman Lake that killed them.

"Anyway we wouldn't mind putting the pike back. I like white fish much better.

"I asked, 'Why don't you tell us when you're going to have a big meeting to make new

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laws?" Well, he thinks next time they'll let us know."

Isaac also worries about the hunting season because his people find themselves in competition with white hunters who spot game by plane.

"They stake out the moose, land on the lake and go in. Before any of us get in there, there's everybody there."

There are about 140 people in Tanacross, some work fighting forest fires but little additional cash flow except for welfare checks.

"Those are getting smaller," Isaac notes. "I don't think we're getting along...not for very long."
