

# Subsistence policy, guidelines adopted

The Alaska Boards of Fisheries and Games adopted a subsistence policy statement last week assigning subsistence uses of fish and game a priority among beneficial uses.

In both the policy statement and an accompanying document outlining the procedures for its implementation, the boards avoided giving a specific definition to just what subsistence might be. However, the boards did warn that although the use of fish and game for subsistence is vital to many Alaskans, limitations on fish and game stocks may in turn limit the number of persons who could be defined as subsistence users.

The boards recognized, as some feared they would not, that subsistence use goes beyond merely satisfying food requirements. "... home consumption of fish and game tends to preserve cultures and traditions and gives gratification to a strong desire possessed by many Alaskans to harvest their own food," read a portion of the policy statement.

"The latter functions seem genuinely important to the physical and psychological well-being of a large number of Alaskans," continued the statement, which was passed unanimously.

The statement was signed by Gordon Jensen, chairman of the joint boards

of fisheries and game; Dr. Samuel J. Harbo Jr., chairman of the Alaska Board of Game, and Nicholas Szabo, chairman of the Alaska Board of Fisheries.

The policy statement and implementation guidelines came at the end of five days of sometimes heated testimony as urban and rural users pushed their points of view.

"There's a hell of a difference between village and urban users," Jimmy Huntington, board member from Galena, pointed out in the final stages of discussion on the policy statement. "Just because the (urban user) camps out a couple of times a year doesn't make him a subsistence user." Huntington said he knew of Natives in small villages with no income who could not compete in their own areas with urban hunters who come in by airplane.

"Just because you eat  
(See SUBSISTENCE, Page 8)



**BOARD PONDERERS** — Members of the joint boards of fish and game wrestle with the subsistence question at meetings in Anchorage. From left are Jim Beaton, Chris Goll, Jimmy Huntington, Calvin Fair, Mick Szabo, Chairman Gordon Jensen, and Dr. Samuel Harbo.

— B. Englishhoe Photo



**GOV. JAY HAMMOND** makes point during Saturday meeting of Board of Fish, but avoided trying to define subsistence use.

# ● Subsistence

(Continued from Page One)

meat doesn't make you a subsistence user," said Huntington during one point in the testimony. "The true subsistence user lives in the woods and has an aboriginal background."

Tom Lonner, appointed head of the subsistence section earlier this year, read an eight-page statement to the meeting of the joint boards saying he and his staff were concerned the boards would adopt definitions that would make it

difficult, if not impossible, for them to provide a good information base on which to make informed fish and wildlife management decision.

Lonner encouraged the boards to adopt only general definitions and regulations and to delay making specific regulations until his section could provide hard data based on good scientific research.