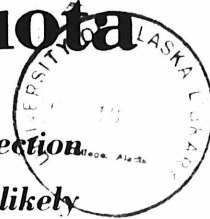


U.S. may enforce bowhead quota

*Official says U.S. objection
to IWC action is not likely*



WASHINGTON, D.C.—The United States probably will not take advantage of its legal right to object to the new whaling quota set by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in London last month, says Richard Frank, administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the United States commissioner on the IWC.

Members of the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission (AEWC) have repeatedly stated that they did not consider the new quota, of 18 whales landed or 27 struck, to be adequate for their nutritional and cultural needs nor justifiable based on the increase in the known number of bowhead whales in the herd.

Jacob Adams, chairman of the AEWC, told Frank that he could not condone such a restriction on the hunters he represents. The AEWC has stated that it will set its own quota and regulate this fall's and next spring's whale hunt themselves, based on actual needs of the Eskimo people, but not to exceed 2 percent of the best estimate of the population of the bowhead herd. The 2 percent figure was supported by the United States at the London meeting, without success.

Frank stated that the U.S., or any member nation, can object to any action of the IWC within 90 days. He said, however, that although the U.S. has yet to review all the results of the meeting and decide what to do, his feeling is that the various branches of government involved will not recommend an objection. The Departments of Commerce, Interior and State are all involved in the decision.

Reluctance to object is based, Frank said, on the acceptance by the IWC of a U.S. Proposal to consider establishing a separate system for regulating subsistence, as opposed to commercial, whaling.

The Associated Press reported last week that Eskimos in Barrow plan to file a lawsuit in federal court in Anchorage.

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age challenging the jurisdiction of the IWC over subsistence whaling. The AEWEC attempted without success last year to obtain an injunction compelling the United States to object to the removal of an exemption from quotas for Alaskan Eskimos which occurred a year ago.

Despite the AEWEC's objection to the new quota, and its statement that it did not consider itself to be bound by IWC actions, Frank said he hoped that the whalers would find it in their own best interests to abide by the new quota and wait for more favorable action in June of 1979. Apparently, the United States plans to enforce the IWC quota.

Ten whales were taken so far this year; the total quota for 1978 is now 14. Fifteen whales have been struck out of an allowable 18. If whalers take more than four whales in the fall hunt off the north coast, then a confrontation may well occur.

Frank said that work has already started on proposals for implementation of the plan for special regulation of subsistence hunting by the IWC. He said that if the AEWEC was willing to collaborate, they would be included in efforts to formulate these proposals during the next couple of months. The pro-

posals will be presented to the IWC Technical Committee, which meets before the annual IWC plenary session.

Frank also stated that the Department of the Interior has indicated that it will supplement the diet of needy whaling village residents with food, not food stamps, if the catch under the quota is inadequate to feed them.