

Walrus

The Eskimo Walrus Commission began meetings Tuesday in what was called a "special" session in wake of a recent opinion by a federal judge that the Eskimos have a right to manage the resource without undue outside interference, either by the state or the federal government. The commission, composed of members who have long been dependent on the marine mammal as a prime subsistence resource, says it is trying to look to the future.

The commission, which seems to recognize more than most that they are dealing not just with the resource but with peoples' lives, is taking on a responsibility that others have not met or clearly recognized. It is especially pleasant to see a group that sees not only the benefits but the burdens of self-regulation, and is determined to carry that weight.