

Whaling Captains Served Subpoenaes

A federal grand jury subpoenaed whaling captains Lloyd Ahvakana and Eugene Brower of Barrow; Roger Sillok of Gambell; and Rossman Peetook of Wainwright on Wednesday of last week in an attempt to force the captains to testify about this year's subsistence bowhead whale hunt.

The bowhead, classified as an endangered species, is the focus of the testimony which the grand jury seeks to obtain information on the alleged violation of the quota on whaling during the seasonal hunt.

The chairman of the Alaska Eskimo Whaling Commission, Jacob Adams, who is also mayor of the North Slope Borough, said he was asked to testify, but the subpoena was cancelled. Adams labled the investigation "an ill-conceived witch hunt."

Alaska Senator Ted Stevens denounced the probe vigorously, calling it "an outrage... a despotic attempt to intimidate the Arctic Slope Eskimos" in a scathing telegram to U.S. Attorney Benjamin Civiletti. Stevens, a former U.S. attorney in Anchorage said in his telegram that he was "outraged to find out that the Justice Department has convened a grand jury regarding the bowhead whale hunt by Eskimos of the Arctic Slope."

Under regulations set up by the International Whaling Commission, Eskimos must stay within a quota of bowhead whales that can be taken and whales "struck" but not successfully taken.

Subsistence hunting of bowhead whales has been limited to 18 whales landed or 26 struck. The National Marine Fisheries Ser-

vice claims the whalers violated the quota for the first time by landing 15 whales and striking (and loosing) 31 whales.

When the quota was reached, the Eskimo villages were informed that the limit had been reached. However, the marine fisheries service says one village violated the ban by landing one whale and striking another.

Federal prosecutors Friday moved for civil contempt charges against whaling captains Eugene Brower, Rossman Peetook, Roger Sillok and Lloyd Ahvakana who, all, cited the Fifth Amendment which guarantees against self-incrimination in refusing to testify before the grand jury, or produce documents, according to court file.

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The government claims Peetook, Silook, both members of the Eskimo Whaling Commission, and Ahvakana improperly claimed to the 5th Amendment privilege because "none..." is subject to criminal liability for any matters as to which he might be examined, nor would they be incriminated by documents.

Brower contended that the makeup of the grand jury sitting in Anchorage does not represent a fair cross section of the community in which the alleged bowhead whale quota violations occurred. Barrow and surrounding smaller villages is where the population is predominately Eskimo and is representative of a substantially different culture.

As the investigation was being done some three blocks from the AFN Con-

vention site at the Anchorage Sheraton, federal agencies in Washington D.C. were deciding how many whales each village will be allowed to take during the next three years.

The quotas will be reduced to a combined total of 45 whales killed or 65 struck over the next three years, according to figures set by the International Whaling Commission.
