



Department of Justice

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The Department of Justice today filed a civil antitrust suit--and a consent decree--alleging that eight Japanese corporations conspired to fix the price they paid U.S. seafood processors for Alaskan tanner (or "snow") crab.

Attorney General William French Smith said the complaint, which alleged a violation of Section 1 of the Sherman Act, was filed in the U.S. District Court in Seattle, Washington.

Named as defendants in the suit were C. Itoh & Co., Ltd., Kyokuyo Co., Ltd., Mitsui & Co., Ltd., Nippon Reizo Kaisha, Ltd., Nippon Suisan Kaisha, Ltd., Shinko Sangyo Trading Co., Ltd., Taiyo Fishery Co., Ltd., and Toshoku Ltd. The eight companies are Japanese importers of Alaskan seafood products.

At the same time that it filed the complaint, the Department filed a proposed consent decree that would -- if approved by the court -- terminate the suit.

William F. Baxter, Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Antitrust Division, said the proposed consent decree would enjoin the eight defendants from fixing prices and exchanging price and other competitive information relating to their purchases of processed Alaskan seafood.

The complaint alleged that the price fixing agreement began in 1979 and that as part of the conspiracy the defendants used the Japan Marine Products Importers

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Association, a Tokyo-based trade association, as a forum for price discussions.

During 1980, according to the complaint, the defendants bought \$24 million worth of tanner crab from Alaska processors.

In accordance with the Antitrust Procedures and Penalties Act of 1974, a competitive impact statement regarding the decree has been filed with the court. Copies of this statement and of the proposed decree are available upon request in the Legal Procedure Unit, Room 7416, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530. They are also available for inspection in the Office of the Clerk, United States District Court, Seattle, Washington.

Comments to the Department and to the court regarding the decree are invited from members of the public within the statutory 60-day time period. They should be addressed to Charles S. Stark, Chief, Foreign Commerce Section, Room 7115, Antitrust Division, Department of Justice, Washington, D.C. 20530.

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