

## INDUSTRIAL FISHERIES SESSION

TUESDAY—NOVEMBER 10

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### **How International Fishery Commissions Operate to Promote Conservation of High Seas Resources**

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THE UNITED STATES for many years has been a member of a number of international fishery commissions, but until very recently none of these covered stocks of fish in this part of the country. As many of you know, the United States and Cuba recently negotiated and ratified the Tortugas Shrimp Convention. Organization of the Commission provided for by the Convention awaits the pending appointment of Commissioners to represent each country. Since this is a new type of fishery organization for this area, perhaps you would find it of interest to hear something about other commissions of this general type. What are these international fishery commissions? Why do we have them? What do they do?

It could be said without question that international fishery commissions have provided an excellent training ground for many of our fishery experts. A number of such experts who received their early training from one or another of our fishery commissions are present in this audience. I myself spent the first three years out of the university with the International Pacific Halibut Commission. However, if the sole accomplishment of international fishery commissions was the training of fishery experts it would not be possible to keep the United States Government and the United States Congress interested in financing these organizations year after year. Let us proceed then to some of the other reasons why the United States Government is interested in so doing.

Generally the fishery commissions have originated from situations where intensive fishing or other destructive factors have drastically reduced stocks of fish exploited jointly by United States and foreign fishermen and the concerned United States public was sufficiently interested in the problem to seek government assistance. Generally it seemed evident that conservation measures were needed and that such measures must be enforced equitably on the fishermen of all the nations participating in the fishery. International cooperation thus became necessary since one nation cannot impose its regulations on the fishermen of another nation on the high seas. The basis for such uniform measures must be an accumulation and agreed interpretation of scientific evidence as to what measures are needed. Let me again stress this essential requirement: agreed-upon interpretation of scientific evidence.

In such situations we have frequently sought to handle the problem by parallel action of the concerned nations. However, in seeking to achieve such parallel action we often found difficulty in reaching agreement with respect to the

measures needed, difficulty in timing the measures so they would apply simultaneously and equally to the fishermen of all the nations concerned, or critical delays both in reaching agreement and in applying the measures. These difficulties have often made parallel action somewhat less than adequate for handling serious conservation problems.

To meet these problems we have over the years developed the current type of international fishery commission. At present we have nine of these Commissions (counting the prospective Tortugas Commission). The Commissions have the following principal characteristics: a) their objective is conservation to achieve the maximum sustainable yield; b) the conclusions or decisions regarding conservation measures are to be based on scientific evidence; c) their coverage is confined to one or two related species or to one region, thus simplifying the task to be handled; d) they maintain close liaison with the public through the Commissioners, most of whom are appointed from the area of the Commission's operations, and through advisory committees appointed by each party's Commissioners from the industry and public affected.

The first effective international fishery convention in North America was the Fur Seal Convention of 1911. This might be termed a prototype of the present Convention. It provided for the protection of fur seals but did not provide for joint research, joint consultation or joint management. The next was the Pacific Halibut Convention of 1923. This was the first of the modern type fishery conventions. It provided for a Commission with an international staff responsible for research and management. Since then we have negotiated eight fishery conventions. Of the total four are bilaterals (Halibut, Salmon, Great Lakes and Tortugas), two are trilaterals (Tuna, North Pacific), one is a quadrilateral (renegotiated Fur Seal), and two include numerous countries (the Whaling Convention 15 countries, and the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries 12).

The organization of the several commissions is similar. On each Commission the United States is represented by from one to four Commissioners appointed by the President with one Commissioner coming from the Federal Government and the others from the concerned public. The function of the United States Section is to carry out United States obligations under the Convention within terms of reference provided by the Convention. The Advisory Committee appointed by the United States Section, composed of representatives of the affected fishermen, boat owners, etc., serves a very important function. Members of this Committee are able to keep the United States Commissioners advised of the various problems and activities of the United States industry affected by the Commission and of the practical effects of any measures considered by the Commission. On the other hand, the Advisory Committee also helps keep the concerned United States public informed about the work of the Commission and the reasons for the actions it takes. Thus it has been possible to maintain strong public support for the fishery commissions, and to develop understanding and appreciation of the conservation problems and public support for the often severe and onerous measures required to meet these problems.

The staffs of the various Commissions are of two distinct types, each developed to meet a particular situation. One type involves a single international administrative and research staff which, subject to the supervision of the Commission, is responsible for planning and carrying out the research program of the Commission and for determining what conservation measures are needed. Halibut, Salmon and Tuna are of this type. This form of organization is

particularly effective in concentrating attention on the problems facing the Commission: in developing agreement on the research needed, on the interpretation of the results of research, and on the conservation measures required. This type provides close coordination in applying the conservation measures. The second type of organization involves a small administrative and research staff which, in cooperation with the scientific advisers from the parties to the Convention, prepares, plans and coordinates research programs. The research itself is financed and carried out by the individual Governments. The Northwest Atlantic, North Pacific, Whaling, and Fur Seal Commissions are of this type. This form of organization is particularly appropriate where the parties already have established research programs under way covering the problems to be considered, and it is desirable that each party be able to carry on its research at whatever level it so desires without required proportional participation by the other parties.

There is one Commission which is a cross between these two basic types. This is the Great Lakes Fishery Commission where the lamprey control program is financed by contributions from the member Governments to the Commission, and research on other fishery problems of the Great Lakes is coordinated by the Commission but financed and implemented by the Governments.

The work of the various Commissions possibly has provided the most outstanding and dramatic demonstrations of what can be done through scientific management of stocks of fish. The Fur Seal Convention of 1911 stopped the threatened extinction of North Pacific fur seals and has been instrumental in restoring these stocks, particularly on the Pribilof Islands, to levels approximating those required to produce the maximum sustainable yield. The Halibut Convention terminated the decline of the North Pacific halibut stocks, and through extensive research and practical scientific management has restored these stocks to levels approximating those required for the maximum sustainable yield. The Salmon Convention of the Fraser River has made great strides in restoring the once great sockeye runs of this river and progress is continuing in increasing the runs. The Tuna Commission has established a unique record through attacking the problem of overfishing before it has caused damage, and in providing foresight as to the levels at which the stocks should be maintained. The other newer Commissions have already made considerable contributions to the field of conservation, particularly the Northwest Atlantic Commission which has pioneered the effective application of minimum mesh sizes in maintaining maximum productivity of haddock stocks. Taken all together, the experience we have developed in these Commissions provided much of the basis for the recommendations which the United States Government made to the 1955 Rome Conference on the Conservation of the Living Resources of the Sea, to the International Law Commission, and to the 1958 Geneva Conference on the Law of the Sea, which recommendations have to a large extent been incorporated in the fishery convention negotiated at the latter Conference.

It was mentioned earlier that the United States and Cuba have recently negotiated the Tortugas Shrimp Convention. You will likely be interested in the present status of that Convention, and what developments can be anticipated in the near future.

The Convention has been signed and ratified by the two Parties, and we are now awaiting appointment by the two Governments of Commissioners to represent them on the Commission. Until this has taken place no further action can be taken to implement the Convention. The Commissioners will have responsi-

bility for appointment of their Advisory Committees, determination of the organization, method of operation, staffs, and program of the Commission. Their primary responsibility will be to plan and implement programs of research which will develop the scientific information necessary to determine the conservation measures needed to achieve the maximum sustainable productivity of the Tortugas shrimp stocks of common concern to the United States and Cuba. Other Federal, State and University agencies now have under way in the Gulf area extensive programs, covering research and oceanography on shrimp and other species. Much of this work will contribute to the solution of the shrimp problem of the Tortugas. The Commission will be concerned primarily with work directed specifically to the Tortugas rather than Gulf-wide problems. It will be the responsibility of the Commission to determine how it should fit its organization and operations into this picture so as most expeditiously and effectively to achieve the specific objectives of the Tortugas Shrimp Convention.

## Fish and Feed in the Sixties

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IT IS AGAIN my pleasure and privilege to have your attention. My last appearance as a speaker before this distinguished group was on November 17th, 1952 and for the sake of continuity I want to repeat a statement and forecast I made at that time.

"In almost every field of science, engineering and industry, research and developmental activity is at a high pitch. As the findings of the various groups are made known to each other, the effects are going to be far reaching and they will be abrupt, because we have an economy that is conditioned for, and responsive to new products or methods. Because of this ferment in the scientific world, it is important that every manufacturer be kept alerted to the trends and that he be actively planning to adjust to their results."

"Competition from synthetics is very real and tends to lower the relative market prices of menhaden oil, meal and solubles. It is, therefore, highly important that this industry continue to increase its degree of quality control so its products will be less vulnerable to substitutes."

TABLE 1  
ESTIMATED U. S. A. BROILER CHICKEN PRODUCTION  
1951 — Versus 1958  
In Number of Birds

1951	1958	Increase	% of Increase
791,878,000	1,659,636,000	867,758,000	109.58%

My message today is along the same vein as I have been advising fishery feed products manufacturers for the past ten years. Raise the quality and lower the price.

The fish reduction industry has made substantial progress in cost cutting. The development of the power blocks, more complete solubles recovery and refrigerated raw boxes and vessels have made important contributions toward