



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH WILL BENEFIT MANKIND, FISHERY MEETING IS TOLD

Utilization of the sea for the benefit of the human race was the theme of the 12th meeting of the American Fisheries Advisory Committee which was held in the Department of the Interior Building in Washington, D. C., May 22 and 23.

The first session was opened by Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, who pledged the support of the Department in making research of the sea one of the outstanding programs of the New Frontier. Secretary Udall asked not only increased efforts in learning the biological, chemical and physical secrets of the sea, but called for increased technological efforts in making the vast protein resources of the sea available to the undernourished peoples of the world.

Besides general expressions of approval of the stepped-up program of oceanographic research which many Federal agencies are planning, the Committee recommended that the research program on artificial propagation of oysters and clams be continued and that there be an intensified program to discover ways to put to beneficial use the large stocks of under-utilized fish in the Great Lakes.

Secretary Udall urged the advisory group to broaden its advice and counsel to the Department "to include counsel on all fisheries matters."

Donald L. McKernan, Director of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries gave a detailed report on "What Lies Ahead" from the Bureau standpoint.

He re-emphasized the necessity of learning how to use the sea for the benefit of mankind. He pointed out the stake America as a Nation has in the oceans of the world and then discussed the part the American fishing industry can do in the huge task of supplying nutrients to the people of this Nation and of the world. Interwoven with his remarks were instances of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries' responsibility to the American fishing industry, in helping the industry to make maximum sustained harvests, at a minimum of time and effort.

Specifically, Mr. McKernan said that those concerned with the fishing industry must understand the sea and its effect upon the distribution and abundance of fish; they must know the life history of many species and all there is to know about the dynamics of fish populations; they must learn how to predict abundance of a species, know their movements and how and when to catch them most economically; know more about the upwellings in the sea, their effect upon the food chains and how to protect the resource from predators which at times plague it; and finally there must be more technological knowledge on full utilization of the products of the sea.

The importance of "vital statistics" and additional knowledge of the sea in predicting abundance and distribution of fish was stressed by Dr. J. L. McHugh, Chief of the Bureau's Division of Biological Research. Dr. McHugh stressed the damage which pollution can do to fisheries, especially in estuaries. He pointed out the damage done by hurricanes, not only the physical damage, but the havoc sometimes wrought by the churning of waters, the elevation of bottom water to the top, the introduction of long-settled chemicals into surface waters and their sometimes deleterious effect upon fish which are not inured to that particular type of water. He pointed out the value of knowing how many fish of a given species are caught, the size and age characteristics, the hours of the catch and numerous other bits of information about landings which, over a period of time, tell a story to the fishery biologist.

The advantage of a small pilot plant to help the fishing industry study problems of mass production of fish flour was discussed by John Holston, Chief of the Branch of Technology of the Bureau. He pointed out that fish flour is equal to dried egg solids in amount and value of protein and that dried eggs have been accepted as the standard for determining protein quality.

The American Fisheries Advisory Committee has 20 members, appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Frank P. Briggs, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife, is the chairman of the group, and presided at the sessions. The first meeting of the Committee was held in Washington in April 1955. Recently the Committee has been meeting annually instead of semi-annually.

The Advisory Committee was authorized by the Saltonstall-Kennedy act passed in 1954. This Act provides that an amount of money equal to 30 percent of the funds received in import duties on fishery products be made available to the Department of the Interior to promote the free flow of domestically produced fishery products into channels of trade, to conduct biological, technological and other types of research necessary to aid in the harvest or utilization of fish and fishery products. Development of markets and educational programs on the proper utilization of fish are also authorized. The Saltonstall-Kennedy funds for these purposes vary from \$4 to \$6 million a year.

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