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CONFERENCE OPENS ON UTILIZATION OF FISH TO MEET WORLD'S PROTEIN DEFICIENCY

A nine-day conference designed to determine how the rich protein values of fish and fishery products can be utilized by the world's protein-starved millions began in Washington, D. C. today.

The need for a greater protein resource was emphasized by Dr. B. C. Guha of the University College of Science and Technology, Calcutta, India, who stated that "animal protein intake is sometimes as low as 7 grams or $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce per day, even less in some countries." This level of animal protein intake is the lowest possible for survival of infants and children.

Animal protein contains the 10 essential amino acids. Vegetable protein lacks some of them. Fish protein is especially rich in these essential acids, minerals and vitamins. Dr. Guha declared that the challenge which faces fishery technologists today is to make these nutritive values available to the millions who need them, and to provide them without deterioration of nutritive value and within the means of those who need this food element.

The succeeding days the conference will review the biological and technological and industrial steps which have been taken to meet these requisites. Topics dealing with the research on the chemistry of fish deterioration, the present contribution of fish to the various national diets, the indirect contribution fishery products are making to the human diet via use in feeding animals which in turn contribute to human food and the possibilities of developing fish meals and fish flour which can be easily transported to even the most inaccessible areas are among the items which will be considered.

The conference, officially known as the International Conference on Fish in Nutrition is sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. About 70 scientists from various parts of the world were brought to the conference by grants made available to the National Institutes of Health of the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The sessions are being held in the new State Department Building in Washington, D. C. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, Department of the Interior, aided in the arranging of the conference.

The conference was opened by a challenge from Secretary of the Interior Stewart L. Udall, who made the welcoming address. Secretary Udall declared that he knew he was talking to truly enlightened conservationists and that it was their responsibility to provide the world's increasing population with a full, wise and useful harvest of marine food resources at the highest sustainable yield. He stated that it was up to the scientists to determine international programs which would enrich, fertilize and cultivate the oceans' self-renewing crops.

D. B. Finn, Director of the Fisheries Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization, represented Dr. B. R. Sen, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization, in welcoming the delegates. Dr. Finn discussed the importance of the conference in terms of FAO's campaign of "Freedom from Hunger" for the peoples of the World.

D. L. McKernan, Director of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and General Chairman of the Conference, outlined the purpose of the conference which is to review the present importance and the potential of fish to the diet of the world's population; to discuss qualities which fish possess to make them important to the human diet and to review the available literature and consider strengthening those areas which are inadequately covered.

The first formal paper of the conference was prepared by Herbert W. Graham and Robert L. Edwards of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts. Dr. Edwards, who delivered the paper, declared that under present conditions there is a definite limit to fishery harvests but that the 300 million cubic miles of salt water in the oceans have a vast potential as a source of protein food. Present harvest potential is about 55 million metric tons. There is about 115 million metric tons of marine fish potentially available for harvest annually but a large portion of this is too thinly scattered to be economically fished at this time.

G. L. Kesteven of the CSIRO Marine Laboratory, Cronulla, N. S. W. Australia, one of the world's leading fishery scientists discussed new events and practices in pisciculture, marine heat and current generators and other technical and artificial factors which might sometime be valuable in the farming of the sea. He declared that the development or the diminishment of the oceans' fishery resources was something which was within man's control.

Dr. G. Mesek, of the Bundesministerium for Nutrition, Agriculture and Forests, Bonn, Germany, was unable to attend the conference but his paper relative to fish production in the world, its present and potential levels and its usage for human food and animal feeding, was presented.

The final formal paper of the day was given by Professor G. F. Coombs of the Department of Poultry Husbandry of the University of Maryland. Mr. Coombs stated that one way to improve the nutritional status of man in many parts of the world is to increase the production of animal products. In evaluating the use of fish meals as supplements to animal feeds Professor Coombs stressed the fact that fish used to supplement other feeds could supply those amino acids which are lacking in many of the other available feeds.

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