UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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For Release to PM's, APRIL 30, 1962

ADDRESS BY UNDER SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JAMES K. CARR AT THE NATIONAL FISHERIES INSTITUTE CONVENTION, NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA, APRIL 30, 1962

NEW FRONTIERS IN THE FISHERIES

The American fishing industry is:

--fragmented
--too prone to independent action
--politically disinterested, and is often
--impossible to work with on Government programs

This, in essence, is what I was told not long ago by an influential member of the Congress, a lawmaker, incidentally, whose committee assignments include the Appropriations Committee.

I would be less than frank with you if I were to say that this opinion of the fishing industry is entirely wrong. Some of the attitudes described come about through the inherent independence of fishing operators that has been traditional in America since this country began.

From what I was told by the Congressman, I believe you in industry and we in Government must reappraise ourselves in a most critical way. If we find the picture is only partially as black as it has been painted, our task is apparent--we must do something about it.

But before we start changing things let's take a look at the plus side of the ledger. The facts are impressive despite what has been said. Building on these assets is the job that lies ahead for both the industry and Government.

We have a President in the White House who has long been interested in the fishing industry, and who has a deep and natural interest in and understanding of its problems. His name is on one of our most important pieces of fishery legislation, the Saltonstall-Kennedy Act. In his little more than a year in office, he has repeatedly made statements regarding the importance of the fishing industry and of the resources of the oceans.

Secretary Udall already has demonstrated his determination to do everything possible to improve the fishing industry, both commercial and sports. Many of you will recall his views as stated at your Convention in Washington last year.

The industry has made technological advances that are truly significant. for example, the frozen food industry has developed machines and methods which have put fish in the supermarkets at a price that is bringing about a much better

distribution of fish products throughout the Nation. It has been a pleasure to visit some of the plants and see the accomplishments that have taken place in the past few years. I am confident that in the years just ahead we are going to see are of this kind of progress which should again reduce the price to the consumer, aprove the quality of the product, and increase the consumption of fish.

Scientifically, the value of fish as food is being recognized more and more. The effort to produce an economical "fish flour," or as we prefer to call it, fish protein concentrate, has helped to bring this about. The manufacture of fish protein concentrate, once we can work out the processing flaws and get into mass production, could well be one of the great steps forward for the benefit of people all over the world. If produced cheaply enough, the highly nutritious, easily transported and stored fish protein concentrate can be both a blessing to humanity and a boon to the fishing industry. I will discuss this in more detail later.

The Department's fisheries loan program has injected new life into some segments of the industry, particularly the tuna fishery with its successful conversion from bait boats to purse seiners.

Studies on passing salmon over high dams in the Pacific Northwest show promise of results. This emergency program, as you know, was started by Secretary Udall past year and has considerable support in the Congress.

These things I have just cited are certainly not all we have on the credit side of the ledger but they give you some idea of the positive factors with which we have to work.

Now what about some of the problems? We have at least our fair share.

When I was in Gloucester a few months ago, I discussed the problem of finding some way to equalize the cost of construction for American fishing vessels with those of our foreign competitors, some of whom can build their boats for as little as half what it would cost our own fishermen. Our shipyards need work and our fishermen need modern efficient vessels. Surely some formula can be worked out that will fill both needs. The Department has transmitted to appropriate Committees of the Congress a letter inviting their staff members to get together with our people in an attempt to draft some proposal that will provide the needed assistance to the fishing industry.

Another problem is the overall need for industry to take advantage of new developments and new methods, not only in catching fish but also in their processing, distribution, and marketing. Fishing as an occupation in this country is more than three and a half centuries old but in many respects it is still "horse and buggy." To compete, the industry must be bold and aggressive, and in many cases the individual fisherman must rely on assistance from Government.

Admittedly serious problems arise with reference to the proposed new trade act. But here we should point to the positive side of the President's program. It is a challenge and an opportunity.

The President's new trade policy is concerned primarily with the European economic Community, otherwise known as the "Common Market." This union involves a promising market of about 170 million people--one comparable in size to that of the United States. Its combined Gross National Product is almost one-half that of the United States now. In recent years the Common Market has been growing at a rate substantially greater than our own. This booming market will create an opportunity of wholly new dimensions for United States exports, already amounting to early $7 billion per year with Western Europe as a whole. The President, in his trade Message to Congress, accurately stressed: "Enactment of this measure will benefit substantially every State of the Union, every segment of the American economy, and every basic objective of our domestic economy and foreign policy." The fishing industry is no exception.

We sometimes forget that ours is the greatest trading Nation in the world. We sell more goods on the world market than any other nation, and we prosper because of this fact. The living standards of our people are the highest in the world. This is due in no small measure to our exports and imports business.

In terms of total dollar value of world fishery imports, the Common Market involves about one-fourth of the total trade. It accounts for one-fifth of the total United States exports of fishery products.

Normal trade with Common Market countries in fishery products may be altered by the new level of duties and by certain special arrangements by which the member countries propose to support the fishery segments of their economy. It is ossible, however, that changes in buying habits brought about by a higher tandard of living in the Common Market may have beneficial effects on total trade. greater use of edible fishery products may be among the favorable effects of a igher consumer income.

United States entrepreneurs have developed the most thorough and efficient marketing system in the world. Up to now Europeans have not ordinarily needed much large-scale, or such well-organized efforts, because their national markets have been restricted to relatively small areas. But the formation of the Common Market, and of other free trade areas throughout the world, has created a remarkable opportunity for us to apply large-scale merchandising techniques and score commercial successes before European competitors fully adjust to this new business strategy that is required.

I would like to make it clear that American ability to compete is not restricted to large businesses. Small or large, American business is traditionally characterized by its flexibility, its capacity to adapt and innovate.

Given equal opportunity the United States can compete effectively. We must search constantly for newer and better means of "making a better mousetrap." We in this Administration will do whatever is possible to assist in creating equal opportunity for the United States fishing industry. I am certain the United States fishing industry will make every effort to meet the challenges of the changing trade situation.

Now I should like to discuss for a few minutes a subject where we in the United States are taking the lead--fish protein concentrate. Many of you in this room have heard of the "fish flour" or fish protein concentrate controversy. You are probably wondering whether all this fuss is really necessary and why the department is taking such an active interest in this matter. Let us examine some of the factors that make this product so important--important to the world at large, to the United States, and to our domestic fishing industry.

Hunger is the biggest human problem facing the world today. More than half of the world's total population, two billion people, suffer from lack of food, adequate in quality and quantity to sustain desired levels of health, growth, and vigor. If hunger is a problem today, what will it be in 40 years when the present world population will be more than doubled?

Widespread malnutrition, and under-nutrition, is largely due to inadequacies of high quality protein in the human diet. The only readily available source of inexpensive animal protein in sufficient quantities to remedy this diet deficiency is in the sea in the form of fish. Fish can supply these diet deficiencies in the form of concentrated protein. Wisely utilized and managed, the sea with its vast fish populations represents an almost unlimited reservoir of high quality animal protein.

Quite apart from the purely humanitarian issues, there are other compelling aspects to this interesting challenge of finding the answers to the world's hunger problem. The production, on a mass scale, of a satisfactory fish protein concentrate would provide a tremendous economic stimulation for our domestic fishing industry. Production of fish protein concentrate would help to diversify the markets of our industrial fisheries. It would assist in restoring the ecological balance of our oceans by utilizing the many species of fish now ignored--or worse still, wasted--by our commercial fishermen. It would provide a market for the great quantities of fish inadvertently taken along with the more valuable varieties and now discarded at sea because no markets exist for them. In many areas, glut periods lower the price of even the valuable catch and frequently, even for these more desirable species, no market is available. If, however, the processor were able to manufacture fish protein concentrate during these periods of surplus, markets would tend to stabilize, and starving individuals the world over would benefit.

A market for fish protein concentrate might exist right here in our own country, for instance, as a supplement to such items as breakfast cereals and baby foods. Cookies, doughnuts, noodles, and similar foodstuffs could be transformed into improved quality protein foods. In the event of a nuclear emergency our industrial fisheries alone could supply in one fishing season more than the protein required to sustain our entire national population during the crucial days immediately following such an emergency.

Closely allied with the agonizing problem of feeding the hungry peoples of the world, and with finding new markets and uses for our fishery products, is the problem of finding ways and means of catching fish more efficiently, of knowing there they are, and determining the factors which have a bearing on their abundance.

In my opinion, it is certainly a paradox in the light of present-day scientific developments--with weather and navigational satellites orbiting the earth and nuclear submarines cruising around the world--that we have not made equally striking break-throughs in harvesting the resources of the sea. The fishing industry has made advances in processing the catch and in improving the gear used to do so, but we still have a long way to go in this area. The nylon seine and power block in the tuna fishery and shrimp peeling and groundfish filleting machines are developments to which you can point with justifiable pride. But it still remains a fact that we have very little knowledge of the quantity of fish in the sea, or why they appear in some areas and not in others, or why abundance of certain species fluctuates so widely from season to season. It will not be possible to make full use of the ocean's food potential or to locate and catch fish with increased efficiency unless we find the answer to questions such as these. These questions can be answered, but to do so will require extensive, probing research and effort in the ocean environment, and research on the fish we are seeking.

Only a year ago, President Kennedy, in his message to Congress, said: "The seas around us represent one of our most important resources." He said further that "They (the seas) already are a principal source of protein. They can provide many times the current supply if we but learn how to garner and husband this self-renewing larder." In order to accomplish this, the President indicated that "It will require the combined efforts of our scientists and institutions, both public and private, and the coordinated efforts of many Federal agencies. It will involve substantial investments in the early years for construction and operation of ship and shore facilities for research and surveys, the development of new instruments for charting the seas and gathering data, and the training of new scientific manpower."

Following the lead set by the President, Government and many private agencies engaged in the marine sciences have embarked on a long-range program of oceanographic research. This is a large and vitally important undertaking. It is being coordinated by a special Interagency Committee on Oceanography. The work of this committee is designed to meet the divergent needs of commerce, defense, atomic energy development, and production of mineral and fishery resources.

As the agency with the prime responsibility for development, management and conservation of the Nation's natural resources, the Department of the Interior has a significant role in this program. Four Bureaus in the Department are participating: the Bureau of Mines, Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Commercial Fisheries, and the Geological Survey. The Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, being responsible for support of the fishing industry and for development of sea food resources, has a large share of the Department's marine sciences program. There is close collaboration with Navy, Atomic Energy Commission, National Science Foundation, and other agencies in Government and with various State and private research institutions.

The ships and the shore facilities needed for modern fishery oceanographic research were sadly lacking when we started this new program. The Department is, however, taking steps to correct this situation and progress has already been made.

Funds were budgeted to the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries to build a new laboratory at La Jolla, California, and to make improvements to existing laboratories at Auke Bay, Alaska, Oxford, Maryland, and Boothbay Harbor, Maine. In addition, a new sea-water system and building for experimental studies on fish and shellfish was completed at the Galveston, Texas, laboratory. Just a week ago, across the lake at nearby Slidell, a 180-foot biological and oceanographic vessel has launched as part of this program. When equipped, it will operate in Atlantic waters. Plans are now being developed for new research vessels for use in the Central Pacific, in the North Atlantic, and in the Gulf of Mexico. The President's budget for 1963 contains funds for a new oceanographic ship for operation in Eastern Pacific waters and for a $2 million dollar laboratory for Seattle.

As a means of increasing the supply of trained oceanographers and fishery biologists and technologists needed to undertake this research, the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries has set up a program of Fellowship Grants to universities throughout the country. This will provide financial support to about 17 graduate-level students during the academic year 1962-63 and it is expected that this number will be increased in succeeding years. At least, this is our expectation.

Although we have concentrated on improvement of facilities and increasing scientific manpower in the early phases of the oceanographic program, important new starts in research have also been made. Expanded studies of Gulf estuarine waters were initiated this year. These waters are potentially as productive as much of our farmland, but we have not yet developed methods of culture that will permit maximum use of their potential. Biologists have learned that these areas serve as nursery grounds for larvae of many varieties of commercial species of shrimp and fish which are taken as adults in the offshore waters of the Gulf. they also provide a large portion of the Nation's oyster supply. Fishery scientists have advocated studies of estuarine waters for the past several years because they have been concerned about loss of this environment through the dredging of channels for real estate and other commercial developments. The goal of this new research is to determine if these engineering developments are harming resource production and, if so, to find ways to prevent it.

A new program of oceanographic research in the tropical Atlantic Ocean is being organized this year. The objective of this activity is to investigate the fishery potential in this important region. The first field work will be on the eastern side of the Atlantic to define the extent of high-seas tuna populations.

It is important to stress that basic research on fish physiology, behaviour, growth and survival will be undertaken as rapidly as adequate funds can be provided and the projects activated. As in all production industries, the fishing industry needs a store of fundamental information on the resources which are being utilized.

New advances in resource development can be made if a backlog of information is available. Without such data for measurement purposes, we are not convinced that new ideas, new developments, new markets, and a full realization of the sea's resources will be forthcoming.

Frankly, I am optimistic about the future. Of course we will have problems, but problems are our best insurance against complacency. Out of crisis springs opportunity, and the key to our success lies in the best possible exploitation of our opportunities. Let's face it. We are in direct, open competition with many solution for the resources of the sea. Simultaneously, we are troubled by increasing competition at the market place. We face one of the greatest challenges of our time and I am confident that we will sooner or later come up with the right solution to the problem. My solemn hope, and the goal of the Department, is that it will come sooner than the other nations, rather than later. Our goal is to restore this Nation to a place of leadership on all fronts. To do this we must apply all our energies, both mental and physical, to the task. With unceasing, diligent effort we can accomplish our goal of reaping the harvest of the fisheries resources of the seas. Concurrently, we stand to increase our world market for fisheries products.

To this end we again pledge the energy, brains, abilities and cooperation of The Department of the Interior to a fisheries program second to none in the world. The time is not too distant, I am sure, when we shall see real new frontiers in the fisheries.

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