



FIRST MEETING - WASHINGTON, D. C. - APRIL 2, 1951

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PRESS RELEASE

The First Meeting of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries which convened at Washington, D.C. on April 2, 1951, concluded its work at a final plenary session on April 10, 1951. The Convention which established this Commission was concluded at Washington under date of February 8, 1949. The Convention is designed to provide for international cooperation in the coordination, correlation, and dissemination of information concerning the fisheries of the Northwest Atlantic Ocean, and a procedure for cooperative action by the Contracting Governments regarding measures deemed necessary to maintain a maximum sustained yield from these fisheries. All of the Governments signatory to the Convention were represented at this First Meeting of the Commission by formal delegations. Canada, Denmark, Iceland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, having ratified the Convention, were fully participating Governments. France, Italy, Norway, Portugal, and Spain, whose ratifications are pending, were represented by Observers. In addition, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea had Observer delegations present.

The Commission elected United States Commissioner Hilary J. Deason, Chief, Office of Foreign Activities, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, as Chairman of the Commission, and the United Kingdom Commissioner, A.T.A. Dobson, Fisheries Adviser, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, as Vice-Chairman. These officers will serve for a term of two years. The Commission appointed William Robert Martin, Senior Biologist at the St. Andrews Biological Station of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, St. Andrews, New Brunswick, as the Acting Executive Secretary for the period July 1, 1951 to June 30, 1952. Richard S. Wheeler, of the U.S. Department of State, will carry out the duties of the Executive Secretary until Dr. Martin assumes office.

The Commission established Standing Committees on Finance and Administration, and Research and Statistics. These Committees are chaired by Mr. J. Howard MacKichan of Canada and Dr. A.W.H. Needler of Canada respectively. The Committee on Finance and Administration is to advise the Commission on matters of budget, headquarters, personnel and the functions of the Secretariat. The Committee on Research and Statistics is to recommend the coordination of research programs in the various countries and advise the Commission as to improvements deemed desirable in the collection of statistics and research programs. Research and statistical programs are to be carried out by agencies of the various Member Governments.

Since full Panel participation as provided for in the Schedule annexed to the Convention will not be possible until all signatory governments have taken the required action toward ratification, Panel membership at this first meeting was necessarily restricted to the five governments who have already deposited their instruments of ratification. Informal advice at the meeting indicated that further ratifications may be expected presently. Chairmen elected at the first meeting of each Panel were as follows:

Panel for Sub-area 1 (West and South of Greenland)

Chairman: B. Dinesen (Denmark)

Panel for Sub-area 2 (Off the Labrador Coast)

Panel for Sub-area 3 (Newfoundland Coast and general Grand Banks area)

Chairman: Raymond Gushue (Canada)

Panel for Sub-area 4 (Banks off Nova Scotia and New Brunswick)

Chairman: J. Howard MacKichan (Canada)

Panel for Sub-area 5 (Gulf of Maine and Georges Bank)

Chairman: Francis W. Sargent (United States)

Organization of the Panel for Sub-area 2 was deferred pending additional ratifications. During the course of discussions at Panel meetings consideration was given to available scientific information on the fisheries of the sub-areas concerned, and particularly in the case of Panels 1 and 5 discussion was facilitated by papers presented on these fisheries. In the case of Panels 1 and 5 tentative agreement was reached on interim meetings prior to the second annual meeting of the Commission.

The Meeting, which was largely organizational in character, established a budget for its first year of full operations, beginning July 1, 1951, of \$26,500. Contributions to this budget by contracting governments are primarily on the basis of representation on the respective Panels.

With a view to the establishment of effective working arrangements between the Commission and other international organizations with related objectives, the Commission authorized its Chairman and Executive Secretary to enter into interim arrangements with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea for the exchange of information and for other types of cooperation. The Chairman shall report to the Commission at its Second Annual Meeting concerning actions taken under this authorization and shall recommend to the Commission methods and means by which such cooperative working relationships may be established and maintained thereafter.

The Commission agreed, for the time being, to establish its headquarters in Canada, with temporary headquarters at the St. Andrews Biological Station of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, St. Andrews, New Brunswick. An offer of headquarters space was received from Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, but the Commission decided that a headquarters site in Canada would constitute a more effective site in relation to the area covered by the Convention. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman, in accordance with the instructions of the Commission, will investigate and consider the offers made by the Government of Newfoundland and Memorial University, St. Johns, Newfoundland, and Dalhousie University at Halifax, Nova Scotia as possible sites for permanent headquarters, and report their findings at the Second Meeting of the Commission which is scheduled to be convened at St. Andrews, New Brunswick about June 10, 1952.

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