

Serial No. 418Document No. 37ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 1956I.C.N.A.F. Mesh Regulations

Her Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have studied the proposals for the regulation of the meshes of nets of vessels engaged in the fisheries for cod and haddock in Sub-areas 3, 4 and 5 of the International Convention for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries which the Secretary of State transmitted for consideration under cover of a memorandum dated 1st September, 1955. In accordance with paragraph 7 of Article VIII of the Convention, Her Majesty's Government now wish to notify their acceptance of these proposals while at the same time making the following observations on certain aspects of the regulations.

At the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Commission at which it was decided to recommend these proposals to Contracting Governments, the United Kingdom Commissioners enquired as to the quantitative significance, in terms of the overall trawl catch of cod and haddock in each of the Sub-Areas concerned, of the exemptions proposed under Paragraph II of the proposed regulations. Her Majesty's Government would still appreciate receiving such information from the Secretariat of the Commission and record their view that, as they hope is the case, exemptions from any mesh regulations should not be such as to represent more than a small fraction of the catch of the species which it is the aim of the regulations to conserve.

Her Majesty's Government would also point out that if the number of protected species should eventually increase, the principle of allowing catches of non-protected species to contain up to 10 per cent of each protected species could give rise to difficulties and eventually lead to substantial catches of protected species being taken with small-meshed gear.

While appreciating that the permission given by Paragraph IV of the proposed regulations for the use of covers to protect the cod-end is designed to save the wear and tear of nets and accords with existing practice in the Convention waters on the part of fishermen of one or more Contracting Governments, Her Majesty's Government would remark upon the dangers of abuse which may be present, since it would appear that loosely attached chafing-gear can be readily and quickly adapted so as to "blind" or obstruct the meshes of the fishing net. They would accordingly hope that the use of such gear will be very carefully watched.

BRITISH EMBASSY,
Washington, D.C.

March 20, 1956

(Forwarded to the Secretariat by the U.S.
State Department on May 8 1956.)