

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
6TH COUNCIL, 41ST SESSION**

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GREAT SLAVE LAKE FISHERMEN'S FEDERATION

Hay River, Northwest Territories

January 28, 1970

Stuart M. Hodgson, Esq.,
Commissioner of the Northwest Territories,
Yellowknife, N. W. T.

Dear Sir,

Members of the Great Slave Lake Fishermen's Federation have noted with interest your remarks at the opening of the current session of the Northwest Territories Council concerning commercial fishing in this area.

We are, perhaps more so than you, gratified at the success of the fishing operations during the past summer season which resulted in substantially increased prices for fish, even though the higher prices were not fully reflected in higher returns for fishermen. Increases in operating costs and the effect of the general inflationary trend served to minimize the higher fish prices to some degree. Nevertheless, we were happy with the overall improvement in our financial position on the summer operations.

Members of the Federation are now deeply concerned, however, at a number of recent developments which indicate that fishermen in this area face a severe deterioration in their financial position. We felt that this information should be brought to your attention so that you and your officers can take any steps that may be possible to prevent the situation from growing worse.

From the commencement of the current winter fishing season the base prices paid for fish in this area have been substantially lower than the prices paid last summer, as well as falling below the prices realized in winter fishing a year ago. For instance, the price currently paid for fresh round whitefish is now 23¢ per pound, compared with 30¢ per pound at this time last year.

In order to impress upon you how severe is this drop in price, we should note that during past years winter prices have tended to be about 9¢ per pound higher than summer prices. The higher winter price was due to increased consumer demand during the winter, but it did not mean greater returns for fishermen because the operating expenses the fisherman must pay are about three times greater in winter than in summer.

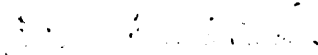
We realize that responsibility for fish prices lies with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation rather than with Territorial Government officials, and that the price depends to a considerable extent on the success of the Marketing Corporation in selling our fish.

We do feel, however, that Territorial authorities have a role to play in insuring that the Marketing Corporation is sufficiently impressed with the premium quality of the fish caught in Great Slave Lake and other lakes in the Northwest Territories and with the consequently higher prices this fish will bring if their sale is promoted aggressively. It is our fear that the price of our fish in relation to that caught in southern parts of Canada will not remain as high as it should without constant vigilance by Territorial officials who are in a better position than we to observe marketing activities.

To assist you in undertaking action and understanding our problems we are enclosing copies of a recent exchange of correspondence with the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

We trust that Territorial authorities will be as anxious as we are to insure that the improved financial position we enjoyed during the past summer will not be lost or severely deteriorated, as the present situation seems to indicate. We will greatly appreciate any steps you might be able to take to overcome these difficulties.

Yours sincerely,


Len Cardinal, President

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cc. D. M. Stewart
LC/dt