

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
7TH COUNCIL, 46TH SESSION

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Yellowknife, N.W.T.
4th November 1971

COMMISSIONER THROUGH
DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Lower Winter Prices for
Fish on Great Slave Lake 71-72

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation has reduced prices for lake trout and whitefish caught on Great Slave Lake this winter. It is anticipated that the Great Slave Lake Fishermen's Federation will be making representations to you in this regard.

Winter Prices at Hay River

	<u>70/71</u>	<u>71/72</u>	<u>Change</u>
<u>Export Jumbo Whitefish</u>			
Fresh	39¢/lb.	37¢/lb.	- 2¢/lb.
Frozen	25¢	24¢	- 1¢
<u>Export Large Whitefish</u>			
Fresh	32¢/lb.	31¢/lb.	- 1¢/lb.
Frozen	21¢	20¢	- 1¢
* <u>Export Medium Whitefish</u>			
Fresh	29¢/lb.	27¢/lb.	- 2¢/lb.
Frozen	19¢	18¢	- 1¢
<u>Lake Trout</u>			
Dressed 4-8 lbs.	37¢/lb.	34¢/lb.	- 3¢/lb.
Under 4 lb.	32¢	29¢	- 3¢
Headless and dressed over 8 lbs.	30¢/lb.	27¢/lb.	- 3¢/lb.

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Background

The Freshwater Fish Marketing Corp. assumed the responsibility for selling all fresh and frozen fish in the Northwest Territories, N.W. Ontario and the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta commencing May 1st, 1969.

They have managed to slowly increase incomes to fishermen, improve product quality, and improve handling facilities. With the construction of the new plant at Transcona, they will be in a position to get into new product lines, and become less dependent on the sale of fresh fish.

The above has been achieved in spite of some very serious setbacks as follows:

Floating of the Canadian Dollar

As nearly 85% of sales go to the U.S.A. this had considerable impact on the industry.

Mercury

The adverse publicity resulting from the finding of unacceptable levels of mercury in pickerel and perch in Lake St. Clair and later in other areas, had a carry over into the sale of other fish that did not have this problem. This was unfortunate for the F.F.M.C. as nearly 80% of their sales are whitefish (an uncontaminated species).

The 10% Surcharge on Exports to the U.S.A.

This added cost was absorbed by the F.F.M.C.

Great Lakes Production

Fishermen in these areas enjoyed in 1971 the best season they have had for many years. Most of the F.F.M.C. markets are adjacent to the Great Lakes. These markets were flooded with low priced, high quality whitefish from American producers. Increased landings of lake trout also occurred from U.S.A. waters this year as a result of a Supreme Court order upholding the claims of Indian fishermen that they did not have to adhere to quotas in waters under State jurisdiction.

The increased Great Lakes production has resulted in a considerable inventory build up of 1.8 million pounds over last year, in frozen Great Slave whitefish and block filets. This is further accentuated by added whitefish from Lake Winnipeg that was not fished last year.

Inventory as of September 30, 1971 -
Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation

	<u>1970</u>	<u>1971</u>
Smoker Whitefish - Gt. Slave	590,740	879,589
- Lake Winnipeg	Nil	865,068
Block Fillets	<u>1,221,554</u>	<u>1,893,551</u>
TOTAL	1,812,294 lbs.	3,638,208 lbs.

On the other hand the demand for pickerel has risen and prices have been increased for this species (an insignificant factor in Gt. Slave production).

Suggested Course of Action

In discussions with the fishermen it might be pointed out that:

1. In spite of heavy pressure to reduce 1971 summer prices the F.F.M.C. did not do so.
2. More frequent lifting of nets by fishermen will reduce the high percentage of culls encountered last year (25,993 lbs. in the period mid-December to Mid-January) Although the average was 11% some fishermen had as high as 23% of their catch culled.
3. The N.W.T. Government has no power over the Corporation as it is essentially an independent business. If prices are maintained for Hay River fishermen it means that fishermen in other areas are subsidising the operation.

4. Fishermen can make representations through their member (Mr. Studney) who is on the Advisory Committee to the F.F.M.C. and will be meeting on November 24/71 in Winnipeg.

*Note
Studney did not
show up at the
Advisory Comm.
meeting
ear*

Lewis/sar

E. Alan Ballantyne,
Director,
Industry & Development