

APPENDIX "INSU-1"

JUNE 27, 1984

MR. BILL CORBETT
C/O SUB-COMMITTEE ON UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE INEQUALITIES
ROOM 522

REGRET OUR BUSY SCHEDULE PREVENTED OUR ATTENDANCE AT SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING THIS AFTERNOON, WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR FORWARDING OUR REGRETS TO SUB-COMMITTEE AND PASSING ON THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

1. OUR UNION REPRESENTS APPROXIMATELY 7,000 SEASONAL FISH PLANT WORKERS IN NEWFOUNDLAND, WHOSE INCOME IS DERIVED FROM A VERY UNPREDICTABLE RESOURCE. AS AN EXAMPLE, LANDINGS IN ONE COMMUNITY LAST WEEK DROPPED FROM 260,000 POUNDS OF FISH ON THURSDAY TO 30,000 POUNDS ON FRIDAY.

THE GENERAL TENDANCY IS FOR A SLOW BUILD-UP IN LANDINGS AND THEREFORE IN EARNINGS OF PLANT WORKERS, HEAVY PRODUCTION FOR A FEW WEEKS IN THE SUMMER, THEN A GRADUAL TAPERING OFF IN THE FALL. AS A RESULT, OUR MEMBERS WILL NORMALLY HAVE A FEW WEEKS OF MINIMAL EARNINGS ON THE ''SHOULDERS'' OF THE SEASON AND FULL WEEKS OF EARNINGS DURING THE PEAK PERIOD.

AS A RESULT OF THIS SITUATION, AVERAGING OF INSURABLE EARNINGS FOR FISH PLANT WORKERS SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCES THEIR U. I. BENEFITS. THIS PROBLEM WAS RECOGNIZED IN RESPECT OF INSHORE FISHERMEN, WHOSE BENEFIT PERIOD AS OF 1983 IS NOW BASED ON THEIR 10 BEST WEEKS OF INSURABLE EARNINGS, PROVIDED THEY HAVE A MINIMUM OF 15 INSURABLE WEEKS. PREVIOUS TO THIS CHANGE, FISHERMEN COULD ACTUALLY LOSE MONEY BY FISHING IN THE FALL BECAUSE THEY WOULD LOSE MORE IN THEIR U. I. BENEFITS THAN THEY MADE FROM FISHING.

THE INSHORE FISHERMEN AND SEASONAL FISH PLANT WORKERS LIVE SIDE BY SIDE IN ATLANTIC CANADA AND DERIVE A LIVING FROM THE SAME RESOURCE. STRONGLY URGE FISH PLANT WORKERS BE TREATED THE SAME AS FISHERMEN IN BASING U. I. BENEFITS ON 10 BEST WEEKS. OTHERWISE THERE WILL BE, AS INDEED THERE IS NOW, A STRONG SENSE OF INJUSTICE BY PLANT WORKERS. THE CAUSE OF THE WIDE FLUCTUATION IN FISH PLANT WORKERS' INCOMES IS BASED ENTIRELY ON THE AVAILABILITY OF RAW MATERIAL AND THEREFORE IS ENTIRELY OUTSIDE THE CONTROL OF EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES.

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