

## THE INTERNATIONAL PACIFIC HALIBUT COMMISSION

The Convention between Canada and the United States of America for the preservation of the halibut fishery of the North Pacific Ocean and the Bering Sea was first negotiated in 1923. It was revised in 1930 and again in 1937 and during the past three years negotiations have taken place between the two countries which have led to the present revisions.

The change in name, from "The International Fisheries Commission" to the "International Pacific Halibut Commission", is to enable ready identification and to distinguish the Commission from other fishery commissions on which Canada and the United States are represented.

The original treaty provided a close season and established a commission of four - two from each country - to investigate and recommend to the two governments measures for restoring the dwindling stocks of halibut. In 1930, powers of making regulations subject to approval of the two governments were bestowed on the Commission. These powers were further extended in the 1937 revision. In the present revision the number of commissioners has been increased from four to six - three from each country. The reason is that in the United States, unlike in Canada, fishery jurisdiction is vested in each state and the federal Government only acquires some jurisdiction by virtue of a treaty made with another country. In this case the United States wanted to give Alaska representation on the Commission. The other two United States Commissioners represent the federal Government and the industry at large.

Under the new treaty, the Commission has power to establish more than one open season. There was some doubt as to the Commission's power to do this under the former treaty. The granting of this power was considered necessary in order to allow the Commission to extend fishing over more than one period of time. The scientists of the Commission advanced the hypothesis that during a concentrated short season, some fishing grounds might be under-exploited. The experiment of dividing up the season will be useful to determine to some extent whether this hypothesis is correct.