

WAR ON THE LAMPREY

Continued progress in the joint Canadian-United States war on the predatory sea lamprey was reported recently at an interim meeting of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the international body formed eight years ago to find means of protecting and, in the case of some species, rehabilitating the commercial fish stocks of the Great Lakes.

The sea lamprey, which has played havoc with the once valuable stocks of lake trout and whitefish in many fishing areas of the Lakes, is the biggest problem facing the Commission.

First priority in the fight against the lamprey was given to Lake Superior, last of the Great Lakes to be invaded. The lamprey population there was reduced by 80 per cent in 1962 through the use of "lampricide", and has been kept at about the same level in 1963.

The Commission and its advisers were welcomed by Dr. A.W.H. Needler, Deputy Minister of Fisheries of Canada, who said it was gratifying to note that new means of bringing the lamprey under control were being developed. He stated that the research sponsored by the Commission showed promise and had broad value, but pointed out that questions regarding long-term economic control of lampreys remained unanswered.

The meeting, under the chairmanship of Dr. A.L. Pritchard, Director of the Conservation and Development Service of the Department of Fisheries of Canada, heard progress reports from its agents, from the U.S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries and the Fisheries Research Board of Canada, as well as from certain state agencies.

LAMPRICIDE

There are 110 lamprey-producing streams tributary to Lake Superior. Ninety-eight of these have been treated with chemicals to kill the young lamprey. The chemical treatments have now been extended to Lake Michigan, and surveys recently completed on Lake Huron have located 90 lamprey-producing streams there.

In Lake Michigan, 66 of the 99 lamprey-producing streams have received initial treatment. An interesting development noted at the meeting was the discovery that a "molluscicide" used to destroy snails in tropical countries could be used to improve the action of the lampricide. Small amounts of this chemical, added to the poison now in use, can almost double its effectiveness. This will reduce considerably the cost of treating the remaining Lake Michigan streams, particularly those with high flows.

IMPROVED TROUT SITUATION

In addition to reports on the lamprey-control programme, the Commission heard reports on the lake-trout rehabilitation programme from the states of Wisconsin and Minnesota, as well as from the Bureau and the Research Board. The improvement in the lake-trout population is most pronounced in the Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior, where there was a marked increase in the numbers of large fish (over 25 inches) and in the numbers of spawning trout.

Hatchery fish planted in the lake were found to have survived well. It was reported that hatchery plantings are expected to be the mainstay of the inshore fishery until natural reproduction reaches its former levels. The survival of large, mature fish indicates that this will occur and that the natural population will be rehabilitated.

There has also been evidence of improved survival of larger and older trout in Canadian waters in Lake Superior, and the general improvement appears to be continuing.

The Commission and its advisers discussed the walleye situation in Lake Erie. After several years of high production in the mid-50s, the walleye population in that lake has declined drastically, though some recent recovery is in evidence for certain year classes. A programme is under way to find the causes of the changes in abundance of walleye and the means of improving the fishery.

At this meeting the Commission received for study proposed programmes for investigation of the Great Lakes fisheries prepared by fishery scientists on both sides of the border.

COLUMBIA POWER TALKS

Representatives of the United States and Canada met in Ottawa on December 9, 10 and 11 for further discussions on the Columbia River Treaty.

The United States delegation was headed by Mr. Ivan White, Minister of the United States Embassy, and included Mr. Charles Luce, Bonneville Power Administrator, Major-General W.W. Lapsley, North Pacific Division Engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other officers of the departments and agencies concerned and of interested utilities.

The Canadian delegation was headed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Paul Martin, and included Mr. Ray Williston, British Columbia Minister of Lands, Forests and Water Resources, Mr. Arthur Laing, federal Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, Mr. Robert Bonner, B.C. Attorney-General, Dr. Jack Davis, Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister, Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, Chairman, B.C. Hydro and Power Authority, and other officers of the departments and agencies concerned.

The meeting discussed reports of the technical working groups that had been set up at the previous meeting in Washington, D.C., on September 6. The discussions dealt with several major points concerning arrangements for the sale of Canadian downstream benefits and for financing the development of the Columbia River in Canada. After three days of discussions, during which substantial progress was made, the negotiators were in general agreement on a report that would be submitted to the governments concerned. Working parties were to meet shortly to draft the necessary documents for consideration at a further meeting of the delegations in Ottawa on December 20.