

with incomes in excess of \$45,000 annually.”<sup>(1)</sup> Fishermen with the lowest incomes are usually the ones located in the “inland” waters while the most successful fishermen are those in the Great Lakes.

Thus the Ontario fisheries are larger and more highly developed than those in the Western Region because of the concentration of fishing in the Great Lakes, in particular Lake Erie. Notwithstanding a relatively high level of development, however, the Great Lakes fisheries are deemed to suffer from over-capitalization and over-participation relative to the biologically sustainable yields. This has led to the recent attempt to control harvesting in the Great Lakes major fisheries by the introduction of individual quota systems.

The transferability of individual quota-licences is expected to help solve the problems of over-capitalization and over-participation in the primary and secondary sectors of the industry. Some producers are of the opinion that quota systems, such as the one on Lake Erie, are good for the industry. Consequently, the system generates a high level of support which is conducive to self-enforcement by producer associations. However, most producers agree that quotas should not be changed for reasons other than protection of the resource and that, whenever possible, changes should not be made to quota levels during the fishing season.

According to a number of witnesses, the major problem of the Ontario fisheries in the coming years is likely to be the availability of supply rather than marketing. Although the Ontario freshwater fishery is the largest in Canada and has the widest variety of species, it is still rather narrowly based both in terms of species and geographic location. Nearly 60% of the landed value in the Ontario fisheries is from the Canadian waters of Lake Erie and consists of a limited number of species such as smelt, perch, bass and pickerel. The Committee would like to emphasize that, in light of such a narrowly based dependence, environment and habitat protection, stock management and maintenance take on an added importance for both industry and government.

In recent years, the Ontario fishing industry has to some extent been affected by pollution. With the exception of a temporary drop in export sales of smelt to Japan, brought on by the dioxin scare, consumer support has remained good as a result of an effective information campaign. Although pollution is being controlled, governments must continue to set more stringent environmental standards. These not only protect fish stocks but also millions of people who use the same bodies of water for drinking water and recreational use. Moreover, at any given time, export sales from the Great Lakes Region could be seriously threatened if the level of toxins in any of the fish were to exceed acceptable limits without adequate counter-measures being taken immediately. This implies certain responsibilities on the part of both government and industry.

Accordingly, the Committee recommends that:

- (14a) Ontario processors offer quota officers the opportunity to work in their companies in order to establish better understanding of the quota needs of the industry. Should this exercise yield positive results, it could become an on-going program.**

---

<sup>(1)</sup> Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ontario Region, *Overview of the Ontario Fishery*, Pacific, Inland and Arctic Fisheries Reference Manual, July 3, 1984, p. 6.