

Mr. CLARK: That may eventually come. I would not like to make a comment on that, Mr. Chairman, because from the information we have available to us there is no indication that the dragging operation, use of trawlers, is any more destructive, provided it is used wisely and under proper conservation measures, than other methods of fishing.

Mr. CARTER: On the George's Bank the number of fish was being expended.

Mr. CLARK: That is true, but that does not prove it was the fault of the gear; it may have been over-fishing, not actually the kind or type of gear being fished.

Mr. CARTER: Yes, but the over-fishing on the Grand Banks is mainly by draggers, that is the only method used out there at the present time.

Mr. CLARK: That is correct. As far as I know it is a trawling operation.

Mr. CROUSE: Mr. Chairman, is not there a change in water temperature affecting the growth of fish stocks in any one year to a much greater degree than any amount of over-fishing by man? When you realize two-thirds of the world's surface is covered by water and cold northern currents or excessive amounts of ice-packs are coming down over the fishing grounds affecting the water temperature and then in addition you have this depletion of the fish stocks as a result of over-fishing—

Mr. CLARK: I think this is so. There is no question in our mind that the oceanographic conditions play a most important part in the availability of fish in a given season. The warming up of the water is one factor and the cold currents coming down in great masses is another. Therefore, I think the oceanographic conditions play a most important part in fisheries generally. The oceanographic work of the commission is an important segment of the entire scientific investigation.

Mr. CARTER: If the effect is as Mr. Crouse has stated it is, you have two factors depleting stock, not only the over-fishing by draggers but the changing water temperature. If those two should coincide you would have a much greater depletion than from either one acting separately.

Surely that points out even more forcefully the need for conservation methods, or for consideration being given to that eventuality.

Mr. CLARK: Well, Mr. Chairman, I think that it must be taken into consideration that this area is certainly far away from Canada's territorial limits, whatever they may be. The choice of the method of fishing is a decision for the people doing the fishing.

You can deplete the resource, if Mr. Carter's argument follows, equally as speedily by any other method of fishing if you have the combination of all of these factors which are depleting the resource.

Mr. CARTER: I would not agree.

Mr. CLARK: I would not like to comment, Mr. Chairman, on the question of gear, as between trawlers and some other methods of fishing.

Mr. ROBICHAUD: Is it not true also that George's Bank, being one of the main banks of the United States area, New England fishing centres like Boston, New Bedford and Gloucester, that it was a concentrated bank where practically the entire fleet of the United States was concentrating its efforts? If there is over-fishing it may be because they concentrated on that bank. Is that not an important factor?

Mr. CLARK: I think this is so. As Mr. Robichaud has pointed out, George's bank is a relatively small bank compared to other areas and for many years this was the area where the very heavy concentration of United States fishermen from Boston, Gloucester; they did most of their fishing there. That is why I said before, and perhaps in the case of George's bank this is true, that over the years there was some over-exploitation.