

01-82-01-01 PT. 1

Hiroshi Kasahara

“International aspects of Alaskan fisheries”

Series: Alaska Science Conference, 1969

August 25, 1969

Unidentified chairperson of the symposium said the main theme of the conference is “Change in the North.” He said there is a debate going on that will cause changes in commercial fisheries in the very near future. He said each of the speakers are there to attend another meeting concerning the economics on the fisheries of Alaska. The principle theme of that symposium was the in depth review of problems and crisis in commercial fisheries. He gave a short historical review of fisheries in Alaska. He said clams, mussels and salmon resources have been in use for several thousands of years. The Russian occupation made practically no usage of the fisheries. Following the purchase of Alaska by the United States very rapid development came about. Whaling, cod fishing, and salmon salting activities came about shortly after the purchase. There was rapid development of the salmon industry. There were very high yields by 1900. North of Bristol Bay was reserved for subsistence use until the advent of statehood. In 1968 the commercial catch of salmon succeeded subsistence catch of salmon. The herring industry grew from 1900 to 1950 and then gradually collapsed because of an economic problem. Halibut grew in the same period. It has been at fairly stable levels. Recent developments include the introduction of foreign crawlers. Most of the shellfish industry is quite recent in origin. In the late 1960s the fishing industry is ranked the number one industry in Alaska. Oil income will replace that position. Fisheries will continue to be a leader of the number of employees. With short term cycles and productive capacity there isn't much doubt that the fisheries will grow in the next fifty years and continue to be at a high level when oil income drops. Fisheries will be a real value in the world economics and world food production. A lot of people are dependent on the industry. Some feel too many people are involved. He introduces Hiroshi Kasahara.

Hiroshi Kasahara said he is anxious to be a part of the debate on the fisheries problems of Alaska mainly because of the petroleum developments. He will be looking at the general position of the Alaskan fisheries in the international arena. He said the expansion of fishing activities on the Bering Sea and the Gulf of Alaska has already passed its climax. The development of Japanese and Russian trawl fisheries did not keep its pace very long. He discussed species populations which have decreased because of increased fishing pressure: yellowfin sole, shrimp, sablefish, halibut, walleye Pollock and king crab. The shelf areas at the south of the peninsula have been heavily harvested by foreign trawlers. He discussed the unknown potential of Pollock, the size of recent catches and where it can be found in the water column. The potential for pelagic species other than herring are largely unknown. He expects any further developments of foreign fishing activities to be modest. Japanese fishing industry is at a stage of decline. He discusses fishing by South Korea in the North Pacific.

He believes that the expansion of foreign fishing activities in the Bering Sea so far has done little direct damage to the fishing industry of Alaska. International agreements have provided protection for many of the stocks. He talked about the future of the Alaska fisheries in the international arena, conservation measures, government protection from international competition, the possibility of large scale exploitation of abundant resources and joint ventures with foreign enterprise.

Salvatore Comitini talked about the basic economic distinction between the fishery resources and other extractive resources and the concern of the capacity of traditional fisheries management. He discussed a basic production function model as it applies to fisheries management.

James Crutchfield talked about the economic issues in salmon management. He discusses the two requirements that should be met before a renewable resource can make its contribution for the welfare of the people who use it. Waste through a faulty time distribution of the catch must be avoided and waste through excessive capital and labor should also be avoided.