

Summary of Caribbean and General Session

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In the discussion period following the paper by Mary Schulman on "A Suggested Reorganization of Florida Fishery Laws" several points were brought up. It was pointed out that the Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission looks forward to the simplification of the fishery laws of all the Gulf States. In answer to questions, Miss Schulman stated that it was proposed to repeal all the general and local laws and re-enact new ones. While no checks existed on the legislature to prevent the passing of foolish laws, Mary Schulman felt that the legislature tended to follow the recommendations suggested by the several Boards; further, the only way to get power from the Boards was by legislation.

It was the general feeling that there existed too many local laws which were difficult to police and which in fact often served no useful purpose, even when controlled. It was also felt that the time could not be long delayed when a complete review and revision of all legal matters would have to occupy the attention of the several Boards and the legal officers of the state.

Following his paper, "Computed Ocean Currents in the Gulf of Mexico", Dr. D. F. Leipper was asked whether there was any chance of work on currents being extended to the southern Caribbean area. Dr. Leipper replied that much depended on first having a ship available for a year, but he himself would very much like to have the opportunity of covering the area.

Questioned whether the seasonal depletion at the west end of Cuba had

any relation to the flow of the Mississippi River, Dr. Leipper felt that the seasonal flow of the Mississippi did not affect the Gulf Stream flow. In answer to a question about the depth at which the Yucatan Current influences the Gulf of Mexico and how much goes out through the Straits, Dr. Leipper stated that the velocity is 30 m.p.h. and the still depth 1,600 miles. The Florida Straits' still depth is less than 600 miles. This cuts down the flow.

Prof. Rivas replied to several queries following his paper. He stated that it was blackfin tuna rather than bluefins which were usually encountered in August and September. It was thought unlikely that tuna seen during September were on a spawning migration, as the path of tuna is along the right edge of the Gulf Stream. The local yellowfin tuna is the species found in the Mediterranean. It was considered that tuna preferred set temperatures for breeding purposes. It was also interesting to note that tuna usually travelled in a northerly direction when the wind was blowing southerly.

It was believed that a 100 pound fish was approximately five years old. The stomachs of bluefin tuna caught are usually empty, but on one occasion a tuna had small fish in its stomach. It was felt that this was due to the refusal to feed during spawning season, as 95 per cent of the fish taken were spent and 5 per cent were very ripe.

The question of the need for trained fishery experts was discussed following Mr. Wiles' paper. It was felt that the training of fishery officers would be continued in the United Kingdom under a scheme that had been in existence since 1946, or that this training program might be shared with the F.A.O. in South America. It was emphasized that the Caribbean Islands depended to a very large extent on their fish, and any research carried out by any country or group of countries would be greatly appreciated, as these Islands needed help.