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SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

FIFTH TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES

Noumea, New Caledonia
10 - 11 August 1972

TERRITORIAL REPORT

BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS PROTECTORATE

(a) Fisheries Development

The principal development over the last two years was the advent of the Taiyo Fishery Co. Ltd., who started a Survey of Skipjack resources (Katsuwomus pelamys) in mid June 1971 resulting from a Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Government and the Company on 28th April 1971, this being subsequently modified by a Further Memorandum of Understanding signed on September 17 and subsequently ratified by the Governing Council. The actual details of catches are at present confidential, but it can be said that they were high until December, after which there was a decline - the weather in the early months of the year in these waters is generally poor. The bait fish resource appears adequate. The waters of the Eastern Outer Islands of Santa Cruz, Vanikoro etc., have not yet been surveyed. There was some hostility from local people at first, but this has largely abated, as the benefits to them of a large-scale commercial fishing venture gradually became apparent. These include not only employment, but also, for example, the sale of mangrove wood as fuel for the pilot factory making "arobushi", and will, of course, include the sale of baitfish in the future. During the survey period the company is paying the Government $500 per catcher boat per month. The Company conducted a brief oceanographic and scientific survey from December 1971 to January 1972. Negotiations for a permanent venture will take place later this year. Coral Seas Fishing Co. Ltd., an American-owned private company, continued their operations, which consist of buying crayfish (Panulirus) for export, (together with Trochus Shell), from local people. They have also established freezers at various points so that the fishermen can store fish which are collected by the company for sale in their Honiara fish market. The company has done some experimental prawn trawling, and has not yet found these in economic quantities, but the results suggested that further investigations would be worthwhile. The company is also buying Tilapia mossambica, introduced in 1957 into Lake TeNganno, the brackish lake on Mungebba (Rennell) island. Beche de mer Ltd of Honiara continued their operations, but no longer enjoy monopoly status under the law and others have entered this field; exports rose from 9 cwt in 1970 to 100 cwt in 1971.

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A number of merchants have now started buying dried sharks' fins from local fishermen. A project initiated with the help of the South Pacific Commission's Fisheries Officer, Mr V.T. Hinds, in 1971, to start a small fishery in Lake Lauvi near the Southern Coast of Guadalcanal is going well (more nets are awaited). The principal promoter of this enterprise, a Solomon Islander, has asked for information, which is being sought, on the possibility of farming crocodiles using fish offal for food. There are ample supplies of immature crocodiles in the lake.

A Chinese entrepreneur is examining the possibility of following the lead of Indonesia in exporting fish Satay packed in plastic bags to the United States and Canada, and another is considering the further processing of dried sharks' fins locally. A commercial venture attempting to farm the Golden lipped Pearl Shell (Pinctada Maxima) closed down owing to difficulties encountered in spat collection and breeding techniques. A general interest by Solomon Islanders in commercial fishing has grown greatly in the last two years, although the killing of fish by explosives is a problem near Honiara and in the Florida group of islands. Exports of marine products during the period were as follows:

	1970		1971	
	Quantity	Value $	Quantity	Value $
Fish (including crayfish, Beche de mer etc.) tons	-	-	4,099	1,237,839
Crocodile skins		4,092		2,454
Marine Shell cwts.	15,290	102,984	12,157	80,522

(source - Annual Report 1971)

The difference represents an increase greater than tenfold.

South Pacific Commission assistance took the form of visits by Dr R.W. George and Mr K. Sachinanthananthan on crayfish and beches de mer respectively, apart from Mr Hinds' visit, already mentioned.

(b) The Fisheries Service

Fisheries is the responsibility of the Department of Agriculture, but the only employees at present are observers stationed on the Taiyo Company's chartered catcher boats. A fisheries officer is under recruitment, however. It may be possible to get a Volunteer from some international agency to assist him. See (c) below.

(c) Need for Technical Assistance

This has already been sought from UNDP, both to advise in the negotiations with Taiyo and to advise on policy including staff matters. A legal expert from FAO is presently (June 1971) in Honiara drafting Fisheries legislation. The detailed needs for technical assistance will need to be assessed by the first expert. Advice will also be available from the Overseas Development Administrations Fisheries Adviser, Dr D.N.F. Hall, who will be visiting this country in October or November this year.

(d) Need for Research

The assessment of this must, again, await the advice of Dr Hall and the UNDP expert. The Taiyo scientific survey report suggested investigations into shark and squid. (The latter may be of seasonal occurrence here.) To the writer as a layman, some experiments in prawn (*Macrobrachium* sp.) cultivation would seem to be worthwhile.

(e) Views concerning the best way of meeting the need for assistance

This must once again await the advice of the two experts.

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