

January 13, 1936

[Fish Advisory Comm. Remarks]

FDR Special File

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE FISH ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ON THE OCCASION OF THEIR VISIT  
TO THE WHITE HOUSE EXECUTIVE OFFICES  
January 13, 1936, 12.25 P.M.

(The Chairman of the Fish Advisory Committee explained to the President that the Committee had gathered from all over the United States to discuss aids to fishermen and commerce, that they were also interested in legislation which would help the fishing industry.)

I think we have to go a great deal further than we have gone in this industry. Speaking about encouraging fishermen, I suppose you know that the first bounty given by the Federal Government in 1789 was when Congress passed a bill giving fifty dollars to every fisherman who proved that he had fished fifty days during the year. That applied for a great many years.

It is all very well to educate people on the value of eating fish. But there is something more important, and that is to get the fish into communities which haven't got them. I talked to the Secretary of Commerce about that six or eight months ago. In the whole, big territory between the Alleghenies and the Rockies they haven't got any real quantity of fish to

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

(The Chairman of the Fish Advisory Committee explained to the President that the Committee had gathered from all over the United States to discuss also to fishermen and also to discuss also to fishermen in various States, that they were also interested in legislation which would help the fishing industry.)

I think we have to go a great deal further than we have gone in the industry. Speaking about industry and fishermen, I suppose you know that the first money given by the Federal Government in 1935 was when Congress passed a bill giving fifty dollars to every fisherman who proved that he had fished fifty days during the year. That applied for a great many years.

It is all very well to educate people on the value of eating fish. But there is something more important, and that is to get the fish into communities which haven't got them. I talked to the Secretary of Commerce about that six or eight months ago. In the whole big territory between the Mississippi and the Rockies they haven't got any real quantity of fish to

eat. There are all kinds of mechanical difficulties in the way, it is true. Up in the mountains they have a very few trout. But we have not been able to get salt water fish into the middle part of the country. When I talked with the Secretary of Commerce several months ago he raised one point. He said that under the Supreme Court decision you cannot use refrigerator cars which originate out in the Middle West, you cannot put a return cargo of fish into them to be carried out into the Middle West. That seems to be a legislative or constitutional difficulty with which I am not familiar. It seems to me that there are great things which can be done in getting fish into that area back of the Coast where the people are not getting fish at the present time. People will buy fish if they can get it.

(The President was then told that the Committee had been studying fish from the standpoint of its food value for some time; that it was the one food which did not have its value adulterated in some way before being retailed; that it was one of the few foods which retained its essential values for giving physical and mental alertness. It was also pointed out that fish, as a food, had many medical values for the treatment of certain diseases.)

That is right. We will have to get the fish into the interior. In the old days, in upstate New York, there

was quite a lot of fish delivered, particularly in Albany, Syracuse and Rochester. They are not getting much fish in those communities now. Why that is, I do not know, but it is not there.

(The President then asked for a copy of the bill which the Committee was seeking to put through Congress.)