

time you hold your next annual meeting, construction will be well under way.

I trust your meeting here will be the success it deserves to be, and that your stay in Dade County will be such a pleasant one that you will return again and again to our shores.

Opening Address

F. G. WALTON SMITH, *Chairman*

MENTION WAS MADE at last year's meeting of the failure of mankind to maintain food production ahead of population increase. This is not a problem for the future. The race is already lost to the extent that over 20 million persons are reliably estimated as dying each year from the direct or indirect results of undernourishment.

No apology is made for introducing this year's meeting with the same theme. Since last year the population of the United States alone has increased by something in the order of 1,000,000, and the world population by at least twenty times this figure. The problem becomes more serious with each passing year.

Although in the United States we are ahead in the population-food race, the margin is decreasing. In the Caribbean area the crisis is closer and has become a major economic problem already, inasmuch as the area is not self-supporting. The British West Indies alone import from Canada the equivalent of about 100 million pounds of fish, and the population is still increasing.

These problems concern all of us present at this meeting. With the drive to produce more and more food it becomes increasingly important for the fishing industries to extend their sources of supply and to conserve and stabilize existing sources, by wise regulation.

The function of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute is to aid in the expansion and conservation of fisheries in the area by bringing together those to whom it is of primary concern. We welcome not merely scientists, but representatives of government administrations, economists, fish dealers and the fishermen themselves. These various groups will, during the next few days, discuss their own special problems, and in addition, will attempt to unify efforts by exchanging ideas and information with other groups in general session.

The problems with which we are concerned include the basic facts of the biology of fishes and the basic oceanography which determines their distribution. We are also concerned with the need for exploratory development of the fisheries, with the problems of transportation, distribution and marketing and with the economic conditions of the fishermen. We welcome the speakers in these various fields who represent the governments of neighboring states and the countries of the Caribbean and we welcome those from scientific organizations and representatives of the industry who will discuss problems from their respective viewpoints.

Many problems in this area have more than local significance and, as a result, we are privileged to have as participants experienced men from other parts of the United States. To all of these we extend a hearty welcome.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has contributed in great measure to the program in front of us. The success of our deliberations will also reflect the close cooperation of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the newly organized Gulf State Marine Fisheries Commission. Part of the program

is based upon suggestions made by the Caribbean Commission. In short, we have the most auspicious conditions for our purposes and we may regard the Institute in this respect as a catalyzer.

This viewpoint is perhaps particularly important today. A considerable amount of individual uncoordinated research has been carried out in the past, in the area with which we are concerned. Perhaps we may now aid each other by assessing these scattered efforts and preparing ourselves for a reorientation of future work in the direction of cooperative and integrated research and development. The program is arranged so that the conclusions reached in each session will be specifically reported and so that definite recommendations may arise from the joint efforts of us all. It may not be too much to hope that, during the next week, the foundations may be laid for a New Deal in the fisheries work of the Gulf and Caribbean.