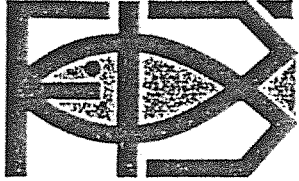


New Zealand Fishing Industry Board



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30/06/2
NEJ/cin

21 October 1985

Dr O R W Sutherland
Auckland Committee on Racism & Discrimination - ACORD
P O Box 47-155
Ponsonby
AUCKLAND 2

Dear Dr Sutherland

I am responding to your letter of 27 September, addressed to the Chairman of the Board, who is currently in Europe. In your letter you outlined the concerns of ACORD over a proposal to investigate the possibility of developing an export market for kina in Japan. I am pleased to have this opportunity to comment, and I hope that the information I am to provide will remove much of your concern.

Various matters which you detail relating to the Treaty of Waitangi and the Waitangi Tribunal Findings are ones which require decisions and almost certainly policy changes by Government and by the Government Departments who have the responsibility of administering Government policy. Fisheries matters are, of course, very largely in the hands of the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries who are the prime controlling authority in this area.

The New Zealand Fishing Industry Board is a statutory authority, established by Act of Parliament in 1963. It has as its primary responsibility that of fostering the development of the fishing industry. We have few statutory powers, and our involvement in the areas to which you refer are more to act in an advisory capacity to Government rather than in any executive capacity.

Despite this, we have a considerable interest and a great deal of sympathy with the concerns that you raise. We believe it is important that there be better communication between Maori and commercial fishing representatives, than has been the case in the past. This is because it is not generally recognised that the interests of the fishing industry are in most cases identical to or parallel with the interests of the Maori people. This particularly applies to joint concerns over the importance of maintaining the resources by wise management and the need to avoid pollution.

Not all fishermen are good fishermen, either in terms of their fishing ability or in their attitude towards the resource. However, a large number of those in the industry are responsible and concerned people who would identify closely with most of the aims of the Maori people.

For this reason I cannot fully agree with the comment in the attached papers which states that "the commercialisation of seafood resources of New Zealand has always been characterised by greed of commercial operators, leading to over-exploitation and finally a gross depletion of the natural resource".

While there certainly has been over-exploitation of the species referred to, not all these resources have been grossly depleted (in particular, rock lobsters and oysters), and with the possible exception of snapper, the measures already introduced by Government to conserve the resource have already prevented outright ecological disaster.

More importantly, the reason why the situation has reached this level has been because of the absence of any effective management regime to control the efforts of commercial operators.

In the fishing industry, however, it has been the commercial operators themselves who have stressed the need for effort reduction. This concern was largely ignored for many years by those in control, who were still advocating expansionist strategies, and it is only recently that Government and its officials have recognised the need for more effective fisheries management measures. I believe it would be unrealistic to expect commercial operators to voluntarily reduce their effort at a time that Government was still permitting new entrants into the fishery to increase the effort and were unprepared to take the steps which were necessary to more appropriately match the effort to the size of the resource.

It is the official stance of the Board and the industry that fisheries management measures must be introduced which will ensure the conservation of fish resources, and additionally the resource must be protected from pollution and from the results of activities on land. Additionally, although the details have yet to be discussed, it is the view of the fishing industry that an appropriate balance must be struck between competing users of fish resources, both marine and freshwater, so that equity is achieved without diminishing each other's rights.

This preamble serves as an introduction to the matter which you specifically raised with us, ie the suggestion that kina could provide export opportunities for the New Zealand fishing industry. The first prerequisite of this was that any such exploitation for commercial use could only be considered if there was no risk of endangering the resource itself. It is our view that despite there being some areas of New Zealand where the resource is currently being heavily exploited, there are other areas where additional amounts of kina could safely be taken. We would support such exploitation subject to there being some guarantee provided by the Ministry of Agriculture & Fisheries that they could control the level of this exploitation so as not to damage the resource itself.

In summary therefore, our attitude towards the exploitation of kina is that if there is product which can safely be taken without damaging the resource, or affecting the traditional rights of groups to harvest that portion of the resource which they can readily take, then it is desirable that investigations be undertaken as to the opportunities to market such a product and provide an economic return for the people of New Zealand.

I repeat that we are not advocating commercial exploitation at the expense either of the resource or of traditional gatherers of the resource. What we are saying is that any portion of the resource beyond that which is needed to sustain traditional uses and which can be taken without any detriment to the resource, should be a candidate for commercial exploitation.

It is my belief that there is enough for all of us to meet our differing requirements - yours to retain your traditional rights to gather seafood, recreationalists to be able to participate in a sporting conflict, and the commercial fishing industry to earn its livelihood from exploiting these resources, all at an appropriately wise level of effort.

This last weekend I was privileged to attend a hui on the Taupunga Marae at Waimarama. This gave an opportunity for me and a number of fisheries people from MAF to learn something of the traditional attitude of the Maori people towards fishing, and in turn for us to explain the changing concepts of the Ministry and the fishing industry. I believe this meeting was of great benefit to both parties.

A further opportunity is to be provided to me at the National Hui to be held at Porirua in mid November. I have been invited to speak, and I will again be making the basic points that the fishing industry should not be seen as a competitor or opponent to Maori interests, since our basic concerns are the same. Additionally, what we are talking about is an allocation of the resource which takes into account the needs and rights of the various groups who are interested in it, that is traditional Maori interests, recreational interests, and the commercial fishing industry.

I will be happy to discuss this further with you, or any other person who is interested in it. I will be in Auckland during the first week in November, and I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and/or representatives of ACORD, either on Monday 4 or Friday 8, to further discuss these issues. Please ring my Secretary, Ingrid Naeff, if you wish to hold such a meeting.

Yours sincerely
NEW ZEALAND FISHING INDUSTRY BOARD



N E JARMAN
General Manager

cc Mr P J Stevens