Closing of Dow Unit's Plant In Sarnia, Ontario, Is Asked

SARNIA, Ontario (UPI) — Canadian commercial fishermen have asked that a Dow Chemical Co. of Canada plant here be closed because it contributes to mercury contamination of fish in Lake St. Clair.

The Canadian government has seized more than 18,000 pounds of high-priced walleye pike which were contaminated due to heavy mercury concentrations dumped into the lake at the Dow plant.

Fishermen may lose thousands of dollars because of the contamination. The St. Clair Commercial Fishermen's Association met in Tilburn, Ontario, Friday, and sent telegrams to Dow and to Ontario's prime minister, John Robarts, demanding immediate action to end the contamination.

Government officials said Dow, under orders of the Ontario Water Resources Commission, had been on a crash program for more than six weeks to control mercury emissions from the plant.

They said the mercury going into Lake St. Clair already has been cut from 200 pounds a day to 20 pounds.

Commercial tests of the first 18,000 pounds of walleyes seized by the Canadian government showed mercury concentrations in the fish to 1.36 parts per million, nearly three times the 0.5 parts per million set as a tolerance standard by the Canadian government.

DSW 201399

STLCOPCB4059464