



**DEMOLITION WORK** on the upper unit of the Thompson Fish Hatchery is proceeding on schedule. Much of the material from the building will be utilized in the construction of the new hatchery building. (Tribune photo)

# Thompson fish hatchery remodeling work begins

Demolition work is now going on at the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Hatchery in Thompson in preparation for an expansion and rebuilding project which will continue through the summer.

The work goes mainly un-noticed by the public because it is at the upper unit of the hatchery, located to the northeast of the building and ponds which can be seen from US-2 and County Road 149. Demolition work, being done by prison inmates, is on schedule and slightly over half completed.

George Chvala, newly named director of the hatchery, said work on the new facility is expected to begin soon. He explained that bids have already been let for the drilling of two 1,700 foot wells which will provide the water for the hatchery.

The water expected from the wells, approximately 1,000 gallons per minute, will be disease free as well as slightly warmer than water currently being used, according to Chvala. He added that the wells will eliminate the need to use water from the Thompson Creek in most instances. Spring water from the area will be continued to be used however.

The drilling and eventual use of the wells is the results of studies with similar wells at Manistique and Nahma. Water from wells at those locations was used in experimenting with raising and found to be successful. DNR officials believe the same

water will be found at Thompson as at the other two locations.

The actual construction of the new upper unit at the hatchery is expected to begin later this summer. Chvala said the legislature has so far appropriated \$860,000 for the project.

The new unit alone will have a capacity for producing 70,000 pounds of trout and salmon a year, when completed. Previously the capacity for both the upper and lower units was 40,000 pounds. Plans are

also being made to remodel the lower unit of the hatchery at a later date. No timetable has been set for this work yet.

Currently at the hatchery, personnel are busy raising northern pike, walleye and muskie. The Thompson hatchery is being faced with increased production due to whirling disease which hit a downstate hatchery. The hatchery is committed for 8 million walleye this spring which will be planted throughout the U.P. The other fish will be shipped throughout the state.