

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PESQUERIAS CARIBE, C. A.

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Having been invited to speak on Venezuelan fishery along with two representatives of the Venezuelan Government, I naturally would have to cover more or less the same ground as Mr. Fernandez and Mr. Smith. Therefore, I am going to take the liberty of going into the details of the commencement of the Pesquerias Caribe, C.A., of which fish company I am Vice-President.

The Rockefeller Group has had for some years a non-profit organization known as the "American International Association" or AIA, which has as its motive the accomplishment of economic and social developments in the countries in which it begins its programs.

AIA has accepted invitations from different foreign countries to make surveys pertaining to welfare of the population of the respective countries. These surveys go further than actually making recommendations. For example, should a country which is infested with sickness request the aid of AIA, this organization will make a survey in order to determine the cause of the diseases in question, will set up the necessary machinery to eradicate the diseases and will assist said country financially to carry on with their organization. Also, AIA will start a social survey program to improve living conditions for the rural communities and lower income groups of these countries. The total efforts of AIA are purely philanthropic and this organization receives no compensation for the work done. However, should it, in the course of one of its surveys, determine that there exists an opening for a commercial enterprise, it will make recommendations to the Government in question that such an enterprise be started. If the Government receives the suggestion favorably, a Rockefeller organization known as the International Basic Economy Corporation will assist in financing and staffing the recommended organization.

In the course of the studies made in Venezuela, the possibility of establishing four commercial organizations was perceived. These would have the objectives of lowering the cost of living and supplying Venezuelans with a more plentiful supply of food. These four companies were established and are known as, "Productora Agropecuaria, C.A." (the food production company), the, "Distribuidora de Alimentos, C.A." (the food distribution company), "Lactuaría del Caribe, C.A." (the milk company), and "Pesquerias Caribe, C.A." (the fish company).

The first company has as its objective the establishment of experimental farms with the dual purpose of increasing food production and demonstrating to the Venezuelans the latest technical methods in farming. The second company has as its objective the rational distribution of food supplies produced within Venezuela, by means of efficient transportation, warehousing, the establishment of retail outlets in the largest cities of Venezuela, and the importation of deficient foodstuffs. The objective of the third company is the production of fresh milk in Venezuela and the sanitary distribution of reconstituted milk until there is sufficient fresh milk to supply the demand in areas of Venezuela where milk is practically unknown.

This brings us to Pesquerias Caribe, C.A., or the fish company, also established under this program. At the time that this company was formed very little ice was used in the commercial fishery of Venezuela, which naturally meant that most of the fish sold in the mar-

kets of Venezuela was of extremely poor quality and not a popular item of diet. Further, a great deal of the fish produced, which could have been sold fresh, was salted for lack of other methods of preservation. One reason why ice was not used was its extremely high cost, from \$15. to \$30 per ton. The plan proposed for the operation of Pesqueras Caribe, C.A., consisted primarily in the building of an ice plant for the manufacture of ice to be used in the fish industry.

The objectives of Pesqueras Caribe, C.A., are not to bring foreign fishermen to replace the local fishermen, but to bring in as many modern methods as seem practical and also to supply the local fishermen with reliable markets for their catches.

In order to accomplish these objectives a 30 ton ice plant with dock facilities is now being constructed in Puerto La Cruz, Eastern Venezuela, and icing stations have been established in Porlamar and Juan Griego at the Island of Margarita. Other stations are contemplated for other points. Run boats will operate out of Puerto La Cruz carrying ice and supplies to the icing stations. They will pick up the catches of fish produced by the local fishermen since the last trip of the run boat. In order that this plant may function more smoothly, a radio network has been established between the icing stations, the run boats and the larger fishing boats.

To assist the fishermen to produce more fish the Company has supplied the fishermen with both motors and ice boxes. In order to make these installations the Company has now quite a large shop in Porlamar and contemplates in the near future the installation of a small marine railway at this point. With the use of motors and ice, the fishermen should be in a position greatly to increase their catch per boat. Previously a great deal of time was lost going to and from the fishing grounds due to the fact that their catches could not be preserved for any length of time. Now with the use of ice time on the fishing grounds can be extended from hours to days.

Pesqueras Caribe, C.A., has also some modern markets in Caracas and expects to extend the distribution of fresh, frozen and salt fish to many other cities in Venezuela as soon as the supply of fish increases sufficiently to justify the expansion.

Pesqueras Caribe now has two large fishing boats operating off Margarita Island. A number of Venezuelan fishermen have been supplied with motors and ice and sell their catches to the Company. Fish is transported from that area by boat to the port of La Guaira, where it is picked up by the Company's refrigerated trucks and brought to the capital, Caracas.

Although, as may be readily understood, the Company is operated on a profit making basis, its main aim is the development of the Venezuelan fishing industry and the distribution of first quality fish to supplement the diet of the people of this country.