

catch. Also, the small fish houses which only occasionally get in such fish usually dump their merchandise for what they can get for it, thus demoralizing the market for those who handle the product regularly. The customers inland would prefer to place their orders with those companies who can be reasonably expected to supply their needs.

Any inland distributor who handles red snapper regularly is in favor of the comparatively stable prices maintained throughout the red snapper industry, rather than the rapid and wide fluctuations in the prices of some other varieties. Spanish mackerel is a glaring example of a fish which fluctuates greatly in price, so that the buyer scarcely knows from one hour to the next what the market may be, or what his competitors may have paid.

A good deal of the success of the red snapper industry to date has been in the cooperation between the companies involved. For example, it may surprise you to know that our sales manager disposes of the catches of three or four of our smaller competitors. By moving a larger volume of fish in this way through one outlet, the producers get more orders and a greater demand for their products, and the advantage to us arises out of the more dependable supply provided our customers.

Of course, the red snapper industry exists because people eat fish. And following the same line of reasoning, the greater the demand, the more successful will fish dealers be. The same cooperation which has proven so successful in this industry should be extended to all branches of the seafood industry, and all would profit thereby.

Some three years ago the National Fisheries Institute was formed for the specific purpose of acting as a coordinating agency for the entire industry, and in this objective it has done an outstanding work. It needs more members, more financial support, and it is urged that all dealers become associated with the organization's activities.

To sum up: the writer is more than convinced that if the dealers cooperate and produce fresher products, thereby creating more demand, the future of the red snapper industry along with that of its friendly competitors will be a happy one.

Problems Of Administration And Transportation In The Wholesale Fisheries Industry

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TWO PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS confronting the wholesale fish business are those of administration and transportation.

The problem of transportation is undoubtedly the greater. Since April, 1940, the writer has participated in two hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission on controversial rate increases by the American Express Agency. In the matter of icing charges the industry was successful in defeating the proposal. In June of this year dealers opposed a suggested increase in minimum billing weights, which at this writing has not been decided. In issues of this type the industry is constantly on the defensive and is continually battling for its existence. Transportation costs have increased so extensively since 1946 as to make them a definite threat for future business. In many cases these

charges are equal to the purchase price of the seafood, and sometimes are as much as twice the original cost. This creates difficulties in pricing for resale and frequently eliminates an article from general usage, or, at least, places the consumer price above the average budget allowance. Recently a nationally distributed newspaper article states that "the consumer paid six hundred million dollars for seafoods for which the fishermen received only two hundred million dollars." No mention was ever made of the costs of handling, cleaning, etc., necessary before the consumer received the finished product. And few people probably gave a thought to transportation costs, which play an important part in the final selling price. A conservative guess would be that at least 25 per cent of the consumer price could be charged to this item. This would account for the large difference cited between fisherman's price and consumer price. Surely scientific research by Governmental authorities would appear in order for this problem.

Trucking facilities, in the recent past, have lowered transportation costs considerably. But this method of transportation has not solved the problem. Usually trucks handle only full loads between points. Some express trucks will take partial loads on long hauls, but with no guarantee of delivery date. This is done, usually, at the convenience of the trucking company. "Drop shipments," to interior points, are not acceptable. The only present means of handling such shipments is the Railway Express Agency. Air transportation facilities cannot cope with this situation at present. Truckers have taken over heavy shipments from the Railway Express Company, leaving them only the smaller drop shipments. These drop shipments are an important part of the seafood business. There is an imminent danger that the American public will rapidly become a consumer of frozen seafoods and that our children will never know delectable taste of fresh seafood. Scientific research of this problem is another must, and it must be done quickly.

Trucking transportation has created a serious problem. It will take billions of dollars to replace highways throughout the country which have been damaged as a result of heavy trucking. Even the new Pennsylvania Pike is showing signs of definite wear. This is a super express highway engineered and built for the purpose of withstanding heavy loads and only recently opened. No concrete or macadam highway will ever stand up under continual pounding from trucks carrying twenty to thirty tons, days and night, in all kinds of weather. The answer again is scientific research into this problem.

The problem of administration is one that can, and should, be solved by the industry itself. However, research can aid considerably even in this field. The Universities can help by including the problems of the fisheries industry in their curricula. The fisheries support a huge industry, among the ten foremost of the nation. The day of the unscrupulous dealer is mostly passed, although he may still exist in a small way. However, many legitimate dealers fall by the wayside through poor administration. Honest competition is as essential to any business as is good merchandise. No longer can one pull "fast deals" behind fish boxes and in dark corners. Open and above-board dealing through legitimate channels is essential to survival in the business. The successful dealer is the one who presents his merchandise properly at fair prices, and who makes quality merchandise the basis of his business. If he has learned the value of fair dealing and quality merchandising, he has mastered the proper administration of business.