

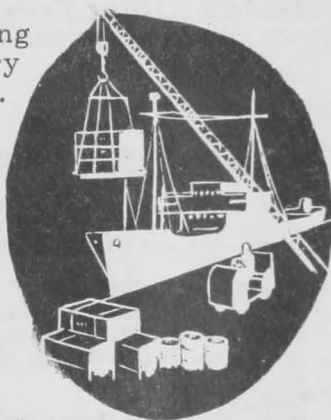
## INDEXES OF THE COST OF TRANSPORTATION FOR FISHERY PRODUCTS

By Don FitzGibbon\*

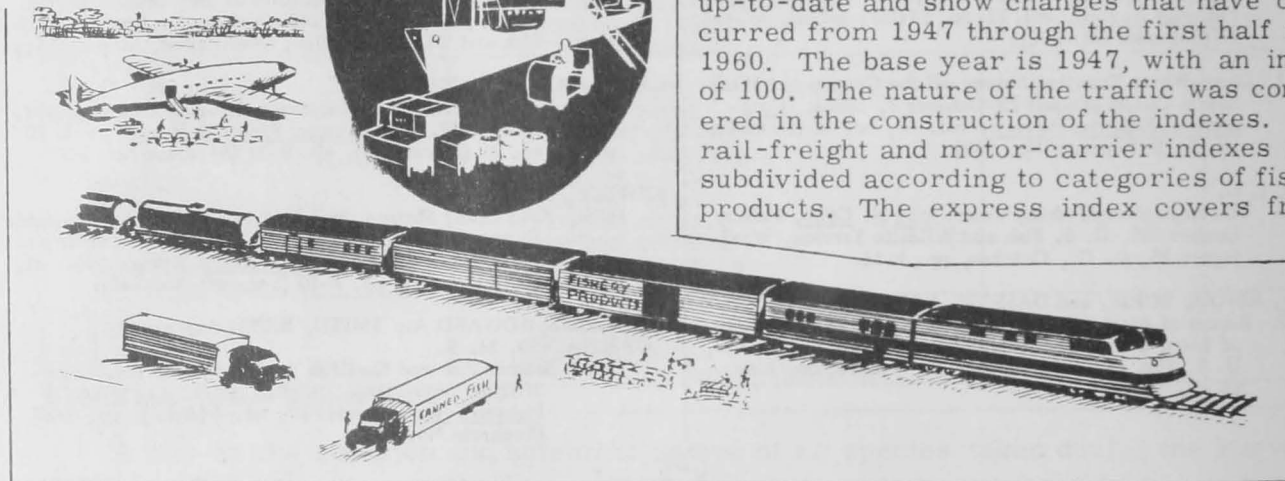
The cost of transporting fishery products from the port of landing to the consumer is of concern to many segments of the fishing industry. Transportation costs are a sizable item in the over-all cost of marketing fishery products, and as with most such products can mean the difference between a profit or a loss for many firms.

Of the three types of carriers transporting fishery products, the railroads carry the largest quantity. The tonnage carried by rail is made up principally of frozen fish, canned fishery products, and byproducts (such as fish meal, oil, and solubles). All of these are products that usually are shipped long distances. Motor carriers have been accounting for an increased tonnage each year. This is particularly true on the West Coast, where motor carriers appear to be transporting larger amounts of canned fish. The amount of fishery products carried by REA Express, although extremely vital to many shippers, has been on the decline. Shippers are looking for a substitute method of transportation for small shipments, and have found some local service available on bus lines.

All of the foregoing transportation costs for fishery cost trends, the U. S. rate indexes which showed that trans-immediate postwar



shifts have had a definite effect on transport-products. To analyze these transportation Bureau of Commercial Fisheries computed were first published in 1953. These indexes portation rates increased considerably in the years. The indexes have now been brought up-to-date and show changes that have occurred from 1947 through the first half of 1960. The base year is 1947, with an index of 100. The nature of the traffic was considered in the construction of the indexes. The rail-freight and motor-carrier indexes are subdivided according to categories of fishery products. The express index covers fresh



and frozen traffic only, and a regional breakdown is used for that index.

There has been a general upward trend since 1947 in the weighted average index of all three types of carriers combined--in 1959 the index rose to 184.8 percent of 1947. The individual indexes by types of carriers are rail freight 171.9, express 198.0, and motor carriers 206.3. Both the motor-carrier index and the express index have increased more than the rail-freight index. (See table 1.)

The average rail-freight rate index for all fishery products has shown a steady increase since 1947, reaching an all-time high of 171.9 in 1959. The combined rail-freight rate index of all individual fishery products analyzed, except fish meal, shows a similar trend since 1947. The rate index for canned, fresh, and frozen fishery products reached a

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Year	Average all Traffic <sup>1/</sup>	Rail Freight	Rail Express	Motor Carriers
1960 <sup>1/</sup>	188.2	171.9	208.7	214.0
1959	184.8	171.9	198.0	206.3
1958	182.8	171.7	192.7	201.8
1957	179.0	174.2	191.3	184.6
1956	168.8	163.6	178.0	176.2
1955	160.7	155.1	169.6	168.8
1954	158.7	153.8	169.2	164.9
1953	153.2	152.6	154.4	153.9
1952	148.3	150.4	146.4	144.6
1951	136.1	139.6	133.5	130.0
1950	131.2	136.7	129.8	120.8
1949	127.5	133.9	120.8	116.8
1948	117.4	122.5	110.3	109.6
1947	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1/</sup>Weighted average; relative weights: rail freight 60 percent, rail express 10 percent, motor carriers 30 percent.  
<sup>2/</sup>Only data for first six months included.

Year	All Fishery Products	Canned Fish	Fish Meal	Fish Oil (not edible or medicinal)	Fish, Fresh or Frozen
1960 <sup>1/</sup>	171.9	197.3	139.8	194.7	197.3
1959	171.9	197.3	139.8	194.7	197.3
1958	171.7	196.8 <sup>2/</sup>	139.7	194.4	196.8
1957	174.2	151.7	179.2	181.9	183.8
1956	163.6	144.0	168.8	170.0	171.6
1955	155.1	139.4	156.7	162.2	161.9
1954	153.8	142.5	149.1	162.2	161.2
1953	152.6	144.0	149.4	162.2	154.8
1952	150.4	142.1	150.5	158.6	150.5
1951	139.6	134.8	141.1	146.2	136.3
1950	136.7	133.8	136.4	141.1	131.4
1949	133.9	134.8	133.1	135.9	131.7
1948	122.5	124.7	121.8	121.3	122.0
1947	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1/</sup>Only data for first six months included.  
<sup>2/</sup>Carload weight changed.

high of 197.3 in 1959. Fish-oil rates reached a slightly lower level by 1959 with an index of 194.7. The fish-meal rate index declined in 1958, dropping from 179.2 in 1957 to 139.7 in 1958. The principal reason for the latter drop appears to be an increase in minimum carload weights with accompanying lower rates that became effective in 1958. The heavier loadings allowed for reduced rates per hundred pounds but still gave the carriers about the same return in per-car earnings. (See table 2.)

The express-rate index has shown a steady upward trend. Its all-time high for all the regions combined was 198.0 in 1959. The regional indexes ranged, in 1959, from 261.0 in the New England area to 171.3 in the South Atlantic and Gulf areas. The average index in 1959 for the Pacific coast was 195.6; the Great Lakes, 181.9; and the Middle Atlantic area, 180.2. All of the foregoing regional indexes show a steady upward trend from 1947. (See table 3.)

The same selective routes as given in the previous U. S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries publication<sup>1/</sup> were used. These routes may be considered as the most important shipping routes between the leading production and consumption areas of the United States. However, the various routes were not weighted to reflect their importance. For this reason, these indexes should be treated only as indicators of trends.

Origins and destinations of shipments have been changing rapidly in recent years, as have the modes of transportation. Air transportation is playing a vital role in the movement of some fishery products, and piggyback carriage is on the increase. It may be expected that the next publication of rate indexes will reflect these changes and perhaps others not yet anticipated.

Year	All Regions Combined	New England	Middle Atlantic	South Atlantic and Gulf	Great Lakes	Pacific Coast
1960 <sup>1/</sup>	208.7	275.2	188.7	178.8	194.4	206.6
1959	198.0	261.0	180.2	171.3	181.9	195.6
1958	192.7	253.9	175.9	170.9	175.6	190.1
1957	191.3	245.0	175.9	170.9	174.8	190.1
1956	178.0	226.5	164.1	159.8	162.0	177.7
1955	169.6	216.4	157.6	153.6	155.6	164.6
1954	169.2	216.4	157.6	153.8	155.7	162.6
1953	154.4	195.0	143.7	142.4	140.7	150.3
1952	146.4	178.6	137.2	139.3	132.9	144.1
1951	133.5	152.7	127.0	138.4	118.2	131.1
1950	129.8	141.4	125.9	134.7	116.9	129.9
1949	120.8	127.3	116.0	123.9	115.6	121.1
1948	110.3	117.1	109.8	110.0	107.6	107.0
1947	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1/</sup>Only data for first six months included.

## APPENDIX

Detailed tabulations, showing the monthly change in the rate indexes for fish and shellfish products, are available as an appendix to the reprint of this article. They show the changes in the indexes for REA Express, motor carriers, and railroad freight which have occurred from 1947 through the first half of 1960. (Tables 4-7.)

<sup>1/</sup>Circular 23 - Indexes of Transportation Rates for Fishery Products, 1953, U. S. Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

