

FOREIGN FISHERY TRADE

Canada

PORT PRIVILEGES EXTENDED TO U. S. FISHING VESSELS: The Canadian Government has extended for the calendar year 1948 the customary port privileges granted in previous years to United States halibut fishing vessels engaged in fishing in Pacific Coast waters for halibut and sablefish, according to the American Embassy at Ottawa.

The United States, through the lapse of wartime legislation, has been unable to continue to grant reciprocal port privileges in Alaska to Canadian fishing vessels, and the Canadian Government was so informed by the Embassy. The Canadian action has been taken despite the absence of similar privileges on the part of the United States in 1947 and probably in 1948.

The Canadian Department of Fisheries is considering the suggestion of the feasibility of working out some permanent reciprocal solution to the problem of port privileges.



Mexico

FISHING REGULATIONS: Commodore Antonio Vazquez del Mercado, Director General of Mexican Merchant Marine, has furnished the U. S. Embassy a copy of his order to port captains, No. C-2215, Circular 140, dated August 5, 1947, translation of which follows:

"To avoid infringement of fishing regulations by port captaincies in issuing exit permits to Mexican vessels or vessels engaged in commercial or sport fishing when their outfitters, charterers, crews, or passengers have not previously obtained the proper permit or concession from the Directorate General of Fisheries and Allied Industries, you will please order the employees in charge of navigation services in your port captaincy that beginning with the date on which you receive the present communication they shall not handle any application for departure for vessels in the traffic cited if that application does not contain the approval of the fishing inspector or persons substituting him in your port.

"At places here there may be no fishery inspection office, the captain of the port, prior to authorizing the exit permit, shall require that the interested persons prove that they are authorized by the Directorate General of Fisheries and Allied Industries to engage in that activity.

"Foreign fishing vessels despatched 'via a la pesca' by the offices of fisheries inspection at Salina Cruz, Oaxaca; Ensenada, B. C.; San Diego, Calif.; or San Pedro, Calif.; when they arrive at any of our ports by reason of unforeseen or forced causes, shall, through their captains, deliver such despatches to the port captaincy, not to be returned until their departure, note being made thereon of the reason for their arrival and the departure permit, with their respective dates. In case these vessels do not have the aforementioned clearances, your port captaincy shall draw up a detailed report and advise this office by urgent telegram; guard shall be placed over them and no departure permit shall be granted them until authorized by this office."

The Director General explained that the circular was issued solely to assure the approval of both Mexican fishing inspectors and port captains at Mexican ports of departures of fishing vessels engaged in fishing operations in Mexican waters, and was not intended to change departure requirements in effect prior to date of issuance.

The Director General stated that United States fishing vessels, not having Mexican licenses, putting in at Mexican ports by reason of force majeure or for supplies need not obtain Mexican fishing licenses. He said possession of clearance papers issued at preceding foreign port is considered sufficient, without Embassy's intervention, to assure that Mexican fishing inspectors and port captains will grant clearances without delay, even though there may be fish aboard caught on the high seas or in waters of other countries. He said the order to hold vessels under guard pending determination by Central Mexican authorities is intended to apply only to vessels entering Mexican ports without clearance documents of any kind. The Director General informally assured that he will consult with the Embassy concerning the cases of any United States vessels thus detained with the understanding that he will cooperate toward effecting the earliest possible release of vessel in accordance with desire of Mexican Merchant Marine to avoid difficulties in departure of United States vessels.

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FISHERY NOTES: The following information relative to the fisheries of Mexico is based on translations made by the U. S. Embassy in Mexico of articles appearing in Mexican papers.

CANCELLATION OF FISHING PERMITS: The Ministry of Marine, through the Director General of Fisheries, intends to cancel fishing permits which are not in order and thus to end surreptitious smuggling of giant shrimp by American fishing boats.

Currently, there are some 50 vessels in the Gulf of Campeche engaged in the capture of shrimp in the huge banks located in the estuaries and bays along the coast of Tabasco and Campeche. All boats fishing shrimp, including those of cooperatives, packing plants, etc., will be checked to see that their documents are in order.

For this purpose, the Chief of the Fishery Inspection Office of the Director has gone to Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche, with definite instructions to proceed to enforce the Fishery Law.

In the Ministry of Marine it is known that there is a tremendous amount of giant shrimp exported to the United States, and that there are vessels anchored at Laguna del Carmen and Campeche constantly, loading shellfish as though it were any other commodity.

There is no occasion to take action with reference to these vessels as they duly pay their fees to the treasury and have everything in order; but if any irregularities are found in the permits of the fishing cooperatives or private companies, they are to be cancelled in order to stop the smuggling.



It is also known that smuggling is carried on by foreign vessels over which the Director of Fisheries has no control and which cannot be patrolled by the coast guard boats assigned to the Gulf of Campeche. It is against the activities of these clandestine ships particularly that effective measures will be taken.

DANGER TO FISHING IN LAGUNA MADRE: The Director General of Fisheries of the Ministry of Marine learned of the danger of a paralysis in fishing activities in Laguna Madre as a result of the extinction of marine species due to the gradual filling in of the canal connecting this lagoon with the sea.

If the species become extinct, the families of 3,000 fishermen will be left in a difficult situation, and for this reason the necessary requests have been submitted to the Under Secretary to have a dredge sent there as soon as possible.

The Director added in his report that he wishes to put an end to the exploitation of the fishermen by the permissionnaires in the ports of northern Tamaulipas, since in Matamoros and nearby ports, only unorganized fishermen are working and they are required to turn over the products of their fishing at low prices because they do not have the vessels and equipment necessary to fish for their own account.

The Director General of Fisheries plans to establish a fishermen's colony at Jesús María and to unify all the seamen of the region. When this has been done, they will request the necessary aid of the government to organize fishing cooperatives such as those which operate in other ports and fishing stations on the coasts of the Gulf, the Pacific, and the Caribbean.

DEVELOPMENT OF MARINE WEALTH: The Ministry of Marine, through the Director General of Fisheries, anticipates the approval of the First Magistrate of the Nation, Attorney Miguel Aleman, of the budget of the department, which will be reorganized next year in order to utilize ocean resources to the best advantage of the country.

Currently, the budget of the Director General of Fisheries amounts to 800,000 pesos (\$164,000) and it is proposed to increase it to \$615,000, based on the fact that this department alone has been responsible for an increase of \$2,050,000 annually in revenue to the treasury.

If this budget is approved, the Director General of Fisheries will found schools for fishermen on the Gulf and Pacific coasts, in which the fishermen and their children will receive technical training; and light armed boats will be obtained for the purpose of eliminating smuggling from Mexican ports near the United States. These armed boats will confront smugglers frequenting the beaches near the borders of the United States and Guatemala and defying the patrol of the authorities.

There will be a greater number of technicians, and inspectors will be better remunerated and will therefore perform their duties better.

EXPANSION OF THE PATROL FLEET: The results of the inspection on the east coast made by the Director General on all the aspects of the old Mexican problem of the fisheries will be the subject of a report submitted to the President of the Republic. The report will contain a program for the development and production of Mexican marine resources for the benefit of the country, and a suggestion that adequate measures be taken to attain this end.

Meanwhile, the Congress of the Union is studying a bill covering a necessary and timely increase in the budget for the Director of Fisheries of the Ministry

of Marine. This increase will be used for the selection and expansion of an adequately remunerated marine police force from whom it will be possible to demand greater services, and primarily for the acquisition of patrol planes and fast armed launches to be mobilized and operate with the gunboats and coast guard boats against vessels operating to the detriment of the Federal treasury and the country.

ORGANIZATION OF FISHERMEN: Under the auspices of the Matamoros, Tamps., Fishery Inspection Office of the Ministry of Marine and the Labor and Economy inspectors of the region, several hundred fishermen who now not only live in misery and are exploited by intermediaries, but because of the rudimentary and even illegal fishing methods which they use, constitute a menace to the survival of the species, are to be organized into fishery production unions or cooperatives. For the two reasons mentioned above, there has already begun the organization of fishermen into unions in cases where they deal through an agent, and into cooperatives in instances where they both catch and sell the fish. In both cases, success is anticipated for the workers themselves and in the observance of the fishery laws, since through the union it will be easier to control undue exploitation by the agents, and since by means of the production cooperatives they will be able to obtain credit, boats, and adequate equipment. Both in Matamoros and Laguna Madre there are plans to found fishermen's towns and ports where those who now work independently may settle together with their families.



This organization of labor unions and cooperatives will be more important upon the conclusion of the Fishery Treaties which the Mexican Government is negotiating with the United States and Cuba. These treaties will lead those countries to accept a system of reciprocity in the fisheries in Mexican waters.



Newfoundland

FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN SALE OF CODFISH: Newfoundland exporters of salt codfish have been deeply concerned with the possible effects of the present serious foreign exchange situation on the export of salt codfish from Newfoundland, according to the American Consulate General at St. John's, Newfoundland. Owing to recent British foreign exchange restrictions, Newfoundland exporters were unable to convert into dollars the sterling received from European buyers. This was the more serious because of the relatively heavy dependence of exporters on the European market--primarily Spain, Portugal, Greece, and Italy.

On September 20, 1947, the Newfoundland Commissioner for Natural Resources announced that the Newfoundland Commission of Government would make available to exporters of salt codfish from Newfoundland to markets where sales had to be made in sterling the equivalent in dollars of the sterling paid. The dollars thus made available would come out of Newfoundland's own dollar surplus, and the sterling thus exchanged would be held--for the time being--in London.

The complete text of the statement made by the Commissioner for Natural Resources follows:

"I had hoped to make this announcement before now, for I know how anxiously you have been awaiting news of the effect on the salt codfish industry of Newfoundland, which depends heavily upon European markets, of the decision by His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to suspend the convertibility of dollars, and of the measures being taken to counteract any resultant loss to the people engaged in the industry. The Government of Newfoundland has been fully aware of your anxiety and no less appreciative of your patience in this time of doubt and uncertainty. The Government has worked unceasingly on your behalf, and I am now glad to be able to tell you that our efforts have met with success and that the immediate difficulty has been surmounted.

"What was happening was that sales to European buyers who were short of dollars could be made in sterling, but the sellers could not convert the sterling into dollars. Consequently, trade came to a stop when there were no more dollars. The arrangement now made, stated shortly and simply, is that the Commission of Government will make available to exporters of salt codfish from Newfoundland to markets where sales must be in sterling the equivalent in dollars of the sterling paid. Those dollars will come out of Newfoundland's own dollar surplus which, fortunately, has been accumulated, and held readily available for an emergency such as this. The sterling thus exchanged will be held, for the time being at any rate, on Newfoundland's behalf in London, and the question of its subsequent use will be one for further examination with the authorities in the United Kingdom.

"A situation which, if prolonged, would have led to incalculable loss to the fishermen and the danger of collapse in an industry vital to Newfoundland's economy, has been met. The fishermen are now assured that the prices that they will get for fish this year will not be reduced because of the exchange problem, though there may be next year another problem to be faced and solved, I am happy to acknowledge the stabilizing influence of the exporters with whom, through the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, I have been in close and constant touch throughout this difficult time."



Norway

GERMAN TRAWLERS: The building of 100 German trawlers will continue despite the Norwegian Government's protest, according to a Royal Norwegian Information Service's report on an AP dispatch. In a note which answered the protest, Great Britain advised that the Allied Control Council in Berlin had approved the building of the trawlers. Norway's protest was based on the assumption that a restoration of the German trawler fleet would compete with Norway's own fishing industry.

