

MEMORANDUM ON THE FISHING INDUSTRY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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The sea fisheries of Great Britain may be divided into two main sections, namely, deep-sea fisheries and inshore or coastal fisheries. The former of these two sections may again be sub-divided into the fishery which takes place in « near waters » i.e. in the seas in close proximity to Great Britain and that prosecuted in « distant waters » such as the seas around Iceland, Bear Island and Murmansk. The fishery in near waters may again be sub-divided into drift-net and ring-net fishery for herring and the trawl fishery for demersal fish. Accounts of the development and the nature of the British deep-sea fisheries are to be found in the Annual Reports and the Sea Fisheries Statistical Tables of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and of the Fishery Board for Scotland. The more important of the inshore and coastal fisheries are also dealt with in these Reports and Tables.

Of the coastal fishing vessels, some are sailing boats, but the majority are motor-propelled. The inshore fisheries are, however, worked to a considerable extent by row boats whose sphere of operations is naturally limited to the immediate vicinity of the fishing villages from which the boats operate.

While ordinary types of gear, e.g. trawl nets, seine nets and trammel nets, are those most frequently found in use by all types of vessels engaging in sea fisheries, there are many local specialised forms of gear adapted to the nature of the fishery or to peculiarities of local conditions. A full account of these is to be found in « An Account of the Fishing Gear of England and Wales » by F. M. Davis, B.A., Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Investigations Reports Volume XV, No. 2 (1936).

The fishing grounds worked by the inshore and coastal fishermen are those situated within or in close proximity to territorial waters.

Fishing is prosecuted for all species of fish found within attainable distance of the fishing stations for which there is a market. The chief varieties and the quantities taken annually are shown in the Statistical Tables.

With regard to systems of sale openings and prices, the following reports give a comprehensive survey of these matters from different aspects : —

Imperial Economic Committee, Report on Marketing and Preparing for Market of Foodstuffs produced within the Empire. Fifth Report-Fish (Cmd. 2934) (1927).

Food Council, Report on Fish Prices (1927).

Herring Industry, First Report of the Sea-fish Commission for the United Kingdom on the (Cmd. 4677) (1934).

White Fish Industry, Second Report of the Sea-fish, Commission for the United Kingdom on the (Cmd. 5130) (1936).

Coastal fisheries have for many years shown a decrease in respect of the numbers of fishermen engaged therein and in the value of their produce. As will be gathered from the reports mentioned above, the difficulty of marketing catches in competition with the industrial deep-sea fisheries and the difficulties of transport from what are, in many cases, isolated parts of the country at a considerable distance from main centres of population, militate seriously against profitable exploitation of such fishing resources as are at the disposal of the inshore fishermen. Provision was however made in the Sea Fish Industry Act, 1938, for encouragement to be given to inshore fishermen to organise themselves more particularly from the point of view of obtaining readier facilities for marketing their produce.

In common with the fishing industries of many other countries, the deep sea industry of Great Britain has been faced with grave difficulties during the past 20 years. The greater cost of fuel and equipment, the higher rates of wages, and increases in other additional over head charges, have thrown additional burden upon the industrial fishing companies which (it is *asserted by them*) have not been made good by an equivalent increase in the prices realised by the sales of fish on landing. Moreover, the depletion of the nearer fishing grounds has driven the industry further and further afield for its catches with consequent additional costs to be borne by the producers. The causes and effects of these features are fully discussed in the Reports mentioned above.

The areas upon which the commercial fisheries are based

and the yields will be found in the Ministry's Reports and Statistical Tables (see above).

The method of marketing is fully described in the above-mentioned Reports which also contain some information as to the *financial return obtained by the owners.*

Organisation of the industry.

I. General Administration by the State.

The administration of fisheries in Great Britain is entrusted (1) in England and Wales to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and

(2) in Scotland to the Fishery Board for Scotland.

(1) The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has been responsible for the administration of English and Welsh fisheries since 1903, prior to which date the responsible Government Department was the Board of Trade. The functions of the Ministry comprise the general administration of both sea fisheries and salmon and freshwater fisheries. Sea fisheries within territorial waters are administered directly by authorities known as Local (Sea) Fisheries Committees set up by Orders made under the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act, 1888. These Committees are Committees or Joint Committees of County Councils or County and Borough Councils and derive their funds from the Councils to which they are related. The consent of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries is necessary before any byelaws made by the Committee for the regulation of their fisheries can become effective.

(2) The administration of Scottish sea fisheries is at present entrusted to the Fishery Board for Scotland, a body constituted under the Fishery Board (Scotland) Act, 1882, and responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland, who is answerable in Parliament for their administration of the fisheries. Arrangements are now being made for the abolition of the Fishery Board for Scotland and the transfer of their functions to the Secretary of State, who, will be advised by a Scottish Fisheries Advisory Council.

For the re-organisation, development and regulation of deep sea fisheries from ports in Great Britain, two bodies have been appointed, videlicet, the Herring Industry Board under the Herring Industry Acts, 1935 and 1938, and the

White Fish Commission under the Sea Fish Industry Act, 1938.

The Herring Industry Board have wide powers for the execution of the duties entrusted to them and provision has been made for the appointment of a Herring Industry Advisory Council to advise and assist the Board in the discharge of their functions. The members of the Board and the Advisory Council are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Secretary of State for Scotland jointly.

The *White Fish Commission* have the functions of keeping generally under review matters relating to the white fish industry and of advising and assisting Ministers in such matters. Provision has been made in the Act for the constitution of a Joint Council consisting of an independent Chairman and other members representing white fish trade interests to advise and assist the Commission in the discharge of their functions. The Commission are charged with the registration of persons engaged in the production and distribution of white fish and are empowered to make marketing regulations, and to assist in the promotion of schemes for the self-government of the industry. Members of the Commission and the Joint Council are appointed by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Secretary of State for Scotland.

II. Financial Assistance by the State.

Apart from one or two limited schemes to assist herring fishermen, mainly in the purchase of fishing gear, the State has not, generally speaking, instituted in the past schemes of direct financial assistance to the fishing industry. In 1934, however, in view of the depression in the herring fishing industry arising from circumstances beyond its control, the Government gave a limited guarantee against loss on the fitting out of vessels which participated in the summer herring fishing of that year. Government grants have been given since 1935 towards the administrative and certain other expenses of the Herring Industry Board, through which the Government have also given assistance by means of loans at moderate interest for the purchase of herring fishing gear and the reconditioning of herring fishing vessels, and for the purchase, for scrapping, of old vessels regarded as redundant. Moreover, a scheme of grants and loans operated through the Herring Industry Board has just been instituted to assist

in the construction of new motor boats intended primarily for herring fishing, in place of obsolete steam vessels many of which are being discarded.

Indirect assistance by the Government has, however, been accorded to the fishing industry by loans or grants for the construction, extension or repair of fishery harbours (i.e. harbours distinct from large commercial harbours) and in Scotland for the maintenance of dredgers for carrying out work at such harbours either without charge or, at not more than the cost of the work.

In England and Wales assistance on a very small scale has been accorded (as indicated below) through the machinery of the Fisheries Organisation Society.

In both England and Wales and in Scotland fishery research is undertaken mainly at the Government's expense either directly through State Research Institutes or indirectly by private organisations to which grants are made for this purpose. Details of this work will be found in the Annual Reports of the two Departments—Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Chapter VI; Fishery Board for Scotland Chapter VIII.

III. Internal Organisation of the Fishing Industry.

Certain sections of the fishing industry have formed organisations for the protection and furtherance of their interests. Of these the British Trawlers' Federation, which comprises a number of local and other minor associations of fishing companies, represents the majority of the companies and the few independent owners engaged in the trawling industry.

On the side of the herring fisheries there are similar organisations which represent the bulk of the companies and private individuals engaged in commercial herring fisheries in England and Scotland respectively.

In addition there are a number of organisations which have been formed to protect and further the interests of the fish trade, i.e. of the port merchants, wholesale and retail fish merchants, fish curers and exporters and also the fish friers.

Generally speaking, the inshore fishermen in both parts of Great Britain, i.e. the independent fishermen, based upon the minor fishing stations around the coast, who carry on their occupation in small boats in territorial or other near

waters, are not organised. In England and Wales there exist several small co-operative associations concerned with either the purchase of gear or the disposal of catches, many of which are affiliated to the Fisheries Organisation Society, an institution formed in 1910 and supported partly by State grants-in-aid and partly by voluntary contributions. In Scotland there is only one fishermen's co-operative organisation which engages at a minor port in selling fish and purchasing fuel, oil and stores.

These associations and federations are not subordinated to any Government Department nor does the Government intervene directly in the organisations of persons engaged in the fishing industry. Owners of herring fishing vessels, herring salesmen (i.e. auctioneers), pickle curers, smokers, tanners, and exporters, of herrings are, however, now required to obtain a licence from the Herring Industry Board. Similarly white fish producers, processors, and distributors, wholesale and retail, are required to register with the White Fish Commission.

IV. Miscellaneous Statutory Powers affecting the Fishing Industry.

The general lines of the State administration of fisheries were outlined in an earlier part of this memorandum. Departments other than the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and the Fishery Board for Scotland are, however, responsible for the administration of particular statutory powers that affect fishermen and the fishing industry. Of these, the following may be mentioned : —

(a) In certain matters, mainly those connected with the registration of fishing vessels and navigational regulations, equipment with safety devices and remuneration of crews, the Board of Trade is the responsible Government Department for the whole of Great Britain.

(b) Fishermen employed under a contract of service, i.e. under the usual conditions governing the relationship between master and servant, are insured for National Health Insurance and Contributory Pensions in the same way as other employed persons, and this also applies to employed fishermen who are remunerated by share in the profits or gross earnings of the vessel. The Ministry of Health is responsible for the administration of the Contributory Pensions

Scheme and for the supervision of the administration of the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Special provisions as regards National Health Insurance are made in the case of fishermen who are employed on foreign going fishing vessels (i.e. those which proceed beyond certain defined limits of Latitude and Longitude), and whose employers are statutorily liable to defray the expense of their medical treatment and attendance. Such fishermen are not entitled to sickness and disablement benefit, while the employers remain so liable, and in consideration of this fact the employers' health insurance contribution are reduced by 2 1/2d. a week.

The contributions payable in respect of fishermen are accordingly made up as follows : —

Men	Employment on Shore or Home Trade Ships			Employment on Foreign Going Ships		
	Employer d.	Employee d.	Total d.	Employer d.	Employee d.	Total d.
Health Pensions	4½	4½	9	2	4½	6½
	5½	5½	11	5½	5½	11
Total	10	10	1s. 8d.	7½	10	1s. 5½d.

(c) Fishermen employed under a contract of service are also required to be insured against unemployment under the Unemployment Insurance Acts, but in cases where they are wholly remunerated by a share in the profits or gross earnings of the vessel they are specially excepted from the provisions of the Acts. The Unemployment Insurance Scheme is administered by the Ministry of Labour.

(d) When disputes arise between fishermen or persons employed in the fishing industry and their employers they may, in common with all disputes between workers and employers or between organisations representative of either side, be reported, under the Industrial Courts Act, 1919, to the Minister of Labour, who may take such steps as seem expedient for promoting a settlement, or, with the consent of both sides, refer the matter to the Industrial Court.

List of Acts relating to Sea Fisheries from the year 1860 and of Orders made thereunder and in force, showing whether applying to the whole of Great Britain (G.B.) to England and Wales only (E.&W.) or to Scotland only (S.).

Description of Act or Order.	Applying to
Sea Fisheries Act, 1868.	G. B.
Fisheries (Oyster, Crab & Lobster) Act, 1877.	G. B.
Fishery Board (Scotland) Act, 1882.	S.
Sea Fisheries Act, 1883.	G. B.
Sea Fisheries (Scotland) Amendment Act, 1885.	S.
Sea Fisheries Regulation Acts, 1888-1930.	E. & W.
(1) Sea Fisheries Regulation Act, 1888,	E. & W.
(2) Fisheries Act, 1891 (Part II).	E. & W.
(3) Sea Fisheries (Shell Fish) Regulation Act, 1894.	E. & W.
(4) Sea Fisheries Regulation (Expenses) Act, 1930.	E. & W.
Herring Fishery Scotland Act, 1889.	S.
Fisheries Act, 1891 (Parts I and IV).	G. B.
Merchant Shipping Acts, 1894-1937.	G. B.
(1) Merchant Shipping Act, 1894.	G. B.
(2) Merchant Shipping (Safety and Load Line Conventions) Act, 1932.	G. B.
(3) Merchant Shipping (Scottish Fishing Boats) Act, 1920.	S.
(4) Merchant Shipping Act, 1937.	G. B.
<i>Orders.</i>	
Merchant Shipping (Fishing Boats Registry) Order, 1927.	G. B.
Apprenticeship to the Sea Fishing Service, 1929 (S.R.O. 1929 No. 1009).	
Merchant Shipping (Life-Saving Appliances) Rules, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1375).	G. B.
Fishing Boats Order, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1531).	G. B.
Sea Fisheries Regulation (Scotland) Acts, 1895.	S.
Trawling in Prohibited Areas Prevention Act, 1909.	G. B.
Herring Fishery Branding Act, 1913.	E. & W.

Description of Act or Order.	Applying to
<i>Orders.</i>	
Herring Branding Regulations, 1919 (S.R.T. 1919, No. 1111).	E. & W.
Fishery Harbours Act, 1915.	E. & W.
Oil in Navigable Waters Act, 1922.	G. B.
<i>Orders.</i>	
General Direction, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1321).	G. B.
Sea-Fishing Industry Act, 1933.	G. B.
Sea Fish Industry Act, 1938.	G. B.
<i>Orders.</i>	
Sea-Fishing Industry (Regulation of Land- ing) Order, 1936 (S.R.O. 1936 No. 697).	G. B.
Sea-Fishing Industry (Restriction of Fish- ing in Northern Waters) Order, 1938 S.R.O. 1938 No. 697).	G. B.
Sea-Fishing Industry (Immature Sea-Fish) Order, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1506).	G. B.
Sea-Fishing Industry (Fishing Nets) Order, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1507).	G. B.
Illegal Trawling (Scotland) Act, 1934.	S.
Herring Industry Act, 1935.	G. B.
<i>Orders.</i>	
Herring Industry Scheme, 1935 (S.R.O. 1935 No. 490).	G. B.
Herring Industry Act, 1938.	G. B.
<i>Orders.</i>	
Herring Industry Act, 1938 (Appointed Day) Order, 1938 (S.R.O. 1938 No. 1395).	G. B.