

CONCLUSION

Fishing is probably the oldest industry in this country. The fishermen, particularly in the East Coast, have for generations used traditional rather than profitable methods and systems.

There are two major problems confronting the industry, namely:

A. The Welfare of fishermen.

Not until late 1956 that fishermen problems were considered as separate ones from those of other rural population. With the aim of raising their standard of living, the problems such as credits, marketing and share distribution are being tackled at present by the Ministry of Agriculture through Cooperative Department.

As regards credits, the 3 mill Aid Scheme will certainly enable the fishermen to purchase mechanised equipment. But the Aid Scheme seems to have two defects:

(a) It does not give fishermen credit advances during off season; and

(b) It does not give primary societies loans for advances to members against landings.¹

In/absence of provisions for the above advances or from the other Government sponsored sources, it is very likely that the fishermen will go back to their old creditors during monsoon, and the primary societies would be unable to gain the fishermen's confidence and their support.

To give greater income to fishermen, the Government is

1. The primary societies through which the \$3 mill Aid Fund is to be implemented, have to pay 60% of the estimated value of catches received from members based on current market prices.

investigating the possible outlets for the catches assembled by the societies with the view of introducing "some form of control, some stabilizing influence which would curb the middlemen's present freedom to buy cheap and sell dear".¹

This goal can be achieved if the Government introduces legislature which aims at creating new markets in big consuming centres. Such action must be taken in conjunction with satisfactory development in road transport.

The inequitable distribution of shares among fishermen needs greater Government attention. So far the cooperative Department has attempted to make correction in this aspect but the reform confines only to a small percentage of fishermen who purchased their gears with the Government Aid loans. However, the Pool Ownership System while it is^a sincere attempt to give greater share of earnings to awaks, permits inequitable distribution of wealth among fishermen.

To introduce any effective steps towards the present varied distributive system, it needs a thorough survey of the costs of gears and boats; their inputs and rates of depreciation. In the industry in which income fluctuates day by day and risks are considerable, it is very difficult to calculate fair returns on capital equipment without the help of local and foreign experts.

1. "Report of the Committee to Investigate the Fishing Industry"

B. Expansion of the Industry.

Fish provide important protein to every citizen's diet. The industry itself contributes substantially towards the country's National Income¹ and employment (directly and indirectly) In spite of these, the industry still remains as one of Malaya's minor industries in terms of capital investment put into it.

As for Trengganu, the expansion of local market at present is handicapped by^{the} delay in ferry-crossing and poor road conditions in the interior. The volume of trade in preserved and salted fish, with the rest of Malaya is also limited due to the absence of railways in the State.

The Government has not yet paid much attention into the possibility of the industry's expansion with its vast China Sea. The Fishing Industry in Trengganu has a great future. The Authority, therefore, should encourage and organise research work and investigations into breeding grounds, breeding habit and movements of pelagic fish, with the view of increasing the intensity of their operation. At the same time, greater progress must be made in the fields of port facilities, transportation and distribution.

1. "The gross value of fish production is not far below that of domestic rice" - Report in "Economic Development of Malaya" by International Banks' Missions Sept. 1955, p. 236.