

CHAPTER III

Fish Haulage in Beserah

Since fish is a principal export commodity from Beserah, it is essential to devote a detailed study of the important aspects of fish haulage. In this chapter the various movements of fish from landing places to the final consumer will be traced in detail.

A. Fresh Fish Haulage

1. From Landing Places to "Collecting Centres".

In the mukim there are four principal landing areas along the beach: Batu Hitam, Seberang Che' Let, Kampong Di-Pantai Beserah and Palindong, in that order from north to south.¹ In the vicinity of these places there are "collecting centres", which are not really organized ones, but just places where fish-dealers (peraihs) bring together the fish they buy from various scattered landing places before sending them to Kuantan by motor vehicles.

At Batu Hitam, Seberang Che' Let and Palindong the dispersed individual catches are brought together by the cyclist-peraihs and other dealers who buy fish in small quantities and send them to the various collecting centres by bicycles. They usually load up close to the shore where the fishermen pull up their beats. At Kampong Di-Pantai, there is a distance of less than 1/4 miles between the landing place and the collecting centre; this cannot be travelled by bicycles or

1. See Map 2 on page 14.

vans, so pole-carriers are hired to carry fish at 50 to 60 cents per basket weighing about 120 katis. Sometimes, when large consignments of fish are collected at Palindong, vans are hired to carry them straight to Kuantan. Otherwise they are transported first to Kampong Di-Pantai collecting centres by bicycles.

It can be concluded that the most common means of transport between the landing places and collecting centres is the bicycle. Pole-carriers are important only at Kampong Di-Pantai Besarah. Recently, however, two peraihs bought auto-cycles to use them as means of transport between the places, and for collecting fish from scattered landing areas even outside the main. They informed the writer that they found it more convenient to use auto-cycles compared to bicycles, but they were operating them illegally since they had not been given haulage permits to carry goods.

Except in the case of pole-carriers, the cost of transport of fish is difficult to calculate at this stage of movement because the peraihs carry fish on bicycles for themselves. Concerning the two cooperatives, the Kampong Di-Pantai Besarah Cooperative hires pole-carriers to carry its fish from the beach to the collecting centres, while the Seberang Che' Let Cooperative does ^{not} have to incur transport cost since the collecting centre is on the beach itself, from which its two hired cyclists take the fish to Kuantan.

2. From the Collecting Centres to Kuantan.

Kuantan is the most important retail market town for fresh fish from fishing areas in its vicinity, namely Beserah, Tanjong Api and Tanjong Lumpur. These three areas market about 40 piculs of fresh fish to Kuantan per day on the average. Beserah's share is estimated at 15 piculs per day.

In hauling fresh fish from Beserah to Kuantan, the bulk is transported by the Kampong Di-Pantai Beserah Cooperative's van and the two cyclists hired by the Seberang Che' Let Cooperative, and the rest is carried by various means of transport such as buses, taxis, etc.

Table 2 below shows the amount of fresh fish carried by the cooperative van and the cyclists over a period of 12 months.

TABLE 2
FRESH FISH TRANSPORTED BY THE COOPERATIVE
VAN AND THE SEBERANG CHE' LET COOPERATIVE'S
CYCLISTS FOR THE PERIOD JULY 1957 TO JUNE 1958

Year and Month	Amount of fresh fish in piculs	
	Coop. Van	Cyclists
1957: July	72	183
August	127	173
September	147	204
October	365	199
November	120	86
December	15	16
1958: January	151	38
February	96	73
March	170	147
April	227	124
May	197	123
June	89	134
Total	1,776	1,444
Grand Total	3,220	

The above amount represents about 60% of the total volume of fish transported to Kuantan for that period. The very small amount of fish transported in December reflects the fact that it was at the height of the monsoon season.

The principal means of transport in fresh fish haulage are the two cooperatives and the perahis. The principal suppliers of transport services are the Kampong Di-Pantai Seberang Cooperative van, a private van and the two cyclists who work for hire for the Che' Lot Cooperative. The buses and taxis are of lesser importance.

Table 3 below shows the charges for hauling fish by the different means of transport from the various collecting centres in Seberang to Kuantan.

TABLE 3

FREIGHT CHARGES FOR HAULING FRESH FISH FROM VARIOUS COLLECTING CENTRES TO KUANTAN

Point of Origin	Distance to Kuantan (in miles)	Freight Charges per Basket ^a		
		Coop. & private vans	Cyclists	Buses & taxis
Batu Hitam	6 3/4	\$2.00	-	\$1.00
Seberang Che' Lot	6	\$2.00	\$2.50	-
Eg. Di-Pantai	5 1/2	\$2.00	-	\$0.80
Palindang	8 1/2	\$3.75	-	-

^a 1 basket weighs approximately 1.35 piculs.

The cooperative van and the private van, which carries goods for hire illegally, charge the same rate for the different distances between the collecting centres and Kuantan. This is an effort to attract as much custom as possible from the paraihs. This rate is still very much higher than those charged by buses and taxis because they regard the hauling of goods as only a subsidiary activity, the operating cost being charged on passenger transportation. They usually charge rates according to weight regardless of the types of goods carried. These cheap rates induce transport users to use their services rather than the services of the vans. Sometimes even the Kempong Di-Pantai Research Cooperative does send fish by the above means, letting its own van render services to others, in order to minimize its fresh-fish haulage cost.¹ However, there are certain factors which enabled the vans to compete with the buses and taxis.

First, buses and taxis, primarily passenger-carrying vehicles, can carry fish only in small quantities. So if there are large quantities of fish to be transported, the cooperative van or the private van is usually engaged.

Second, buses and taxis cannot give door-to-door service as the vans. Taxis, which carry goods illegally, are not willing to stop near the market for fear of being detected.

1. The Cooperative uses bus and taxi services when its van is away at the precise moment there are fresh fish to be transported to Kuantan.

Third, the cheaper charges by buses and taxis are effected by the fact that their services cannot be got at the precise moment when they are needed. Fresh fish are highly perishable and as such timeliness is an important condition of efficient transportation. This can be provided by the Cooperative van and the private van.

Fourth, concerning the vans, there is an arrangement by which the transport fees can be deferred by means of credit. Customers short of cash still have the opportunity to use their services.

From the above table it should be noted that bus and taxi services cannot be obtained for Seberang Che' Let and Palindong because they are situated off the trunk road.

The Seberang Che' Let Cooperative engages two for-hire cyclists to carry its fresh fish to Kuantan regularly. The rate per basket is higher than that charged by the vans, but the Cooperative chooses the services of the cyclists for the following reasons. First the cyclists, besides hauling fish, also help to weigh them at the landing place. Sometimes they also help the cooperative's sellers at the Kuantan market. Second, there is rivalry between the two cooperatives, so there is less patronizing of each other's facilities. Only when it is absolutely necessary, as for example

when fish are landed at night, does the Seberang Che' Let use the services of the cooperative van.

Generally speaking, the transport facilities for marketing fresh fish from Beعرah to Kuantan are reasonably efficient. The cooperative van and the private van provide prompt and regular services. In addition the two Seberang Che' Let Cooperative's cyclists, buses and taxis increase the supply of transport services needed by the fresh fish dealers (Peraihs).

There is another movement of fresh fish. These fish not sold in Kuantan are load and transported by larriss to inland towns or to Kuala Lumpur which has an auction market for iced fish.

3. Peraihs' Transport in Beعرah

Quite a large amount of fish is consumed locally in Beعرah. Some peraihs hawk their fresh fish in the morn by bicycles to the rubber farmers, shopkeepers and others. It should be noted that bicycles can be used on footpaths and cart tracks.

4. Fresh Landing Places to the Curing Sheds

There is another movement of fish which needs transport facilities, i.e. between the beach and the curing sheds where fish intended to be dried are processed; and also between the curing sheds and the storehouses in which the dried fish are kept prior to being sent to Kuala Lumpur. In both these cases, buffalo-carts are the usual means of transport used by the Chinese dried fish

22

makers. The dried fish from Palintong curing sheds, 3 miles away, are conveyed by the jeep² belonging to one of the makers or the Cooperative van, to the storehouses at Kampung Di-Pantai Baserah. The van charges \$6.00 per load of dried fish (each load weighs up to 12 piculs).

B. Dried Fish Makers.

The five Chinese dried fish makers in the mukim have markets for their products in the larger centres in the Federation. Usually they sell the bulk of their dried fish produce to wholesale-buyers at Kuala Lumpur, the rest being sent to Singapore for export to Indonesia.

Two of the dried fish makers send their fish direct to wholesale-buyers at Kuala Lumpur, the transport charges being borne by the sellers. The other three makers send their consignments of dried fish through their agent in Kuantan who arranges for transport services and other facilities for the haulage.

Generally speaking, the transport facilities for dried fish haulage from Baserah to Kuala Lumpur, a distance of 175 miles, are well developed. There are two big lorry-haulage companies, which operate 3½-ton and 5-ton lorries providing services for long-haul

2. See Plate 5 on page 59.

of the writer, the high rates are due to the ignorance of the dried fish makers of the low rates elsewhere and of the Government regulation, and also due to the monopolistic position of the lorry operators.

A substantial volume of dried fish produced in Beserah and other fishing areas in the Kuantan region is sent to Singapore by coastal steamers. The fish is later exported to Indonesia.

