

Economic Potentialities of the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries and Recommendations for Economic Investigations Towards their Realization

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THE DISCUSSION of Dr. Larsen's paper on air transportation brought out interesting points on packaging methods, useful in these subtropical areas, and on the relationship of transportation costs to total costs of the higher valued fish, for example, red snapper, and shellfish (including Crustacea) of these areas.

The potentialities of increased spiny lobster production is mainly conditioned by application of better gear, by better grading service, by proper inspection methods, by price and production stabilization and by a possibly centralized sales organization. The paper on sponges discussed the bills before Congress, of which the session considered H. R. 6063, introduced by Congressman Peterson, identical with S. 2489, introduced by Senator Pepper, as the most important ones. In this bill, \$250,000 is being requested for the study of sponge diseases, study of sponge plantation and rehabilitation of the depleted sponge beds of Florida. The interest of Hon. Charles E. Bennett, Congressman from Florida who was present was especially appreciated. Congressman Bennett will advocate the inclusion of economic studies under this bill. The paper of Mr. Anderson on Texas fishery capital investment was a very valuable contribution to our knowledge on what capital is invested in the fishery. The session expressed the desire to have more such State studies available. A most stimulating discussion arose after Mr. Todd's paper on the social conditions of full time fishermen which emphasized the interest of fishermen in conservation. The discussion in which all parts of the industry, dealers, wholesalers, producers, as well as Congressman Bennett and various members of government agencies participated, closed with an appeal to the conservation agencies to use all their resources to make a constant fish supply available to those who rely on this supply for their livelihood. The discussion of labor conditions led to the discussion of cooperatives and the cooperative movement in the Caribbean and Gulf fisheries. There are potentialities in developing this movement side by side with the legitimate trade. The needs for fresh fish in the domestic market in these areas are great. Potentialities to fill this need are existing. If the fishermen learn the "know how," if trade and retailing methods adapt themselves to the requirements of the public, an expansion of the existing production of fresh and frozen area fish to the double quantity compared to the one which exists today can be expected within a reasonably limited period.

The recommendations of the Economic Session are these:

1. To approach the Governments and peoples of the Gulf and Caribbean Area with the suggestion to develop the spiny lobster production and trade by furthering the introduction of proper catching methods, stabilization of prices, improvement of transportation, grading and inspection service, freezing and refrigeration service and by the establishment of proper sales organizations.
2. To approach the Governments and peoples of the Gulf and Caribbean Area with the suggestion of developing to a great extent air transportation for fish and fishery products including proper packaging methods for air transportation and proper subsidization of air transportation as far as it should be necessary.
3. To support H.R. 6063 introduced by Congressman Peterson and the identical S. 2489 introduced by Senator Pepper which are at present before

Congress for the purpose of studying the possibilities of the rehabilitation of Florida sponge production including the study of the economic conditions of the sponge market.

4. To approach the Governments and peoples of the Gulf and Caribbean Area with the suggestion to make a survey of capital investments in the fisheries similar to what was done by the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission for the State of Texas.

5. To approach the Governments and peoples of the Gulf and Caribbean Area with the suggestion of developing natural fishery resources in the interest of increased income of fishermen and to exercise their taxing power to level off the competition between sports fishermen and commercial fishermen in local market areas.
