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European Markets for Frozen Fish

Scarcity of Supply and High Prices Are Making It Possible for Pacific Coast Fish to Enter British and European Market—Transportation Problem Being Overcome.

At the present time the fish dealers of this Coast are very much interested in the possibilities for a considerable development in the market for frozen fish in England and France. The fresh fish trade in those countries, owing to the war, is in a very demoralized condition. Hundreds of the steam trawlers have been requisitioned for mine-sweepers, a large number of which have been sunk by the enemy's submarines, while some have been laid up by their owners either from fear of their being destroyed or because of the difficulty of securing crews to man them. As a result the catch of fresh fish has dropped off very seriously, and in England, where fish forms a highly important part of the food supply of the country, its loss is beginning to be keenly felt. France, not being such a large consumer of fishery products in a fresh condition, has not felt the pinch so seriously, but even here conditions are far from ideal.

The war has caused a great increase in the value of nearly all food stuffs, especially meats, in these countries. The advance in fish has not been so great in comparison as in the case of other products, but as the war goes on and the sources of home supply of fish become more meager, the price will steadily advance until it is on a parity with meat. This increase in price falls most heavily on the poorer classes, who are the chief consumers of fish, and the various governments, and the dealers in fishery products, have been casting about for fresh supplies from other sources to aid in supplying the local deficiency and thus to help in keeping down the cost.

Robert P. Skinner, American consul general at London, England, has the following to say in a recent issue of the Daily Consular and Trade Reports, of the effect of the war upon the fisheries of the United Kingdom:

"Fish is scarce and dear because the fisheries in the North Sea and adjacent waters are practically closed to trawlers. The returns of the quantities of fish landed in March show large decreases, as compared with March of last year, in England and Wales and Scotland, and an increase in Ireland:

"England and Wales, 1915, 538,497 hundredweight; 1914, 782,932 hundredweight; decrease, 244,435 hundredweight; decrease value, \$344,791.

"Scotland, 1915, 241,862 hundredweight; 1914, 369,389 hundredweight; decrease, 127,527 hundredweight; decrease value, \$60,330.

"Ireland, 1915, 23,809 hundredweight; 1914, 11,801 hundredweight; increase, 12,008 hundredweight; increase value, \$16,789. The increase in Ireland is almost wholly

owing to large catches of herrings.

"Present prices of fish, compared with one year ago, are as follows:

"Cod, 1914, middle, 16 cents; 1915, 20 cents.

"Plaice, 1914, 16 and 18 cents; 1915, 16 and 18 cents.

"Sole, 1914, medium, 52 cents; 1915, 56 cents.

"Turbot, 1914, 18 to 24 cents; 1915, 24 to 32 cents.

"Salmon, 1914, Scotch, middle, 66 cents; Canadian, middle, 32 cents; 1915, 48 cents and 28 cents, respectively."

Lacking fresh supplies, naturally these countries would first look to their salt fish dealers for supplies to replace those heretofore sold fresh, but the same causes which have caused the dwindling in the production of fresh fish have also operated to produce a shortage in the supply of salted fishery products.

In the well known journal, Cold Storage, of London, England, under date of May 20, appeared the following editorial on the subject of the sale of frozen fish in England:

"It is of interest to note that a few weeks ago the well-known Liverpool firm of pro-

duce importers, Messrs. Charles Petrie, received a shipment of frozen fish from the Canadian east coast, comprising salmon, halibut, cod, codlings, haddocks, flounders and witches. In conversation with a representative of Cold Storage at the London offices of the firm, Mr. Haddon Petrie said that the fish arrived in fine condition, and was well cleared. The prices were as follows: Salmon, Steelheads, 6d to 7d; Silversides, 5d to 6d; halibut, 5½ d to 6½ d; cod, codlings, haddock, flounders, witches, 3d to 4d per pound. These figures are well below the rates current for fish from home waters, and if fishmongers retailed the fish at proportionate prices, they should have had no reason to regret their experiment in handling frozen fish.

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