

PORTS: The most important seaports are Marseilles, Le Havre and Dunkerque. In 1986 some 75 million tonnes of freight were embarked and 206 million tonnes disembarked at French ports. The French merchant marine numbered 191 cargo ships in 1987. There are regular cargo services to major French ports from Halifax, Montreal and Vancouver and refrigerated container service is available for fish and seafood exports. The ports of Marseille, Le Havre and Dunkerque have direct road/rail links at dockside, roll on/roll off container services, heavy duty lift capacity and extensive public and bonded warehousing and storage sheds.

WAREHOUSING: Extensive modern warehousing facilities are found at major ports, commercial centres and airports. France permits goods to be stored in bonded warehouses for up to 3 years without payment of customs duties and taxes when destination of goods is unknown. Customs duties and taxes are not levied on goods warehoused or for reexport. French customs also provide for the establishment of Free Trade Zones in maritime and river ports.

DISTRIBUTION: There is no single all embracing distribution system in France. Prospective Canadian exporters may appoint a distributor. Exclusive distribution agreements may be established but these must meet with EC competition regulations. Alternatively a commercial agent may be appointed to negotiate sales on behalf of the producer for which service a commission would be paid. Equally, direct sales to processors and to food retail chains are feasible. With respect to an agent, it is customary in the case of consumer goods such as fish products to appoint an agent on a