

DISTRIBUTION AND TRANSPORT OF FISH

The Fish (Distribution) Order, 1942, and Directions under the Food Transport Order, 1942, have been made by the Minister of Food to give statutory force to the scheme for imposing certain zonal restrictions on the transport of fish, and to provide for the equitable distribution of fish supplies throughout the country from the ports of landing down to the retailer and fish frier.

The main object of the scheme is to secure economy in transport by limiting the length of journeys, utilising direct railway routes, and eliminating cross hauls and unnecessary transfers of traffic.

To achieve this object fish landed at each of the main ports may, in future, be distributed only within a defined zone, and fish sent to inland wholesale merchants within each zone may be redistributed only to customers within 20 miles of that merchant's premises.

As exceptions to this general restriction of movement, a defined London area will be allowed to draw its supplies of fish from all ports in Great Britain, and a defined Birmingham area will be allowed to draw its supplies from more than one port.

The transport of fish when sold by retail is not affected by the zonal restrictions, and the scheme does not provide for any form of rationing to the community.

The zonal areas have been based upon the relationship between estimated landings at the main ports and on the adjoining coasts, and the population within each zone. In fixing zonal limits regard has also been had to the availability of direct railway routes.

Within each zone there will be defined sub-zones, and fish landed in a zone will be distributed to each sub-zone in proportion to the population of that sub-zone.

The zoning restrictions will necessarily entail some change-over in trade connections. This has been left as far as possible to the trade itself, but in order to afford the trade all possible assistance in the matter, provisional customers' lists under the new arrangements have already been drawn up by the Ministry in so far as customers to be supplied from the main landing ports are concerned.

These lists will be adjusted as may be necessary by Port Fish Distribution Committees, which have been set up by the Ministry at the main ports, consisting of an independent chairman and representatives of primary and secondary wholesalers, fishmongers and fish friers, who buy direct from the ports.

For distribution from inland markets, Inland Fish Distribution Committees have been set up at 21 main centres. These also consist of an independent chairman and representatives of inland merchants, retailers and fish friers.

Both for distribution from the ports and also from inland centres, all customers' supplies will be proportioned to the quantities of fish bought during a datum period of July to September, 1941, which period has been adopted at the suggestion of the industry as being the period during which the distribution of fish throughout the country was regarded as equitable.

The Ministry has appointed a Port Fish Distribution Officer at each of the five main landing ports to give assistance to the Port Fish Distribution Committees in carrying out their duties under the scheme and Area Fish Distribution Officers have been appointed at each Divisional Food Office town to give similar assistance to Inland Committees.

In times of heavy landings and surplus supplies, these Officers will, if necessary, authorise the movement of fish to appropriate destinations outside the normal zone or inland area, provided that all the requirements of registered dealers within the appropriate zone or area have been satisfied.

For landings at small ports customers' lists will not be prepared, but in the interests of transport economy, these landings will only be distributed within certain surrounding areas, which are defined in the Directions.

The arrangements as a whole apply only to the transport and distribution of white fish; not to herrings, pilchards, sprats and mackerel.

The Order and Direction will come into force on October 17.