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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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REPORT ON EXEMPT TRUCKING OF FISHERY PRODUCTS ISSUED

About one-half billion pounds of fish and shellfish are shipped annually in trucks operating interstate on an "exempt" basis, a report just released by the Department of the Interior discloses.

The study was made because of the need for facts necessary to solve many transportation problems of vital importance to the fishing industry and to give a clearer picture of the operations of exempt and regulated carriers in relation to fishery products. The study was financed by Saltonstall-Kennedy funds and was made by the Eastern Traffic Freight Bureau for the Fish and Wildlife Service's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries.

An "exempt" truck is one permitted to operate legally without economic regulation by the Interstate Commerce Commission. Some trucks operate on an "exempt" basis only part of the year. Such exemption was provided in 1935 when a law placed trucking operations under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The law specified various products which were exempt from regulation by ICC. These exemptions were based fundamentally upon the perishability of the product and upon the proposition that the shipper can transport perishables to market more expeditiously by exempt carrier than by carriers required to follow definite route and time schedules.

The practice of using exempt trucks has been followed for nearly three decades by individual firms dealing in fishery and other perishable products, but until this study was made by the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, there was no overall information on the scope of the operations.

The study covered the period 1956 to 1958. A sample of 155 interstate shippers was selected from 1500 firms engaged in distributing fishery products. Another sample was taken from both the exempt and regulated carriers.

The survey showed that exempt carriers employed 778 drivers in 1958 and would accept cargo for practically any destination in the country. The carriers usually made three stops to discharge cargo in the course of a trip.

Entitled, "Exempt Trucking of Fresh and Frozen Fish and Shellfish in Interstate Commerce--Circular 133," the report can be obtained from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington 25, D. C.

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