



REPAIRING DAMAGED NET AT SEA

Speedy repairs are made to a rent in the cod end of the otter trawl. The trawl is often torn when fishing on rough bottom and, when good hauls such as the one just taken aboard here are made, the speed with which repairs are made is most important.

Future of fishing at Souris watched

By E. D. CLINTON
One of the big questions being asked these days in the Eastern King's area is "What is going to happen in the fish business? Will it continue? Or will it gradually go downhill?"
The main reasons behind these questions is first of all, the new plant being erected in Georgetown. Many people are afraid that it will attract the fishermen from Souris to this "new port," and thus cut into the operations of the Souris plants. Another cause for concern is the fact that the present dragger fleet in Souris is getting old, and the new boats are apparently not what was expected.
When it was decided to build a new plant in Georgetown, the Souris operations were assured that it would not, in any way interfere with the Souris operations. Georgetown was to have its own fleet of ships, which would supply quite adequately the needs of the new plant. Therefore, the present Souris based

Weather plays important role

The inshore fishing does not start until after the lobster season. Then, using various kinds of nets, hooks, etc., the inshore fisherman heads for the fishing grounds. Early in the season, his catch will consist mainly of hake, with some cod and a sprinkling of flounder. In the fall, everyone goes after the elusive mackerel. And when the mackerel disappears from the scene, the weather is usually unfit to continue fishing.
More so than the dragger fisherman, the inshore fisherman is more dependant on the weather. Rough seas, high winds will and do keep him ashore for days at a time. In the fall, winds pick up, seas get rougher than usual, and the fisherman is sometimes lucky to average three days a week on the fishing grounds.

fleet would have to remain in Souris. So, in this way, there is no danger to the future of the Souris fishing industry.
But, the present Souris fleet is getting old. Wooden boats have a definite lifetime, and when it is reached, they are no longer fishable, or it would cost too much to keep them operating. Some of the fleet no longer exist, having been destroyed by fire, or by sinking.
To close this gap, new steel trawlers were constructed and last year were put into service. They did land, per trip, in some cases, more fish than their smaller counterparts, but did not land near the amounts they were supposed to be capable of. They have not been written off as failures, but nor have they been counted as successes. This coming season could very well decide the future building and operations of such boats.

One of the big dangers to the future of the fish business, is the scarcity of fish and it could be the real danger. When the fleet started operating first, there was only one way to describe the size of the fish landed, and that was "big". The boats did not have room for the smaller sizes, and threw them back. With each succeeding year, the size of the fish landed has gradually diminished. Now, the boats take all the fish they can get providing it is legal size.
One of the main reasons given by veteran fishermen for the disappearance of the fish is the great number of foreign boats fishing in Canadian waters. These factory boats took millions of pounds of fish annually from our waters. While this might not be the main reason the fishing has slowed it has to be considered as one of the top. Will the industry survive? It will. It has to. Too many people depend on it for their living. The community depends on it for prosperity. Without it, Souris could very well fold up and die. New methods are being constantly tried for catching the elusive

Industry aids marginal land owners near Souris

Through the years, Souris has been this province's main centre as far as Gulf of St. Lawrence fisheries is concerned.
The home of the Island's 20 dragger fleet, Souris, has provided fish processing facilities through the years for the heavy fish yields of the gulf.
But now the picture may be changing.

Souris Mayor Roy Leard said that he does not see the town blossoming into a large city but its processing plants provide "a pleasant rural life for marginal land holders who will supplement their incomes by working in the town."
Mayor Leard said "this trend has already been established and now workers commute to the town from as far away as 30 miles."

Two big fish packing plants—Esen and Eastpack—give a large boost to the town's economy, employing as many as 300 workers at peak season.
The Souris area's opportuni-

ties, according to Mayor Leard, lie in the fact that farmers and fishermen will have a chance to provide "the staples for the large fish and frozen food plants that will begin operations in the county in the summer."
About 20 draggers operate out of Souris and these boats employ about 90 men. The crews' average weekly wage is about \$100 and the fishing season lasts 30 weeks.

BENEFIT ECONOMY
Dragger operation has a beneficial effect on the economy of the area. Each dragger takes large quantities of supplies ranging from ice, fuel and groceries to nets. This affects plants, grocery stores, fuel dealers, bakeries and many other businesses and, indirectly, the people employed by all these types of firms. Many firms have to hire extra employees just to handle the business from the dragger fleet.

As a result of dragger fish catches and processing plant operations, employees of other businesses are indirectly affected. Each year, over 3,000,000 pounds of produce is delivered to retailers in Canada and the United States and this is done by local trucking firms.
While the two Souris fish processing plants buy some of their supplies outside Souris, they still do a big business with local firms. Both companies pay taxes, donate heavily to local charities and in many other ways benefit the community.

Fisherman's day long and arduous

A dragger fisherman is usually on the fishing grounds for a week or 10 days at a time. Of course, with exceptionally good fishing it could be much shorter than that. Before each trip, the dragger loads up with food supplies, fills its fuel tanks and takes on from six to 15 tons of ice. After everything is ready, the dragger "steams" to the fishing grounds, and this takes anywhere from four hours to a full day, depending on where they'll be fishing.

On their arrival on the fishing grounds, the dragger lowers her net over the side. This net is rather hard to describe. On the bottom are wooden rollers, that act the same as wheels would on land, letting the net move along on the ocean floor. Attached to the top of the net are floats, which do exactly what you would expect of something with that name. They float the top of the net in the water.
The mouth or entrance of the net is a wide affair. From the

mouth to the end of the net, a gradual tapering occurs. The net is towed behind the dragger, with everything in front of the mouth entering the net and being pushed back into the end of the net. From here there is no escape. At least, not until the net is hauled up and dumped on the deck. The net is towed for about two hours on the average, but can be longer or shorter depending on the fishing.
After the net is dumped on deck, the men get to work, gutting the fish. Then the fish is washed and lowered into the hold of the boat. There it is put into pens or bins, and completely covered with ice to keep it fresh. It is not touched again until the boat lands and the fish are unloaded.
Working on a dragger means long hard hours. The net is towed for two hours, hauled on deck dumped, and put back into the water. It can take up to an hour to get the fish all below deck.

Scallop bed big source of income

A relatively new and highly profitable industry was carried on last summer at Georgetown when the large scallop beds situated off this harbor were utilized to the full with as many as a dozen draggers operating during the summer and fall months.
Some years ago it was discovered that the waters off Georgetown Harbor covered extensive scallop beds but although

extent for a number of years it was not until last summer that this became an industry of worthwhile proportions.

Draggers from here, from Alberton, Souris and New Brunswick engaged in this operation and all their catches were landed at Summerside where the scallops were shucked.
This shucking is the term for extracting the scallop from the shell. Only a small part of a scallop is used for human consumption and this is known as the hinge. As a delicacy the scallop commands a good price

a successful one from a financial standpoint.
Each evening about dark the boats returned to harbor after dragging the bottom during the day. Their catch is hoisted out of the ships holds in crates and weighed and then the crates are placed aboard trucks for transportation. The fishermen are paid so much a pound in the shell.
It is expected that this relatively new industry will continue to be a source of income to more and more fishermen, at a time when his lobster fishing for the year has ended.

Best Wishes

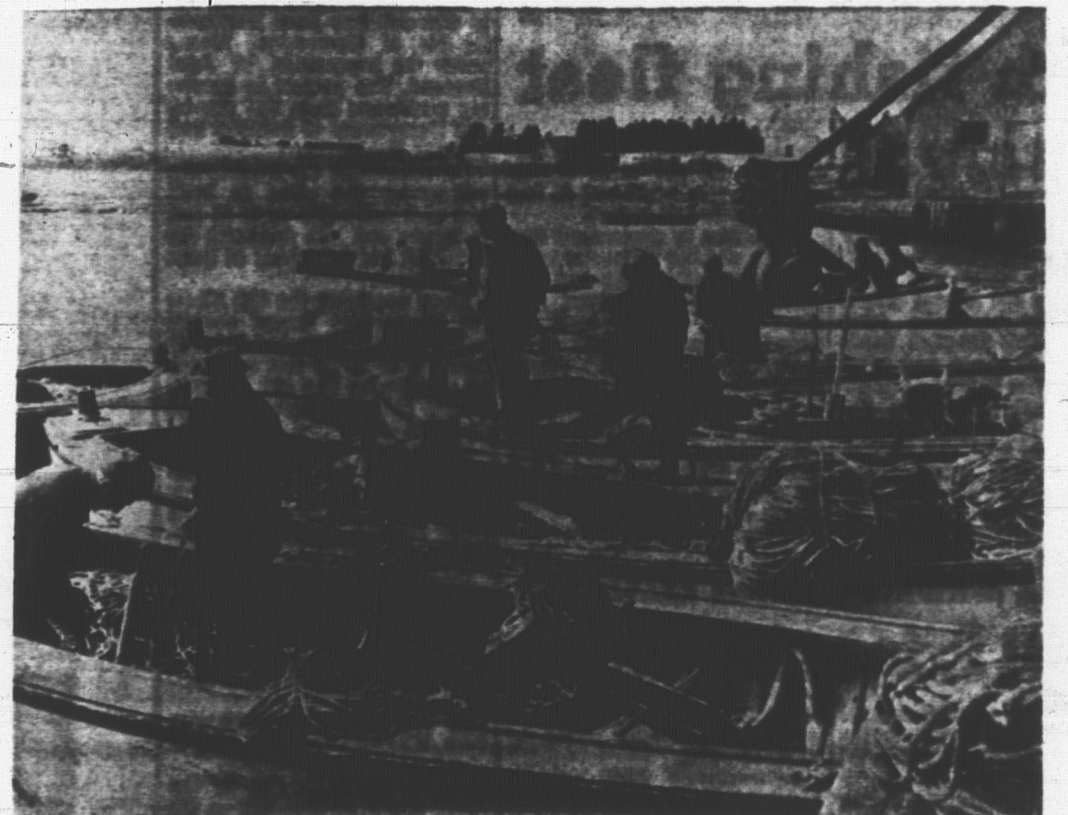
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