

RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF INQUIRY INTO THE FISHING INDUSTRY HELD AT THE CHIEFS' COUNCIL CHAMBER, BLANTYRE ON THE 17<sup>TH</sup>, 18<sup>TH</sup> AND 19<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 1956.<sup>1</sup>

Present:

The Hon. J.B. Hobson, Q.C., Chairman  
The Hon. J.H. Ingham, C.M.G. M.B.E.  
The Hon. F.G. Collins  
The Hon. N.D. Kwenje  
H.J.H. Borley, Esq.  
Miss P.B. Clewes.

The meeting opened at 9 a.m. on the 17<sup>th</sup> July, the first witness being Deputy Town Clerk of Blantyre/Limbe.

Being duly sworn, he stated:

I am Vernon Leslie Roberts, and I am deputy Town Clerk of Blantyre/Limbe. I think I can speak more for Blantyre than Limbe, as I have not had a great deal of experience with the Limbe market. The fish supplies in the Blantyre market are very erratic. Furthermore, very often supplies of fish which do arrive in the market, and which are not enough for everybody, are taken away and disposed of. If they are not disposed of the sellers tend to sell them in the market in the condition in which they arrive. I do not think I can say a great deal apart from the erratic supplies of fish. Fresh fish is normally consumed by Europeans. I cannot say what the consumption would be under ideal conditions. The demand is never satisfied, not because of the condition of the fish but because of the suppliers: even if the fish were good there is not enough to meet the European demand.

There appears to be a good and plentiful supply of dried fish. The market fees received for dried fish from April, 1955 to March, 1956 amounted to £320, which is quite considerable. Market fees are on quantity of fish and are as follows:

Licence to sell fresh fish or dried fish, per head load per day	2d
Fresh fish, per motor transport	
Minimum charge	1s 6d
50 dozen	2s 6d
60 dozen	3s 0d
70 dozen	3s 6d

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<sup>1</sup> This is a transcription from the Commission of Inquiry into the Fishing Industry (1956) conducted during the Nyasaland Protectorate. The original material is held in a single file (C.O.M. 9-3-1) at the Malawi National Archives in Zomba. It was collected for the Lessons from Lake Malawi project by Dr Bryson Nkhoma and transcribed by Dr Milo Gough.

80 dozen	4s 0d
90 dozen	4s 6d
100 dozen	5s 0d

I should say there is still an adequate quantity of dried fish. I arrive at this conclusion through my own knowledge of the market and from what the market master and Health Inspector have informed me. I do not think the dried fish lasts more than about a couple of hours when it comes on the market. I have not actually observed this, and the person to give evidence on this point would be the Health Inspector. I did ask him to get details for me, but he thought the meeting was on the 27<sup>th</sup> and not the 17<sup>th</sup>.

When fresh fish arrives at the market there is probably about a lorry load, in separate baskets and so on.

We have been trying very hard to find out what happens to fish ordered to be disposed of. We strongly suspect that a lot of it is removed from the market in the same lorry and is sold out in the district, but the owner, when questioned, said that he buried it all. The owner was Dr. Malachias. Most of Mr. Yiannakis' fish goes to Limbe. For the information of the Commission, it comes to my notice that fish is more plentiful in Limbe, and that it is being bought there by various people at 8d and sold at 10s here.

There was fish in Blantyre market this morning. For a week past there has been none. There would be no European market for barbel and nchila. The Europeans are interested only in Chambo. The town Africans also prefer chambo, but other Africans eat kampanga and Barbel.

Everyone recognises that there is a short season for fish, during the cold weather. Apart from that, fish used to come in fairly plentifully up to two years ago. Since the increase in the population and the increasing demand for fish supplies have fallen off.

I think the European population would put up with an increase in price if they were assured of a regular supply in good condition. Fish goes into the market early in the morning, and within an hour or an hour and a half it is finished. The people here definitely go short of fish.

Gerald George Sidney James Hadlow, being duly sworn, stated:

I am Chairman of the Nyasaland Tea Association and have been deputed to represent it at this meeting.

From the Nyasaland Tea Association's point of view, most employers are most anxious that their labour forces should have a ration of animal protein, and the only form of animal protein we can see in any quantity in this country is fish. Most employers wish to get an organised supply of fish down from the Lake, either fresh or dried, which they can supply to their labour forces, some for free issue, some for sale. Under the present arrangements they find that they cannot do this with any certainty. Sometimes fish is available, sometimes it is not. Sometimes we are asked to send lorries or motor cars into Limbe. We may get fish, we may not. Sometimes a telephone message is received by all the estates to send in a lorry at a certain time. We send in, but more often that not we come away without. No explanation is afforded. Some people have 30 – 45 miles to go into Limbe, and the whole day is wasted with vehicles travelling. It seems to members of the Association that what is necessary is an organised distribution as well as the organisation of the

catching. There is no lack of demand in the industry. The whole thing seems to devolve upon how to get it to the estates. We have got so bored with the whole process that we have stopped sending in and have given it up as a bad job.

I do not think Mr. Borley was a party to it, but he may remember the outcome of the approach we made in an endeavour to get rapprochement between the estates and the fishing firms. Towards the end of 1954 and the beginning of 1955 a series of meetings were held. The arrangement was that a fish lorry would come down on certain days of the week to certain places in the Cholo district – Sir Malcolm Barrow's corner; north east of the Konjeni Road, Sharpe's Road – at a certain time of the day. Estates would meet these lorries and take fish back. So far as I can remember, on not once occasion did that occur. The whole thing collapsed.

The estates at the present moment are willing to lodge orders for bulk purchase of fish. We have not had fish during this wet season for the reasons I have outlined. One gets bored with sending in and nothing happening, and it is impossible to organise one's transport.

We have had Mr. Nielsen down on most of the estates and we have made form orders with him. He had guaranteed the supply: whether he is right in doing so I do not know, but he had certainly committed himself. It is not tied up 100 per cent. He had said that he will undertake to get fish to certain areas within a reasonable time at certain hours. Nobody minds waiting one to two hours. Nothing has been put into writing yet, it is a "gentleman's agreement", and nothing can be done until cold storage is installed, which might take a year. Consideration has not been given to our putting in a cold storage plant in Cholo because we rather thought that was the job of the supplier. We sell tea, and it is up to use to put the tea on the market: we maintain that the people who sell fish should put it on the market. We have suggested to Mr. Nielsen that he could put in a central freezing point at Cholo neat the Boma and bring in frozen fish from the Lake.

The estate are willing to pay the extra cost caused by cold storage. We are only concerned with getting animal protein for the labour. But I make the reservation that if the prices went up double we would call a halt. Another 2d or 3d would make no difference.

The estates are interested in dried fish if it can be properly dried as it used to be. The dried fish at present has no keeping qualities. It goes down within two or three days, it is riddled with all sorts of maggots and is quite uneatable. The African fisherman dries the fish very well indeed. Mr. Yiannakis used to dry his fish very well in the war years and immediately afterwards, but lately he does not do so. We are getting a considerable amount of dried fish round the estates, but we want to get this organised to have a proper distribution to the labour.

I have had no dealings with Malachias, only with Yiannakis.

On my estate the labour receives more food than cash for posho. Some estates give almost 100 percent cash. I maintain they should all give food. It is at the option of the labourer whether he receives cash or food, but I imagine the generosity of the food ration makes him accept or otherwise cash or food. If he gets a generous food ration he takes the ration: if not generous he takes cash. Many of the estates would not themselves buy quantities of fish because their labour prefers to take cash. I agree that a supplier's position would be difficult because he would be depending on the demand direct from the labourer, which may be fluctuating demand.

Cooked food is issued daily, and weekly food and cash rations are issued weekly. Pay is by ticket of 30 days.

I think one or two people have an arrangement to take a lorry load of fish. I think Nchima Estate is one, and there is another one, but I cannot remember its name. Whether it works or not I do not know, but they send in the Limbe always, fish is not delivered to the estate.

Supplies of dried fish would be preferable because fresh fish is a very tricky thing to handle.

We import salted dried fish from Holland. It is smoked, salted and packed in wooden cases in waxed paper and arrives in perfect condition. The Africans like it very much and so do Europeans. The African are taking it in lieu of cash as ration. I will write in and give you my figures for the imported fish.

The estates in Mlanje would like to get fish, but the general opinion is that it is impracticable because of the distance. I cannot say if they have consulted Nielsen, but I think there is a possibility, because Nielsen said that they were proposing to use Auriomycin to wash the fish in, which would keep it very much longer and might make it practicable to transport it to Mlanje. If Mlanje could get fresh fish in decent condition I imagine that their attitude would be the same as that of the estates in Cholo, and they would like a central distribution point.

If I could get a sufficient supply of good dried fish and fresh fish locally I would not import from Holland. I only import fish because I cannot get the local stuff, which, in my opinion, is ludicrous.

The industry has not made any assessment at present prices of what its demand for local fish might be, but I think that could be done if you wish. I will bring it up at the meeting next month.

Reverting to the question of posho in cash or in food, this point must be remembered. It is very much cheaper from the employer's point of view to issue cash rather than food. Posho in kind costs twice as much as cash posho.

The vast majority of the Africans eat as much fish as they can get. There is quite a rush for it when the lorry arrives.

I agree that if Nielsen puts in a cold storage point then obviously we shall only be able to have Nielsen's fish, and that if the Tea Association installed its own plant it would be able to take fish from any supplier, but this point has not occurred to the Association. I will put it to the Association. The estates that are issuing cash will probably not be interested in the bulk buying of fish.

Delmaine Hilton Ferreira, being duly sworn, stated:

I am director of Limbe Garage and Transport Co. During the year I do a considerable amount of travelling around Nyasaland, especially around the Fort Johnston area. I have found in the past that the further away you get from the Lake the worse the dried fish becomes. I have seen some towards Chiromo; I have seen some very poor specimens of dried fish in the African markets. I feel that no guarantee can be given as to the number of fish that can be delivered in any area in this country, as, in the first place, you can never guarantee how many fish you are going to catch, and secondly you have always got the transport element to put up with. During the rainy season, coming down from the Lake, the roads are sometimes very bad, and I have actually had some trucks which have been stuck, and I have also passed the existing fishing companies' trucks when they have been stuck. I do not see how any guarantee can be given that a truck will be at a

certain place at a certain time. I feel that the only solution to the outlying districts from, say, Limbe and Blantyre, is to get fish properly dried on the Lake Shore, and, like the meat is examined by a Government or Municipal Inspector, the fish, before being sold, should be examined by a similar officer.

I feel that if these facilities from Lake Nyasa were improved the cost of fish would have to be raised. This would hit at the Africans, because the African is the largest consumer of fish in the country, and any increase in price would be definitely to the detriment of the majority of the population.

The fish supplies in Limbe and Blantyre are, on occasion, short, and it is very difficult to get hold of fish, good fresh fish.

I bring fish down myself from the Lake for my staff, my European staff and for my Africa staff, and I go to the Lake about once a week to examine my transport up there. I find, even if I take fish straight off Yiannakis, put it in the boot of my car and bring it down here, that, although it is still fresh, it is not fresh for very long.

I have not personally gone in for importing fish from Holland, but I have interests in a company in Blantyre.

I think there is a big future for cold storage, provided the cold storage point starts at the beach where the fish is actually caught. There does not seem to be much point in bringing the fish 120 miles, or further, and then putting it into cold storage.

Regarding the transporting of fish being a profitable business, I have had some personal experience. It is too irregular at the end where you pick up the fish. If you could say, "At 10 o'clock to-morrow morning I will be in here, can you supply a load of fish?", it would be all right. I am talking now of African fishing, as I have never gone into European fishing. When you get there, the net is broken, and he doesn't fish with it, although the day before you were told he was going to fish. You may have to wait two or three days until enough is caught, and but that time the fish first caught has gone off. Transporting fish alone is very unprofitable, unless the supply where you pick it up is increased. I feel that African fishermen ought to provide their own transport.

Transportation of dried fish would be more profitable than that of fresh fish, as the dried fish would keep better. The quantity is greater because the weight is less. I am sure that, if the fish were properly dried, the market for dried fish in the outlying areas of Cholo and Mlanje would be very good.

I have not had the experience of operating refrigerated transport or of trying to transport fish packed in ice. I do not know the cost of a truck with refrigeration chamber in it. My personal opinion is that fish would keep better if it were packed in a refrigeration plant, then in trucks have layers of mesh, fish, mesh, fish, or trays like in a bread van. To pack fish in boxes is not good thing, as there would be practically no air unless the boxes were open sided.

The reasons I bought fish from Africans and not from the European fisheries is because I brought is down for one of my staff, and he bought it from the Africans because it was cheaper. He wanted to make a business of this fish. The majority of it was sold to European in Zomba, but he reported to me that there was an inconsistent supply of fish from African fishermen. I understand that when he was disappointed in the Africans he did buy some fish from Dr. Malachias.

Eric Burnett Smith, being duly sworn, stated:

I am the Principal Medical Officer, Southern Province.

I do not think that there is anything I can add to the notes made by Dr. Clarke on the values of fish as food, but the main thing in the urban areas of Blantyre is the uncertainty of supply. The fish is available at one time and then at long stretches there is none at all in the township. The workers in the town need protein of some sort, either fish or meat, the whole year round, and both the supply of meat and fish are erratic in Blantyre. The shortage of fish is seasonal: at present there is very little.

The quality of the fish as a food is very good, but there are occasions when lorry loads come down unfit for consumption, and very often they are destroyed. At least, they are removed from Blantyre market, what happens to them I do not know. They might be eaten just the same.

Cases of high protanaemia are mostly in young children. There is not very much in Blantyre, but in the Southern Province it is mostly among Africans. I cannot give a percentage. The usual time you get this disease is when the child is being weaned to the normal diet and then suffers from a lack of protein, round about 2-3 years old. You will find an odd case in most hospitals in the Protectorate. I would not say that it is a limiting factor on the health of the population, but one has to realise that before one gets obvious signs of high protanaemia there has to be a very much reduced protein intake. Similar conditions would apply to an adult. I think there is less lack of protein in Blantyre and Limbe than in other parts of the Southern Province because we have the market here and fish is sold here.

Dried fish can reach a stage where it should not be eaten, but if it reaches the market it is eaten. It can be toxic at a certain stage in the initial drying. Once it is thoroughly dried it will last a long time.

Robert Stewart Abbey, being duly sworn, stated:

I am a director of the Ntondwe Tobacco Co.

I cannot give you a lot of information because I have not been making inquiries for locally supplied fish for the past 2 years. I am bringing my fish in from Holland. I am the person who was responsible originally for bringing into the country the fish you heard Mr. Hadlow speak about.

In the tobacco season we have an African staff ranging between 850 and over 1000. I did apply to Yiannakis to supply fish and did not get any satisfaction at all, no supplies ever came. I once spoke to Mr. Kettle to send me down quotations, with the idea of going into the questions of supplies, and I never heard any more. I felt that I wanted to give fish to Africans along with normal food.

All I have to say about the fish question is that I feel that the whole matter circles round distribution. I myself go to Yiannakis on a Saturday morning to endeavour to get some fish for my own family. Invariably I waste my time. Then there are other days when the fish has come and it is completely off, as far as I am concerned. It is still taken by all the Africans who are there. I understand that there is a market in Limbe where fish is supposed to be sold. I have

often wondered the reason why these lorries arrive at Yiannakis' premises and anything from 150 to 250 Africans can be seen there on a Saturday morning (I cannot say how many during the week) when we have a market. Why is the fish not put on the market?

To save my boys asking permission to go to the market I offered Yiannakis at one time to let him come into my premises to sell his fish, no rent being charged. I said that at any time when he had fish he could send boys with baskets. There is a big yard outside my factory. Yiannakis made the suggestion that I should buy the fresh fish to sell, but I said no, he was the fish seller. I work tobacco, therefore if he wished to sell fish it was up to him to put a seller in my yard: he would sell all the fish he could supply. He has never done anything about it. This was about 2 years ago, and nothing was put into writing. He had the chance to sell both fresh and dried fish.

Regarding the consumption, tobacco is a seasonal crop, and the big months are from May to the end of October. After that it dies down. We have a labour force of 850 to over 1,000, depending on the size of the tobacco crop.

We have a small company called the British African Trading Co. which belongs to our organisation. We represent a Dutch fishery firm in Holland, and we order the fish direct. I probably order personally 50 to 80 cases for the season. Mr. Hadlow gets his supplies through Mr. Gurney, who puts in an order for 100 to 300 cases per month. We issue one whole fish to each African per week. The men like it very much. Their wages are not affected in any way: it is a supplementary to their normal ration.

I bought the fish to obtain continuity of supply. I place the order in Holland and arrange that it comes in one of the fast ships which carries 100 passengers. The ship gets priority of berthing in Beira, and so 28 days despatch from Holland it is in Beira, and the fish comes up within the week. If there are any complications it may be longer. The fish keeps safely from 6-9 months without any refrigeration or in any specially chosen cool place. The methods of curing is the same way that they do kippers in Scotland, in the smoke barns with the peat. There is no peat here, of course, but the principle of hanging the fish is the same, and I suppose basically you would still get the same effect from smoking it with wood.

September is a poor month in which to get supplies, so you always have to make allowances for this when ordering. I understand it is because the herrings are not so plentiful. The rest of the year I can order what I like when I like.

I have never dealt in Mr. Yiannakis' nor Malachias Bros.' salt fish. I made overture to them, but nobody bothered. I felt that if they were not interested to come and make a business contract then why not go and get fish somewhere else.

I am not sure what the ruling prices for fresh fish are at the moment. One Saturday they are 6d, and another Saturday 8d. The smoked fish average 5 ½ fish per lb. I met one of my Africans with a large fish which had been smoked at the Lake and for which he paid 1/3. I put it on the scale and it weighed just under 14 oz. A case of smoked fish weighs 50 kilos, and the cost is £4.10.7 C.I.F. Beira, ocean freight plus insurance 19/6, Beira charges 3/7, railage 6/-, landed price of £5.19.8 in Limbe.

As well as having the fish as part of the ration, I sell it on our own African canteen, and the Africans purchase it quite well. They have one comment, that it is a little salty, but I told them to steep it overnight and a lot of salt would come out. On an average there is probably a case and a half a week sold in the canteen. The canteen fish is included in the 50-80 cases during the season.

I also sell tinned fish in the canteen. If one of the head Africans comes in to buy fish, he will probably buy the herrings in tomato sauce, but if one of the labourers whose salary is not so high comes in he will buy smoked fish. A 5 oz. tin of herrings in tomato sauce is 9d, 15 oz. 1/3. The smoked fish average 3 1/2 d each. Another interesting point is that, comparing these fish with the Lake fish, you can reckon that there is about 2 1/4 - 2 1/2 oz. of bone in a Lake fish which the African cannot eat. You can eat all the smoked fish. I do not import tinned fish in any large quantity.

If fish can be supplied from the Lake, then whoever is going to sell it can come and we will have a talk about it. The main thing, I feel, is that there must be continuity of supply. Regarding cold storage, I think it is an excellent idea.

The I.T.C. employs more labour than we do.

Wali Mahomed, being duly sworn, stated:

I am living in Blantyre, and during the past year I have been lucky enough to get fresh fish about 10 times. I have sent my son to the cold storage. I have kept my boy waiting at the Blantyre market sometimes for the whole day, and it has been very difficult for me to get fresh good fish. The cold storage at Limbe belongs to Yiannakis.

Distribution of fish is not at all as it should be. The fish in Blantyre market sometime is delivered in the morning, sometimes after lunch time, and I have seen box bodies waiting near the market in the evening. Once in a month or so you will fish at all times.

Asians are not used to tinned stuff very much, and we mostly depend either on fresh fish or salted fish. We have been trying to get salted fish in the local Indian stores, and they get their supplies from Portuguese East Africa, Beira or other places. We have been paying 6/- a pound for dried fish. Salted shrimps we have been buying at 9/- a pound. I myself tried to buy the dried fish available in the market which the African usually buy. I tried to prepare it in lemon juice, but the smell is still always there, and I believe there is something wrong with the process of drying. In Zanzibar there is a lot of fresh fish, in spite of which salted and dried fish come from Arabia. We like both dried and fresh fish, but we do not get properly dried fish here. If anything better or more attractive was available to the Africans or to the Asians here in the market there would be a very great demands for it.

I have got in personal touch with some of the Asian transporters who take fish to Dedza and Lilongwe. It was only last week I was in touch with one who lives in Lilongwe. He leaves Lilongwe at 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning and reaches Yiannakis' place on the Lake shore at 7 or 8 o'clock. He waits there the whole night, sometimes gets a supply at midnight, or 2 o'clock. Leaves and goes to Dedza and Lilongwe. He is not able to get supply regularly, and sometimes has to wait 2 or 3 days. Cold storage in that place would help suppliers, and cold storage in different places in Blantyre, Lilongwe, etc., would be a great blessing.

Another thing is, our staple food is rice and meat, Relish is supplied by fish, chicken or mutton. If fish was available every day it would reduce the cost of living. When there is no fish on the market here the prices of chickens soar. I always pay 2/6 when there is fish; when there is no fish I pay 5/-. When there is fish in the morning in Blantyre market mutton is plentiful. When there is no fish in the morning mutton is not available in the afternoons. I think it would be worth while to have a cold storage plant in Blantyre. If we get fish we do not get chicken or



mutton. I have lived on fish as a relish for one whole year. I have know children who have lived on wheat or rice and fish for one year and on medical inspection have been quite all right. We never tire of eating fish.

There is the same demand from the Asian population for fresh fish as for dried fish. The Asians do not ask that the fish shall be dried in a certain way: it is the smell that the dried fish here has got that is unpleasant. I have been getting fish from Tanganyika and from Beira, both salted and dried, and it is quite a good relish. It is sea fish, not lake fish, and we pay 4/-, 5/- a pound. The fish is heavily salted. From India we have been getting dried and salted fish, and it never goes bad, even after a year.

The dried and salted fish I bought from Yiannakis I cooked in different ways, but always the horrible smell was there. There is nothing wrong with the fish. I myself bought fresh fish from the Lake shore, and we salted and dried it ourselves without doing anything to it, and it was quite palatable and nice.

I have visited Yiannakis' place several times, and the fish is laid upon stand, with no protection from flies and other things. When it is removed from the stands it is stored in bulk in such a way that it goes bad at once. If the fish was taken from the stands and it was dried in a nice way I think it would remain in better condition.

When I smoked the fish myself I made a charcoal fire and put the fish on a stick. I made a circle round the fire, and when the heat was quite all right I just removed the sticks. It took me about 2 ½ hours to smoke dry the fish. There was no smell from the smoke.

The Asian community does not eat any of the imported dried fish. This is the first time I have heard of the fish from Holland. It is not sold in ordinary places or canteens. I have a canteen and keep the tinned fish. I sell sardines 1/-, 1/3 and 1/9. When the Africans do not get fish here they buy tinned fish from me. I have tried fish from Zanzibar and other East African territories, and I know that fresh fish, caught at Dar-es-Salaam, is sent by air to Mbeya and gets there at 12.30 or 1 p.m. The fish agents use to put it on the market and we had that fish for lunch. The price was 3/- lb. The fish agents had no cold storage: the fish was sold within an hour of its arrival. The 'plane was an ordinary passenger 'plane, holding about 6 or 7 passengers.

If a European fisherman offered me a job to train Africans to smoke fish properly I would teach them. The smell is bad in the fish because some water remains in the fish and when it is stored in bulk the water smells. If it was properly dried there would be no smell.

Fish is essential food for children, and I have noticed that if mothers of small children wat fish the mother's milk is very plentiful. I have tried this in my home, in a brother's home and in others. The mother keeps very healthy if she gets fish three or four times in a week. The doctors also say that fish is a very good food in certain diseases. Fish is essential food, and if there is good distribution the standard of living will be better, and we should be in better health at a cheaper price.

William Robinson Riddoch, being duly sworn, stated:

I am director and the secretary of London and Blantyre Co. Ltd.

I feel sure that the supply of fish could be increased if certain steps were taken. At the Lake itself. I think that more rigid control of the African fishing industry is necessary in that they are taking very small fish out of the Lake, and if these were allowed to remain a matter of a few months more they would become very much better and there would be a larger supply.

I also think the carrying of fish is not satisfactory in that one can get cured fish from the continent which keep indefinitely. This cured fish from the Lake goes off very rapidly. I also think the question of transport is very important. Very often the roads are in a bad condition, even impassable. There should be special transport for fish which is unsuitable for any other purpose. I have no experience and no information of what this special transport would cost.

I do not know whether a cold storage plant both here and at the Lake would be practicable or not. If one is thinking of a deep freeze, I understand that once food had been put into deep freeze it cannot be put back again if it is removed. But I feel that you could have an ice plant at the Lake and bring the fish down in insulated lorries and put it into cold storage at its destination in Blantyre. We have a cold room in our premises which was to some extent installed with a view to an extension of the amount of fish in Blantyre, including Lake fish. Owing to the irregularity of supplies and the difficulty of getting fish at certain times of the year we drifted away from the idea of selling Lake fish and use our cold storage equipment for other commodities.

I have not got the figures for the cost of running the cold storage, but the original cost of the plant and structural alterations was about £1,750. It is something between a cold room and a deep freeze. The capacity of the cold room plus deep freeze is  $12\frac{1}{2}' \times 8\frac{1}{2}' \times 7\frac{1}{2}'$  high. The deep freeze alone is  $5' \times 6\frac{1}{2}' \times 7\frac{1}{2}'$ . A little space is taken up by machinery, there is no plant.

Lake fish is sold to a very small extent at the outset, early in 1954. None has been sold this year. I cannot say definitely what type of fish was sold, except that it was fresh.

I will ascertain the actual running costs of the cold storage and let you have them. I am afraid I know very little about this side of the business, as Mr. Howard arranged to have the cold storage put in for the fish, and he did not discuss it with me before he went on leave. No approaches have been made during recent months to any of the fishing concerns regarding supply of fish to us. If we could get Lake fish in good condition we would be prepared to deal with it. We would want first of all to have reasonable assurance of continuity of supply and a good standard of fish. The turnover in the cold storage would be fairly rapid. We would want the fish delivered direct to us.

It is difficult to say what the rate of consumption of fish would be. There is a good potential for fresh fish from the Lake. But I do not know that we would guarantee to take as much as we could sell because we do have a lot of other commodities which entail refrigerated space, and obviously we could not exclude those in favour of fresh fish even though there was a substantial supply. As far as we are concerned, it would have to be a trade limited in relation to the other cold room commodities. I could let the Commission have specific figure later.

Regarding additional cold storage, it would depend if the sale of fresh fish was profitable enough to warrant further investment. At the moment we handle other commodities which go into deep freeze or into cold storage which are more profitable than fresh Lake fish would be. But at the same time it does not mean that we would not handle it; we handle a great many commodities to give a general service to the public. We have not done the paper exercise of determining whether the fish business alone handled through cold storage would be a profitable one.

Charles Edward Snell, being duly sworn, stated:

I represent the Nyasaland Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The question of fish distribution was discussed at a recent meeting of the Chamber, and many of the members thought there should be a deep freeze at the Lake. When we made further inquiries we discovered that if the fish was put in a deep freeze at the Lake it could not be put into deep freeze again at the distribution points. We feel that the answer would be ice plant at the Lake for fresh fish and that it should be brought down in insulated vans and the deep freeze should be in this locality.

Speaking now from experience on tea estates, it is difficult to estimate how much fish one requires in a week. There is always a certain balance left over to the following week. I am speaking of dried fish. Invariably when one looks at the fish a week later it is full of maggots. We feel that the fish is not properly cured.

You will hear evidence that the locally salted fish is not eaten by the Africans. The last 2 or 3 months we have been putting the imported salted fish into the estates, and they are gradually growing to like it. It keeps indefinitely, and there is no loss to the estate, and I do feel that the African will get the taste for this type of fish.

We feel that the present way of bringing down fresh fish in open lorries is very bad, and a lot of the fish at the bottom of the lorry is not fit to be sold at all. Health officer should be asked to examine fish on arrival. If found bad it should all be destroyed. We hear that in Lilongwe the fish which had gone off was sold at half price; it should be condemned and destroyed.

Continuity of supplies is essential, and there must be adequate and suitable transport and storage and processing plant. The fish comes at certain times of the year in very big catches, unfortunately when the roads are at their worst. Whatever is done up at the Lake or in the townships down here, unless there are proper roads to get fish out it is rather a waste of time, I speak as a consumer, but looking at it from the other angle, if there are no good roads the suppliers cannot bring the fish out.

Providing we can produce fish locally as good as the Dutch herring, I see no reason why we should not be able to do so at a price lower than the imported fish.

Regarding export of fish, we feel that there might be a value in letting high quality fish out of the country. First class fillets might be most attractive outside the country, and once the fishing industry was put on a proper basis it could do no harm to the local market.

The committee which the Chamber of Commerce set up to study fishing conditions feels that a licence might carry responsibilities and conditions, and that there might even be two types issued, one to fish and one to process and distribute. It is appreciated there is a large African fishing industry; we feel that it should be strictly controlled. When the committee's memorandum was discussed in the Chamber of Commerce, quite a lot of evidence was produced that nets are too small, rivers were being blocked, and so on.

I am not sure, but I should say that they were fly maggots on the fish when it was kept over from one week to the other. That is one reason why we suggest that the dried fish should be properly packed in cases.

I doubt very much at the present time, if the Dutch fish was put on the market, say 1,000 tons, that the Africans would buy it right away. They have to get accustomed to the taste, although I know some of them like it.

The Committee did not discuss the price or get any information about the ice plant at the Lake. We felt that we should point out what, in our opinion, was lacking. You are no doubt aware that London & Blantyre, in anticipation of more fish being available in Blantyre, did instal cold storage.

With regard to the question of licences and regulations for the African fishing industry, no actual cases and figures were produced of species caught by particular methods, nor did the Committee discuss the fact that there is a small type of fish which never grows big. The whole thing was that we wanted to bring to your notice the possibility of regulations for African fishing and that small fish were being caught which might have grown bigger if left in the Lake.

I think that if fish were increased 2d or 3d each the African would still buy it if it were of a better quality, for he is keen to get fish.

As you know, last year or the year before efforts were made to have supplies of fresh fish brought from the Lake to central distributing points and the estate lorries would go to these points and collect fish. It was a complete flop. Mlanje estates did not participate in this, as it is a station for dried fish, being so far away from the sources of supply of fresh fish.

I should like to suggest a point for your consideration that licences be issued for fishing on Lakes Chilwa and Malombe to see if more fish could be made available. If it could, there would not be the road factor to contend with. A European could perhaps be given a licence for these lakes when fish is scarce from Lake Nyasa.

The Committee realised that if special transport was used to transport fish it would put up the price, but they have not gone into the extent of this. They did not discuss why no one had ever had the idea of taking over the distribution from the fishing firms. They also thought that if there were separate licences for processing and distribution it would be food for the fishing industry, but they did not say whether they thought it would be an economic proposition.

The Chamber of Commerce feels that there should be no price control but that the price should be fixed by economic conditions of supply and demands. Certain members of the committee thought that there would be a tendency to starve the local market if export to the Rhodesias was allowed, as the suppliers would make more profit supplying the Rhodesias than Nyasaland.

On the subject of deep freeze, we feel that there should be one in Blantyre/Limbe. Whether an installation in Cholo/Mlanje would be warranted would remain to be seen.

The memorandum prepared by the committee was endorsed by the whole Chamber of Commerce.

I have never seen fish at the market being thrown away because it was bad, but I have seen large quantities at the Lake being thrown away for that reason.

Regarding the point in the Chamber's memorandum that there were a number of areas where no fish was sold at all because it never reached there, the Central and Northern Provinces must be in that position, and if the distribution of fish could be better arranged more fish would be

absorbed in the home markets. We did not discuss whether all aspects of the fishing industry should remain in commercial hands.

I have never tasted fish from Lake Palmobe, not have I heard remarks about it. African caught Chilwa fish is sometimes available in Mlanje.

Mr. Nicholas C. Yiannakis was the next witness, and was accompanied by Mr. Blackwood. After Mr. Yiannakis was duly sworn, Mr. Blackwood said it would probably be best if he led the witness, and first of all proceeded to give a resume of the witness; activities when he first began fishing. He also handed in a number of letters which had passed between Mr. Yiannakis and the Secretariat regarding the former's application for another fishing licence.

Mr. Yiannakis:

If I am given a licence to fish in the south east arm or in Lake Palombe, the only economic places, I can supply fish at 4d., and if allowed to establish in south east arm, provided I am given a guarantee of tenure, I can afford to establish commitments in the south west arm, together with cold storage facilities. I have the experience and the finance to do it, and could bring the public more fish. If more fish is available the price will be reasonable.

I cannot understand why Government writes to me saying that I cannot have a licence because biologically it would be unsound to grant any more licences and then allows Nielsen Bros. a license. I think that many more licences could be issued for the south east arm, because when the bund across the River Shire is closed there will be more fish.

I would bring the fish from the south east arm in lorries and from Lake Palmobe and sell in Blantyre, Limbe, Cholo, Mlanje at 4d.

Regarding cold storage, if the fish I bring are sold quickly there will be no need for it. Africans prefer fish without gutting. I have made inquires regarding costs, and will let you have the details. The capital needed is £20,000 with £20,000 reserve. I do not want to put in cold storage at the Lake. I want fish to be caught and put on lorry and brought straight to cold storage here. An Ice plant could be installed at the Lake. We used to send fish to Salisbury packed in ice in boxes, and it kept for 36 hours. The price there was 2/6 lb, about 9d each fish. We used to send 2 lorries a week, with 2 tons of fish in a 3 ton lorry.

We never took any iced fish to the local markets because we could get it there fresh, and there is more taste than after it has been put in ice. It sells better in early morning. If it is to go in deep freeze can send it down in ice. Would depend on extent of catch and time of year.

When we dissolved partnership my brother Chris took over the fishing part of the business, and my brother Stavros and I asked Government for a licence for ourselves, but were refused. If I were allowed a licence I would do it in such a way that I could sell fish cheaper than the other people, and I would ask that one of the conditions of my licence should be that I would sell at 4d, the same price as fish was in 1945. In January to March I might sell at 2d and 3d to get rid of it. If I can afford to sell fish at 4d the other fishing concerns can.

I do not know why Government would not give me a licence, as I have never had any trouble at all, never been convicted of anything in connection with fishing. If they give me a licence in the

south east arm I will make money and develop the south west arm. The security I ask for is a tenure of 4 years.

I would not be prepared to develop the north end of the Lake now. I need more capital, and if I could fish the south east arm I could make that capital. At Monkey Bay the beach is too difficult.

I do not think the people with whom I was working before would lodge any objection if I was granted a licence. I am on good terms with them. I intend to make another application to Government.

The meeting adjourned at 3.15 p.m., and reassembled at 9 a.m on the 18<sup>th</sup> July.

Mr. Kosta Trataris was sworn as Greek interpreter.

Christos Comminos Yiannakis was duly sworn and stated:

I am in the fishing business and I dispose of my catches in Fort Johnston, Blantyre, Limbe, Zomba, Cholo, wherever I can find a market. Also, cars call at the fisheries from different parts, as well as Africans on bicycles, to buy fish.

When the fish arrives in Limbe there is a certain amount sold at the depot, and some are sent to Blantyre and some to Limbe markets. Boys on bicycles and different people who want fish come to the depot. The bicycle boys go out of the district for re-selling.

I do not sell any fish direct to bulk consumers, like European estates. Nyasa Tea Estates and the B.C.A. Co. send in to the depot to buy fish, about 250 dozen altogether a week, may be more, may be less, cannot say exactly.

The most important way of selling at the moment is to the boys on bicycles and to the estates. I send very little to Blantyre and Limbe markets. The catch is very small now and I have no surplus, but in the season I cannot sell all I catch. I have tried Lilongwe market. I went to the tea estates at Cholo and Mlanje to see if they wanted fish, fresh, dried or salted, but most of them said no. This was in February. When the meeting was held between producers and consumers at the end of 1954 the consumers said they were not getting fish and we offered to supply as many as they liked. A list was made of the estates, but when I went and saw them most of them said they did not want fish any more.

There was another meeting later on, and it was arranged that we should send fish to Cholo market. Sometimes it was sold, sometimes not. We never sent more than 70 to 80 dozen at a time, and most of the times it was returned.

We put fresh chambo on Lilongwe market. We had one Indian and two Africans used to come with their card on Friday and they used to take the fish on Friday night and sell it on Saturday at Lilongwe. We did not send our own lorries. We sold the fish at the beach.

At Cholo market the fish did not sell very well in the rainy season, even 30 dozen, because the Africans can catch their own. On Sunday morning we sell 100 dozen. It is Conforzi's market. The fish which was returned had to be thrown away. We were charging 6d each. If the fish was not sold we dropped it to 4d, 3d, 2d, even 1d, to get rid of it instead of bringing it back and

throwing it away. I can let you have details of how many fish were put on the market on a certain day and how many returned.

We make dried fish when there is plenty of fish and the weather allows it. We have no written contracts, but we do supply some of the Cholo estates. Lujeri was taking 600 dozen a month: Nyasa Tea Estates about 300 dozen a month, maybe a bit more. There are a few more smaller ones we can tell you by looking at our books. We have had the agreement with Lujeri and Nyasa Tea Estates for many years. We tried to expand our business and went to all the estates in Cholo and Mlanje, right to the Portuguese border, offering fish, either dried, fresh or salted. Last year we had some orders and this year they have dropped. Fresh fish we offered only up to Cholo, elsewhere it was too far for transport. We do not know why the orders dropped off, although we reduced our price. Delivered in Cholo they were 6/- last year for a dozen, this year dropped to 5/-.

We only failed to deliver the fish if the roads were out of condition. Even in the dried fish trade the supply did occasionally break down owing to the road conditions.

We are not supplying dried fish now. We always let the estates know when the fish season is near the end when we cannot supply.

We are catching fish now, but very little.

There is an understanding between the tea estates and us. They like fish when the tea season is on. As soon as the tea season is over they are not interested in getting fish at that particular time of year. The estates can never tell exactly the month the tea season is finished. They want fish from January to May, and sometimes small amounts in June. They have never asked us for fish in other months.

We supply Nyasa Tea Estates, B.C.A., Lujeri, Gotha, and a few more. I can give you more details later. We have said that we can supply them up to May because that is when we catch the fish, and the estates are quite satisfied with that. We would be willing to supply them with fish for the rest of the year if they want it, but they do not know that. It is us who have told them we can supply up to May. We are not sure after May whether we can supply.

After May we bring some to Blantyre, sometimes we sell some on the Lake itself. If the catch is very small it does not pay for the lorry to come from Fort Johnston to Blantyre and we sell at the Lake shore.

It only happened once that the lorry with dried fish could not get through this year. It left Fort Johnston, but could not get through and went back. Instead of supplying on a Thursday we supplied on a Friday. The fresh fish was returned about 5-7 times due to bad roads. The 1954-55 rainy season was bad. This year not so bad. It was 37 miles this side of Fort Johnston when it had to turn back. The lorry had to return about twice when the Liwonde Ferry was out of action. The lorry took the dried fish round by the Matope Road, and sometimes fresh fish, too.

If I could obtain them, I could supply larger number of dried fish contracts. The market is bigger now than it used to be for every sort of fish.

We bring fresh fish to Blantyre market in the morning, put the price at 6d. We might sell 20 dozen at 6d, then the price drops and drops. The Limbe depot distributes the fish to Limbe and Blantyre and all around. Not a lorry load when it arrives at the depot, but depends how much is caught. Some put aside for markets, some for bicycles, some for estates. 70, 80, 100 dozen to

Blantyre. We sell ourselves. In the wet season an average of 200-500 dozen is sent to Limbe and Blantyre markets. There are not enough bicycle boys to take all the fish which comes from the Lake. We always keep some for the markets, and would not sell all to bicycle boys if we could.

We know approximately what Blantyre and Limbe markets consume, and when the fish arrives from the Lake the first thing is to send the lorries quickly to the market to get there early. There is a lorry always at the depot waiting to take the fish to Limbe and Blantyre markets. We have had complaints about fish not being available on the markets, and the only reason we can give is that when the season starts going off and the fish is not so plentiful the boys rush in and buy it up before the Europeans get there. If anyone said that they had to wait 2 to 3 hours for fish getting from the depot to the markets he would be wrong.

I charge the bicycle boys varying prices. When there is a lot of fish the price is 3/-, 4/-, 5/- a dozen. When the fish is first put on the market it is 6/- a dozen. The reason the price drops to 3/- is that when there is a lot of fish Malachias Bros. also bring fish, and the boys just stand round and wait for the price to drop. If the fish would keep the price could be maintained at 6/-. 3/- is the average price, 1/- the bottom price.

The prices to people who come from Lilongwe vary with the season: 2/-, 3/-, 4/-, 5/-, average 3/-. In May and June we get /- a dozen. If anybody said that they could sell in Blantyre at 4/- it would not be reasonable, in the cold season, but average throughout year would be reasonable. I cannot tell you now, but I could produce figures showing how many fish we sell on the market at 6d, how many at 5d, and so on.

There are times when we do not use our full capacity for fishing deliberately because there would be no market for all the fish we caught. This happens in the rainy season, but not very often. I would not limit myself if I could sell the fish, but I cannot tell you if I could catch double the amount I am catching. I would catch more if I was able to deliver and sell in Lilongwe and Dedza area.

My cold storage holds 150 to 200 dozen and is in use constantly to its full capacity in the season. It is in use in the cold weather, but not as much as in the hot weather. The turnover in the season is 100 to 150 dozen daily. The fish which is put there is what is left over when the lorries have been loaded. Sometimes the price I get for the fish in cold storage is better because it is sold when a day comes when no fish from the Lake. At the present moment the cold storage is large enough, but we are thinking of extending it, and we will probably get better prices for the fish. We sell fish to Europeans fresh from the cooler. We also have a small deep freeze, 15 dozen capacity, we sell those fish at 8/- a dozen. We feel that this additional price is necessary to cover the costs of running the cold store and the deep freeze. Electricity costs approximately £1 a day, including the deep freeze.

To make it worth while delivering to Cholo market and the estates I would have to have a guarantee of 400 dozen weekly, both fresh and dried, to make it worth while. The two kinds of fish could be transported together. We would have to supply Kampango and nchila at this time of year, not chambo. There would not be much dried fish at this time, because nchila when it is smoked does not keep as well as chambo. It breaks up into small pieces. At the present prices we could not supply fresh fish alone. It would not pay us to take it to Cholo and sell at the present Blantyre prices, because the cost of transport is so high. I would have to work out the exact figure if we supplied 400 dozen regularly and made it pay. I cannot tell you off hand, but it might be 8/- dozen June to October. January to May might be 6/-, 5/-. We would have to put on a



special lorry to go to Cholo and Mlanje, and would have to add the cost of the transport to the cost of the fish. We can put up to 600 dozen fish on a 5 ton lorry.

Regarding salt fish, only the Railways and the Central Prisons take salt fish. Railways take about 10 tons a month and the prisons about 1 ton a month. We have advertised in the local paper, but no interest has been shown by anyone else

The lorries we use are the ordinary type, with no racks inside, and sometimes the fish at the bottom are not in good condition when they arrive at their destination. If we put racks in the lorries we could not put the same amount of fish in the lorry as we do now. There are other ways of preventing the fish from crushing without reducing the quantity too much, but they are rather expensive. When we sent to Salisbury we used to pack fish in ice and grass in boxes. In a 3 ton lorry we used to send 120 dozen, less than a ton. If loaded in ordinary way lorry would hold about 3 tons. We did try Mr. Borley's suggestion, which he made in 1953, of carrying fish in baskets, but it did not prove any better, because the baskets are not strong enough to take the fish. We tried many ways of strengthening the baskets, but it did not help. I have thought about a refrigerated lorry, and in 15 days' time I am going to Salisbury, where I will make inquiries about one. I have 6 lorries. Fish is carried in them to Blantyre, and if there are loads to be taken back to the Lake we do so, because we have a transport licence.

If someone were to instal a cold chamber in Blantyre or Limbe it would be a good idea, and I would support it.

I sell more fresh fish than dried. The Africans prefer fresh fish. When they cannot get it they eat dried. At Cholo the best day for selling fish is Sunday, when the market is held.

At some of the place where there are no supplies of fish you could not sell it even if you took it there, because the people will not pay the price. Two Africans bought new box bodies and came and bought fish from me to supply Kasungu district. They tried it for 2 months, and then came to me and said that it did not pay them, because people were not prepared to pay the price. After it cost them so much to transport it they sold it at 1/-.

We do all the curing at the Lake ourselves. In the wet season dried fish does not keep more than 10 days. The reason that the imported salted fish from Holland keeps longer is that there are big factories there with proper machines and the people have a lot of experience. My experience is only with the Africans here, and the way I smoke fish is the way the Africans like it. I do not think that there is a market here for the salted fish from Holland. Having the large factories also helps to keep the price of the fish down. We cannot build a factory like that nor have we got the amount of fish all the year to keep a factory going.

Before the lorry left for Cholo market we used to inform the estates that a lorry was on its way and they could buy from the market. If they said they wanted plenty we put more on the lorry. I shall have to look in my books and let you know which estates were taking fish last year and are not this year.

When we are drying fish even half an hour's rain is sufficient to spoil the drying. We have dried in sheds, but it never worked. The fish dried in sheds smelled and cracked easily in the baskets.

We did try starting at a lower price than 6d in Blantyre market, but the result was the same, the boys still waited until it was lower.

I will submit confidentially a statement of my expense in running my business.

I have dried and salted fish stored at the Lake. They are of good quality, but as time goes on they get worse. We have told Africans how to cook them, to soak them first. They never came back to buy more. We have tried to send salt fish to market, but there was no sale.

Last year I caught a lot of fish and could not get them away from the Lake because of the bad roads. I salted them and asked the Government if I could export them. Government said they would think about it, but they took such a long time that I have lost all the fish: I had to throw it away. It would be better if the roads were all-weather roads.

Eric Llewlyn Gregg, being duly sworn, stated:

I am a manufacturers' representative and I operate a stone quarry.

I think this business of salt fish from Holland to the U.K. is trifle over-rated. I sold it, and generally the Africans didn't like it. I have now given up my agency because I did not think it worth while. The price works out at 4d or 5d each to the estates, but nobody is making any profit.

I tried to put it on the market, not only to the estates who employ large labour forces, and gave London & Blantyre 7 good samples. They gave them to 7 Africans, who all came back and said it was too salty. I tried to sell it at Chitikali Estate, where there is not much fish because of distance, and I left samples with Africans down there, and there was no response.

London & Blantyre worked out that they would have to work at not less than 25% profit and they would also have to store it away from lots of other goods as it smelt fishy, although not unpleasantly. I called on Conforzi, but they would not take the fish because of it making the tea smell.

The people who want fish for the estates all want it at the same time, December, January, February, March. The set up they would like is for an organisation to carry stocks of fish so that they can ring up and say, "We want so many cases". But I cannot visualise, from my experience, any future in imported golden smoked herrings as a permanent food for African labour.

There is always a certain amount of labour on the tea estates all the year round, but in December to March are the busiest months when they need extra labour, and they like to have supplies of fish to offer as an inducement. The estates which are supplying fish are attracting labour away from those which are not.

I did not import the fish myself, I was only an agent. I got 5% on the orders I obtained. The fish is probably excellent for Africans, but they don't like it. It is possibly highly nutritious because of the oil content of herrings is higher than in Lake fish. I got no repeat orders from the people who tried it. Mr. Gurney took 100 cases, and he, too, had great difficulty in disposing of them.

The Ntondwe Tobacco Co., whose representative you say gave evidence yesterday, is associated with the British African Trading Co., who I represent. They imported something like 50 cases about a year ago. I called on Mr. Abbey one day and saw these, and thought we could sell them. As I said, some of the estates tried it, Horace Hickling and B.C.A.. It was sold to them at cost. If an importer were to try and make a business out of it he would have to charge more than the British African Trading Co. are doing, and it would work out at about 7d a quarter pound. Lake

fish averages 6d – 8d for 1 ¼ lbs. Africans may have indicated that they like this salt fish, but it is a gift. Would they buy it? I don't think so.

After the smoked herrings are ordered through London and shipped out here they may have to sit for 4 months in Beira, and then the estates don't want it. I would not have given up the agency if I had thought it had a future.

Kenneth Nielsen, being duly sworn, stated:

I am a partner in the firm of Nielsen Bros. trying in Nyasaland to set up a fish business. We have a licence to fish the south east arm of the Lake as well as the northern waters.

The catching of the fish is the thing that I am specialising in. This is my speciality, and as regards the non-African fisheries, I do not think I would like to comment at all. As regards Africans of the Lake, as far as Fort Maguire and on the south west arm I called at various villages to ask what quantities of fish they could catch and supply to eventually reach the markets in Nyasaland. The main difficulty with these people is that they have a very small net and a very limited range. Although they may get quite an appreciable amount, such as a ton, at certain times I could not get from any of the village headmen any assurance apparatus as it is at the moment. A possible suggestion occurred to me that the production of the Lake would be greatly increased if these people were fitted out with a proper boat, I mean an improvement on a canoe, not an elaborate affair, and a certain amount of gill nets. If they had that arrangement, with about 1000 yds. of gill net, they would catch fish they could not dispose of, and if we had an agreement with them to collect the fish then the (?) could be done away with and replaced by a larger mesh gill net, which would increase the production instead of catching immature fish. It would probably involved Government subsidising them, with hire purchase terms for a boat and gill net.

We would collect from the Lake, as there is no access by road at all. If we collect from the Lake, as there is no access by road at all. If we could increase the catching capacity we could get the catches in 5 ton lorries to the markets. The whole crux of the matter is that the production of the Lake must be increased. This, the point of export to Southern Rhodesia and distribution through this country hinges entirely on increased production. There are many other areas that can produce just as much as the south east arm. I would not like to say definitely at this stage, but production could be something like 4 or 5 times the present output.

To catch fish we have got to work in these more distant area, Domira Bay and the south west arm. We are going to require a bigger type of ship. We have had estimated - £10,700, plus £2,000 to get it here. We require a refrigerated carrier to bring in fish if not salted. £25,000 to £30,000 for a refrigerated carrier boat. There are no roads to Domira Bay, so would have to take fish from there by water to Fort Johnston. We cannot land fish at Salima beaches, so it will have to be brought to Fort Johnston by water also. From there it would be put into insulated trucks to Blantyre. An insulated 5 ton truck costs about £2,500 for the body only: a further £1,500 would be needed for the chassis and cab.

Regarding the collection from the African fishermen, I was thinking of their drying the fish as it was caught and we would collect about twice a week. It would not be possible to deal in fresh fish. Some of the villages thought they could produce a ton per day, and at others they thought they could supply more, but they are limited to a few hundred yards from the beach and only get

fish when it comes to them. The villagers and headmen were extremely interested in my proposition.

There is no road to Chipoka, and the rail is unsatisfactory, and there would be exposed landing at Chipoka, with no shelter. Fresh fish must be delivered where there are insulated lorries waiting for it or where there is refrigeration. Assuming production was stepped up considerably we think 1,000 tons could be disposed of in a year. Production may increase by as much as 10,000 tons a year when fully developed.

There are places in Nyasaland which do not receive any fish because they are out of the way, and there are also places where fish is not taken because there are not enough people to buy it.

I will send you under confidential cover our proposals for stepping up the production.

There is only one way to produce a cheap article, and that is by salting. No insulation whatever is needed, and I do think personally that people in this country have not yet properly salted fish in a reasonably fresh condition. As Mr. Gregg pointed out, fish has been salted in Holland and sent out. It lasts for over a year. Lake fish is a first class fish, and could be salted successfully here. Salting is a specialist's job, not something that anybody can do. When we started salting fish we brought in specialists to show us how to do it. The same applies here. If it is desired to sell a new type of fish to the Africans specialists are needed.

Whether we decide to go in for it in a big way is entirely dependent on what we find. We will probably send a box or two of salted fish to each tea estate first. We are sufficiently hopeful; since it is the only way you can get an economical fish from Domira Bay and south west arm it has to be dried. Will still fish in south east arm, and maybe there are other points, too, where we can develop fresh fish. If we have insulated or refrigerated trucks to bring the fish down here we can get them here reasonable fresh and put into cold storage, which we are going to erect. We have agreed that it is an essential factor in order to spread the uneven fishing which prevails at the moment. It is still under discussion where to erect storage plants.

Regarding the supply to tea estates, we were given reasonably firm undertakings to take fixed amounts from us throughout the year. These amounts may vary, depending on the season. They insisted on regularity of supply. The fish should arrive on one particular day or one particular time of day every week. It is impossible to do that without cold storage plant in Blantyre or Cholo.

When we are fishing in the south west arm and Domira Bay we shall be catching 20 miles from the shore base for 1, 2, or 3 days. It is impossible to dry on a ship. The collection is a different aspect. The fishing, as I see it at the moment, comprises different types of fish that live upon the Lake shore and is very scattered it is not an economical proposition for any method of poor ships, but rather a proposition for a series of small boats and for a non-African fishery.

I think in my experience I have never really seen where the supplier has also to be the transporter for the wholesaler and retailer. I think that the present companies should not be criticised too severely for not being perfect in all aspects of the fishing industry. We do not intend to be all these ourselves. We prefer to erect a large cold storage and then the Africans build up a retail trade themselves. There will have to be one preliminary stage at the Lake where the fish will be frozen and stored in Blantyre.

The outlay and running expenses for development of Domira Bay to the scale we are considering, and for the south west arm would be: 8 fishing boats in the Domira Bay area, cost

£13,000 each; 2 refrigerated carriers for Domira Day, £25,000 to £30,000 each; in the south west arm 1 carrier and 6 fishing boats. Additional to that would be the cold storage on the Lake shore, deep freeze, refrigerated transport, and finally the cold store in Blantyre. Obviously we are going to need considerable catches of fish to maintain that.

Talapia is the best fish for export, but by the development of other fisheries, the small ones, you increase your supplies of nchila and kampango and Nyasaland can be supplied very much cheaper.

We should consider definitely how far we could export, but we cannot be more than provisional in our ideas. We have a sort of pilot scheme. The "Chauncy Maples" provides us with a means of following the shoals of fish and we can work in small boats from it to try and find methods of catching fish. All these figure we shall probably give to you and tell you what we have found. To make the full venture worth while we should need to produce 10,000 tons a year. We would sell at £40 per short ton. If the production is greater it will bring the prices down. The Nyasaland Africans seem to prefer nchila and kampango, while Rhodesia Africans prefer chambo. If we can get better prices abroad, we sell for the best that we can get. If you want a cheap fish in Nyasaland, perhaps you might try and get Government to give a subsidy.

The whole object of our scheme is that the people of this country will get fish. There are many subsidiary industries, also, which will develop from a prosperous fishing industry, and that should be borne in mind. There will be a considerable amount of local labour employed by ourselves, and a greater amount of labour indirectly profitably employed.

We would try to make a good stock of fish available in Blantyre, and would find enterprising African who would try to get fish to the villages. They are quite happy to come to the Lake shore at the moment for 2 or 3 days. If there was a large stock of fish in Blantyre they could buy from there and sell it. They would be able to make as much in a week by selling at a lower margin of profit.

We are not drying fish, but we do not know whether we shall process them as dried fish in the future. Dried fish will not keep indefinitely, whether European dried or African dried.

We would rather not say at the moment what our plans are regarding major plans and immediate marketing arrangements. We will write in about it.

Lloyd Albert Gurney, being duly sworn, stated:

I am a crocodile hunter, and I have a fishing permit. I cease fishing last September, and I now have a business in Blantyre.

I have been an objector and a crusader in the way that certain types of fishing have been done in the rivers and so on with regard to trapping. In the rainy season particularly when the fish are supposed to be going up spawning. Although we have a lot of fish each season the entire river is not supposed to be blocked; at least a third of the river should be left open. The rivers are blocked not once but many times, sometimes as much as 12 or 15 times.

I know the Lake fairly well as far as 15 miles north of Kota Kota. It is not only a question of looking after the European fisheries in these Areas but of the Africans. I have a new line of business, and sell a lot of fish nets and limes to Africans who want to fish seriously. The men

who are fishing in the rivers are not serious fishermen at all. If one was to realise what was caught in the way of small fish in these rivers it would be really staggering. It is all very well to say, as I have heard some people say, that the fish run up the rivers and kill themselves. Not all the fish kill themselves, some get through. If there were no traps more would get through to spawn, and the result would be more fish in the Lake. From what I have seen of Portuguese rivers there is none of this carried out on the Portuguese side of the Lake.

Another point I the use of small mesh seine nets. There are certain fish which do not go up rivers, but spawn in the Lake. European fisheries are only allowed to gill net during December, but all other netting is still carried on, small or otherwise. The chambo type of fish that spawn actually in the Lake in shallow eater form their nests in hollow basins. The female is so particular about the nest that the male may have to make 10 of them before she is satisfied and will spawn in that particular nest. Seine nets are used in Domira Bay, at the outlet to the south east arm, round about the Bar and round Mwela, and these are very big spawning areas for these fish. If the seine net is dragged over the nests, the possibilities are that the fish will stop spawning. I personally think that it would make a lot of different to the quantities of fish in the Lake if the rules and regulations which have been made were adhered to.

Regarding Lake Malombe and Lake Chilwa, I made application several times to try and get a permit for these areas, apart from other people trying as well. If there is a shortage of fish in this country, which there is at this time of year, I do not see why a commercial firm should not be given a permit in these areas, either myself or somebody else. The Lake is big enough, 20-25 miles long and 15 miles wide. If it is a question of upsetting Africans fishing, and I doubt this because they can sell all the fish they can catch at this time of the year, for nchila and types others than chambo the season is different.

I have a fishing permit which I have ceased to operate. The trouble is that we cannot get out with the fish. I import smoked herrings; they can be cured so that they will keep, but one cannot keep on putting money into something that does not give some sort of return. That is one of the reasons I asked for a fishing permit for Malombe. The south west arm is a good area, but a long term investment.

I did not market much fish when I was operating in the south west arm. At this time of year, when the catches are small, I used to dispose of most of my fish on the beach. As it was ear Dedza, Ncheu and Lilongwe the boys would rather buy from me when I had the fish than go right down to Fort Johnston. There was no market at all in the wet season. At that time we were not fully organised. We had put up a smoking shed, and there were rather heavy rains which washed the whole thing away.

The market for dried fish is extensive. The Africans do not like salted fish, but you can always sell smoked fish. The point is to experiment with smoked fish to make them last, and to salt fish to a degree not as heavy as at the moment. In certain areas the smoked herrings I import go very well, but not in others. I have been requested to send smoked herrings to Karonga.

The market for fish as a sort of relish, as the African calls it, to his ngaiwa and so on is increasing. Greater numbers of them are earning more money and realising that they need these additions to their food. They would rather have the fresh fish, especially those who have lived near the Lake, and will only take salted fish when they can get it no other way.

In the wet season we all know that catches are very big. There are not only catches from European fisheries and interested African fishermen who are doing it properly. Most of the

rivers, even little streams that cross the road, are absolutely full of fish. Africans go into the water waist deep to catch them, and fish are even found lying on the road to Monkey Bay.

Trapping in the rivers goes on right through the year in certain rivers. The water comes down rather fast and breaks some of the barriers down, which does help. But as soon as the river starts to stem itself again up to the baskets. Rivers like the Linthipe are cluttered up from end to end. It is my contention that if fish were not caught in the rivers in the wet season and were allowed to spawn there would be more fish available in the cold season. Some of the dambos, too, contain fish. Chisenjeka Dambo, which for the last 2 or 3 years has been rather empty owing to the low level of the Lake, still has water in it this year. Even in the rains the water in this dambo flows slowly, and fish can be seen in it.

During the rainy season, or just before the rainy season, certain types of fish, whether they breed in the Lake or in rivers, come to the edges of the Lake. Some also feed on the sediment that flows into the Lake. During the colder season they go into deeper water, sometimes into very deep water, and the fishing that is carried on, other than gill netting, does not catch the fish, because the ring nets can only for to a depth of 150 feet. It does not mean that because few fish are caught that they are not there. They are, but in deep water and not so concentrated as in the rainy season. If we could fish in Malombe by gill nets we do not see how we could do any fish any harm, as we would catch mainly kampango and barble.

In Malombe most of the African fishing is near the shore. This lake is comprised of 2 channels. There is a sandbank in the middle, and the channel which runs north of that is about 15ft. deep. I would say that the fishing is restricted to the shore because of the size of the nets they use. Seine nets will only go as far as the ropes will take them. The Africans there also have a form of gill netting where they run from a post and then stretch a gill net across. This can be done more or less anywhere on Lake Malombe, depending on the depth of net employed. Malombe is full of vegetation, but a lot of spawning goes on in the middle of the sandbank which is not touched. The chambo build nests in the form of a small crater. If a European firm was given a licence in that area presumably they would use gill nets at this time of the year, and this would not affect the spawning on the sand bank.

In certain areas which are depleted of fish and where the Africans hardly ever see one I have had a sale for the smoked golden herrings I import because they have no option, more or less. I have tried to instruct them, naturally from a point of view of business, that if they soak the fish for a period to remove some of the salt. We sell a lot to the estates for labour, and the Africans take them because they are gifts; they probably would not buy them. I get a big demand for them, and all the firms buy from me. I do not know why Mr. Gregg said they were not worth having. I have had to buy another form. I do not follow his view as far as that goes. It is a question of pressing your market, and most of my orders I get from the mere fact that we can guarantee deliveries. The price per pound is 1/9, which is about 3 ½ d per fish, and I make about ½ d a fish profit. I do not sell in dozens, I sell by the case.

George Charles Harding, being duly sworn, stated:

I represent the firm of Malachias Bros. in Blantyre. When the fish is landed at the Lake the majority of it is sent to the markets at Zomba, Limbe and Blantyre and the rest is kept at the Lake for curing, salting and smoking. When the fish arrives here the local lorry, which is

permanently based here, takes its load for distribution to Limbe and Blantyre, and then we carry on with the long distance lorry and with the bicycle boys in Limbe.

We have a contract with the Nyasaland Railways to supply them with salted fish, approximately 10 tons per month. There is a gentleman's agreement with the B.C.A. Co. to supply them when available with approximately 1 ton smoked fish per week.

I produce an extract from our books showing the sales at various prices for the first quarter of the year. It also shows the amounts received at the depot. The wholesale figures include the bicycle trade sales, and when there is a figure in the "No Sale" column it means that that amount was destroyed. The wholesale prices average 3/6 to 4s. Regarding the fish for which there was no sale, we feel that we could have left them at the Lake for curing.

We have not been in a position to supply extra-ordinary quantities of cured fish because we cured too much and insects and maggots for at them whole they were stacked. What we have tried to do is to supply the markets with as much fresh fish as we can in economic conditions. The only people we supply outside of B.C.A. are the Tobacco Auctions an occasional basket, the odd estate owner who may come in and ask for a basket or two, and we have supplied about three baskets to South African Labour Recruiting Co., but it is not a market where there seems to be a great demand. At present we have very little stocks of smoked fish at the Lake. We lost about 15 tons last month, through such things as maggots. All we found left at the bottom of the pile was skin and bone. It was 6-7 weeks in stock, in bulk storage. If the fish can be got to the estates right away the estate owners can empty the baskets and keep the fish well aired so that there is no dampness inside and there are very few flies, and it will keep a few weeks longer. We could cope with a larger dried fish trade if it could be kept better.

In August, 1954 Mr. Borley tried to get the estate people interested and to take dried fish. Unfortunately, in January, 1955 we were not in a position to supply them with fish because of non-delivery of our fishing equipment. Yiannakis did take steps to ensure supplies, which I believed fell through after about 4.5 weeks. The estate owners have never approached us about fish, nor have we approached them.

There is, as you will see from the figures, quite a reasonable return for Sunday, the 8<sup>th</sup> January. Every Sunday when the fish arrives the lorry is refuelled and sent down the Cholo Road. On the 15<sup>th</sup> there was no fish, but on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, had we not had the wholesale trade, we would not have done very well. Invariably, road conditions permitting, the lorry arrives at the depot about 4.30 a.m. and is away down the Cholo Road by 7 o'clock at the latest. One gets a wrong idea about this Cholo market looking at the week end sales. Then the boys have their posho, and those who have not already spent it in the canteens are able to spend it on fish.

The figure given do not include the salted fish sold to the Railways, only fresh, and the figures are all in dozens.

During the months when fish is plentiful we try to build up supplies of salt fish for later on, and that goes on Limbe market. Salt fish will last about 5 months. But the African does not like salt fish. He takes it from the Railways because it is included in his posho.

I produce further sets of figures; one showing the disposal of fish during 1955, one showing the expenses of boats, nets, etc. at the Lake and giving the average cost there of the fish; one showing expenses of transport, rental of garage depot, etc., and the average cost of transporting the fish; and the further one showing stock replacement on order for 1957.



We generally supply Limbe market for the simple reason that there are more Africans. When we sent to Blantyre market we invariably get some returned because we have over-estimated. Supplies to Blantyre are only a quarter of an hour late than those to Limbe.

On the 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27, 28<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> January we did not start selling at 6d but at 4d. We had a fair amount of fish, and so had Yiannakis. If we started selling at 6d we would have lost half the fish, but we sold more by starting at 4d. The price is decided on the spot, either by Dr. Malachias or myself. We each take a market. The doctor goes to Cholo, although I have been myself on several occasions. We start at lower price, although we know definitely we are going to bring it down to 1d. Rate of sale is slower when started at a lower price. It almost pays to risk at higher price. If we had depot here where we could store the fish we could stop selling at 4d. We have no cold storage apparatus, but have made inquiries, and the prices are beyond our means. The price of one that will hold 15 tons of fish was in the region of £8,000.

We applied to the G.E.C and one or two other firms in England, and they referred us to their South African agencies. The difference in price between the U.K. and South African is something extraordinary. We would require cold storage capable of carrying 400 tons. There was no actual refusal to supply direct from U.K., but it was suggested by the firms that it was better to deal with local agents, because they would be far better aware of local conditions, etc., and would be available to come and instal or examine and repair the plant. If we bought from England we would be completely isolated, the agents would have nothing to do with us. I cannot say whether there are any agents in the Federation. Mr. Dean, of Farming & Electrical, has seen us and we have asked him for quotations. I believe that he represents cold storage manufacturer with agencies in Salisbury. Up to now we have had nothing from them. We were thinking of a deep freeze in the first place to deal with 5 tons at a time. Then, of course, we should need refrigerating plant to bring it here and put it into cold store. I think that is the right procedure. Deep freeze at the Lake and cold storage down here.

During the fish season a cold store would be of advantage, because we could be building up supplies without depleting the local markets. We could send 5 or 10 tons each week into deep freeze. 15 tons capacity would not be big enough for us. We are trying to get more reasonable quotations. I do not think it will be worth while getting quotations from England, as we should get the same answers. And we are worried about maintenance if we bought from England, as I believe that a refrigeration plant engineer is a highly skilled man. The work is a little beyond the ordinary mechanic.

We cannot supply people from June to September because it would not pay to send a lorry from the lake with only 50 or 100 dozen. A normal paying load is 300 dozen in a 5 ton lorry.

If we could get a 400 tons cold storage installed, I think the market would stand the extra price, because the Europeans, whose numbers are increasing, would buy the fish. The African will not touch frozen fish: we gave some to our own boys and they gave it to the dogs. I do not think they refused it because there was plenty of fresh fish.

I should like to raise one point, and that is about the market in Blantyre. The stall is an open affair. There is no roof, no cover, and when it is hot the sun get on it and the fish deteriorates very quickly. It is much better in Limbe market. We have our own stalls supplies by the market for which we pay rental. In Blantyre there is no rental, there is just a market. There is a cover over the stall in Limbe, and sprinklers, a proper fish stall. Sometimes in Blantyre, 9.30, the

Health Officer says we must not sell any more after another half hour, while in Limbe we are still selling fish at 11 and 12 o'clock in far better condition.

We have not considered transporting fish in ice because the loss of space would be colossal. I know from experience aboard ship the amount of space that is lost.

We have not sent to Lilongwe market. Mr. Kettle is fishing at Chipoka, and I believe he supplies Lilongwe. During the rainy season we could not get through because the roads would be impassable. Also, it is so much further to go, and the Africans would not have the money to pay even the landed cost of the fish.

We do not dispose of a lot of fish at the Lake to Africans who dry and distribute it themselves.

Regarding getting rid of more smoked fish, what is the good of smoking fish in January if we cannot get rid of it before the end of May. There is no money about, and estate people will not take this fish in posho.

We went down the Cholo road once during the week, and there were complaints that the labour was leaving the field. That is why the markets are held and are only supplied on a Sunday. It is obvious that once the labour leaves the field it probably does not go back, or goes back 3 or 4 hours late. We were selling the dried fish at 10d a pound. A single fish is about 6 oz.

A ring net lasts approximately 2 years. Gill netting is a very big item. If we get 3 months' wear we consider ourselves fortunate. The average cost of running a 5 ton lorry is £24 for the round trip. We run our own maintenance depot, so have no garage repair bills, just purchase spare parts.

About 2 years ago we wrote to the Town Council in Blantyre asking that a roof be put over the stall. The reply came back that we do this at our own expense, but it would have to be passed by the Town Engineer. We did not see any point in putting a roof over a public edifice at our own expense. It would be a great advantage to fish consumers and to suppliers to have a covered stall. There is no question of saying "This section is Malachias, this section is Yiannakis". Anybody can use the stall. Africans who come with fish from Lake Chilwa use the stall. This does not matter: what does matter is that there should be a covered stall.

The meeting concluded at 3 p.m. and reassembled at 9 a.m. on the 19<sup>th</sup> July.

Stephen Masea, being duly sworn stated:

I was Head Clerk in the Cholo Boma, I retired in 1953. I live at Cholo, on my own place, about three quarters of a mile from Cholo Boma.

I am not engaged in the fishing business myself, I am giving evidence as a consumer.

In Cholo it is very difficult to obtain fish. It is Mr. Yiannakis who sometimes supplies us, but he does not come very often. He comes at certain time on Sundays, and there are many consumers. Supplies are not adequate. Mr. Yiannakis brings fresh fish. The African fish sellers who bring dried fish charge high prices, 5d to 8/-. The larger ones are 8/-. The average price is 5d. to 1/-. There is plenty of dried fish. I saw some fish in the market last Sunday just as big as my arm (?). I asked the price, and it was 1/- 2/-, 3/-. In the wet weather the price is down to 5d. Mr. Malachias comes to the market very rarely.

I do not go to the market myself every Sunday, but one of my children goes each week. The fresh fish lorry only comes to Cholo on Sundays. I pay 6d to 8d for a fresh fish. There are a few Africans who buy fish from Mr. Yiannakis and come on their bicycles to sell it. We do not get Africans coming from the Lake. I only saw one this year.

When Mr. Yiannakis brings his fish here he sells it all, there is nothing left, because there is a very big demand for it from the Africans. Sometimes he reduces the price to 3d or 4d when the fish is getting rotten. He brings it about 8 or 9 o'clock, sometimes earlier, and sometimes it is in a good condition when it arrives, but after it sits there until about 12 o'clock, then it starts to get rotten. Sometimes the fish is not in very good condition when it arrives.

I know some of the estates are giving the smoked fish from Europe to their labour, but I have not tried any. I think the Africans like this fish, not just because it is a gift, and I think that if an African turned up with a basket of them to sell they would be bought.

If people could be assured of a regular supply of fish by the fishing firms because of the installation of a cold storage room I think they would be prepared to pay a little more for the fish. We are already paying 8/- for some, the very big mlamba.

Having a big family, if fish were available I would buy twice a week; would spend about 6/- a week. I cannot say if many people would be prepared to pay as much as that.

The Africans who bring fresh fish come only on Sundays as well as Mr. Yiannakis.

Some people like fresh fish best, some prefer it dried.

J.L. Mapangwe, Chinyanja interpreter, as duly sworn.

Billiat Kachulu, being duly sworn, stated:

I live at Konjeni, 10 miles from Cholo Boma. Am a business man; I make bricks and I am a baker.

I have a wife and 8 children, and I buy fish every Tuesday and Sunday for my whole family. Last year we used to pay 6d. Only last year we the supply regular. This year Mr. Yiannakis has not come regularly. Certain coloured men came with fish to Lujenda market, which takes place on Saturday. Near where Bwana Newby lives. The coloured men only came once.

We get fish fairly regularly carried by bicycles. The fresh fish is bought by the boys from Yiannakis to sell to us. The price is higher, from 8d to 9d, so many fail to buy.

If we run short of fresh fish we buy dried fish. We buy this from vendors who bring fish from Lake Chilwa.

I never saw any dried fish from Europe which the estates round about might supply to their labour. If Mr. Hadlow gives his labour this fish he has only just started.

This season there is less of the dried fish from Lake Chilwa.

There is plenty of fish January, February, March at price varying from 5d to 8d and 2/6 to 8/- for Mlamba.

The people in my area like fish, but we have shortages. People cannot afford the dried fish. It is hard for a labourer getting 2/- posho to pay 2/6 for a fish.

I do not know the coloured man who came with fish because I am busy with my business and did not see him.

I have 36 labourers who make bricks. I give them money as their posho. The price of food is high, so I cannot afford to give them food or fish. I pay them 2/- per week. That is the senior ones. Others get 1/10 and small children 9d.

Namanga Nachuma, being duly sworn, stated:

I live at Chaoni Village, about 5 miles from Cholo Boma. I shop at Mikolongwe Station. There is a market at Mikolongwe.

I buy fish from the Lake and sell it at Mikologwe. I buy from Lake Chilwa. I pay 3d, 4d, each, never more than 4d. For Mlamba 2/- and 3/-. I take the fish dried to the market because the distance is great. I buy from the Portuguese side of the lake and dry them there before I leave. I carry them to market on my bicycle, and I have a labourer who uses my other bicycle. Sometimes I go alone for the fish. I can carry 100 fish on my bicycle, sometimes 50, depending on the size. From the lake to where I sell the fish is about as far as from Blantyre to Fort Johnston. We go through Malombe area, by Chikowa, and on the Portuguese side of the lake. I cross Palombe on the upper side.

I do not sell any fish on the way, because I am often tired and go straight on. A fish that I pay 3d for I sell on the market at 5d, and the big ones at 3/- I sell for 5/-. During these months I have no trouble in selling fish, because there is not plenty in the cold weather. I sometimes give fish away to children and to people who are known to me.

It takes three days to get to the lake, two nights on the way and the other day I reach the place where I buy the fish. If there is no catch of fish I spend about five days waiting. It take four days to return with the fish. I have no other work. When I have sold the fish I turn round and go back to the lake. Sometimes it take three days to sell the fish, sometimes two.

When I see that there is not good sale at the market and I find that I shall have a loss in my fish, that is the time when I start to give it away.

It takes about 3 weeks for a dried fish to go bad.

My villages is near one of the markets where I sell.

Sometimes I stay at home when I have sold my fish but that is when I am ill and I stay in order to make myself fit for another trip to the lake. When I am well I do not stay at home.

A new bicycle costs, £15, £14, £13. Due to the travelling I do a bicycle lasts 3 years. A basket costs 3/- or 5/-, and it lasts one month. That is 2 trips. In the hot weather a tyre lasts 3 months, and in the cold weather it lasts 4 months. They cost me 12/6, Dunlop.

During this time of the year more fish is caught on the Portuguese side of the lake. I go in between the boundaries of P.E.A. and Nyasaland, sometimes for about 1 mile. Some of us are arrested and some of us disappear. All the Africans disappear when they are arrested by the Portuguese, when you get to the Portuguese Boma you cannot see them. Sometimes when I see

that the Portuguese road is having difficulty I got to Fort Johnston, where I buy fish and then go on the other markets.

I do not sell fish at the places where I sleep on the way back, because the people cannot afford my prices, and they are near the place where fish is caught. When I get as far as Palombe, then I start selling the fish, but sometimes I do not.

Some people buy 5/- worth of fish in a village, some 4/-, 2/-, 3/-.

I cannot say whether people prefer the fish I bring from Fort Johnston or that which I bring from Lake Chilwa, but when Mr. Yiannakis comes most of the people rush to buy his fresh fish.

I spend about £3 on fish at Lake Chilwa each trip. Sometimes I get 100 fish, sometimes 150. The £3 includes the 2/- and 3/- fish. There was one time when I spent £3 and did not get £3 back. The best profits I make are £1.15s, £2.

H.B. Dallah, being duly sworn, stated:

I work in the Income Tax Office, Blantyre, and I live in Limbe. I have a wife and 6 children. We eat fish and we buy it from Limbe market and from Yiannakis' depot. We buy fish very often, as it comes into Limbe, but sometimes we can't get it.

I spend 4s on 8 fish. My salary is £365.10s. When the fish came in regularly I used to buy twice a week. Spent about 8s a week on fish. We get in on Limbe market about once or twice a week. My wife buys the fish whenever she is able. She goes to the market very early, and sometimes the fish does not come at all. It is this time of year when it is difficult to buy fish: in the rainy weather we can get it when we want it.

We pay 6d and sometimes more now for a fish, and would be prepared to pay up to 1s if we could get it regularly, but it would be difficult, with regard to the size of the family.

We eat dried fish, but they are rather more expensive than the fresh fish. It is available, but it is in short supply, and therefore more expensive. Small fish 6d, up to 10d. The prices never change for dried fish.

My wife goes straight to the depot to buy the fish. If she fails there she goes to Limbe market. Sometimes she fails to find it in either place. To buy at the depot is sometime a bit easier than at the market, but you must be there every early.

Even though the dried fish is dear people still buy it. Generally people prefer both fresh and dried for a change.

When the fish arrives at the depot from the Lake it is sold to cyclists with baskets, and the surplus, if any, is brought to the market. To get fish in the market is always a struggle, and women, especially women with children, are unable to buy fish.

When my wife fails to get fish at the depot, sometimes she meets a man with a basket of fish on a bicycle which he has bought from the depot, and he sells her a fish for 9d. Sometimes the cyclists go outside the township.

When we pay 6d for a fish we do not have the chance of choosing which is a smaller or bigger one. We just take any fish.

When the fish comes in small quantities to Limbe market and is, therefore, costly, I think about the people like labourers, whose salaries are not as much as mine. They must suffer. Recently in the papers I have been reading that some firms have been throwing away fish. If the fish becomes rotten and unsaleable, why do not the men who run the businesses put in some refrigerators so that the fish can be kept better?

About 2, 3, 4 years ago fish was 2d to 4d, now it has gone up to 6d. It never does down below 6d, even in the wet season.

Chisanu, being duly sworn, stated:

I am clerk in the Native Treasury, Blantyre. I have a wife and 3 children, and my salary is £5 a month. We eat fish, but it is difficult to say how often, due to the shortage of fish in the town. I do not find it easy to buy it this time of year. I have not found fish from the beginning of this month to now. When it is available it is 1/-, because some of the fish is sold in Limbe, and when it comes here the price is high. When I can get it I spend 3s.

During the rainy season the price is still high. Some people bring it on bicycles and they sell at 8d each. In the market the price is sometimes 10d. That is fresh fish. Whatever the size, chambo is 10d.

We eat dried fish, and we can get it now. The price is from 1s upwards. I have bought dried fish three times this month.

I do not know who brings the fresh fish, I just find it at the market. The dried fish is on sale also at the same time.

I send someone to buy fish for me. To get fresh fish there is always a struggle, because the fish is only brought in small quantity.

Lester, being duly sworn, stated:

I am working in the Council Chamber as watchman. I am paid £2 a month, no posho. I have a wife and 6 children. I eat fish, but only buy it when I have money enough, as it is very costly. I often eat vegetables. This month I had fish only on the day I was paid. Bought some small fish called kambusi for 1s. They were sold before at 1d. I bought them at the market. There was no struggle when I was buying them.

I do not often buy chambo, because the price is very dear, 8d to 10d. I only buy chambo twice in the month. The evidence I have given you concerns dried fish. In the past I used to eat fresh fish, but now that the price is 1/- to 1/3 I am unable to buy it. In March this year fresh fish was 6d.

A messenger sweeps the hall, I just sleep here and look after the safety of the place. My village is nearby, so in the day time I often go home. I have been working here since November, 1953. The first month I was paid £1.15s.

If I had more money I would buy fish more often, and if the price was lower I would buy more often.

In March when I bought my fresh fish for 6d I had no difficulty in getting it. There was a but of a struggle but there was plenty of fish. I bought direct from the lorry.

In the past when there was more fish people could buy from the lorry, and some bought from the Africans who came with baskets outside the township. The Africans do not sell on the market, except when there is less fish. The price of fish in the morning was 6d, in the afternoon 4d. I have never seen fish being thrown away. When I bought at 4d there were plenty of fish and I did not have to struggle because many of the people had left. Some of them said the fish was bad, but some who had less money would buy the bad fish.

Sidney Nasiyaya, being duly sworn, stated:

I am clerk in the Council of Blantyre Chiefs. I am paid £17 a month. I have a wife and 5 children and I live in Blantyre. We eat fish 3 times a week, fresh fish because we like it. It is very hard to get in cold weather.

I wanted to eat fresh fish this month, but I have not had a chance. I have bought dried fish from the market. I often send messengers to buy fish. Dried Chambo is up to a maximum of 1/-. I buy 4 fish to be enough for the day's meal. Sometimes when I go to the market to buy dried fish there is a struggle to get it because many people rush for the good fish.

Fresh fish comes sometimes to the market in Limbe, because I have seen people who have bought it, but not here at this time of year. I would always buy fresh fish if it was available in the market here, and I would spend about 10s a week, 3 fish 3 times a week. I would buy dried fish as well.

The cheapest price for fresh fish is 6d, but the last time I bought I paid 1/-. The people here would like more fresh fish.

I live at Soche, and before that I lived at Ntonda, about 6 miles from Blantyre. Sometimes fish came to Ntonda, both fresh and dried, by cyclists.

The meeting closed at 11.45.