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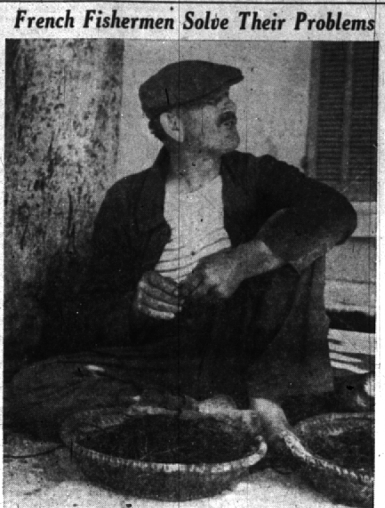
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LAZARE, 'THE FRENCH FISHERMAN'
Repairs nets for next day's work
BY ROBERT BALL
Special Correspondent for The Eccentric

CASSIS, Southern France—Perhaps the foreign ministers of the Marshall Plan countries could take some advice on cooperation from Lazare.

Lazare is a fisherman in Cassis, a small village on the Mediterranean coast. With one small boat, which he handles himself, he is by far not the richest fisherman in Cassis. Nevertheless, he is the one the other fishermen listen to, and perhaps it wouldn't be the foreign ministers any harm to listen too. The wisdom which Lazare brings to bear on local problems is based on his idea of nature.

"That's natural," says Lazare when he approves of something, by which he means that it is in tune with the world as it should be—because for Lazare ethical rules are just as natural as taking care of his boat.

AND THIS IS where the foreign ministers come in. "Cooperation is natural," says Lazare. For the fishermen of Cassis it does seem to be so.

Since 1911, about the time that Lazare began stringing his lines in the ink-blue waters of the bay, this cooperation has manifested

itself in a cooperative, to which at present all but a handful of the 100 fishermen belong, and through which nearly all of the annual catch is sold.

Before the cooperative, the fishers had sold individually to buyers in nearby Marseille, who bought the fish on the spot and carted them to market.

The trouble was that fish, as every camper or housewife knows, is highly perishable. To put it mildly, the value of a catch decreases rapidly with the time it is out of the water.

ACCORDING TO the old-timers, the buyers took advantage of this to buy on a "take it or leave it" price basis, knowing that the fishers would rather take a low price than have a catch go bad on their hands.

"We decided then we'd sell the fish ourselves," Lazare explained. It wasn't easy at first.

The manager they picked in the beginning was more trouble than the buyers, and many were ready to throw over the whole idea.

"But the idea wasn't wrong," said Lazare, retrieving a strand of his net. "It was just the manager

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— Advertisement —

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who was wrong. We fired him and got a new one.

Now the manager has two helpers, and the co-op owns warehouse, ice house, truck, office and repair crane.

EVERY MORNING each fisherman unloads his silver-blue snappers, firm red snappers, rockfish, lobster, and the occasional tuna at the warehouse dock, where the truck loads them for Toulon or Marseille. At the end of each week the fishers are paid at current rates for the pounds of fish delivered.

The manager, meanwhile, tries to swing the best market price he can.

Every morning a phone call determines whether Marseille or Toulon is offering the best prices, and fast handling assures that the Cassis truck will be one of the first arrivals, because only first-comers receive top prices.

The manager has direct interest in smart business: 2% of the earnings are his.

ON THE LAST DAY of the year the books are checked; after costs (gas, etc.) and the manager's cut have been deducted, the fishers decide by majority vote whether to make any new capital outlays.

If not, the remainder of the earnings are distributed to each fisherman according to the value of his total deliveries. Then everybody adjourns to Andre's place to drink a good luck glass of local wine to the new year.

If life of a Cassis fisherman sounds good, you can come and try it, with only two reservations: the first is from the French government: a licensed fisherman must have served two years in the merchant marine—navy doesn't count.

THE SECOND IS from the fisherman themselves: you've got to be willing to pitch in and help the others.

As Lazare and I walked along the pier (heading for Andre's) in the honey-dipped Mediterranean sunshine, we passed several of the fisherman scraping paint on boats. The owner, no Tom Sawyer, was bending an elbow too, but he couldn't have sweat any more than the others.

Lazare waved a greeting. "We work together," he said. "It's only natural."

Pomeroy Re-Elected To Alumni Council Of Detroit College

Fraser E. Pomeroy, 1320 Dorchester was re-elected a member of the alumni advisory council of the Detroit Commercial College at the annual meeting of the administrative board, according to an announcement released Monday by President R. J. McLean of the college.

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Soap Box Derby Has Seven Local Entries In Test Runs Today

Seven area boys are entered in the annual Soap Box Derby through North Chevrolet company, local sponsor.

The boys: Dick Kappler, 13, of 28010 Sunset; Jim Somers, 11, of Berkeley; Campbell Harlan, 14, 284 Piquing; John Hobart, 13, 28510 Lathrup; Mike Koskinen, 12, 18840 San Jose; Robert D. Drennan, 97185 Seneca highway, and Charles Potter, 12, Milford, were guests of the company Thursday evening at a dinner.

Arrangements were in charge of S. E. Watson, sales manager for North Chevrolet and J. P. DeMars, 1950 chairman.

The trial runs are being held today at Rouge Park. The winner of this event will compete in the finals at Akron, Ohio, on Sunday, August 13.

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