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# THE BRITISH TRAWLING INDUSTRY

From  
Press Branch  
W P W

TRAWLERS TO OPEN THE BOOKS TO THE MINISTER

Prime Minister's 'own' trawler 'For Sale'

*ms* <sup>2</sup> PRIME MINISTER  
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When Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Mr. Peter Walker and Britain's fishermen review the financial state of the industry next week (Thursday, July 3) the Minister will be told there is a 'For Sale' notice on virtually every trawler in the British fleet - including Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher's 'own' trawler, the Lowestoft based Boston Sea Stallion

As Leader of the Opposition the Prime Minister launched Boston Sea Stallion at Great Yarmouth just two years ago. The modern stern trawler was one of a new class of vessel specially designed to fish in Britain's own 200-mile limits but, due to the present imbalance in the international market, has been losing money heavily like the rest of the trawler fleet.

In common with other British Fishing Federation members Boston Deep Sea Fisheries have been compiling a record of their operating costs for the Ministry and a spokesman for the company, which has already sold three similar vessels abroad, said: "Boston Sea Stallion finished her financial year in March well in the red and has since been losing at the rate of at least £2,000 a trip. We cannot stand that sort of loss for much longer and, like the rest of our trawlers, she's for sale if the right offer comes along."

At the meeting with Mr. Walker the fishermen will be citing the continuing flood of low priced imports from subsidised fleets, aided by the continuing strength of the pound, as the main cause of their problems.

Most of the damage has been caused by a flood of fresh or chilled fish imports from other EEC countries, much of it brought in by ferry in refrigerated road transport, benefitting from the combination of unrestrained fishing and Government subsidies. In the first four months of this year these totalled 51,624 tonnes, a 31 per cent increase over the 39,405 tonnes in the same period last year, while the price was seven per cent lower.

As in previous years frozen fish imports showed a decline in April but over the first four months frozen cod imports were up by 19 per cent from 16,985 to 20,274 tonnes which means cold store stocks will continue to have a depressing effect on British quayside markets through the summer months irrespective of the continued level of imports.

A spokesman for the British Fishing Federation said: "The message to the Minister will be clear. The target might be a satisfactory Common Fisheries Policy by the end of the year but, without further aid, there will be little British fishing industry left to take advantage of it."