

## FISH FOR THE



Chiu Chiang river South of Canton.

It was the tenth such charter flight to be made by CAT this year and the fourth year in a row that fish-shippers had chosen CAT airlift in preference to any other.

The total load airlifted on each flight comes to four tons of river water with the millions of babies in the water a negligible weight factor. The shipper, Mr. K. C. Tsai, owner and manager of the Kwong Tack Co., Hongkong, refers to his product as "fish fry," small fry fish fry, that is.

Tsai informed this correspondent that the best market for the baby fish is Taiwan, and next comes Singapore, Siam and Swatow. Before the war, large quantities also were shipped to

Japan and Amoy.

The mainland's Communist authorities encourage the export of the fish as it brings in considerable revenue. A duty of 10% is levied.

The shipper went on to say that the mother fish lay eggs only once a year (in spring or early summer). When the Spring streams of water begin to pour down from the surrounding mountains into the Kwangtung rivers it seems to have the property of stirring up the mother fish's reproductive instincts. Four varieties of baby fish are bred in the waters of the Chiu Chiang River:

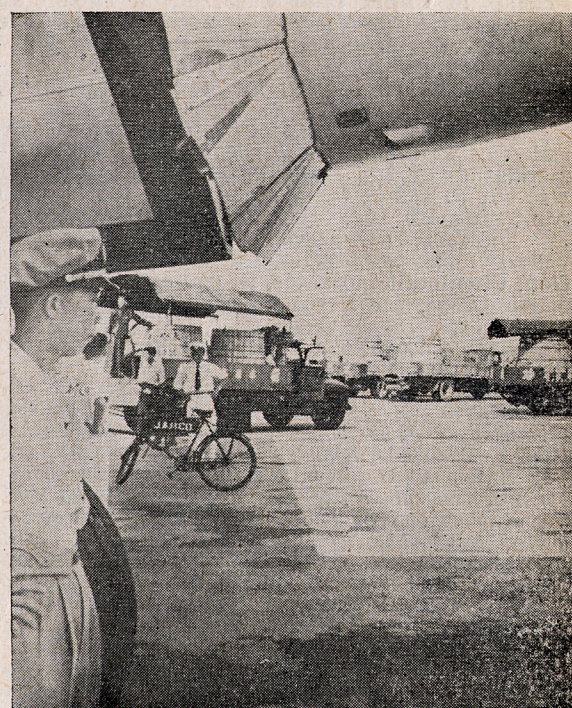
Silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix* (C. & V.)), Grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idellus* (C. & V.)), Mud carp (*Cirrhina molitorella* (C. & V.)), Big head (*Aristichthys nobilis* (Richardson)).

These fish, said the shipper, are not found anywhere else in the Far East.

After the eggs hatch out into fingerlings 1-inch to 1½ inches in length, they are carried down the river by the current. Now comes the difficult job of catching them. A dam is placed across the swift waters leaving an outlet to the next dam. Thus a pool is formed between the two dams: from it the baby fish are pulled out in nets. Then they are poured into



HONGKONG HEADQUARTERS at 4 Queen's Road, West, of Kwong Tack Co., sellers of baby fish (Paul Tay)



TRUCKLOADS OF BABY FISH are trucked onto taxiway immediately after arrival of special CAT C-46 from Tainan. Traffic Officer, Shorty Tam, extreme left, supervises loading operation (Paul Tay)

## PONDS OF TAIWAN

by Paul Tay

big wooden tanks or into tubs ready for sale. Vital to keeping the babies alive is an ingenious arrangement for keeping the water in the tubs in constant motion: wooden floats are tied to racks placed on top of the tanks and these are continuously tilted.

And just how do they go about the job of counting babies whose numbers run into the millions of millions? Well, first they section a tank into halves by inserting a wooden board. Then the tank is further sectioned into quarters, eighths and sixteenths. Water is then dipped out of a sixteenth section and the baby fish in it are counted. Multiply by sixteen and there's your answer. Simple.

Next step in the long process of getting the fish to market comes in shipping them to Chien Shan and from there to Macao by river boats. Each boat carries six tons of fish-in-water. Small holes are drilled in the bottom of the boats to permit free circulation of the water. On arrival at Macao they are transferred to round wooden tanks and shipped to Hongkong. There the babies are trucked to the New Territories and dumped into fish ponds until transportation to their various eventual destinations has been arranged.

Since the hatching season lasts only from the third to the seventh month of the lunar cal-

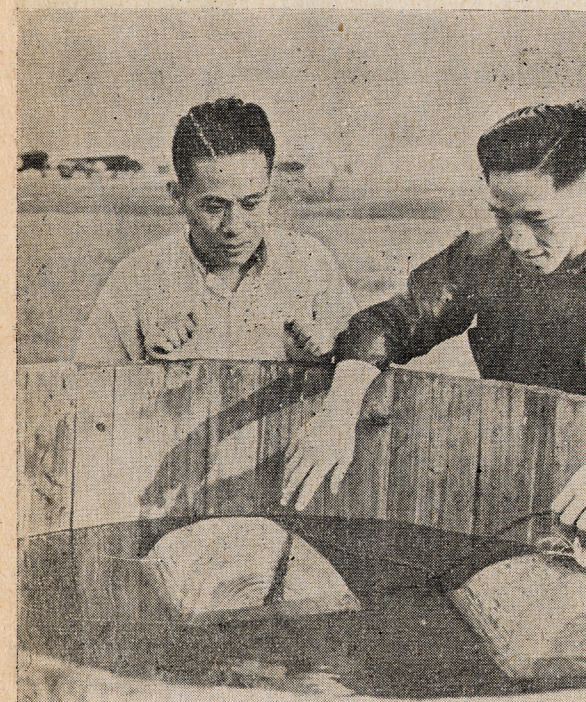
endar, the baby fish are brought into Hongkong in quantities sufficient to satisfy the year-around demand. At their temporary quarters in New Territories' ponds, the babies are fed a special variety of mountain grass costing HK\$20 per day. They will grow to marketable size in four months' time.

Some years ago, shippers were using the services of another China airline for airlift of their product to Taiwan. The record showed only 5% alive on arrival. So they tried out CAT. No one in CAT seems to be able to explain the whys and wherefores, but the records show an amazing 95% alive on arrival after CAT airshipment. Ever since that year, CAT has handled the fish airlift to Taiwan on an exclusive basis.

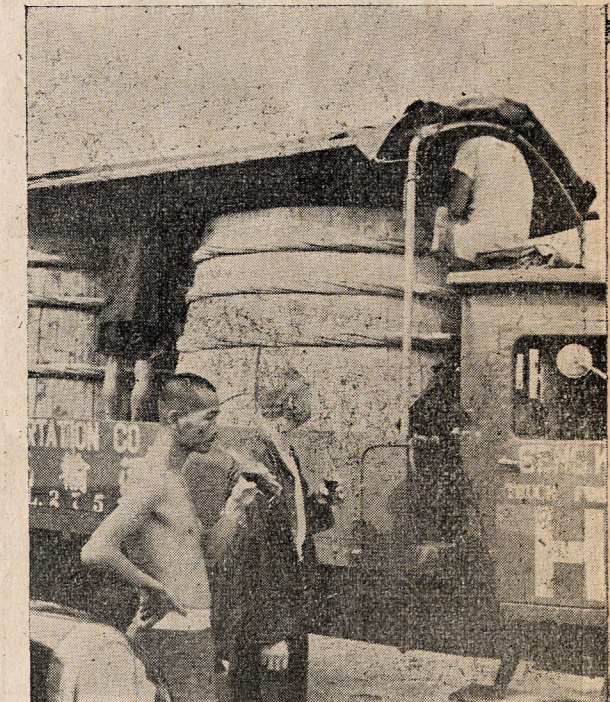
Loading the fish on the plane is as laborious a job as catching them in the first place. I watched the loading of XT-840 and it took two solid hours for the whole operation. At the Kwong Tack Company, four huge tanks of baby fish were loaded onto two trucks. Six other tanks, some empty and some filled with fresh water, were sent ahead to the field to await the arrival of the CAT charter plane from Tainan. It came in at 10 o'clock and no time was lost starting the loading operation.

First, four empty wooden tubs were lashed

(TURN PAGE PLEASE)



INGENIOUS FLOATS, designed to keep water in tanks in which baby fish are shipped in constant motion. Kwong Tack employees test floats prior to placing tank in plane (Paul Tay)



AWAITING LOADING OF TANKS on aircraft, two Kwong Tack employees enjoy a "pause that refreshes" (gift of the boss) while two others continue the never ending job of manipulating the floats that keep the water in motion (Paul Tay)