

# PATRONS OF INDEPENDENT FISHERMEN ARE BLACKLISTED BY TRUST.

## PALADINI DENIES TRUST FISH A POOR BUSINESS

Achille Paladini said yesterday that the trust has no existence in fact, but only in the imagination of jealous rivals.

Although his property holdings are estimated at \$1,000,000, Paladini was behind the counter in his market when interviewed, performing barakini on a stack of sandabs.

"The trust is all crazy talk," he said. "I make only small money. I sell fish for 3 or 4 cents. The retailer, he makes all the money. I sell the fish cheap."

"I am a very busy man and have to work hard. I make only expenses. Sometimes fish is scarce, it sells high. When lots of fish it sells cheap. It is hard to make money with fish. I have to work myself to make it go."

In proof of cheap prices he pointed to some sole and rockcod, which he said were going at the unusual price of 5 cents a pound.

As news of a new and independent fishing company, headed by Joseph Catania, has been agitating the fish circles, Paladini was asked what he thought of the enterprise.

"I don't know about an independent company," said Paladini. "You think I make a million, well, let them make a million. Catania? Oh, he has too much mouth. He talks in his hat. It is all crazy talk, this trust business. Fish is a very poor business."

trict attorney, "to warrant me in laying it before the grand jury—sufficient, I think, for the finding of indictments and for conviction. I shall proceed at once and it is my intention to conduct the inquiry personally. The testimony at hand shows an outrageous condition of affairs. I think we shall be able to break up this manifestly unlawful combination and to that end I shall direct all my energies."

The district attorney did not wait a needless minute after he was satisfied with the evidence gathered for him by The Call's investigators. Last night the presentation of this evidence began before the grand jury. District Attorney Fickert himself questioned the witnesses. With him in the grand jury room was his assistant, Aylett Cotton. When it comes to the trial of the cases against the fish trust's responsible heads, Attorney Sales will probably sit at the prosecution table as the special assistant of the district attorney.

### FIRST WITNESSES CALLED

The witnesses called by Foreman Goldman last night to open the inquiry were Captain Anders C. Johnson, Charles Whitlock, Frank P. Martin, Jack McHendry, Giovanni Tofanelli and Joseph Catania. Their testimony outlines the case, which will be completed at further sessions of the jury.

District Attorney Fickert, who intends to go slowly and thoroughly, was present in the jury room with Assistant District Attorney Aylett Cotton.

Among the first of the new witnesses found by The Call is Captain Johnson, who has commanded trawling tugs for more than six years for both the Western and Paladini companies. While the independent company was making its fight for life last year he had charge of the tug Liberty. But after the independent went under he returned to the Western.

Whitlock was engineer on the Paladini tug Henrietta from November, 1908, until last February.

### DEEP SEA CATCH LIMITED

The testimony of these men goes to show that the Paladini and Western companies conspired deliberately to limit the deep sea catch they monopolized, which consisted mainly of soles and sand dabs. Conspiracy was evident in the limiting of the catch by the fish boss, under orders from the owners, who threw the excess overboard. It was further shown in the arrangement made

District Attorney Charles M. Fickert (left), Attorney Dudley D. Sales and Attorney General U. S. Webb in consultation on the problems presented by the case of the fish trust.



## FISH PRICES CLOSE TO HIGHEST CHARGE FOR CHOICE CUTS OF MEAT

The retail price of fish, through the machinations of the trust, has been held close to that of the meats. This relation is neither natural nor just, for fish and meat are governed by entirely different economic conditions. Livestock requires food, shelter, care and expensive transportation, yet, even at that, the wholesale butchers make an enormous profit.

The most favorable retail fish prices for the pound during the last three months have been as follows:

Striped bass	18	cents	Barracuda	15	cents
Salmon	17	"	Rock cod	14	"
Soles	12½	"	Halibut	15	"
Sand dabs	15	"	Shad roe	17½	"
Smelt	15	"	Shad	10	"

These were the prevailing prices when each variety named chanced to be plentiful. During the latter half of April smelts and striped bass were never sold at less than 20 cents a pound in the Western fish company's retail booth in the California market.

Across the aisle from the Western's booth in the market is the meat department of A. Decourtieux & Co. The retail prices of meat, unlike fish, have been standard during the three months past. According to Decourtieux, they are by the pound:

Porterhouse	20	cents	Rib roast	10	cents
Tenderloin	18-15	"	Spring lamb roast	18	"
Sirloin	15-12½	"	Lamb fore quarter	15	"
Round	12½	"	Loin mutton chops	15-12½	"
Lamb chops	20-15	"	Round of beef	8	"
Pork chops	20	"	Chucks of beef	6	"
Rib roast (choice)	18	"			

The most expensive cut of steak is the middle porterhouse, at the fancy price of 25 cents.

between the two companies after the failure of the independent company last July. By this pact the tugs of each company fished on alternate days and divided the catch with each other, keeping expenses down and the price of fish up.

These witnesses clinch what the senate committee only suspected.

Martin was employed by the Carley drayage company from the April of 1908 to the same month of 1909, while that firm had the contract of hauling fresh fish from the trust markets, principally the Western and Paladini, to the X. L. O. grease company's plant in the southern part of the city. It was at the X. L. O.'s plant that the process of making glue from fish was perfected. For a few dollars, the X. L. O., as a side concern of the Western, daily bought tons of fresh fish which could not be sold to the public without a reduction of price. The families of the drivers ate fish until they tired of it. The superintendent of the works and employees made a practice of taking fish home and of giving it to friends.

### TWELVE TONS A DAY FOR GLUE

All that Martin saw also came into the experience of Jack McHendry, also a teamster. McHendry has hauled as much as 12 tons of fish a day to the X. L. O. It was good enough for Superintendent Born to take home for his own table. McHendry supplied his own family with fish until they objected. He found it as good as could be found in the markets. Most of it came from Paladini's and the Western's places.

Tofanelli, a retailer at Bush and Sixteenth streets, was the strongest witness to appear against the trust during the session of the senate committee, for he saw his own name on the official blacklist prepared by Paladini and Manager Trapani of the Western trust at the time the trust was boycotting the Portola company last winter. His story of the affair before the committee was as follows:

### ON THE BLACKLIST

"I bought fish from the Portola company three or four times. One morning I stopped in front of Paladini's and went in. Paladini called to me and said, 'Look here, you are on the blacklist.'"

"I said, 'How is that? I always pay my bills every week.'"

"Paladini said it was not for that, and he called me in the office and showed me the list, with half a dozen different names, my brother and myself. Paladini said I did wrong to buy of the Portola."

Tofanelli was then made to understand that if he gave up the Portola, which handled salmon mainly, he might be able to get soles and sand dabs as usual. Paladini implied that the blacklisting was done at the order of the Western.

Tofanelli explained his position to the Portola people. But a few days later they came to him with the story that differences had been patched up with the trust. So Tofanelli was tempted to buy salmon there again.

### TROUBLE IS THREATENED

On his next visit to Merchant street, the retailer was called in by Paladini, who said there would be trouble if he went to the Portola any more. So thereafter he bought of Paladini.

Joseph Catania has an intimate knowledge of the workings of the trust, with 40 years of experience in the fish business. The firm now carries the names of the sons as Catania Bros., but its founder is still active in the business and will assume the management of the new trawling company which will break the trust's monopoly of soles and sand dabs next month. His testimony before the grand jury may be corroborated by his sons, Clifton and Gerald.

Last November, Paladini gave Catania permission to rent part of his store to the Portola fishing company. Five days later Paladini ordered him to put out the Portola people on the penalty of being deprived of soles and sand dabs if he refused. Catania did not obey, and found this supply cut off. A week later he called on Trapani, manager of the Western, on the advice of Paladini.

## "ALL TALK," SAYS TRAPANI TRUST MAN ONLY LAUGHS

Manager Trapani of the Western company shares Paladini's ignorance as to the existence of the trust and the new anti-trust company.

Trapani is about 30 years old, typically Italian in appearance, but thoroughly American in his manner. He is handsome and dresses well. As he was brought up in the fish business, he knows it from every angle and obtained his appointment on merit.

While Trapani is given credit for being the shrewdest man in the trust he laughs at the idea of its existence.

"This is all talk," he said, "just talk. There is not much to be made in the fish business. The Catanias are trying to get into our trade. That's all there is to it."

In the presence of Catania and his son, Clifton, Trapani said he would drive business away from the Catanias also unless they put the Portola people out of their place. Trapani offered on this occasion to make good the rent lost through the breaking of their lease with the portola.

### TIRED OF THE COMBAT

The Portola people were by this time sick and tired of the ineffective struggle against the trust and volunteered to leave. But when Catania asked for the rent lost on this account, Trapani went back on his word and refused to pay a cent.

Among other things, Catania is able to tell of the successful fight made last year by the trust against the Independent fish trawling company, of which he was a promoter.

The trust at the present time has placed a ban on the Catania firm, which has to get its supply of soles and sand dabs from peddlers or friends.

## INDEPENDENT FISH MEN ARE RUINED BY MONOPOLY

In the days before the fire the fish peddler with pushcart and tin horn was a familiar figure in all parts of San Francisco, and especially so in the district south of Market street. Fish was then cheaper than the poorest grades of meat. It was still in the reach of the poor man directly after the fire, when the retail business was done largely by peddlers. But as conditions became more settled the temptation to gouge became general among the men handling necessities. Out of this temptation came the fish trust.

### PALADINI THE BULLDOZER

Achille Paladini can scarcely be called the brains of the movement to monopolize the fish business, but he has not tailed on the side of zeal. His personality colors the trust's dealings. He has been the first in bulldozing independent dealers. He has ground the public for every cent that is in it and sent tons of food to the reduction works rather than see the price come within the means of the poor.

Paladini is a millionaire. But he is not a proud millionaire. He is at his market in Merchant street between Montgomery and Sansome long before dawn and does not leave till sundown. He owns valuable North beach property, stables, steam tugs, brick buildings and his own ice works, yet he may be seen in his market at any time of the day, cleaning boxes out in front, or behind the counter pulling the entrails from fish just as he did 40 years ago.

### HE CAN SIGN A CHECK

Paladini's scholarship does not go very far. If given time he can add up a bill, and he can sign his name to a check. But there is no detail of his business over which he hasn't an eye.

Paladini owns steam trawling boats. So does his greatest rival, the Western fish company. The markets of the two companies adjoin, and their trawling boats lie up against the same pier at the foot of Filbert street. It was only natural, under the circumstances, that the elderly but energetic pioneer in the business should strike a working agreement with the younger Antone Trapani, manager of the Western.

The first clash between the trust and the independents came in June, 1907, when Catania Brothers brought a suit in the superior court to enjoin the Western, New San Francisco and California fish companies from shutting the Catania firm out of the fishermen's wharf market. This conspiracy was worked through Nicholas Storlesi, who accepts money from the trust while pretending to represent only the fishermen. Storlesi refused to sell fish to the Catanias. But after the suit was brought he would allow them to get a few boxes. On account of its expense and the fact that the Catanias do their buying from outside points the case was allowed to lapse.

### REAL FIGHT IS PLANNED

But an attack on a decrepit old man like Storlesi was not the way to get at the greedy wholesalers. In November of 1908 a real fight was quietly planned by means of an independent company.

The partners in the independent fish trawling company, which was to make them independent of the Western's and Paladini's supply of deep sea fish, were Joseph Catania, J. B. Ingolia, Frank Bellanti, Mando Biagini and George Alioto. They represented Catania Brothers, the California, International, American fish and oyster and Biagini & Co.

With the news of the expected competition, Paladini and Trapani came to a definite agreement, and out of this agreement came the trust, as it is in operation today. The trust immediately refused to sell sand dabs and soles, of which it had the monopoly, to its coming competitors.

### DISASTER FROM BEGINNING

The experience of the new company was disastrous from the start. Bad weather held back its operations until February of last year. The tugs suffered continuous breakdowns. Then Paladini and Trapani tried their best to undermine its business through the intimidation of customers and the cutting of prices.

The method of underselling used by the trust was such as to cause the least general reduction in the retail prices. Dealers in Oakland, Alameda, San Mateo and other points paid the trust the same prices as before the fight. Fish was thrown by the trust suddenly on the local market and sent to the glue works as soon as it had sent prices tumbling. This competition was felt strongest at the wharf.

Several months before the independent company went to smash, which was on July 31 last, the Catanias drew out because they were not getting their pro rata of the catch.

Price cutting became the hottest in July, just before the independents failed.

Soles at this time retailed in the local retail markets as low as four pounds for 25 cents, and sand dabs at three pounds for the same price. The peddlers found an opportunity during this short period, and San Francisco began to eat fish again.

Soles at this time sold generally at the wholesale places for about 50 cents for an 80 pound box. At times it went as low as 25 cents a box. The list of retailers paying these prices has been turned over to District Attorney Fickert by The Call.

### SUDDEN JUMP OF PRICES

These men will also testify that as soon as the independents failed the price of these fish jumped to the neighborhood of \$4 a box.

With the downfall of the independents the trust was put on a strictly business basis, violating the Cartwright law in letter and spirit. The smaller firms were then forced in so that the roll showed Paladini, the Western, the New San Francisco, the California, the International, the American and Biagini & Co. Of these the New San Francisco and California had formerly been in the combination. The California broke away to join the independents. The International, American and Biagini, identified with the independents, had found it useless to fight the Western and Paladini and thus came into the fold.

Emilio Borzone is head of the New San Francisco, Santo Cereghino of

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## ELKS TO DEDICATE NEW EUREKA HALL

Many Members of Herd to Go From San Francisco in a Special Steamer

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

EUREKA, May 12.—The new Elks hall in this city, representing a total outlay of more than \$80,000, will be dedicated with appropriate exercises and a banquet Friday evening, May 27. Judge Henry A. Melvin, associate justice of the state supreme court, will be the orator and Judge Fletcher A. Cutler of San Francisco, law partner of Governor Gillett, formerly of this city, will also deliver an oration.

According to Secretary Charles P. Cutten, 200 or 300 members of the antlered herd are coming from San Francisco and the bay cities to participate in the festivities. The Alameda lodge of Elks is taking the lead in getting together a goodly number to come to this city for the big "house warming."

Cutten said that arrangements had been made with the Pacific Coast steamship company for a steamer to leave San Francisco May 26 for the accommodation of the visiting Elks. There is no steamer scheduled to leave for this port on that day, but the City of Topeka will be held over to run especially for the Elks, and if enough reservations are made the State of California or some other vessel will make the special round trip for the Elks.

Many Elks from the central part of the state are coming to Eureka for the dedication by auto. A large number of lodgemen will visit this city in their own machines.

The Elks special steamer will leave this city on the return trip to San Francisco May 29, a round trip fare of \$15 having been granted by the steamship company. The visiting Elks will be royally entertained.

REAL ESTATE MAN KILLS HIMSELF.—Seattle, May 12.—Frank M. Muckolls, a real estate agent, aged 54 years, shot and killed himself last night. Muckolls had been ill and became despondent. Muckolls was in an adjoining room. The family came from Chicago two years ago and formerly lived in Shelbyville, Ind.

## 132 IMPRISONED IN COAL MINE

MANCHESTER, Eng., May 12.—An explosion in the Wellington coal mine at Whitehaven last night cut off the exit from the 136 miners.

Rescue parties succeeded today in saving four men, but were prevented by gas from reaching the point where most of the men are imprisoned. Every indication was that the inner workings of the mine were on fire, and distracted crowds of relatives surrounded the pit head.

The colliery is owned by the earl of Lonsdale and its workings extend four or five miles beneath the sea.

PICNIC TO BE HELD.—Oakland, May 12.—Oakland Alliance of St. Patrick Alliance American will hold its annual picnic Sunday, May 15, at East Shore park. Music and games will be given.

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