BANK OF MONTREAL
COPY
MAIN AND HASTINGS STS. BRANCH
390 MAIN ST.
VANCOUVER, B.C.

20 West 36th Avenue,
Vancouver, B. C.
18th October 1940.

Messrs Jos. A. Craig & Robt. L. Hacker,
c/o U. S. Bureau of Fisheries,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sirs;-

Just recently I received from the Bureau your "History and Development of the Fisheries of the Columbia River." I was much interested in this and congratulate you on the scope, thoroughness and general accuracy of your accomplishment.

Up to 1902 I was closely connected with the Columbia river fishery and counted most of the pioneer packers as personal friends. From boyhood I knew intimately all the Humes, McGowans, Cooks, Warrens, Kinney, Megler, Hanthorn, Devlin and many others. My business interests took me all over the coast from California to Alaska and I was in close touch with all the operators from San Francisco to Behring Sea.

In those days there was no Pacific Fisherman; no prepared record of coast or river packs; and, although all were greatly interested, there was no attempt made by any operator in one district to ascertain what was being done by their competitors in other districts. My connection with all sections of the industry gave me access to information that all were anxious to know and I made it a practice to oblige them as much as possible. On this account I gathered pack records in all districts; learned who the various operators were, when they started, etc., and I think the data in this way acquired covering the industry up to the time the Pacific Fisherman was founded was more full and accurate than can be secured elsewhere. As an instance I might mention that my records include the 1901 canned salmon pack of the Columbia river which you were unable to secure.

As to the earliest operations my record does not differ from yours as only round figures were given then and nothing but chinook was packed. Since 1906 the data compiled by the Pacific Fisherman is accurate and correct. However, from 1888 to 1906, both inclusive, my figures cannot always be reconciled with yours but I think mine are the most accurate. I enclose herewith a table covering my compilation for the years in question. The cause of the differences I believe to be the trade jeolousies that made packers exaggerate their production and ½ lb. flats of 48 tins to the case were often counted by them as full cases. This made their packs appear larger than actually was the case. These descrepancies would be in chinooks and bluebacks only, the cheaper grades going altogether in 1 lb. tall tins.

There are also one or two subjects discussed by you in the body of your text concerning which I think you might wish to know something further. I will touch on them as briefly as possible.

1. The first automatic fish cleaning machine was not that produced at Bellingham in 1903 but one that was invented by Samuel Haigh of California, (formerly of Haigh & Sons, Fraser river salmon packers), the American patent rights for which were sold by him about 1900 to the Alaska Packers Association. The Haigh machine was successfully operated until it was superceded by the "Iron Chink" the latter's scope covering a greater number of operations.

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2. As you may have noticed, changes in temperature causes water to form on the exterior of filled tins and they are then said to "sweat." Unless care is taken this results in rusty tins. Up to the opening of the Panama Canal all canned goods destined for European consumption was shipped in sailing vessels around Cape Horn. In this journey they passed through the tropics twice, once in the Pacific and again in the Atlantic. The voyage usually took from 4 to 5 months during which time the shipments were twice subjected to this sweating process. It was to prevent this rusting of tins that cans were first painted, and in later times lacquered, not just the aesthetic taste of the English buyers.

3. Tissue wrapping was not employed in the early days of the industry. nor has it ever been in vogue in the English market. It was first introduced when certain packers commenced using white and embossed labels and tissuing was then resorted to to keep the labels clean. As English buyers do their own labelling on the arrival of shipments in England only lacquering was necessary for their requirements at this end.

4. All the pioneer packers had their own brands and these were quickly established in the English market where most of the early packs were disposed of. Unfortunately these brands were not registered there by their originators and English brokers discovering this fact registered them in their own names with the idea of thus compelling the packers to continue the agency indefinitely with those who were the registered owners of the brands. However, it did not take many years before the merits of Columbia river chinook salmon became known to American consumers, with the result that the latter demand absorbed practically the entire pack. English buyers had to look elsewhere for their requirements and used their registered brands on other varities of salmon, first on Sockeye, then Alaska Red and finally Siberian salmon, for the chinook quality on which the popularity of the brands had originally been founded. Today the best selling brands in the British trade are still these old favourites that bear the names of Hume, John West and other pioneer packers of the Columbia river.

I thought perhaps you might find the above information useful at some future time if occasion for revising your Columbia river data arises. In the meantime you can file it away with your other notes.

Yours faithfully,

HD/P.

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