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January 15th 1904

E. E. Evans Esq
c/o Messrs Pinn Vaughan & Co
No. 1 Drapers Gardens
London E.C.

Dear Evans;

Your brother this morning gave me your address and in accordance with my promise I will post you on the up to date developments. Under ordinary circumstances happenings at directors meetings are supposed to be strictly sub rosa, but as you belong to the Chosen few I do not think I am acting wrongly in giving you the details of what occurred.

In the first place the meeting took place yesterday. The first thing considered was the performa balance sheet submitted which showed a profit on 1902 operations of $148797.00 and on 1903 only $306.75. These two amounts were further augmented by the increase in value of Albion 1901 pack, of $12141.75. The startling difference between the realized profit for 1903 and what had been expected was due to the differences in the inventories of material as compared with the values given them in 1902. Of course this profit may possibly be increased somewhat from the reserves against reclamations and selling charges such reserves amounting to about $95000. The balance sheet was subjected to considerable discussion and it was finally decided on Murray's suggestion that a committee be appointed by the executive to visit each company and recheck the inventories. Of course it is not my funeral so I said nothing, but if Murray had had more practical knowledge he would never have proposed such a thing, as a creditable report is absolutely unobtainable, but outside of Ewen no one seemed to realize it, so the attempt is to be made. I suppose the committee will consist of Bain, Alexander and Rowan and they have my sincerest sympathy.

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After the balance sheet had been disposed of the requirements for next season were discussed and it was explained that exclusive of cost of fish (which of course would be an additional asset) the monetary requirements would probably be $105 000 from each bank. This seemed to be well enough received.

Mr Wilson explained that the orders placed for nets and net sundries amounted to $40 000 and of course will be greatly augmented by the requirements of the fishermen when the fishing season approaches. Consequently my estimate of four months ago that they would be fully $50 000 (which statement was received as an indication of my lack of regard for expenditure) is fully corroborated by the actual result although no notice has been taken of the fact. In the same way the holy horror expressed at last seasons purchase of $108 000 worth of nets when $10 000 worth was already on hand at the season's beginning, and the lack of credence given my statement that the carry over would show little if any increase over 1902, was not followed up by any admissions of mistaken judgement on the part of the directors when the balance sheet confirmed my statement again by showing nets on hand at the close of 1903 was $100 200.00 or $2000 less than the preceding season.

The discussion of sundry correspondence followed and then came half a dozen letters from Murray which furnished the afternoons amusement. These letters I will take up in order.

Re Australian sales. The correspondence between you and Murray was read and he asked how the prices at which sales were made compared with English offers at the time, and whether such prices compared favorably with what could have been obtained later on. He also desired to know how sales came to be made at "a time when the market was pressing as our friend (yourself) would say" when the pack

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was short and when it was reasonable to expect advances would occur. Wilson and I both said you had discussed prices with us before accepting offers and that at the time we considered the prices exceedingly good. After considerable discussion it was decided Mr Ker should look into the matter and at a later meeting submit full particulars re prevailing prices in Canada & England at the time Australian sales were made, together with any other information of interest which might be obtainable.

Re Charter of Ships In this matter Murray rehearsed all his former remarks and insinuations, opposed your idea that better terms could be secured by working through one channel instead of calling for tenders, and stated that even though your plan had been adopted he saw no reason for going outside of B.C. for assistance. He thought local people should be given the preference and wanted to know why Rither or Ward - who were in just as good a position to serve us as was B.C. Co - had not been given the securing of boats for us. Erwen and I tried to explain their inferiority, and Erwen appealled to Ker for confirmation, but Ker's remarks were short and conveyed no enlightening information. Things were rapidly drifting away from a satisfactory conclusion when I walking lead trumps and took the game. He began by quietly remarking that he did not see the object of talking it over any further. He supposed Mr Murray's letters were written to get the information contained in your replies and that with those replies the question should be allowed to drop. He had not heard that anything deragatory to the Company interest had been attempted, no loss had been entailed and the whole matter was a thing of the past. The executive were all cognizant of what had occurred; were a unit in considering the bargain a good one; they were supposed to live up to the responsibilities of their positions and he failed to see where anything was to be gained by looking further

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into the matter. Mr Murray subsided, and I commenced to feel proud of Mr Sweeny.

Re weighing machines Mr Murray wrote to know by whom and by whose authority these had been ordered. I replied that I saw no reason for bringing this up again as it had already been discussed at previous meetings and had further been explained in a report I had made, a copy of which had been given him. He answered he had no recollection of hearing it discussed at former meetings, and remembered no report on the subject. I said "It was included in my general report on expenditure" "Oh! that great big wad of papers! I never took the trouble to read through that stuff" "Well," I replied, "it was part of that great big wad" Then Wilson took a hand and explained I had ordered them on my sole responsibility that there was only one conversation he had relating to the purchase of three machines, and that he, you and I were all present. I replied I remembered that conversation and its resolution to purchase but three machines, but that the increased number were ordered as the result of an after consultation between Ewen, himself and I. Wilson declared up and down he had never been a party to any such conversation. Both Ewen and I declared he had, and after quite a long discussion he admitted he had talked it over with us but that the actual number of 24 machines had not been mentioned. As this was something I could not tell myself until I figured up the lines of machinery we had, and which as a result of the conversation were to have a weighing machine included in its equipment I consider his objection irrelevant and entirely beside the question. However the discussion ceased without any results except that I could see that Ewen's and my declaration and Wilson's final admissions had not altered their opinion of the responsibility being wholly mine, and I further learned Murray was so unfair that according to his own admission he had not read my side of the expenditure story, and therefor had

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made his report to the bank and the Boston shareholders with the full knowledge he had only taken one side of the case. If he did so with me, equal credence can be given to his reports concerning you, that lead up to the recommendation to accept your resignation as well as mine.

Re purchase of 1903 tin plates, pig tin, groceries & gum boots. The gum boot question was taken up first but outside of Mr Keir's explanation that the carry over was not large, the goods all right in value and that there would be no difficult in disposing of the stock on hand during next season, there were no further comments. The tin plate and pig tin question came next and proved a curtain raiser to the chef-d'oeuvre of the afternoon. Murray wanted to know if tenders had been called for every lot purchased. Keir said he had been looking over the contract book but had not time yet to do it thoroughly and that while he could not find bids for every case, he might find them after a more exhaustive search. I said I thought in some cases no tenders had been called for because ~~because~~ we picked the goods up just as we required them and when we knew just who had them. In this manner we bought all the spare pig tin Ward had to sell and in the same way had purchased 2000 bxs of tin from your company. Wilson thought this was some belonging to Bell-Irving, and while he was not sure whether tenders had been called he thought the price was all right. But the vials of Murray's wrath had to be opened and he retorted on Wilson that he noticed while Wilson had been very free in running down to him with tale after tale reflecting on my actions in such a manner as to give him the impression I was helping myself and friends at the expense of the company, he was attempting to shield you, because he never had reported the irregular things in connection with you. I wanted to join in here to get particulars about Wilson's insinuations about me — which by the way Wilson did not deny having made — but before I had a chance Wilson mixed it with Murray in insinuating

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he was crooked in shielding some crookedness on your part and he strongly resented any such imputation. He did not know whether tenders had been called for in every case but that Mr Ker had been ~~poring~~ poring over the contract book for weeks and he could advise him on that point. Ker said he had not been more than a few hours looking up the contract book, Wilson said he had. Ker that he hadn't, and the conversation between those two became some what animated, until finally Murray — who in the meantime had cooled down somewhat — said that the matter could be again reported on when Mr Ker had completely his examination and added that it was not his object to stir up trouble, that what he wanted ~~was~~ was facts and to know why the directors were not properly consulted and advised, and further that whatever he had said about E.C.&C., B.C.&Co, or yourself, he would have said just as openly and just as strongly had you been present.

But then came the grand finale. Mr Murray had remarked when the reading of his letters had first commenced that he had prepared a plan for the board to adopt which he thought would safeguard the future. He passed this over to Mr Sweeny who read it carefully, but regarding which he made no comment until the discussion over tin plates had ceased. He then said he not only could not second, but would vote against Murray's resolution (Murray jumped to 120° in the shade) that the proposition which was the appointing of Ker and Stellwell a special committee to look into all transactions of the past and to make recommendations for the future of the following points:-

1. The management & the governing of their actions.
2. The keeping of accounts both at canneries and head office.
3. The purchases, charters, etc.
4. The sales to U.K. with recommendations as to best method for selling there

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5. The selling in Canada & Australia
6. Any ~~of the~~ other matters concerning the Ass^n welfare which occurred to them.

I may not have these quite right but the intent is fully expressed. Sweeny objected and gave his reasons and Murray quite angrily said "Well Mr Secretary, there is my resolution. I wish it entered in the minutes with the statement it was not seconded, and I want a copy of it sent east with the copy of the minutes. I wish them to know my views in the matter"

Then Sweeny came back finely "Mr Secretary" - he quietly remarked, "you will also please state in the minutes that I objected. That I would gladly welcome any report from Mr Halliwell and would like him to suggest anything he can that will benifit the Ass^n, in the bookkeeping or accounting line with which he is familiar, but that I not only am opposed to his being asked to report on matters concerning which he has had no experience, but that I would not consider him a fit person to make a competent report. He knows nothing about the canning business, nothing about selling fish, and nothing of the duties of management of the business, and I would strongly resent anything in the nature of a report by him as to how our executive should attend to their duties. We have put them there because they are supposed to have the knowledge required and I consider it as unnecessary and as a reflection on our own judgement to ask a person like Mr Halliwell to comment on the management"

This was all Murray was able to stand and without waiting for a motion to adjourn and forgetting entirely to take up the discussion of distribution of grocery orders, he remarks it was very

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late (it was 6.15) and as there was nothing further to do he was going home. Sweeny immediately rose and the thing was over. For this I was somewhat sorry, for not only had I had a most enjoyable afternoon's entertainment but I had wanted to ask quite a few questions myself, which under the circumstances I thought it inadvisable to mention.

I'll bet you find these the longest minutes of any meeting you have ever heard of, but I am writing this jilly to post you on matters so if you find adverse reports awaiting you at Boston and Toronto you will know all that has occurred since your departure. You will probably have an easier time in Montreal and Toronto than you otherwise might have had, owing to the fact that Mr Sweeny in response to a sudden call left for New York and Montreal to-day and expects to be there a month. It is probable you will meet him there which would be a still greater help toward setting you at least right with the eastern shareholders.

From the fact that all letters re ship charters, Australian sales, and other matters in your department were addressed by Murray to Ker, by Ker's appointment to investigate such prices as sales were made at, and also the tin plate and pig tin tender question; and by the further appointment of Ker to act with Hellwell on the proposed scheme of Murray's, it is quite evident that the latter is boosting Ker along, and it strikes me quite a lot of Murray's present questions are the result of data and suggestions furnished him by Ker.

I trust you are having an enjoyable time and that you found your father much better than you had reason to anticipate. I do not know when I will have anything further to write about, but if I have I will probably address it c/o Geo. Lightbound, Toronto.

Yours sincerely
Henry Doyle