GULF OF GEORGIA HISTORY PROJECT

BACKGROUND PAPERS ON BUSINESS AND SOCIAL THEMES

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March, 1992

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The Gulf of Georgia Cannery 1894-1926: A Business History of the Plant Prior to the Canadian Fishing Company Takeover

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March 1992

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Introduction

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site is based on a much-modified salmon cannery structure that was built in 1894. In its original construction, subsequent operation as a salmon cannery, and modification to suit other purposes, it reflects the changes that have affected the industry as a whole over the past century. This report will focus on the operators and operations of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in the period from its construction to its purchase by the Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. Specific information relating to the technology of fishing and processing in the plant throughout its history and the activities of the Canadian Fishing Company since 1926 have already been discussed in detail in the various reports prepared by Duncan Stacey for the Canadian Parks Service, and it is not intended to repeat his work.

In 1894 to 1926 the Gulf of Georgia Cannery served as a salmon cannery; the emphasis on other fish processing activities came after the Canadian Fishing Company's acquisition and rationalization of plant responsibilities. Throughout the period under examination, the British Columbia fishery was the most productive in Canada. Further, within the British Columbia fishery, salmon canning was by far the dominant aspect. Not only did it represent two thirds of the value of the provincial fishery, but also more than a quarter of the value of the national fishery.

Cannery Ownership on the Fraser River: Overall Trends

Practical factory canning of sockeye salmon for export developed on the Fraser River at the start of the 1870s. There was a rapid period of expansion, both on the Fraser and on the north coast, over the next decade, with the total provincial pack of canned salmon rising from 62,000 cases in 1880 to 255,000 cases in 1882.' The earliest stage of salmon canning in the 1870s was financed by British Columbia merchants, generally based in Victoria. By 1871 Lowe, Stahlschmidt and Company, Victoria commission merchants, were acting as agents for Alexander Ewen, the first commercially successful canner on the river. Two years later another Victoria commission firm, Findlay, Durham and Brodie, were exporting salmon as the agents of John Dease. Also by 1873 the cannery started in 1871 by Captain Edward Stamp was under the control of Henry Holbrook and James Cunningham, general merchants in New Westminster. These firms had all raised their venture capital through activities within British Columbia.'

In the second phase of growth in the industry, in the late 1870s, there was an influx of capital from the already developed west coast American canning centres, particularly northern

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1. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, Vancouver, British Columbia Packers, 1969, p. . The "case" has been the standard measure of production in the fish canning industry. A case is 48 pounds of canned fish, normally meaning 48 one pound cans or 96 half pound cans.

2. H. Keith Ralston, "The 1900 Strike of Fraser River Sockeye Salmon Fishermen", M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1965, pp.19-20.

California and the Columbia River. By 1881 there were eight plants on the Fraser, with a total estimated value of $188,000, and an estimated annual operating cost of $540,000. Roughly 55% of this investment was supplied by British Columbia capital, with most of the rest coming from the United States.[3] This period was also when the development of some northern canneries started, primarily on the Skeena River.

The largest of these American-based commission merchants acting as finance agents for the canning industry was William T. Coleman & Company of San Francisco, followed by a British-based and a Portland-based firm. In British Columbia the top three agents were William T. Coleman & Company, followed by Robert Ward & Company and Welsh, Rithet & Company, both the latter based in Victoria.[4]

In the 1880s there was an abrupt lessening of demand for British Columbia salmon. Unlike the American producers, who had developed domestic markets, the B.C. canners were still export-oriented, with Great Britain the primary consumer. With the 1882-1886 recession in Europe, this market weakened, dropping demand, and as the market became glutted with fish, prices also dropped.' There was also strong competition from the north, with new large-

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3. *Ibid.*, p.21.

4. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries, c.1957, p.25.

5. David J. Reid, The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885 to 1913, Vancouver, Department of the Environment, Fisheries and Marine Service [Pacific Region], 1973, p.iv.

scale fisheries being developed in Alaska. The British Columbia production declined to 108,000 cases, the export income was down to 20% of former levels, and the number of operating canneries was cut in half.[6]

By the end of the 1880s, the British market started to revive, and with it, the interest of British capitalists in becoming more directly involved in the production of salmon on the Fraser River.[7] This also corresponded to the beginning of large-scale limited liability companies in British Columbia. On the initiative of locally-based entrepreneurs, two *large* British-backed companies were established. First, in 1889 the British Columbia Canning Company Ltd. was formed to acquire and operate a number of canneries on the Fraser. Two years later the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd. was formed, purchasing all the former American interests on the Fraser River through W.T. Coleman of San Francisco. Most of the remaining locally owned canneries on the river were assembled under the auspices of the Victoria Canning Company Ltd., headed up by R.P. Rithet & Company, their Victoria *agent.* By 1891 this resulted *in* a situation where the Fraser River canneries were primarily controlled by two British companies and one Victoria company, with only two plants still independently operated. There were no longer direct commercial ties with the

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6. *Ibid.;* Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaae, op. *cit.,* p. .

7. H.Keith Ralston, "Patterns of Trade and Investment on the Pacific Coast, 1867-1892: The Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry", B.C.Studies, No.1 (Winter 1968-69), pp.42-44.

United States.'

This also signalled the start of Vancouver's economic control of the industry, with agents in that city replacing those of Victoria. Henry 0. Bell-Irving, senior partner in the Vancouver shipping and commission firm of Bell-Irving and Paterson, was the leader in assembling the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd.' Likewise, in the 1890s the Vancouver firm of Evans, Coleman and Evans & Company, the agents of the British firm Balfour & Guthrie, assumed the role of the leading financiers for the canners." As described by Vancouver historian Robert McDonald:

> By 1900 Evans Coleman and Evans of Vancouver had surpassed R.P. Rithet and Company and Robert Ward and Company as the province's leading salmon canning agency. The agencies of George I. Wilson and Farrell, Tregent and Company had also *become an* important part of the Vancouver business community during the decade. Vancouver's role was further enhanced by the intervention of eastern Canadian banks into salmon canning after the establishment of bank branches in the Terminal City in the late 1890s.[11]

By this time the mechanisms for establishing a cannery were

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8. Ibid.

9. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1977, p.129. The company was incorporated in England with an authorized capital limit of £200,000 in April of 1891. Bell-Irving had acquired options on the nine original canneries for a total of $330,000, and gathered the required capital from relatives and friends *in* Britain, *ibid.*

10. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries, c.1957, p.25.

11. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", *op. Cit.,* p.80. Both Evans Coleman & Evans and George I. Wilson were active in the affairs of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

well institutionalized, facilitating the whole process and resulting in a boom in plant development. Henry Doyle, who was the primary mover behind the attempt to consolidate all British Columbia canneries in the early twentieth century, later offered his thoughts on the situation in the 1890s:

> It was a comparatively easy matter for a new company to get financed. First, an agent such as Robert Ward & Co. or Evans, Coleman & Evans was secured. They furnished, under the protection of a chattel mortgage, the tinplate, pig tin, coal for fuel, etc.; they shipped the resultant packs to England on sailing vessels they had chartered for their *own* account; or sold Canadian buyers, under the agents' own private brands, what canned salmon the home markets could absorb. They made a profit on what supplies they furnished the canners; on transportation charges on the ships they chartered; and they were paid a net 2 1/2% brokerage on what the packs sold for if sent abroad, or 5% on Canadian sales.[12]

Doyle identified the agents as the essential component of the equation, as well as the participants that stood to make the largest share of the profit. Doyle used Charles S. Windsor, the canneryman responsible for the founding of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, as an example of how someone with canning experience could get backing from such agents, and the potential of the partnerships."

Another factor which affected development of the salmon canning industry on the Fraser River, both in terms of new construction and changes in ownership, was the cycle of the sockeye salmon. The emphasis in the early days of canning on the Fraser

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12. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries, c.1957, p.200.

13. Ibid., p.202.

was on this species alone, so its natural cycle determined when the canners were capital-rich, and hence able to embark on new ventures. Sockeye runs up the Fraser to spawn each summer in July and early August. The runs follow a four year cycle of one dominant, or "big run" year, followed by a subdominant year and then two off years. The dominant years in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were 1889, 1893, 1897, 1901, 1905, 1909 etc. As these huge runs presented the best chance for the canners to make a large profit, there was an incentive to open plants just for the dominant run, or enlarged existing plants to increase their capacity. If the canners were successful in the dominant year, they often established new plants or new companies prior to the next season with the boom-year profits providing the seed capital.

If one of the major agents was willing to back the construction of a new plant, other businesses would willingly extend credit:

> ...sawmill owners would vie with each other to supply on credit the lumber required for building purposes and the salmon boxes in which the packs would be cased. Small marine yards built the fishing boats needed, agreeing to wait until the season's close for payment, or, in some instances, taking stock in the new enterprise for a part or the whole of what the boats were invoiced at. Fishing supply companies sold nets and their accoutrements to be paid for when the pack was of sufficient size, over and above the agents accumulated advances, to provide banking accomodations. Machinery supply houses equipped the new plants on the like terms. Of the labor costs only the Chinese cannery crews received anything in advance of the packing season and they but approximately a third of what would be earned under their contract. For the rest -- white labor in the cannery or on fish collecting boats, and the fishermen for the salmon caught and delivered -- payment was always deferred until the season's close.

An average sized cannery and its equipment

> represented an investment value of $30,000 to $40,000, and, conceded all the facilities and credits recited above, $5,000 in actual cash, and sometimes even less, would be ample for the initial investment. In the first stage of this expansion one thing that gave confidence to agents, supply houses, and bankers alike was that most of the new companies were organized by men who had previously been employed by old established operators and risked their own accumulated capital in the venture. It was felt, and rightly so, that since they understood the business, and risked their own savings to back their judgement, their prospects of succeeding warranted other commercial interests to extend them a helping hand.[14]

The factors identified by Doyle combined to lure a great number of entrepreneurs into the salmon canning industry in the 1890s, producing a boom in the number of plants:

> Large profits (and the even greater illusion of profit), the small amount of fixed capital needed to establish a cannery and the ready availability of short-term financing had produced a record expansion in the salmon processing industry between 1889 and 1901, when the number of canneries in operation and the number of cases packed tripled."

The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., established in 1894, was typical of this phase of expansion, being a single-plant operation, initiated by the experienced canner Charles Samuel Windsor in anticipation of a dominant year for sockeye, and inanced through agents in Vancouver. However, in spite of the rapid growth in independent plants, the three major companies established at the beginning of the decade still controlled some *70%* of the salmon packed on the Fraser River, so were proving

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14. Ibid., pp.202-203.

15. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", *op. cit.,* p.38.

somewhat more effective than the smaller companies.[16]

A new factor in the 1890s was the arrival of the eastern Canadian banks in Vancouver. This offered a way for the canners to gain some independence from the agents; they could now borrow capital without being tied to a single source for their supplies and a single market for their pack. The Bank of Montreal and the Canadian Bank of Commerce became the main finance sources for the canners, and this fiscal independence also contributed to the growth in the industry." This new source of finance was most relevant to the medium to large companies, with the agents remaining the key factor in allowing the establishment of smaller companies and canneries.

In 1897, a new round of mergers began, which culminated in 1902, with the formation of the British Columbia Packers Association of New Jersey Ltd., which took over 22 existing firms, including the British Columbia Canning Company and the Victoria Canning Company. Immediately on formation, B.C. Packers controlled over 50% of the Fraser River district salmon production.[18] This

16. David J. Reid, The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885 to 1913, op. cit., p.2.

17. Alicja Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force: Historical Notes", in Patricia Marchak, Neil Guppy, John McMullan, editors, Uncommon Property: The Fishing and Fish-Processing Industries in British Columbia, Methuen, Toronto, pp.48-49.

18. David J.Reid, "Company Mergers in the Fraser River Salmon Industry, 1885-1902", in W. Peter Ward and Robert A.J. McDonald, editors, British Columbia: Historical Readings, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1981, p.306 [reprinted from Canadian Historical Review, Vol.56, No.3 (September 1975), pp.282-302].

phase also included the formation of the United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd., which took over the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and various related companies, including two other canneries.

Various explanations have been offered for this flurry of consolidation and mergers around the turn of the century. All writers have agreed that these actions would have had no effect on the world price of the product. British Columbia was a smaller producer than other salmon canning regions, so local changes would not affect the price on the European market. However, mergers would have acted to lower the cost of production in two ways. First, by increasing the size of some canneries while shutting other plants, economy of scale would allow fewer plants to process more fish at a lower cost. Secondly, there was an imperative to control the cost of inputs [raw fish and labour] through limiting the opportunities available to the fishermen and cannery labour. Between 1888 and 1899 the cost of raw fish had risen by some 240%, while the price of canned salmon had declined by about 25%. It has been argued that this provided an inducement for the canners to merge to limit the number of options available to the fishermen and cannery workers, and hence to control the prices paid for the inputs. Although the rise and fall of world prices could not be changed, the canners could lower their production costs through these two devices." Different authors support each of the factors as being the primary factor. David Reid, an economist, thought that "merger for monopsony", in other words, to create a near-

19. *Ibid.*, pp.306-319.

monopoly situation for the purchase of the raw materials and labour, was central to the mergers." Fishing historian Duncan Stacey, on the other hand, has suggested that economy of scale and consequent changes in technology were the primary incentives for merger.[21] Finally, Vancouver historian Robert McDonald suggested that Reid gave "too little consideration to the fact of overcapitalization and the desire by eastern Canadian banks to recoup at least some of their investment."[22] In other words, the capital invested in the numerous small plants was more than required for packing the available or marketable fish, and consequently more than could be repaid through the earnings of those plants. By rationalizing operations, the capital costs could be reduced relative to the potential production of the plants:

> B.C. Packers was formed to solve the crisis of over-capitalization, over-production and declining profits which had plagued the salmon canning industry at the turn of the century as a result of the excessive expansion in the 1890s.[23]

All of these factors probably played some role in the decision to form B.C. Packers' Association. The new combine was based on the models of the Alaska Packers Association and the Columbia River Packers Association, both of which had been formed in the 1890s and

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20. *Ibid.*

21. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Steveston British Columbia, 1894-1930, Ottawa, Canadian Parks Service Microfiche Report Series 129, 1981, p.106.

22. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", op. *cit.*, pp.351-352, note 129.

23. *Ibid.*, p.40.

subsequently proved successful." The two principal players in the merger were Henry Doyle, the managing director of a family fishing supply business, and Aemilius Jarvis, an eastern Canadian financier. Their intentions were aided by the heavy carryover of pack from the big year of 1901, which left many canners indebted to eastern banks. The Bank of Montreal held half of these accounts, the Canadian Bank of Commerce held another 40%, while Molson's Bank held the remainder. Doyle obtained the banks' approval for the amalgamation, while Jarvis had already formed a syndicate and acquired subscribers. The new company was chartered in April 1902 in New Jersey, and was officially called the British Columbia Packers' Association of New Jersey. The three largest companies incorporated into B.C. Packers were the Victoria Canning Company Ltd., Ewen & Company, and George I. Wilson. With the 22 companies incorporated, the new company took possession of 29 of the 48 canneries on the Fraser River, as well as 12 northern canneries.[25] By 1905, the next peak year after the formation of B.C. Packers, the company had reduced the number of its operating canneries on the Fraser from 29 to 15. One of these plants now had 4 lines installed, and three others had 2 lines, with the additional

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24. Alicja Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force: Historical Notes", op. *cit.*, p.51; L. Anders Sandberg, "A Study in Canadian Political Economy: A Critical Review and the Case of the British Columbia Salmon Canning Industry, 1870-1914, M.A. Thesis, University of Victoria, 1979, pp.135-136.

25. Alicja Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force: Historical Notes", op. *cit.*, pp.51-53.

machinery taken from plants which had been shut.[26] This tends to support the argument for economy of scale and consolidation of plant as an explanation of the merger.

As well as creating a dominant force in the salmon canning industry in British Columbia, the formation of B.C. Packers signalled the final shift in control of the canning industry from Victoria to Vancouver. Not only was the headquarters of the new company in Vancouver, but the Rithet interests were acquired. Ward & Company was similarly taken over by Vancouver interests."

An interesting aspect of the formation of B.C. Packers was the behaviour of those companies which did not participate in the merger. J.H. Todd & Company, the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd., and the owners of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd., all indicated their willingness to become involved. However, ultimately all of them stayed out of the merger. It has been suggested that this may have been a ploy on the part of at least some of these firms in order to gain some sort of economic advantage by remaining independent, but the reasons for the change of heart remain unclear." Reid concluded that there was no real advantage in internal economy in larger companies, but that "medium-small" companies such as J.H. Todd &

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26. Duncan A. Stacey, Sockeye and Tinolate: Technological Chanse in the Fraser River Canning Industry 1871-1912, Victoria, British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1982, p.19.

27. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", op. *cit.*, p.80.

28. David J. Reid, The Development of the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885 to 1913, *op.cit.*, pp.24-25.

Company had the highest survival rate in the 1887-1909 period. United Canneries of B.C. was not dissimilar in size to Todd & Company, so perhaps the amalgamation was less attractive to an enterprise of this scale.[29]

With the exception of the formation of B.C. Packers, the rate of change in the salmon canning industry slowed down after the turn of the century:

> Of B.C.'s three principal resource industries, salmon canning, lumbering and mining, canning grew the least between the turn of the century and the First World War. ...
>
> Change then, came not through overall growth but through a greater geographic distribution of canneries along the coast, the application of new technology, and the reorganization of the capital and management structure of the industry.[30]

In 1898, a comparison of the exports of resource commodities had shown the fishery as a major element. Mining exports were valued at $11,614,838, fisheries exports at $3,846,951, and lumber exports at $426,300.[31] This requires some interpretation, in that compared to lumber, which had large domestic sales, fisheries products were nearly all intended for export. However, after the turn of the century, canned salmon was no longer the leading export commodity on the coast as it had been during the 1890s. After

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29. David J. Reid, "Company Mergers in the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885-1902", op. *cit.*, pp.319-320.

30. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", op. cit., p.38.

31. British Columbia, Sessional Paners 1901, Victoria, Queen's Printer, 1901, p.617, Memorial of Salmon Canners' Association to Premier.

booming in that decade, the industry's production only went up 28% in the first decade of the twentieth century.[32] The two exceptions to this were the large scale capitalization of B.C. Packers in 1902 and of Wallace Fisheries Ltd. in 1911, which "paralleled the similar movement to larger more heavily capitalized units in the lumber and mining industries before the War."[33]

By the start of World War I, B.C. Packers remained dominant in the British Columbia industry, producing about 25% of the provincial pack. The War had an impact on this situation, with strong demand and inflated prices in Europe for British Columbia canned fish. In 1913 the total value of all Canadian fisheries was given as $33,389,464, with that of British Columbia given as $14,455,480, or more than all three maritime provinces combined. The value of B.C. salmon was given as $9,540,368, 66.00% of the B.C. total and 28.57% of the national total.[34] The impact of the First World War was such that in 1918, the total value of Canadian fisheries products rose to $60,250,544, with British Columbia contributing $27,185,059 of that, almost double second place Nova Scotia. The value of B.C. salmon was up to $17,207,245, but the

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32. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Victoria, Vancouver, and the Economic Development of British Columbia, 1886-1914", in W.Peter Ward and Robert A.J. McDonald, editors, British Columbia: Historical Readinss, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., p.380.

33. Robert A.J. McDonald, "Business Leaders in Early Vancouver, 1886-1914", op. *cit.*,p.40. Wallace Packers attempted to gain control of the northern canning industry, in the same way that B.C. Packers had become dominant on the Fraser.

34. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1914, Victoria, King's Printer, 1914, p.H7.

percentage remained similar at 63.30% of the B.C. total and 28.56% of the national total value.[35] A market now existed for all the species of B.C. salmon, rather than just sockeye, so new areas on the coast and Vancouver Island, without sockeye but with large runs of the spring and fall varieties, became viable. The prospect of quick riches encouraged the opening of many new plants, often in these new canning districts. Although many of the ephemeral producers did not outlast the War and the subsequent depression of 1920, B.C. Packers' share of the provincial pack declined to about 16% in the 1919-1925 period.[36] With the end of the War, and the post-war depression, in 1921 the total value of Canadian fishery products had declined to $34,931,935, with British Columbia's $13,919,197 putting it into second place behind Nova Scotia. Salmon nearly maintained its percentage of the totals, with $8,577,602 representing 61.62% of the B.C. total and 24.56% of the national production." However, these percentages were of a much smaller total.

A significant entrant into salmon canning during the War was the Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. [Appendix G], formed on April 30,1906, with capital of $75,000, as a fish processing company with

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35. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1920, Victoria, King's Printer, 1920, p.U7.

36. Alicja Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force: Historical Notes", op. cit., pp.55-56.

37. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia. 1923, Victoria, King's Printer, 1923, p.T5.

the emphasis on halibut fishing.[38] In October 1909 Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. was sold to the New England Fish Company, which thereby gained a Canadian subsidiary.[39]

For the first few years, the Canadian Fish Company concentrated on halibut fishing, but in 1918 were granted a salmon canning licence, and began operations at the Home Cannery in Vancouver.[40] Over the next five *seasons* the pack of the Home Cannery continued to grow, from 31,111 cases in 1918 to 50,005 *cases in* 1922.[41] Even *more* significantly, this *one* plant replaced B.C. Packers as the largest producer in the Fraser River district, canning 35.57% of the total district production.

As a result of its success in salmon canning, and its steady income from the halibut fishery, the Canadian Fishing Company was capital-rich at a time when many canneries were in distress. It began a programme of expansion and acquisition in 1923, initially focusing on some of the outlying canneries constructed during the War.[42] While these outlying canneries were purchased, the Home

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38. British Columbia Gazette, 1906, Victoria, King's Printer, 1907, p.1126; Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, op. *cit.*, p.271.

39. *Ibid.* The New England Fish Company itself had started Vancouver operations in 1893.

40. Ibid., p.328.

41. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1919, Victoria, King's Printer, 1920, p.X90; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1920, Victoria, King's Printer, 1921, p.U82; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1923, Victoria, King's Printer, 1924, p.T64.

42. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, op. cit., pp.356,360-361.

Cannery continued to dominate salmon canning in the Fraser River district. Its 1923 pack was 75,558 cases of salmon, almost double B.C. Packers district production, and 33.30% of the district total. The proportion was similar in 1925, with 92,677 cases packed, or 33.47% of the district total." The Canadian Fishing Company's programme of acquisition continued through the 1920s, leaving it in the situation of being the major rival of B.C. Packers in the provincial industry. In 1926, as part of its acquisitions, the Canadian Fishing Company added the Gulf of Georgia Cannery to its plants. The C.F.C. expansion was followed by a new series of mergers and plant consolidations by B.C. Packers in the 1928 period, when the combine reshaped itself significantly."

It has been suggested that a major reason for the disappearance of the smaller packers and the growth of the major companies in the 1920s was based on technology. Although innovations such as the Iron Chink or Smith Butchering Machine and the sanitary can system had been introduced before the First World War, insurance surveys of canneries in 1923 revealed only about half the plants had butchering machines and about 20% of them still

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43. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1924, *op. cit.*, p.H53; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1926-27, op. *cit.*, p.K58. Although C.F.C. was the largest producer in the district, it packed a much larger percentage of the lower-value species than B.C. Packers, which concentrated more on sockeye.

44. Alicja Muszynski, "Major Processors to 1940 and Early Labour Force: Historical Notes", *op.cit.*, pp.55-56.

made their own cans.[45] With increasing labour costs, this made it difficult for smaller companies to compete with the better-capitalized large companies, which could afford modern machines and could introduce economy of scale by operating multi-line plants.

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45. Ibid., p.56.

Charles Samuel Windsor: Canneryman

The man who seems to have been central to the concept and construction of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was Charles Samuel Windsor. When he died in July 1927 his obituary stated that he came to British Columbia in 1872, and was in turn a storekeeper, the owner of a stage line between Vancouver and New Westminster, and a canner. It reported that he had been associated with the Industrial Cannery in New Westminster [Appendix F], the Scottish-Canadian Cannery in Steveston [Appendix C] and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. "The last-named was built in 1894 by the deceased in company with the late A.H.B. Macgowan and others.""

Henry Doyle, one of the major players in the formation of B.C. Packers, described Charles S. Windsor as a cannery tinsmith working for Alexander Ewen, one of the first canners on the Fraser River. Windsor later moved to one of the early canneries on the Skeena River.[47] The North Western Commercial Company had built one of the first canneries on that river in 1876. Early in 1880 this cannery was bought by Turner Beeton & Company, of Victoria, B.C., who re-

46. B.C.A.R.S., Vertical Files, Film 161, pp.2666-2667, Charles S. Windsor, obituary from Vancouver Province, July 23,1927. Three sons and one duaghter survived him, all in Vancouver; George E., Wilbur N., Philip P., and Miss Grace M. When his son, George, died in 1947 at 62 years old, he was described as the former manager of various Candadian Fishing Company canneries on the coast, and a reference was made to his father having started one of the first canneries on the Fraser in the 1870s, *ibid.*, pp.2669-2670, George E. Windsor, obituary from Vancouver Province, April 1,1947.

47. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries", n.d., pp.200-201.

named the plant Inverness. Windsor, who had been the foreman at the plant prior to the purchase, stayed on under the new owners.[48] Turner Beeton & Company were described as "agents for operating companies", including the Inverness and Balmoral Canneries on the Skeena, and briefly the Garry Point Cannery.[49] In 1882 Windsor was listed in the B.C. directory as the foreman of the Richmond Cannery [Richmond Canning Company]. With Marsh English's Phoenix Cannery, this was *one* of the first two canneries in Richmond municipality. It was described as:

> ...established March, 1882, occupying a substantial building 200x50 feet, employing 200 men and 20 boats. The product being known as the Horse Shoe brand; capacity 500 cases per day.[50]

This plant was said to have been built by a group including Angus Fraser, but was purchased by J.H. Todd & Sons Ltd. before the opening of the fishing season. This was J.H. Todd's first venture into the salmon canning industry.[51] Windsor'was still working as the foreman at this cannery in 1884-1885.[52] Some, like Leslie Ross, have treated Richmond and Beaver canneries, both J.H. Todd owned, as synonymous. However, Lyons listed them separately,

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48. Ibid.; Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, Vancouver, British Columbia Packers Ltd., 1969, pp.149-150,156,164.

49. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries", n.d., p.194.

50. The British Columbia Directory for the Years 1882-83, Victoria, R.T. Williams, 1882, pp.245,243.

51. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, Vancouver, British Columbia Packers Ltd., 1969, pp.168-169.

52. The British Columbia Directory for 1884-85, Victoria, R.T. Williams, 1885, p.180.

stating their dates of establishment as 1882 and 1889 respectively." The provincial and federal cannery records also listed them separately in the statistics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century."

By 1882 Windsor had practical canning experience at a high level, having worked for Ewen, the "father" of the Fraser River salmon canning industry, and having been the foreman at two large canneries on the Skeena and Fraser. He had also made contact with the Victoria agents Turner, Beeton & Company, as well as with J.H. Todd, a successful canner. With the practical knowledge of the industry and the contacts with potential financiers, Windsor was ready to enter the industry as an *owner.*

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53. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, op. *cit.*, pp.168,186.

54. For instance, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1903, op. *cit.*, p.G35; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1904, op. *cit.*, p.F12 both list Beaver and Richmond Canneries as separate entities.

The Garry Point Cannery: 1889-1893

In 1889 Charles S. Windsor joined forces with a Mr. Hobson, with the latter claiming to have $10,000 capital, to build a new cannery on the Fraser River. Construction started on the Garry Point Cannery, and substantial debt had been incurred, when Hobson's money turned out to be imaginary. Windsor and Hobson were able to acquire $4,000 credit from Windsor's former employer, Turner Beeton & Company, and completed building the facility. The cannery packed 13,716 cases of sockeye salmon, and Windsor and Hobson were able to pay off their debts from the proceeds. In 1890 the plant was sold to Henry Bell-Irving's Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd. for $35,000.[55]

The Garry Point Canning Company Ltd. was registered on July 19,1890, with the principals Harold W. Topham, Harry Bell-Irving, and Christopher G. Hobson.[56] Hobson later wrote that he had disposed of his stock in the Garry Point Cannery in 1891.[57] When this company was to be struck off the Register of Companies in August 1911, H.O. Bell-Irving & Company's response to the Registrar was that it had been "extinct" for twenty years.[58]

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55. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries, c.1957, p.201.

56. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B.4412, file 7(1890), p.3.

57. *Ibid.*, p.7, C.G. Hobson to Registrar of Companies, August 24,1911.

58. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B.4412, file 7(1890), "Garry Point Canning Company Ltd.", pp.5-7.

Later in 1890 the C.G. Hobson Canning Company Ltd. was formed, capitalized at $250,000 [2,500 $100.00 shares], with the partners the "cannerymen" Hobson and Charles S. Windsor, together with F.G. Richards of Victoria, who was to be the manager for the first three months.[59]. Hobson later wrote that this intended fishing and packing company was never organized or stocked, and "never was engaged in business".[60] It is interesting that Hobson and Windsor were still partners in a venture a year after Hobson's reputed misrepresentation. The sequence of events is somewhat unclear in any case; although Doyle stated that Anglo-British Columbia Packing bought the plant in 1890, that company was not formed until April 1891.[61] However, the limited liability company involving Hobson and Bell-Irving had taken over the cannery in 1890, apparently as a precursor of the combine. In any case, it seems that the canner C.S. Windsor had made his first foray into plant construction and owning, in conjunction with both the Vancouver agent Hobson and the Victoria agents Turner Beeton & Company, following the common pattern.

It is possible that the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company

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59. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B-4412, file 28(1890), pp.1-3.

60. *Ibid.*, p.7, C.G. Hobson to Registrar of Companies, August 24,1911. He wrote as the principal of Hobson & Company Ltd., financial and insurance agents.

61. Based on information from the B.C. Register of Companies, Keith Ralston listed the date when A.B.C. Packing acquired the Pont Garry Cannery as November 27,1891. This also included 2 acres of land around the plant and 55 acres nearby, B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/R131, Keith Ralston, "British Columbia Salmon Canneries Provincial Archives", Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company Ltd.

operated the Garry Point Cannery for a season or two, but by June 1893 the Fraser River itself ended their efforts:

> About seventy feet of the wharf and the buildings of the Garry Point cannery dropped into the river yesterday afternoon. The water has been gradually cutting away the ground from under the wharf for some time and the owners of the building, knowing it was doomed, abandoned it early this season. The structure was the property of the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Co. Some time during last night another piece of the building succumbed, and the rest is expected to go at any moment.@

It was reported that after the destruction of the facility by the river in 1893, Charles Windsor re-acquired the site from the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company:

> Afterwards, in 1893, when the river currents had so undermined the Garry Point bank that the property was thought to be worthless, Windsor bought back the site for $5,000 and on this was erected the Gulf of Georgia cannery in 1894. The plant is still in operation and has suffered no flood damage since this cannery was built.[63]

After leaving the Garry Point operation, Windsor was apparently involved with the Lulu Island Cannery in Steveston in the early 1890s. In the B.C. directory for 1894, Charles S. Windsor of Vancouver was noted as the proprietor and manager of

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62. Victoria Daily Colonist, June 8,1893, p.2. In the federal Sessional Paoers, the Garry Point Cannery was included among the plants of the A.B.C. Packing Company both before and after 1893, but simply as a name, without any independent production figures. This may reflect actual production, but more likely was an indication that the plant was kept on the company's books to maintain fishing licences.

63. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/D77, Henry Doyle, "Rise and Decline of the Pacific Salmon Fisheries", n.d., p.201. The story of C.S. Windsor as told by Doyle was repeated in Hugh W. McKervill, The Salmon People: The Storv of Canada's West Coast Fishing Industrv, Sidney, Gray's Publishing Ltd., 1967, pp.48-49.

this plant.[64] Presumably this information related to the 1893 canning season.

64. Williams' Official British Columbia Directory 1894, Victoria, Williams' British Columbia Directory Company Ltd., 1894, pp.185,554. Cicely Lyons reported that the Lulu Island Cannery was built by Benjamin J. Short in 1891, and operated from then until 1901, with the exception of 1892, Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, *op. cit.,* p.197.

The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd.: 1894-1895

On January 17,1894, The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company, Limited was registered, capitalized at $lOO,OOO.OO [one thousand $100.00 shares]. The partners involved were Charles S. Windsor, Alexander H.B. Macgowan, and William C. McCord, all of Vancouver, who were also to be the three trustees for the first three months of operation." Macgowan, of Macgowan & Company, "Shipping Commission and Insurance Agents" in Vancouver, seems to have been a silent partner, putting up funds.[66] At about the same time he was involved with two similar enterprises, the American Fish Company and the Burrard Inlet Sealing & Trading Company.[67] The Gulf of Georgia enterprise again followed the expected pattern for the boom decade, with experienced cannerymen forming a partnership with a Vancouver, rather than a Victoria agent. Windsor and McCord were apparently both actively involved in the management of the

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65. British Columbia Gazette, Vol.34 (1894), pp.88-89,136-137. The incorporation was also noted in the Victoria Dailv Colonist, January 26,1894, p.5.

66. MacGowan, called a "founder" of Vancouver, had arrived in 1888 [from Prince Edward Island], and by the early twentieth century controlled "one of the largest insurance enterprises" in Vancouver. His company, which included two sons, represented "some of the most important companies in Canada and the United States", and by 1903 MacGowan gained a seat in the provincial legislature. F.W. Howay and E.O.S. Scholefield, British Columbia from the Earliest Times to the Present, Vancouver, The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914, Vol.IV, Biographical, pp.520-522.

67. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B4412, file 180(1890), "The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd.", pp.2,17; British Columbia Gazette, Vol.31 (1891), pp.125-126; ibid., Vol.34 (1894), p.1068. Macgowan was the only Gulf of Georgia shareholder involved in these companies.

plant, while MacGowan was also investing in other similar businesses. The enterprise was initiated immediately after one of the "big years" for sockeye on the Fraser, when canners would have had the profits of the 1893 season available as seed money.

Construction proceeded, and by May 1894 "the monster cannery at Steveston" was nearly complete.[68] The Gulf of Georgia Cannery put up its first pack in the 1894 season, 18,430 cases of sockeye salmon [884,640 1 pound cans].[69] In the 1895 directory the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company was listed, with Windsor and McCord noted as the owners.[70] Prior to the next season, the cannery was sold, with Windsor the only one of the three original partners remaining involved in the new company.

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68. Victoria Daily Colonist, May 13,1894, p.5.

69. The cannery had also been granted 20 fishing licences, a number which stayed constant for some years. Canada, Sessional Papers 1895, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1895, Vol.8, p.371.

70. Williams' Official British Columbia Director-y 1895, Victoria, Williams' British Columbia Directory Company Ltd., 1895, pp.175-176.

Malcolm and Windsor, Ltd.: 1895-1902

After the successful first season of the new cannery, on May 8,1895 the new firm of Malcolm and Windsor Ltd. was formed, with its expressed object:

> To acquire and take over the business property and undertaking of the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company, Limited Liability, and to pay for the same either in cash or with fully'paid-up and non-assessable shares of this Company.[71]

The new company also was capitalized with one thousand $100.00 shares, with the principal shareholders Oswald M. Malcolm and Charles S. Windsor [both "canners"], with 306 shares each. Five other individuals held one share each.[72] The directors at founding were Malcolm, Windsor, and George I. Wilson [Appendix A], with the latter's name annotated in handwriting on the registration papers.[73] The British Columbia directory for 1898 described Malcolm and Windsor [O.M. Malcolm and Charles Samuel Windsor], 417 Granville Street, Vancouver, *as* the proprietors of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.[74] Although the ownership of this company was different to that of the earlier entity, the balance was similar.

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71. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies,Film B.4409, file 150(1862), p.44, Memorandum of Association.

72. Ibid., p.47. The other shareholders were William Godfrey, bank manager; John Crawford, merchant; Alexander James Malcolm, merchant; George S. Dutcher, canner; and John Campbell, lawyer, all of Vancouver.

73. Ibid., pp.25-26.

74. Henderson's British Columbia Gazeteer and Directory for 1898, Victoria and Vancouver, Henderson Publishing Company Ltd., 1898, pp.425-426,583.

Although Malcolm was described as a canner, he was also active as an agent both in Vancouver and England, as will be seen later in this report. Wilson was a Vancouver merchant and agent who was later integrally involved in the formation of B.C. Packers.

By June 30,1898 the ownership of the company had changed, apparently with Windsor bought out of his principal situation. Oswald M. Malcolm now had 302 shares, and Alexander James Malcolm, a merchant located at 27 Lombard Street, London, England, had 304. Charles Windsor retained only one share, as did five other individuals.[75] The directors of the company were A.P. Judge, a lawyer, as president, C.S. Windsor as vice-president, and O.M. Malcolm as managing director.[76] The company letterhead listed the Gulf of Georgia Cannery as its only business, with an office and factory at Steveston, and an office in the Mackinnon building in Vancouver. The brand names used by the company for its products were *Crest, Prize Winner,* and *Ice Castle*.[77] It would seem that after the 1897 dominant sockeye run, and the largest pack put up by a single cannery, the agents were in a financial situation to buy out the canner. Windsor was kept on as vice-president, presumably to provide expertise for the operation, but was no longer significant in the ownership of the company. The shift to English

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75. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies,Film B.4409, file 150(1862), pp.77-78, summary of capital and shares, June 30,1898.

76. Ibid., p.76, O.M. Malcolm to S.Y. Wootton, Registrar of Companies, July 12,1898. Judge was one of the shareholders with one share.

77. Ibid..

ownership is also interesting, reflecting the importance of that market to the company. On July 21,1902 the majority of the shareholders passed a resolution to voluntarily wind up Malcolm and Windsor Ltd., and Arthur P. Judge, the former president, was appointed liquidator.[78]

Under Malcolm and Windsor, production of the Gulf of Georgia reached its peak. In the 1895 season, 17,010 cases of sockeye were packed [816,480 1 pound cans].[79] The next year production was up to 22,526 cases of sockeye [1,081,248 1 pound cans].[80] Prior to the dominant run of sockeye in 1897 two more canning lines were added to the single line which had operated until 1896.[81] In 1897 the three lines allowed the Gulf of Georgia Cannery to put up the largest pack by a single cannery in the province, 50,707 cases [2,433,936 1 pound cans], still exclusively sockeye. This represented a pack value of $243,393.60 at the prevailing cost of a case of canned salmon.[82] In the 1898 season the pack was back

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78. *Ibid.*, p.73, A.P. Judge to S.Y. Wootton, Registrar of Companies, November 27,1902.

79. Canada, Sessional Papers 1897, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1897, V01.8, p.224.

80. Canada, Sessional Papers 1898, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1898, Vo1.9, p.236.

81. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georsia Cannery, Steveston British Columbia*1894-1930,* *op. cit.*, p.48.

82. Canada, Sessional Papers 1899, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1899, Vo1.9, p.226. The cost of canned salmon was $4.80 a case or 10 cents a pound, remaining constant until 1906, *ibid.*, p.299.

down to 15,149 2/3 cases [727,184 1 pound cans], worth $72,718.40.[83] The cost of raw fish per case during this period ranged from a low of 95¢ in 1897 to a high of $2.07 in 1896.[84] The normal contract labour cost in the first decade of the twentieth century was about 50C per case.[85] For the 1897 pack this would give a basic cost of production of approximately $73,500. Allowing for the additional cost of installing the two extra lines, wage labour, shipping and various agency fees, there clearly was still a substantial margin for profit on the near quarter million dollar selling price. Even in the much smaller 1898 season, the basic cost of production was roughly $31,200, with the retail value almost 2 1/2 times higher. Given the comparatively low capitalization of the company originally, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was clearly economically viable for its owners.

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83. Canada, Sessional Pauers 1900, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1900, vo1.9, p.202.

84. David J. Reid, "Company Mergers in the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885-1902", op. *cit.*, p.313.

85. Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canninq Industrv: A *Grown* Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, pp.113-114.

United Canneries of British Columbia Limited: 1899-1906

In spite of the profitability of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Malcolm and Windsor Ltd. had already been bought out in the spring of 1900 [starting February 28, to be completed by June 1] by United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd. The latter company was formed November 1,1899, with its primary object to "acquire and take over the business property and undertaking" of a number of earlier canning and fishery-associated companies, specifically:
United Canneries Ltd. [Appendix B];
Scottish Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd. [Appendix C];
English Bay Canning Company Ltd. [Appendix D];
Malcolm & Windsor Ltd. [above];
and Anglo Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd. [Appendix E]. All of these earlier firms had been limited liability companies, with three of the five only formed in 1899. There was also substantial overlap in ownership: the broker Frank Burnett was a major shareholder in all the companies except Malcolm & Windsor; C.S. Windsor was a major shareholder in Scottish-Canadian and Anglo Canadian, and had been a shareholder in Malcolm & Windsor and English Bay; O.M. Malcolm was the major shareholder in Malcolm & Windsor and was also involved in Scottish-Canadian and United Canneries; and the agent J.E. Macrae held shares in all the companies except Malcolm & Windsor [see Appendices B-E and above].

United Canneries of British Columbia was capitalized at $500,000 [5,000 $100 shares], and the initial list of shareholders

was dominated by the financial agents involved in the earlier companies, including O.M. Malcolm with 119 shares, J.E. Macrae with 80, Frank Burnett with 49, and J.W. Sinclair [a bookkeeper] and L.W. Wright [a clerk] with 1 each.[86]

The purchase price for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery included 1,200 $100.00 shares in the new company. This was paid to Oswald May Malcolm, the managing director of Malcolm and Windsor, for the plant and office real estate and the machinery and fittings of the plant. The real estate included: in Steveston, in Section 10, block 3, North Range Seven West, New Westminster District, Block 1, Lots 24-28, Block 11, Lots 10-18, Block 12, Lots 1-6b, 13a-15b; and in Vancouver, Lots 1,2,23, Subdivision B, Block 174, D.L.264a, with an 1895 mortgage in favour of Luke Mooney for $437.06. There was also a cash payment of $29,102.02 for the stock of canned salmon on hand still to be sold.[87]

The officers of United Canneries of British Columbia included: Frank Burnett, president; Hubert C.H. Cannon, vice-president; James Macrae, secretary/treasurer; *and* C.S. Windsor, manager. Besides the officers, the directors of the new company were: Oswald M. Malcolm, the company's London [England] representative; Ernest J.

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86. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.1-5. James E. Macrae received the 80 shares referred to in trust for the Scottish Canadian Salmon Canning Company, while Frank Burnett received his 49 shares in trust for the English Bay Canning Company, along with other shares paid for the earlier company, ibid., pp.62-63,54-55.

87. Ibid., pp.56-60.

Deacon, a lawyer; and T. Herbert Wymonde, also of London." The management group was dominated by merchants and agents, with Cannon appearing for the first time; he had not been involved in the predecessor companies. Windsor remained involved, in charge of the practical side of the business, and Malcolm was now in London.

In the 1899 season the three plants of the United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd. packed a total of 64,516 cases of sockeye, worth $309,676.80. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery was the company's largest producer, with 28,500 cases, or approximately $136,800.00 worth of salmon canned.[89]

In April 1900, a special resolution was passed by the company to borrow up to $325,000 from the Imperial Bank of Canada.[90] Although some of the financing of the earlier Malcolm & Windsor may have come from the eastern banks, no evidence of this has been located. By the turn of the century, however, the pattern of borrowing from the Vancouver offices of eastern banks was being followed by united Canneries of B.C. This resolution enabling the borrowing of money from the bank was to be repeated each year, suggesting that it was to provide the capital to prepare for the next summer's fishing season. In the 1900 season United Canneries of B.C., which apparently included the Industrial Cannery in

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88. Ibid., p.41.

89. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery produced 19,716 cases, and the English Bay Cannery produced 16,300 cases, Canada, Sessional Papers 1901, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1901, Vo1.9, p.159.

90. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.37-39.

Annieville [New Westminster] that year, canned 56,323 cases of sockeye, worth $270,350.40. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 18,041 cases, or $86,596.80 worth, second among the four company plants.[91]

By the beginning of 1901 the ownership of United Canneries of B.C. had changed. The firm of Malcolm and Windsor still held the largest block of shares, 1,200, but O.M. Malcolm personally had retained only 1, having sold 1,200. C.S. Windsor had sold 93 of his 94 shares at the end of 1900. J.E. Macrae, who had held 897 shares, retained only 97 of them, and Frank Burnett kept 335 shares in two blocks, after turning over 240 shares to the Imperial Bank of Canada in the summer of 1900, and selling 773 to various small shareholders in the fall of the year. Hubert C.H. Cannon retained 228 of his shares, selling only 2, and two moderate-sized shareholders were added in England; the firm of Dodwell & Company Ltd., in London, with 95 shares, and the Earl of Dunmore, with 65.[92] The ownership of the company was diversifying, with more small shareholders involved, and there was also a certain shift to English [and other overseas] ownership.

One of the more significant changes involved Charles S.

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91. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery produced 20386 cases, the English Bay Cannery 15264 cases, and the Industrial Cannery 2632 cases, Canada, Sessional Papers 1902, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1902, Vo1.9, p.175.

92. Other significant shareholders included: John J. Crane, a canneryman who was involved in some of the antecedent companies with 38 shares; Alexander Sutherland, of the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, with 34 shares; and Charles Woodward, of Woodward's Stores, Vancouver, with 38 shares, B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.22-23.

Windsor selling out at the end of the 1900 season. He had been integrally involved with the founding not only of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, but with both of the other United Canneries of B.C. plants. As noted above, the Industrial Cannery apparently was operated by United Canneries in the 1900 season. Prior to the 1901 dominant run season, Windsor made a deal with the Bank of Hamilton, which owned the Industrial Cannery, presumably through foreclosure, to operate that plant. He organized a new partnership, the Union Canning Company, which operated successfully for the next five seasons [see Appendix F].[93]

Some more shifts in ownership came in the spring of 1901, with Macrae selling off 87 shares, Burnett selling 297 shares, Cannon selling 227 shares, but "Gertrude Angela Cannon" [his wife or daughter?] acquiring 297 shares. The directors of the company as of June 1901 were Malcolm, Cannon, A.P. Judge [the president of Malcolm & Windsor], T.J. Lendrum, A. Stewart, and A. Jukes."[94] As the ownership of the company was changing, two resolutions were passed in February and May 1901 respectively to borrow $325,000 and $275,000 from the Imperial Bank of Canada.[95] 1901 was the next "big year" for sockeye after the 1897 season, which could explain why more capital was considered necessary than the previous year. In the 1901 season the total production of the Fraser River

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93. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, film B.4419, file 606(1897), pp.2-6.

94. *Ibid.*, pp.31-32.

95. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B-4417, file 384(1897), pp.47-50,43-45.

district was 998,913 cases, with United Canneries of B.C. contributing 112,471 of those, all sockeye, worth $539,860.80. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 44,723 cases, or $214,670.40 worth, again second to the Scottish-Canadian Cannery within the company." Throughout this period the basic cost of fish and contract labour per case ranged from a third to a half of the retail value of the fish. With the scale of production at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and within United Canneries of B.C. as a whole, the profit should have been substantial." This may serve as a partial explanation of why the company was interested at first in the B.C. Packers merger proposed by Henry Doyle, but later decided not to participate. At this time, all indications were that United Canneries of B.C. was a viable company for the foreseeable future.

By June of 1902 some more changes in ownership had taken place, most noticeably with Malcolm & Windsor divesting itself of 801 shares. Arthur P. Judge held significant numbers of shares in partnership with others; for instance 644 with O.M. Malcolm, 2 with

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96. The pack of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery represented 4.48% of the district total. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery packed 48,433 cases, the English Bay Cannery 19,315 cases, and the Industrial Cannery 19,500 cases. This last result has not been included in the United Canneries of B.C. total, as it was not listed as part of the company for the year, Canada, Sessional Papers 1903, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1903, Vo1.9, p.106.

97. The cost of raw fish per case ranged from $2.39 in the "off" year 1899 down to $1.98 in the dominant year of 1901, while contract labour prices were approximately 50¢ per case. David J. Reid, "Company Mergers in the Fraser River Salmon Canning Industry, 1885-1902", op. cit., p.313; Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game, *op. cit.*, pp.113-114.

C.S. Windsor, and 149 with Ernest E. Evans.[98] Again in February 1902 the company passed a special resolution to borrow $275,000 from the Imperial Bank of Canada.[99] For that year's season the total production of canned salmon in the Fraser district was 327,095 cases, of which United Canneries of B.C. [now also referred to as Malcolm, Cannon & Company] produced 37,557, exclusively sockeye, worth $180,273.60. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 15,537 cases, or $74,577.60 worth, again becoming the company's largest producer.'"

In 1903 237,125 cases of salmon were packed in the Fraser River district, with Malcolm, Cannon & Company contributing 25,506 of those. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 11,846 cases, nearly all sockeye, but 150 cases of coho were packed as well, the first time another species had been canned there."'

Significant changes in company ownership prior to June 1904 included the large holdings of O.M. Malcolm, now with 574 shares,

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98. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.28-29.

99. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.34-36.

100. The United Canneries of B.C. represented 11.48% of the district total, with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery producing 4.75% of the district total. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery packed 14,520 cases, and the English Bay Cannery 7,500 cases, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1903, op. cit., p.G35.

101. Malcolm Cannon & Company's production was 10.76% of the district total, with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery producing 5.00% of the district total. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery packed 10,463 cases, and the English Bay Cannery 3,197 cases, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1904, *op. cit.*, p.F12.

Gertrude Cannon, with 300, and Andrew Jukes, with 240. A.P. Judge now held 102 shares independently, having divested himself of 399 owned jointly with David G. Marshall, another lawyer, in the fall of 1903. The total number of shares issued was 2,550, which was fairly consistent with the total since the formation of the company. The move towards more small shareholders, widely spread geographicaly, continued, and C.S. Windsor was entirely absent from the list of owners.'"

Following the company's pattern, in June 1904 a special resolution was passed to borrow $300,000 from the Imperial Bank of Canada in advance of the canning season.[103] In that season Malcolm, Cannon & Company packed 8,796 of the 128,903 cases of salmon produced in the Fraser River district. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery was the company's largest producer, with a total pack of 5,729 cases, including 1,066 cases of pinks and 821 cases of cohoes. The English Bay Cannery was no longer listed in the statistics for the season.'"

In the next "big year" for sockeye on the Fraser River, 1905, the total production in the district was up to 877,136 cases. The reported pack of Malcolm, Cannon & Company varied in the provincial

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102. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), p.65.

103. Ibid., pp.67-69.

104. Malcolm Cannon & Company's production was 6.82% of the district total, with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery producing 4.44% of the district total. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery packed 3,067 cases, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Renort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1905, Victoria, King's Printer, 1905, p.F11.

and federal statistics, with the former listing a company total of 79,116 cases. The federal document noted a total of 105,886 cases produced by the Gulf of Georgia, Scottish-Canadian, and English Bay canneries.[105] In 1905 Thomas Burton Hamilton was noted as the manager of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. He was also a shareholder in the United Canneries of B.C. as early as 1901, with 10 shares owned.[106]

The 1905 season was the last one that the limited liability company known as United Canneries of British Columbia operated. It was voluntarily wound up on June 22,1906, with J.E. Macrae, one of the directors, appointed liquidator.[107] The reasons for winding up the limited liability company in favour of a private company with the same owners is unclear, but may relate to finances. After the big season of 1900, on several occasions the approved bank borrowing limits of the company exceeded the potential retail value

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105. Malcolm Cannon & Company packed 9.02% of the salmon in the district according to the provincial figures, with most of the the company's production still sockeye [72,004 cases]. The federal statistics had the same number of cases of species other than sockeye listed [7,112], which suggests that the provincial company total only included two of the three canneries noted in the federal records. Using the federal production figure, Malcolm and Cannon packed 12.07% of the district total, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1906, Victoria, King's Printer, 1906, p.H10; Canada, Sessional Pavers 1906-7, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1907, Vo1.9, p.36.

106. Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory for 1905, Vancouver, Henderson Publishinq Company Ltd., 1905, p.680; B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417; file 384(1897), pp.22-23. This paralleled the situation at the other company canneries, where the managers Alexander Sutherland [Scottish-Canadian] and John J. Crane [English Bay] were also shareholders.

107. *Ibid.*, pp.24-26.

of the pack. Although the borrowing would not have to extend to the limit, it is odd that the projected capital requirements would be substantially different from the potential income. This may reflect on the fact that the ownership of the company was becoming more diverse, and less cannery oriented. There was also the factor of B.C. Packers to contend with, which had become the dominant force in the industry in the province, and particularly in the Fraser River district, where United Canneries of B.C. was also concentrated.

Under United Canneries of British Columbia, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery had demonstrated remarkable consistency in the share of the Fraser River district salmon pack it produced. From 1901 to 1904 its share varied from 4.44% to 5.00% of the district total, regardless of the size of the run. However, there were also some problems with the pack. Henry Doyle, the manager of B.C. Packers received a report concerning the 1905 pack:

> June says he learns from the Chinamen the Gulf of Georgia had trouble with swells again this year, and that at least 800 c/s [cases] of fish had to be thrown away.[108]

The phrase "again this year" suggests that the problem had been an ongoing one at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, which would have resulted in compromised profits. Not only would this mean product thrown away at the plant, but poorly-packed fish could have *meant a* negative perception of the product *in* the British marketplace. Throughout this period the company had continued to

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108. Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game, *op. cit.*, p.142. "June" may have been a labour contractor.

follow the pattern of exporting its products to England. The British participation in ownership has already been noted, and the pack for the boom year of 1905 was distributed as follows:

Malcolm Cannon & Company	-total pack 105,886
-stock left on hand	-47,658
-London direct	-8349
-Liverpool direct	-34983
-Liverpool with option to London or Glasgow	-500
-to U.K. overland	-13850
-to eastern Canada	-0
-Australia/New Zealand	-266
-other	-280[109]

It may be seen that there was an almost exclusive emphasis on British sales, so the company was dependent almost entirely on the market conditions in that country. The pattern which had been established in the 1870s was still followed, with the only difference the "overland" shipping of part of the pack, which would have involved rail transport to an eastern port prior to ocean shipping to Britain.

Another significant aspect of these statistics was the nearly half of the year's production still "on hand". This suggests that the British market either could not accept the total production, or that other producers were competing more effectively in that market. This may further reflect the dominance of B.C. Packers in the British Columbia industry from its 1902 inception, which would have affected the exports of smaller producers. It may also provide another explanation for the financial difficulties of

109. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Rewort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1906, op. cit., p.H13, "Disposition of Pack"

United Canneries of B.C.; although the company was packing the same share of the total district production, if it could not sell the whole pack, the business would not be viable.

Malcolm, Cannon & Company: 1906-1911

For some years United Canneries of B.C. Ltd. had also been known as Malcolm, Cannon & Company, after the largest shareholders. After the dissolution of the limited liability company, apparently a new, non-limited liability company known by the latter name took over all the assets of the earlier firm. In the 1906 season Malcolm, Cannon & Company was still noted as packing 19,255 cases of salmon, mostly sockeye, on the Fraser River, out of a district total pack of 240,486 cases. This firm also packed at the new Dominion Cannery, on the Skeena River."[110] *However,* the company was either unable to, or decided not to operate the Gulf of Georgia Cannery for the 1906 season. This may have related to the growing emphasis on the less-variable northern rivers; the machinery from the English Bay Cannery had been moved to the Skeena to build the Dominion Cannery, giving the company a base on both this river and the Fraser. In the off-year on the Fraser, it may have made more economic sense to operate just one of the Fraser canneries, together with the Skeena one, to ensure a larger pack relative to the operating expense.

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110. The company pack was 8.01% of the district total. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1907, Victoria, King's Printer, 1907, p.C11; Canada, Sessional Papers 1907-8, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1908, Vol.11, p.220. The Dominion Cannery was built by Malcolm Cannon & Company in 1906, with its machinery sent north from the "old English Bay Cannery, closed a short time before", Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, op. *cit.*, p.260. Lyons listed the directors of Malcolm Cannon & Company as: O.M.Malcolm, London; H.C.H. Cannon, Vancouver; and A. Stewart, Tacoma, *ibid.*

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery did operate in the 1906 season, but the canning company was "Lee Coy",.packing the nominal quantity of 2,617 cases, 1,667 sockeye and 950 spring."' Lee Coy was one of the major Chinese labour contractors on the Fraser. He had supplied United Canneries of B.C. with their crews at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery around the turn of the century, and may well have provided the Gulf of Georgia Cannery crews as well. There was a pre-existing business relationship between the principals of Malcolm, Cannon & Company and Lee Coy, and as he would have the labour available, he would be an obvious lessee of the plant if the owners did not wish to operate it themselves. Ned DeBeck described Lee Coy in 1899-1901:

> The Chinese were contract labour, all under one boss. He was a real boss - Big Shot: big fat Lee Coy. When he came out from Vancouver all the Chinese worked hard in fear and trembling. If he saw any slowing up he would take a wallop with his stick or give them a kick. We were told it was slave labour.[112]

Malcolm, Cannon & Company gave its labour contracts for the 1906 season to Lee Coy, for both the Scottish-Canadian and Dominion canneries.'" As the company's emphasis seemed to be on those two

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111. Canada, Sessional Papers 1907-8, op. *cit.*, Vol.11, p.220. The production figures for Lee Coy were repeated in the provincial records, but without specifying the plant in which the salmon was packed, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1907, op. cit., p.C11

112. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", p.2c. De Beck saw Lee Coy at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery in those years.

113. Dianne Newell, editor, The Develovment of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industrv: A Grown Man's Game, op. *cit.*, pp.142-143.

plants, it is reasonable that their contractor would have been allowed to use the idle Gulf of Georgia Cannery to pack salmon on his own account.

In 1907 the total Fraser River district pack was 163,116 cases, with Malcolm, Cannon & Company producing 4,801 of those at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, as well as operating the Dominion Cannery on the Skeena. Neither the Gulf of Georgia Cannery or Lee Coy were listed in the statistics for the 1907 season, suggesting that the plant did not operate.[114]

In 1908 Gulf of Georgia Cannery was listed among the assets of Malcolm, Cannon & Company, described as "Salmon Canners", located on Granville Street, Vancouver, which also owned the Scottish Canadian Cannery on the Fraser, and the Dominion Cannery on the Skeena.[115] However, in July 1908, the fisheries overseer on the Fraser River noted only four active plants in Steveston, with the Gulf of Georgia not listed among them.[116] In the 1908 season the Fraser River district pack was down to 112,425 cases. Malcolm

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114. The operation of the Scottish-Canadian Cannery by Malcolm Cannon & Company in 1907 suggests that it was the same plant where its Fraser River pack for the preceding year was put up.' British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Rewort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1908, Victoria, King's Printer, 1908, p.I19; Canada, Sessional Pawers 1909, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1909, Vo1.12, pp.224-225.

115. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 75, file 705, letterhead on letter signed by A.S. Arkley to J. Babcock, Deputy Commissioner of Fisheries [concerning saltery licence at Dominion Cannery], October 21,1908.

116. Ibid., Box 76, file 717, Samuel North to J.P. Babcock, July The active plants were the Richmond Cannery, the Impeial Cannery, the Star Cannery, and the Burrard Cannery. 216X27,1

Cannon & Company was not included among the producers in that district, but was still active on the Skeena, with the Dominion Cannery. Lee Coy was packing again on the Fraser River, with 1,800 cases of sockeye canned, but no plant specified.'" Given the existing relationship between the contractor and Malcolm, Cannon & Company, it is possible that either of the latter company's idle plants, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery or Scottish-Canadian Cannery, may have been used.

117. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1909, Victoria, King's Printer, 1909, p.I15; Canada, Sessional Papers 1910, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1910, Vo1.12, pp.265-266.

Merrill DesBrisay & Company: 1911-1915

The *next* peak run of sockeye was due in the summer of 1909, and in anticipation more plants were opened or reopened on the Fraser River. In June 1909 Malcolm, Cannon & Company still had the Gulf of Georgia Cannery listed among its holdings on its letterhead when applying for a two-line canning licence for the Scottish-Canadian Cannery."' In the same month M. DesBrisay and Company was applying for a cannery licence for the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and the Unique Cannery [Appendix F], enclosing $300.00 as payment.[119] The B.C. directory for 1910, based on 1909 information, listed Malcolm Cannon & Company as the "proprietors" of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and M. Des Brisay & Company as the lessees.[120]

The $300.00 submitted by M. DesBrisay and Company represented licence fees for three canning lines at $100.00 each, so one of the plants was operating two lines for the big run. This was probably the Gulf of Georgia, as the following year the company applied for

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118. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 117, Malcolm, Cannon & Co. to J.P. Babcock, deputy commissioner of fisheries, June 18,1909. Malcolm, Cannon & Company was said to have sold the Dominion Cannery on the Skeena to the British Columbia Packers Association in 1909, Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, op. *cit.*, p.275.

119. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 117, M. DesBrisay & Co. to Commissioner of Fisheries, June 26,1909; *ibid.*, M. DesBrisay & Co. to Attorney General, June 23,1909 [first enquiry].

120. Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory for 1910, Vancouver, Henderson Publishing Company Ltd., 1910, p.1047.

licences for the same two canneries, and a third on Portland Canal, with the following explanatory note attached to the $300.00 licence fee:

> The Gulf of Georgia cannery is a two line cannery, but as only one line will be operated we understand that the license fee will be $100.00."[121]

The total salmon production of the Fraser River district for the 1909 season was 623,469 cases. The two lines of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 32,319 of these, mostly sockeye, with the exception of 10 cases of spring and 731 cases of coho. The Unique Cannery packed 16,343 cases for the same company, while Malcolm Cannon & Company packed 23,441 cases in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery. The latter company was no longer listed on the Skeena, and Lee Coy was likewise unlisted."'

In the smaller 1910 season, with total salmon production in the Fraser River district of 247,994 cases, the one line operated at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 12,059 of them. The pack was still predominantly sockeye, with 8,546 cases, but 2,982 cases of chum were packed, along with 507 of coho and 24 of spring.

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121. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 122, M. DesBrisay & Co. to Commissioner of Fisheries, June 13,1910.

122. M. DesBrisay & Company packed 7.81% of the salmon in the Fraser River district; the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 5.18% of the district total. Malcolm Cannon & Company canned 3.76% of the salmon packed in the district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1910, Victoria, King's Printer, 1910, p.I22; Canada, Sessional Papers 1911, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1911, vol.14, pp.261-262. The British Columbia Packers' Association purchased the Dominion Cannery from Malcolm Cannon & Company in 1909, explaining the absence of that plant from the lists, Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, *op. cit.*, p.275.

DesBrisay's other Fraser River plant, the Unique Cannery, packed 13,063 cases, of which almost 70% were chum. Malcolm Cannon & Company continued to operate the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, producing 9,294 cases, and Lee Coy was active again, with 3,915 cases of sockeye packed.[123] As both the Gulf of Georgia Cannery and Scottish-Canadian Cannery were operated by other companies, Lee Coy must have found another plant for the season.

M. DesBrisay and Company apparently continued to operate one salmon canning line in the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. In the spring of 1911 the company applied for licences for that plant and its Wales Island Cannery, submitting $200.00, which would suggest one operating line in each facility.[124] The total salmon production in the Fraser River district in the 1911 season was 301,344 cases. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 15,916 cases, 4,684 of sockeye, 346 spring, 9,224 pink, 151 chum, and 1,511 coho. Malcolm Cannon & Company was missing altogether from the records, both on the Fraser and the Skeena. M. DesBrisay and C.S. Windsor's Unique Canning Company was also missing in the returns of the 1911 season. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery, ironically now operated by C.S. Windsor Ltd., put up a much larger pack than the Gulf of Georgia

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123. M. DesBrisay & Company packed 10.13% of the salmon in the Fraser River district; the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 4.86% of the salmon produced in the district. Malcolm Cannon & Company canned 3.75% of the salmon in the Fraser district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1915, Victoria, King's Printer, 1915, p.N132.

124. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 121, M. DesBrisay & Co. to W.J. Bowser, commissioner of fisheries, April 1,1911.

Cannery, 29,001 cases.[125] This evidence suggests that DesBrisay and Windsor sold out of the Unique Cannery prior to the 1911 season in favour of setting up operations in larger, potentially more productive canneries [see also Appendices C and F]. The capital from this would have allowed both these firms to purchase the assets of the apparently moribund Malcolm, Cannon & Company, so M. DesBrisay & Company became the owner rather than lessee of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

In the 1912 season the total production of the Fraser River district was 199,322 cases of salmon. M. DesBrisay & Company packed a total of 9,395 cases, 6,518 of sockeye, 972 of spring, and 1923 of coho.[126] Plant or company statistics for the next sockeye "big year" on the Fraser River, 1913, were not recorded.'" In 1914 the district salmon production was up to 349,294 cases, with M. DesBrisay & Company packing 15,071 of them. The proportion of sockeye packed continued to decline, with 7,894 cases, and almost

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125. M. DesBrisay & Company canned 5.28% of the salmon packed in the Fraser River district, apparently all at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1912, Victoria, King's Printer, 1912, p.N60.

126. M. DesBrisay & Company canned 4.71% of the salmon pack in the Fraser River district, presumably all at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. The Scottish-Canadian Canning Company Ltd. packed 12,802 cases, or 6.42% of the salmon production of the district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1913, Victoria, King's Printer, 1913, p.I81.

127. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1914, Victoria, King's Printer, 1914, section H.

as many cases of other species."'

In the 1915 season, the last run directly under the auspices of M. DesBrisay & Company, the Gulf of Georgia canned 10,765 cases of salmon, out of a district total of 320,519 cases. For the first time, a species other than sockeye made up the largest part of the pack, with 6,002 cases of pink produced.[129] The proportion of the district pack produced by the Gulf of Georgia Cannery when operated by M. DesBrisay & Company had remained fairly stable from 1909 to 1914, ranging from 4.31% to 5.28% of the total. However, there was a sharp decline in 1915, to 3.36% of the district total. This, combined with the drop in the proportion of sockeye packed, would have lowered the pprofits of the plant, and may have led to DesBrisay forming a limited liability company to take over the operation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

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128. M. DesBrisay & Company canned 4.31% of the salmon packed in the Fraser River district. The Scottish-Canadian Canning Company Ltd. packed 17,379 cases, with chum the predominant species, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1915, Victoria, King's Printer, 1915, p.N130.

129. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery's pack was down to 3.36% of the total salmon packed in the Fraser River district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1916, Victoria, King's Printer, 1916, p.S164.

The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd.: 1915-1926

On November 30,1915 a limited liability company, the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Limited, was formed to take over the Gulf of Georgia Cannery from M. DesBrisay and Company as a "going concern"." It was intended to run this as a general fishery business, including all aspects, such as boatbuilding. The new company was private, capitalized with 1,250 $100 shares, distributed among no more than 50 shareholders."' The primary shareholders were Merrill DesBrisay and Henry Alan Bulwer, with 500 shares each, and Robert [sic., later "Percy"] Douglas Roe and Robert Abernathy, sharing 250 shares. The latter two men were apparently nominees of the North Nest Trust Company Ltd., which was said to be the partner of DesBrisay and Bulwer in the new company.[132]

A possible reason for the declining gross production, as well as share of the district production, of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was suggested by the inventory of the plant which accompanied the formation of the new company. When compared to the 1902 inventory of plant and machinery reproduced in Duncan Stacey's Gulf of Georgia Cannerv, Steveston British Columbia, 1894-1930, it is apparent that since the plant was last used by United Canneries of

130. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B5140, file 2993 (1910), Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., p.2.

131. *Ibid.*, pp.21-24.

132. *Ibid.*, pp.26,34,37,40.

British Columbia in 1905 there was almost no new machinery installed, and the canning technology had fallen well behind the times.'") The 1915 inventory, in a tabular form, was as follows:

1 steam boiler (steam pressure 80 pounds)
1 steam engine
2 steam wipers
2 Letson & Burpee cantoppers fitted for flats, 1/2 flats, talls and squats
2 Letson & Burpee crimpers
2 Letson & Burpee finger chain soldering machines
3 iron steam boxes
4 steel retorts
5 test kettles
2 power fish knives, fitted for all shapes
600 can trays
550 can coolers
2 steam pumps
33 retort cars
12 low trucks
22 high trucks
4 bathroom stoves
7 seaming stoves
78 can cylinders
5 pairs of square shears
2 foot presses
1 steam press
3 one pound flat dies
1 one pound oval die
2 half pound flat dies
1 lye tank
All overhead gear for test kettles and lye tanks
5 Columbia River fishing boats, complete
25 bluestone tanks
filling tables
splitting tables
sliming tanks
brining tanks
lacquering tables
1 fifteen (15) horsepower motor
1 twenty (20) horsepower motor.'"

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133. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Steveston British Columbia, 1894-1930, Ottawa, Canadian Parks Service, Microfiche Report Series 129, 1981, pp.49-50.

134. Adapted from B.C.A.R.S., GR 1526, Register of Companies, Film B.5140, file 2993(1910), pp.39-40.

Prominant by its absence at this late date was an "Iron Chink", or salmon butchering machine, and also unusual was the lack of a "sanitary" or solderless canning line. By 1915 only three plants on the Fraser River still used the earlier solder system, and apparently the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was one of them.[135] Curiously, M.DesBrisay & Company was said to have experimented with a new automatic can making system in its Fraser River plant in 1912, alongside its solder system. Together with A.B.C. Packing's efforts the same year, this was the earliest documented use of such a system in B.C.[136] Apparently it never amounted to more than an experiment. The relatively old technology in the Gulf of Georgia Cannery may also help to explain why Malcolm, Cannon & Company had chosen to operate the Scottish-Canadian Cannery in the dominant year of 1909, while leasing the former plant to M. DesBrisay.

In the first year's operation under the new limited liability company, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 4,253 cases of chum, coho and sockeye. The total production in the Fraser River

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135. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georsia Cannery, Steveston British Columbia, 1894-1930, *op. cit.*, p.52. For example, an April 1915 inventory of the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, also a two-line cannery with similar production levels in the early twentieth century, included a "Smith Fish Cleaning Machine" [Iron Chink], two sanitary exhaust boxes, and other more up-to-date equipment, B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4394, file 460A(1910), pp.53-56. With this more current canning line, the Scottish-Canadian Cannery had increased its share of the district pack while that of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was declining.

136. Dianne Newell, editor, The Develonment of the Pacific Salmon-Cannino Industrv: A Grown Man's Game, op. *cit.*, p.135, citing *Pacific Fisherman,* January 1913, p.37.

district was 127,472 cases of salmon.[137] The next season, 1917, was the dominant year for the Fraser River sockeye run, and even with the negative impact of the river blockage of 1913, the year of the last dominant run, the Fraser River district salmon pack was up to 402,538 cases. At the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, 10,028 cases were packed, with just over a third of the total sockeye, and pinks making up just under a third of the total."'

In 1918 the total production in the Fraser River district was 208,851 cases of Salmon, with 5,399 cases of that, largely spring and coho, put up at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. This was also the first season that the Canadian Fishing Company canned salmon, producing 31,111 cases at its Home Cannery in Vancouver.[139] In 1919 the Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 4,385 cases of salmon, about one third sockeye, out of a district total of 167,944 cases.[140] Complete government statistics for the 1920 season were

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137. M. DesBrisay & Company [as the company was still identified in the government records] canned 3.34% of the total salmon pack in the Fraser River district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1916, Victoria, King's Printer, 1916, p.S164.

138. This represented 2.49% of the total salmon canned in the Fraser River district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1918, Victoria, King's Printer, 1918, p.Q124.

139. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 2.59% of the total district salmon pack, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1919, Victoria, King's Printer, 1919, p.X90.

140. This represented 2.61% of the district total pack, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1920, Victoria, King's Printer, 1920, p.U82.

not recorded, but up to August 6 of that year 6,500 sockeye were taken to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, out of a total of 148,827 in the "Fraser District".[141]

In 1921 the production of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery continued to decline with 1,291 cases of salmon packed, about two thirds sockeye. The total production of the Fraser River district was 107,650 cases. M. DesBrisay & Company seemed to be concentrating more on its Wales Island Cannery, which canned 14,590 cases the same year.[142] This pattern was repeated the following year, 1922, when the salmon pack at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was up to 4,000 cases, out of a district total of 140,570 cases. Sockeye made up the largest share of the pack, at 1,736 cases. However, the plant's production was still just under 10% of the pack of the DesBrisay Wales Island Cannery.[143]

In 1923 the major shareholders in the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd. remained the same, with some minor additions. DesBrisay and Bulwer retained 499 shares each, Roe and Abernathy

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141. The largest numbers were from the Imperial Cannery, with 26,937, and Terra Nova Cannery, with 32,049, B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 130, file "1920", C.P. Hickman to J.P. Babcock, August 11,1920.

142. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 1.12% of the total salmon production of the Fraser River district; this would have been valued at about $22,000 by the prices of 1920. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Renort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1921, Victoria, King's Printer, 1921, p.W77.

143. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery packed 2.85% of the salmon produced in the Fraser River district; the Wales Island plant packed 42,276 cases. In 1922, for the first time, the Canadian Fishing Company replaced B.C.Packers as the largest producer in the Fraser River district, with 50,005 cases packed, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Renort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1923, Victoria, King's Printer, 1923, p.T64.

jointly held 236, North West Trust held 13, and H.W. Boak, Albert DesBrisay, and James M. Patullo each held 1 share. The latter three individuals, with M. DesBrisay and Bulwer, comprised the directors of the company.'" In 1923 the total salmon production of the Fraser River district was 226,869 cases. The Gulf of Georgia cannery contributed 4,316 of them, with 2,473 cases of pinks and 1,198 cases of sockeye comprising the largest share of the pack. This total was the lowest for any company in the district, whereas DesBrisay was the largest producer in the Nass district, with 27,851 cases.[145] For the 1924 season, just total productions of salmon species for the various districts were listed, without company statistics.[146] In the 1925 season total production of salmon in the Fraser River district was up to 276,855 cases. The total pack of M. DesBrisay & Company was up to 12,486 cases, with the largest portion comprising 5,004 cases of pinks and 3,591 cases of spring. In spite of the increase, this was the smallest pack on the Fraser River, with the J.H. Todd plant at

144. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B5140, file 2993 (1910), Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., p.62. Boak had also been involved with Des Brisay in the Unique Canning Company Ltd. as early as 1906 [see footnote _ above].

145. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery's production represented 1.90% of the total salmon packed in the district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia. 1924, Victoria, King's Printer, 1924, p.H53-H54.

146. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1925, Victoria, King's Printer, 1925, p.I59.

Esquimalt the only smaller producer in the Fraser River district.'" In the same season M. DesBrisay & Company was absent *from* the statistics for the Nass district, although the Canadian Fishing Company put up the largest pack in that district [37,267 cases] . [148]

In 1925, Henry Doyle was still attempting to put together various amalgamations of cannery companies, and collected data on those companies he was interested in. These included M. DesBrisay & Company:

> *64c. 6/4 Note*
>
> *M. DesBrisay* & Co. This company, a private partnership, has for many years owned the Gulf of Georgia cannery at Steveston, on the Fraser River. The cannery is one of the largest and best situated of all the Fraser River canneries, but during recent years the owners have made no attempt to *secure* their share of the fish, and despite the advantages they possess, the packs obtained have been less than average for the river.
>
> In 1911, the company purchased, for $5,000, the cannery on Wales Island, Portland Inlet, which was built and operated by Americans prior to Wales Island becoming Canadian territory through the decision of the Alaska Boundary Arbitration Tribunal. The cannery is a large one, well situated, and capable of obtaining bigger packs than it has put up in past years. This season instead of operating it themselves, Messrs. DesBrisay & Co. have leased it to the Canadian Fishing Co. Messrs. DesBrisay & co. are anxious to have an amalgamation effected and no difficulty is anticipated in securing their plants at a

147. M. DesBrisay & Company canned 4.51% of the total salmon packed in the Fraser River district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1926-27, Victoria, King's Printer, 1927, p.K58.

148. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1926-27, Victoria, King's Printer, 1927, p.K59.

reasonable figure.'@

Unfortunately, Doyle offered no explanation for the "less than average" packs of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Sometime between 1915 and 1923 the machinery in the plant was apparently updated. In 1923 a survey of canneries by the B.C. Fire Underwriters Association described two lines in the plant:

> Both were sanitary lines as two double seamers were used and no soldering or can manufacture processes were listed in the survey. Both lines were fed by a single Iron Chink.[150]

In spite of the updated machinery, the packs had continued to decline to the smallest on the river. This suggests that it was something other than outdated technology which resulted in the low production. It may have related to the general post-war falling off in the industry, a lack of capital in the operating company, or a focus more on M. DesBrisay & Company's Wales Island plant. Likely all of these factors played some part; the emphasis was on the northern canneries in this period, and the company was not one of the capital-rich majors, which could weather the slow times more

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149. Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Cannino Industrv: A Grown Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, p.212, part of ***Report: "Explanatory Notes Covering each of the Existing Companies it is Hoped to Secure for the Amalgamation," by Henry Doyle, c.1925.***

150. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Steveston British Columbia. 1894-1930, ***Op. Cit., p.51.*** As pure speculation, it is possible that the sanitary line machines and Iron Chink from the Scottish-Canadian Cannery were acquired after that plant shut down. The old association between the plants and their operators, the similarity of the machinery installed early in the century, and the availability of cheap used equipment combine to suggest this possibility. The last pack in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery was put up in 1916, so a potential changeover date would be c.1917 [see also Appendix C].

effectively.

The shareholders in the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd. remained the same through 1927, although only DesBrisay, Bulwer, and Boak were noted as directors.[151] As of July 30,1929, the company had not filed with the Registrar of Companies for two years, and was due to be struck off the register.[152] By this time, however, the cannery was under new ownership. On August 25,1926 the Canadian Fishing Company [Appendix G] purchased the Gulf of Georgia Cannery from M. DesBrisay & Company.[153]

Under M. DesBrisay & Company [and the limited liability company formed to operate the plant in 1915] the Gulf of Georgia Cannery continued its decline. From one of the major producers on the Fraser River, and in the province, under Malcolm & Windsor and United Canneries of B.C., it had sunk to one of the smallest producers. Specific causes for this shrinking pack are difficult to assign. The cost of input, fish and labour, had risen dramatically, with the 1917 cost of production of each case of sockeye on the Fraser more than double the 1891 cost. Each fish now cost from 50¢ to 75¢, and typically about 13 fish were used per case, for a total of some $9.75. The war-related emphasis on other

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151. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B5140, file 2993 (1910), Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., pp.76-77.

152. B.C.A.R.S., Register of Companies, Film B5140, file 2993 (1910), Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., p.78.

153. British Columbia Certificate of Indefeasible Title, #1766276, New Westminster, B.C., cited in Duncan Stacey, "A Structural History of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site", Canadian Parks Service, Historical Services Manuscript, Calgary, 1982, Appendix #1, note 8, Appendix #2, note 6.

species had raised their cost as well. The price of pinks had risen from 15¢ per fish in 1915 to 32¢ in 1917, with at least 15 required per case, for a total of $4.80–$5.00 per case.[154] Cannery labour costs were also up, but the potential for profit was still substantial, judging by the 1919 price per case for the different species and can configurations:

	halves	flats	talls
sockeye	16.50	15.50	15.00
red spring	15.00	14.00	13.50
cohoe	13.50	12.50	12.00
pinks	10.00	9.00	8.50
chums	7.75		6.75.[155]

In spite of the 1920 depression, these prices continued to rise sharply through the next season, to levels that remained the highest for some 25 years after. By 1922 sockeye remained high, but the other species were dropping. The process accelarated during the 1922 season, with sockeye and red spring declining by $1.50 a case, compared to the prices listed below, from the beginning of the season:

	halves	flats	talls
sockeye	19.00	18.25	18.00
red spring	14.00	13.25	13.00
cohoe	9.00	8.25	8.00
pinks	6.75		5.00
chums	6.00		4.50[156]

However, it seems that the retail price of the product did remain substantially above the cost of production, so the industry appeared to be financially viable throughout the period under

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154. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, *op. cit.*, p.325.

155. *Ibid.*, p.341.

156. Ibid., pp.348,351.

consideration. If the basic economics of the industry were still feasible, the decline in M. DesBrisay & Company and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery must have been caused by other factors.

In the period up to about 1917, this may have related to the relatively outmoded technology in the plant. When the Scottish-Candian Cannery, the other former United Canneries of B.C. plant, was operated by the experienced C.S. Windsor in the 1911-1914 period, it substantially outperformed the Gulf of Georgia. The only real difference noted between the plants in 1915 was the presence of an Iron Chink and sanitary canning technology in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery. The more modern canning line at the latter plant would tend to explain the difference in production.

After the installation of more modern machinery prior to 1923, the cannery's production remained low, declining to under 2% of the district total. As the Fraser River District was itself declining in importance, this made the plant production relative to the provincial industry even less significant. The statistics suggest that M. DesBrisay & Company itself was concentrating more on its Nass cannery than of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. This follows the industry pattern in this period of expansion in the outlying areas. However, there must have been financial or other problems, as the plant on Wales Island, often the most productive in that district, was leased to the Canadian Fishing Company for the 1924 and 1925 seasons.[157] This suggests that M. DesBrisay & Company simply could not afford to operate its canneries. Doyle's assertions in 1925

157. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaoe, op. *cit.*, p.364.

that the company was "anxious to have an amalgamation effected" and would be willing to sell its plants "at a reasonable figure" supported this supposition."' As has been noted, by this period the existence of the smaller companies was becoming more tenuous. It would seem that M. DesBrisay & Company was ripe for the picking, with desirable assets but insufficient capital to operate them to potential. The efforts of the Canadian Fishing Company to acquire those assets would have been expedited by the pre-existing relationship between the companies.

Conclusion

158. Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, p.212, part of *Report: "Explanatory Notes Covering each of the Existing Companies it is Hoped to Secure for the Amalgamation,"* by Henry *Doyle, c.1925.*

In many ways, the business history of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery is representative of the trends in the industry as a whole. The initiator of the business was Charles S. Windsor, an experienced canneryman, who had apparently worked both with the pioneer Fraser River salmon canner Alexander Ewen, and then with the successful J.H. Todd & Sons. This would have given him intimate knowledge of the industry on the river, as well as providing contacts throughout the tight group of canners and agents.

In Windsor's initial foray into plant construction and ownership, the capital to enable the Garry Point enterprise reputedly came from a combination of a Vancouver agent, C.G. Hobson, and the long-established Turner, Beeton & Company, in Victoria. This plant then became part of one of the first significant Vancouver-based combines in the industry, the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company.

The Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., was typical of the new initiatives in the boom decade of the 1890s. In this instance, Windsor's financing came from one of the pillars of the Vancouver business community, Alexander MacGowan. The successful cannery was sold prior to the 1895 season to Malcolm and Windsor Ltd., which operated it with good results over the next five seasons. This period signalled the start of more direct British ownership and control over the business. Oswald M. Malcolm, later described as a "London representative", initially shared ownership with Windsor, but in 1898 the latter was bought out, replaced by Alexander James

Malcolm of London, presumably a relative of O.M. Malcolm.

United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd. was a small-scale representative of the merger phase of 1897-1902. In this case, three canneries and two related companies already had a number of major shareholders in common. There were operational and financial advantages to the merger. It was during this period that the first direct evidence of bank financing appeared, with the Imperial Bank of Canada lending money to the company to prepare for each season. By 1901 the balance of ownership in United Canneries of B.C. was changing, with some of the original shareholders, and cannery founders, such as Windsor, bought out in favour of new shareholders. These included Hubert C.H. Cannon, Arthur P. Judge, and various British businesses and individuals. Cannon, together with O.M. Malcolm, was identified as one of the primary owners of the business, and the use of the name Malcom, Cannon & Company started.

Over the next few seasons, the fortunes of the company waned. A number of factors may have contributed to this, including the departure of experienced local canners from the management of the firm and the hard competition from B.C. Packers, which from its inception was dominant in the industry. Although United Canneries of B.C. had initially expressed interest in joining B.C. Packers, ultimately it stayed out of the merger. Although some similar-sized companies, such as J.H. Todd & Company, continued to flourish after the formation of B.C. Packers, United Canneries of B.C. did not. By this time the borrowing limits approved by company

management exceeded the potential earnings of the company, signalling some financial,planning, or marketing problems. There' was also a significant problem with improperly canned fish at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, which would have cost money directly as well as affected future sales.

By 1906 the limited liability company was wound up, and the private successor company, Malcolm, Cannon & Company, followed the trend of the industry by establishing a plant on the Skeena, and only operating the more modern Scottish-Canadian Cannery on the Fraser. The new company was still unable to compete, and had disappeared by 1911. At this time the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was acquired by another private company, M. DesBrisay & Company, which had already been operating the plant as a lessee. This company, both under its own name and as the Gulf of Georgia Canning Company Ltd., continued to operate the plant at a low level of production until 1926.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. had entered the salmon canning industry during the World War I boom, and had continued to flourish in the postwar period. It had become the major rival to B.C. Packers in the industry, and in the 1920s embarked on a major programme of plant acquisition. Starting with the leasing of the M.DesBrisay & Company plant on Wales Island for the 1924 season, within two years the larger company purchased the assets of the smaller, including the Gulf of Georgia.

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery had gone from a major independent producer during the boom period of the 1890s to a marginal producer

in the 1906-1926 period. Some of this decline may have been due to lagging technology, but the inadequate capital of private companies compared to that of the combines must have contributed. The decline seems to have started in earnest with the formation of B.C. Packers in 1902. Eventually, the inability to compete resulted in the sale of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery to one of the "majors", like so many of the coastal canneries in the 1920s. After a brief period of operation as a salmon cannery by its new owners, the plant was turned to various other purposes within the structure of the conglomerate, never regaining the stature of its glory days in the 1890s.

Appendix A: George I. Wilson

George I. Wilson serves as a prime example of the interlinked nature of the various canning companies and organizations. He was a Scot, who emigrated first to New Brunswick, and then on to Vancouver in 1889, where he ran a dry goods store until 1897. In 1893 he purchased a third interest in the Brunswick No.1 Cannery in Steveston, and in the same year was one of the organizers of the Pacific Coast Packing Company. In 1894 he was one of the partners in the formation of Malcolm and Windsor Ltd., in 1895 the agent for the Alliance Canning Company Ltd., and later the owner of the latter company. In 1901 he was the president of the Albion Canning Company. In 1902 the Brunswick and Albion Canneries were sold to the B.C. Packers Association, and Wilson became the secretary of the new company.' After briefly serving as general manager of B.C. Packers in 1904, Wilson resigned, and in 1906 built the Strathcona Cannery on Rivers Inlet, in partnership with Ninian H. Bain. Bain was from New Brunswick, and had worked at the Ewen Cannery as early as 1879, then became the bookkeeper at Laidlaw & Company, held the same position, and then later became a shareholder at the Pacific Coast Packing Company. He had been a district supervisor with B.C. Packers before joining Wilson in the new venture.'

Appendix B: United Canneries Ltd.

This company was organized in July 1899 with a capital of

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1. Salmon: Our Heritase, op. *cit.*, pp.200,235,678.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.235,246,261.

$5,000 [one hundred $50 shares] to acquire the vessel *Lapwing* and set up a shipping business. The subscribers, all of Vancouver, were: O.M. Malcolm, canner; Frank Burnett, broker; J.E. Macrae, agent; and C. Gardner Johnson, broker; each with 24 shares, and J.C. Foote, a master mariner, with 4 shares.' United Canneries Ltd. disposed of all its assets to United Canneries of British Columbia Ltd. on November 6,1899.[2]

Appendix C: Scottish-Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd.

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1. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 296(1897), United Canneries Ltd., p.5.

2. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.51-52.

This general fisheries company was started in January 1899, capitalized at $50,000 [five hundred $100 shares]. The initial subscribers, all of Vancouver, were O.M. Malcolm, canner; Frank Burnett, broker; J.J. Crane, canner; J.E. Macrae, agent; A. Sutherland, canner; and C.S. Windsor, canner; each with 60 shares.[1] Ned DeBeck, who went to work for Scottish-Canadian as a youth in 1899 later remembered the last two shareholders as intimately involved with the business:

> The owner of the cannery SC [sic] was one Charlie Windsor. My father had known him in New Westminster. Off I go to Steveston armed with a letter to Windsor.
>
> . ..Alex Sutherland was our boss. He was spoken of as the foreman but really was the manager and he was thoroughly competant in that capacity. Windsor seldom came out.
>
> . ..Alex Sutherland a local boy had worked his way up in the canneries..."[2]

In the 1900 season DeBeck returned to the cannery, finding some changes due to the takeover by United Canneries of B.C.:

> There were quite a few changes from the previous year. We were now the United Canners and we had two more canneries to operate both in Steveston. We had a tug boat of our own and a couple of scows.[3]

From that year until 1905 the Scottish-Canadian Cannery was operated by United Canneries of B.C., and from 1906 to 1910 by its successor, Malcolm, Cannon & Company. In January 1911 George

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1. B.C.A.R.S., GR1438, Register of Companies, Film B4416, file 170(1897), p.4.

2. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.4c,18c,31c.

3. *Ibid.*, p.34c.

Dodwell et. al. sold the property to C.S. Windsor Ltd., of London, England.[4] Ironically, the man who had been largely responsible for building the plant had acquired it again [also see Appendix F for Windsor's activities in the interim]. For the 1911 season C.S. Windsor Ltd. applied for a licence to operate one of the two canning lines in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery.' C.S. Windsor Ltd. was a British company, with its head office in London, operating under an extra-provincial licence granted in June 1911. Its British Columbia office was in the Bank of British Worth America Building, on West Hastings Street, Vancouver. The primary aim of the company was to acquire the land, buildings and canning business "situate on the Fraser River" from the parties of the first part, who included Charles Samuel Windsor, Alfred Henry Sherman, Thomas William Coate and John Cairns.*

Under C.S. Windsor Ltd., the cannery packed 29,001 cases of pink, chum, coho and sockeye in 1911. C.S. Windsor was also noted

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4. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4394, file 460A(1910), p.54 referred to a deed signed by Dodwell & Company in favour of C.S. Windsor Ltd. Dodwell & Company Ltd., of London England, was listed among the larger shareholders in United Canneries of B.C. in 1901; it may have been the shareholder that bought out Windsor's shares in December 1900, B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.22-23.

5. B.C.A.R.S., GR435, Box 14, file 124, C.S. Windsor Ltd., to Commissioner of Fisheries, July 3,1911.

6. British Columbia Gazette, 1911, Victoria, King's Printer, 1911, pp.8944-8946. As well as being a vendor, Coate acted as the Vancouver lawyer for the new company. Windsor, Sherman, and Coate were all listed at 4 Monument Street, London, and each had 100 shares in the company in September 1910, B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4394, file 460A(1910), p.10.

as the proprietor of the Lighthouse Cannery, which packed 31,011 cases the same season.[7] In the 1912 season, the pack of the Scottish-Canadian Cannery was down to 12,802 cases.' The following year C.S. Windsor Ltd. changed its name to Scottish Canadian Canning Company, Ltd.' Company statistics for 1913 were not recorded, but in the 1914 season the renamed company packed 11,319 cases of salmon.[10]

In the fall of 1914 Joshua W. Windsor of Vancouver was appointed attorney and agent of the Scottish Canadian Canning Company." A.H. Sherman had convinced J.W. Windsor to buy shares in the company. J.W. Windsor operated the plant in 1914, but due to a secret mortgage and other financial irregularities it could not meet its debts, and was foreclosed in April 1915 by the mortgager, J.S. Emerson. In 1916 J.W. Windsor was operating the

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7. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery packed 9.62% of the total salmon production in the district, while the combined Windsor operations packed 19.91% of the total, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia. 1912, Victoria, King's Printer, 1912, p.N60.

8. This represented 6.42% of the salmon canned in the Fraser River district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia. 1913, Victoria, King's Printer, 1913, p.I81.

9. British Columbia Gazette, 1913, Victoria, King's Printer, 1913, p.4878.

10. This was 4.96% of the total salmon canned in the district, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1915, Victoria, King's Printer, 1915, p.N130.

11. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4394, file 460A(1910), pp.44-45.

plant again, but was not sanguine about the returns for the year.[12] After the plant remained closed for the 1915 season, J.W. Windsor was able to can only 1,635 cases of salmon in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery in 1916."

This was apparently the last pack put up in this cannery. Cicely Lyons suggested that a Mr. Graham bought a half interest in the plant for $10,000, against a mortgage debt of $25,000. An attempt was made to sell the cannery at auction but there were no takers at the asking price, so it was retained and operated by J.W. Windsor and Graham. It is possible that J.H. Todd purchased the plant somewhat later, but that company's use of it is unknown.[14]

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12. *Ibid.*, pp.47-49, J.W. Windsor to Registrar of Companies, August 31 and September 4, 1916. Windsor's letterhead identified him as a commission broker, head office Montreal, but he wrote from Steveston. The court decision concerning the issue supported J.W. Windsor's story, *ibid.*, pp.53-56.

13. This was 1.28% of the district total pack, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1916, Victoria, King's Printer, 1916, p.S164.

14. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaae, Vancouver, British Columbia Packers Ltd., 1969, pp.308-309.

Appendix D: English Bay Canning Company Ltd.

The English Bay Canning Company Ltd. was formed in May 1898 as a general fisheries company. The initial subscribers, each with 20 shares, were: Charles Samuel Windsor, John Joseph Crane, and W.H. McDonald, all listed as canners; and Peter Righter and Robert Mee, both locomotive engineers.[1] Cicely Lyons wrote that the English Bay Cannery was "erected by Malcolm, Cannon & Company [sic], near the northern end of Bidwell Street" in 1898.[2] Keith Ralston suggested its location was on the Kitsilano shoreline, near the "present [in 1965] Maritime Museum".[3] The cannery first operated in the 1898 season, when it held twenty fishing licences and packed 8,282 cases of salmon [379,536 one pound cans].[4]

In February 1899 a resolution was passed to eliminate the association of the company, and by November 1899, after the formation of United Canneries of B.C., the ownership of the company had changed substantially. Crane, Righter, and Mee still held 20 shares each, but Windsor and McDonald had both sold out. They were replaced by: Frank Burnett, broker, with 34 shares; O.M. Malcolm, canner, with 20 shares; J.E. Macrae, agent, with 10 shares; C.S.

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1. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4416, file 92(1897), pp.1-5.

2. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaae, *op. cit.*, p.214. The company name, of *course,* is that of the later umbrella company which eventually took over the cannery.

3. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/R131, Keith Ralston, "British Columbia Salmon Canneries Provincial Archives", English Bay Cannery.

4. Canada, Sessional Paoers 1900, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1900, vo1.9, p.202.

Johnson, broker, with 10 shares; and L.H. Wright, agent, with 1 share.[5]

In the 1899 season, under the United Canneries of British Columbia, the plant's production had nearly doubled, to 16,300 cases.[6] The statistics for the plant's yearly production under United Canneries of B.C. are given in the main text. In the last year of operation, 1905, John J. Crane was described as the manager of this cannery. He had been involved from the start as one of the original subscribers, and had stayed on as a shareholder in United Canneries of B.C.' Apparently this plant closed after the 1905 season, and the machinery was taken to the Skeena River by Malcolm, Cannon & Company to establish the Dominion Cannery on that river.'

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5. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4416, file 92(1897), p.6.

6. Canada, Sessional Papers 1901, Ottawa, Queen's Printer, 1901, Vol.9, p.159.

7. Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory for 1905, *op*. cit., p.681.

8. The Dominion Cannery was built by Malcolm Cannon & Company in 1906, with its machinery sent north from the "old English Bay Cannery, closed a short time before", Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaoe, *op*.cit., p.260.

Appendix E: Anglo Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd.

The Anglo Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd. was established as a general fisheries company February 17, 1899, capitalized at $50,000 [500 $100.00 shares]. The shareholders included: Frank Burnett, merchant and C.S. Windsor, salmon canner, each with 42 shares; J.E. Macrae, shipping agent, 16 shares; and C. Gardner Johnson, merchant and a clerk with an illegible name, both with 1 share.[1] It may be noticed that the three principal shareholders were also involved in the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, the English Bay Cannery, and United Canneries. The company was struck from the register of companies in 1911, at which time C.Gardner Johnson could not remember having been associated with the company.[2]

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1. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4416, file 189(1897), pp.1-3.

2. *Ibid.*, pp.5-10, p.6. There was another "related" company created in June 1899; Johnson and Burnett Ltd., capitalized at $25,000 [250 $100 shares]. Johnson and Burnett each had 123 shares, Macrae 2, and two other shareholders had 1 each. The aim of this company was to take over an older business of the same name in Vancouver, involved in canneries and more specifically, transportation related to canneries, B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4417, file 288(1897), pp.1-7. Struck off Register in 1911, *ibid.*, pp.8-9.

Appendix F: Industrial Cannery and Unique Cannery

The Fraser River Industrial Cannery was built in New Westminster in 1896 by the Fraser River Industrial Society, with H. Youdal as the plant manager.' The society had been formed in the fall of 1895, with a number of the elite of New Westminster involved.' The cannery's first pack, in the 1896 season, was 7,050 cases [338,400 one pound cans] of salmon.' In 1897 it was said to be located in Annieville, on the south side of the river, listed as having 13 fishing licences, and packed 11,200 cases [537,600 one pound cans].[4] In the 1898 and 1899 seasons, the cannery, now with 20 fishing licences, packed 3,500 cases and 5,738 cases of salmon respectively.[5] In the 1900 season statistics, the Industrial Cannery was listed as one of the United Canneries of British Columbia plants, with production down to 2,632 cases.'

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1. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritaoe, op. cit., p.209.

2. B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/R131, Keith Ralston, "British Columbia Salmon Canneries Provincial Archives", Industrial Cannery, Annieville, citing Register of Companies, file 63, Societies Act, 1891.

3. Canada, Sessional Papers 1898, op. cit., Vo1.9, p.236.

4. Canada, Sessional Papers 1899, *op. cit.*, Vo1.9, p.226.

5. Canada, Sessional Papers 1900, op. *cit.*, Vo1.9, p.202; Canada, Sessional Papers 1901, op. *cit.*, Vo1.9, p.159.

6. Canada, Sessional Papers 1902, op. *cit.*, Vo1.9, p.175. The British Columbia Directory for 1900-1901 also listed the Fraser River Industrial Cannery as one of the six canneries controlled by the United Canneries of B.C. at this time, British Columbia Directory 1900-1901, cited in B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/R131, Keith Ralston, "British Columbia Salmon Canneries Provincial Archives", Industrial Cannery, Annieville.

In February 1901 the Union Canning Company Ltd. was formed, with its primary object to take over the Industrial Cannery. The cannery was apparently owned by the Bank of Hamilton, as the new company was to "take over and adopt" an agreement between the bank and C.S. Windsor. The latter was to purchase the cannery with cash or shares in the new company, which was capitalized at $24,000 [240 $100.00 shares]. The registered office was at 419 Hastings Street, Vancouver, and the initial subscribers, each with one share, were: Joseph Martin, barrister; C.S. Windsor, canneryman; E.J. Deacon, solicitor; Fred Keeling, clerk; and Elizabeth Jane Martin, married woman.'

In the dominant run year of 1901, the Industrial Cannery packed 19,500 cases of sockeye, under the ownership of Windsor and the Union Canning Company.' In 1902 the cannery produced 5,313 cases of salmon.[9] C.S. Windsor continued to operate the Industrial Cannery for the next three seasons, producing 4,740, 2,911, and 11,079 cases of salmon respectively." The last year

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7. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, film B.4419, file 606(1897), pp.2-6.

8. Canada, Sessional Papers 1903, *op.* cit., Vol.9, p.106; British Columbia Directory 1901, cited in B.C.A.R.S., I/BA/R131, Keith Ralston, "British Columbia Salmon Canneries Provincial Archives", Industrial Cannery, Annieville. The directory also noted Evans, Coleman & Evans as the agents for Windsor and the Industrial Cannery.

9. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1903, ***op. cit.***, p.G35; Canada, Sessional Pavers 1904, ***op. cit.***, Vo1.9, p.212.

10. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1904, ***op. cit.***, p.F12; Canada, Sessional Pavers 1905, ***op. cit.***, Vo1.9, p.218; British

the Industrial Cannery operated was 1905, a dominant sockeye run year on the Fraser River. As with Windsor's old company, United Canneries of B.C., all of the production of the Industrial Cannery was shipped to the United Kingdom. Of the total pack of 11,079 produced in 1905, 9,978 were sent to "Liverpool direct", while 1,100 were shipped to the U.K. "overland", by rail to an eastern port." The agents for Windsor's pack were still Evans, Coleman & Evans of Vancouver."

It would seem that C.S. Windsor, who had been employed as the manager of United Canneries of B.C., had left that company in favour of operating one of its former plants as an independent. He may have had the Industrial Cannery as early as the 1901 season, but definitely by 1902. The 1905 season was the last for which statistics were listed for the Industrial Cannery; however, the next season a new cannery appeared on the Fraser River, which may have been simply a renaming of the earlier one.

In April 1906 the Unique Canning Company Ltd. was formed, capitalized at $50,000 [500 $100.00 shares], with its aim to enact an agreement already made between C.S. Windsor and Merrill

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Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1905, op. *cit.*, p.F11; Canada, Sessional Papers 1906, op. *cit.*, Vol.10, p.212; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia. 1906, op. Cit., p.H10.

11. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1906, Victoria, King's Printer, 1906, p.H13.

12. Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory for 1905, *op. cit.*, p.681.

DesBrisay. The initial shareholders were: Merrill Des Brisay, Rm. 9, Fairfield Block, Vancouver, merchant; C.S. Windsor, New Westminster; George E. Windsor, New Westminster, bookkeeper; James L. Stewart, Vancouver, accountant; and Henry W.C. Boak, 6 & 7 Royal Bank Chambers, Vancouver, barrister; each holding one share." The agreement to be enacted noted that Windsor had been operating the Unique Canning Company "for some time". Everything comprising this operation was to be purchased by the new company, including land, buildings, machinery, and goodwill.[14]

As the only cannery listed as operated by C.S. Windsor "for some time" was the Industrial Cannery, it is probable that this plant became known as the Unique Cannery for the 1906 season. This conclusion is supported by the name of the operating company, "Union Canning Company", and its resemblance to "Unique". The incestuous nature of the canning industry also becomes more evident, in that the builder and former part-owner of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery became involved in this business with the future owner of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. The Unique Cannery continued to pack for the next five seasons, 1906 to 1910, producing 10,820, 12,472, 773, 16,343, and 13,063 cases of salmon respectively."

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13. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4423, file 1463(1897), pp.2-4.

14. Ibid., pp.7-9.

15. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1907, op. *cit.*, p.C11; Canada, Sessional Pavers 1907-8, op. cit., Vol.11, p.220; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report O f the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1908, op. cit., p.I19; Canada, Sessional Papers 1909, op. *cit.*, pp.224-225; British Columbia,

The Unique Canning Company, salmon canners, was listed under New Westminster in the British Columbia directory for 1910 [based on 1909 information]. The plant was said to be on Lulu Island, and Merrill DesBrisay was listed as the president, with C.S. Windsor the manager.[16] The Unique Cannery was not listed in the cannery statistics for the 1911 season, and the company was struck off the register of companies in December 1911.[17] Since setting up the Unique Canning Company, M. DesBrisay & Company had taken over the operation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Prior to the 1911 season, it had acquired its Wales Island Cannery, and applied for licences to operate it and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.[18] C.S. Windsor had re-acquired the Scottish-Canadian Cannery, and applied

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Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1909, op. *cit.*, p.I15; Canada, Sessional Pawers 1910, *op.* cit., pp.265-266; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Rewort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1910, *op. cit.*, p.I22; Canada, Sessional Pawers 1911, *op. cit.*, vo1.14, pp.261-262; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1915, *op.cit.*, p.N132.

16. Henderson's British Columbia Gazetteer and Directory for 1910, *op.* cit., 1910, pp.937,939,1579.

17. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4423, file 1463(1897), pp.ll-16.

18. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 121, M. DesBrisay & Co. to W.J. Bowser, commissioner of fisheries, April 1,1911. Cicely Lyons described M. DesBrisay, Sr. and a Mr. Comeau, both originally from New Brunswick, as operating a cannery at Hidden Inlet, Alaska, until it was ruled to be in the States. About 1911 M. DesBrisay & Company Ltd. bought and operated a plant on Wales Island, Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, *op. cit.*, p.285; documentation on the initial operation of the Wales Island plant by M. DesBrisay & Company is in B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 121, spring of 1911.

for a licence to operate it in 1911.[19] The production capabilities of these plants were larger than those of the Unique Cannery, judging from the statistics, and the fact that the two Steveston canneries were two-line plants. As such, DesBrisay and Windsor went their separate ways, as discussed elsewhere in this report.

Appendix G: Canadian Fishing Company

19. B.C.A.R.S., GR 435, Box 14, file 124, C.S. Windsor Ltd., to commissioner of Fisheries, July 3,1911.

The Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. was formed on April 30,1906, with capital of $75,000 [750 $100.00 shares], intended to be a general fish processing company.' Lyons suggested that the primary intent of the company was to engage in halibut fishing. The partners in the venture were Captain Absolam Freeman and Captain Johnson, both master mariners, and J.M. Atkins, H.H. Watson, and L.G. Henderson, all Vancouver druggists.' Captain Freeman had been fishing for halibut since the early 1890s, selling primarily to the New England Fish Company, which had started Vancouver operations in 1893. In October 1909 Canadian Fishing Company Ltd. was sold to the New England Fish Company, which thereby gained a Canadian subsidiary. The president of the Canadian Fishing Company from 1908 to 1948 was Alvah L. Hager, who had come to Vancouver with the New England Fish Company.'

For the first few years, the Canadian Fish Company concentrated on halibut fishing, but in 1918 were granted a salmon canning licence, and began operations at the Home Cannery in Vancouver.[4] In that first season, 31,111 cases of salmon were canned in that plant.' Over the next four seasons the pack of the Home Cannery continued to *grow,* from 14,174 cases in 1919 to 50,005

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1. British Columbia Gazette, 1906, op. *cit.,* p.1126.

2. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritacie, op. *cit.,* p.271.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., p.328.

5. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Report of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1919, op. *cit.,* p.X90.

cases in 1922.[6] Even more significantly, this one plant replaced B.C. Packers' several plants as the largest producer in the Fraser River district, canning 35.57% of the total district production.

As a result of its success in salmon canning and the steady income from the halibut business, the Canadian Fishing Company began a programme of expansion and acquisition in 1923. In that year it purchased a number of outlying canneries from Western Packers Ltd., including Butedale Cannery, Shushartie Cannery, and Margaret Bay Cannery, as well as the Lagoon Bay Cannery in the Queen Charlotte Islands, built by Western Salmon Packers Ltd. in 1918.' In 1925 C.F.C. purchased all the assets of the Kildala Packing Company Ltd., including the Carlisle Cannery [Skeena River], the Kildala Cannery [Rivers Inlet], and the Manitou Cannery [Dean Channel].*

While these outlying canneries were purchased, the Home Cannery continued to dominate salmon canning in the Fraser River district. Its 1923 pack was 75,558 cases of salmon, almost double B.C. Packers production, and 33.30% of the district total. The proportion was similar in 1925, with 92,677 cases packed, *or 33.47%*

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6. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1920, op. cit., p.U82; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Reoort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1923, op. *cit.*, p.T64.

7. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, op. *cit.*, p.356.

8. Ibid., pp.360-361.

of the district total.' By this time the Canadian Fishing Company was involved in the M.DesBrisay & Company canneries, having leased the Wales Island Cannery for the 1924 and 1925 seasons. In 1926 C.F.C. purchased both of the DesBrisay plants." Ironically, after purchasing these two plants, the Canadian Fishing Company lost its leading position in both the districts concerned in 1927: in the Fraser River district it fell to third place, with 56,532 cases produced, or 19.88% of the district total, while in the Nass district the pack fell to 7,107 cases, the smallest on that river."

The Canadian Fishing Company continued its acquisition of canneries throughout the 1920s, purchasing three others in 1926, for instance. By the 1930s canneries were being closed, and later several, such as the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, were converted to other functions, including fresh fish and reduction plants. By 1959 the company was back to where it had started in 1918, with the

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9. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1924, op. *cit.*, p.H53; British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1926-27, op. cit., p.K58. Although C.F.C. was the largest producer, it packed a much larger percentage of the lower-value species than B.C. Packers, which concentrated more on sockeye.

10. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritage, op. *cit.*, p.364. This is borne out by the cannery statistics for 1925, which show M. DesBrisay missing on the Nass, but C.F.C. on the Nass replacing it as the largest packer, producing 37,267 cases, British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1926-27, op. *cit.*, p.K59.

11. British Columbia, Department of Fisheries, Revort of the Fisheries Commissioner for British Columbia, 1928, Victoria, King's Printer, 1928, pp.N50-N51.

Home Cannery its only salmon canning plant."

12. Cicely Lyons, Salmon: Our Heritase, op. cit., pp.364-365,368, 379,385,425,438,459,464,466,470,476,480,493,494,496,513,541-542, 544.

Notes on Work and Life in the Steveston Canneries at the Turn of the Century

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March 1992

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Edward Keary DeBeck and the Scottish-Canadian Cannery at the Turn of the Century

This report attempts to define some aspects of work and life surrounding the canneries at Steveston, and particularly the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, in the period of its greatest activity, 1894-1905. In this period the plant was one of the leading producers in the province, initially run as an independent business, and later as a part of the United Canneries of British Columbia, a small combine. In this research, little material directly applicable to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery turned up. However, there is a single source that seems to best encapsulate the work and life surrounding a Steveston cannery in this period are the Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, and particularly one file entitled "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)".[1]

In this, Ned DeBeck described the setting and activity surrounding the Scottish-Canadian cannery at Steveston in the 1899-1901 period. DeBeck went to work at this cannery as a sixteen year old student, and it made a profound impression on him. This cannery was originally built by Malcolm and Windsor, the owners of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in 1898, and like the latter plant, was taken over by United Canneries of British Columbia in 1900. As it was built by the same people, only some four years after the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and as it was operated by the same company, it

1. British Columbia Archives and Records Service [hereafter cited as B.C.A.R.S.], Add. Mss 346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)".

may be assumed that most of the practices observed at one cannery also apply to the other. The DeBeck reminiscences form the core of this report, giving an overview of the work and life in the sister plant of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery.

There are various other sources which describe canning and canneries for this time period. Particularly good examples, which have been widely cited elsewhere, include the T. Ellis Ladner reminiscences, Above the Sand Heads, which describe the Fraser River industry to the south of Steveston.[2] This book provides an interesting counterpoint to the DeBeck manuscript, in general correlating very closely in the details of cannery operations and the people working in the industry.[3] However, it is not Steveston-specific. Another work that has been widely cited is Alfred Carmichael's account of working in a cannery on the Skeena in 1891.[4] This gives a great deal of information concerning canning and life, but because it relates to a northern river has limited applicability to the Fraser.

DeBeck started his account by describing the setting of the cannery and its ancillary development in the community. The Scottish-Canadian Cannery was at the extreme west end of the

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2. Edna G. Ladner, editor, Above the Sand Heads: Firsthand accounts of pioneering in the area which, in 1879, became the Municipality of Delta, British Columbia, Burnaby, Edna G. Ladner, 1979.

3. *Ibid.*, pp.83-112 is the section on the industry and technology, and pp.113-134 is the section on the "cannery crews".

4. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 2305, Alfred Carmichael Papers, Box 6, file 1, "Account of a Season's work at a salmon cannery. Windsor Cannery, Aberdeen, Skeena. 1891"

cannery row, a short distance from the town centre of Steveston:

> Cur little village was in four parts: the cannery itself fronting on the river; the Chinese and Japanese houses along the slough; the office cookhouse and living quarters for the whites behind the cannery on the flats. The inner end of our causeway was where the breakwater begins.
>
> The town of Steveston had a hotel (Harry Lee), several stores gaol &c & over 20 canneries. In summer it would have a population of 5 or 6 thousand but in the winter 4 or 5 hundred about 90% Japanese. The summer population was in approximately equal portions Japs - all fishermen; Chinese - cannery workers; Indians - the men fishermen, the women cannery workers; and whites from every country in Europe distributed in all occupations.[5]

A visitor to Steveston in the off-season was less than flattering about the town, describing the Oriental district as a "packing-box and doghouse town...that staggers along the clayey dyke facing the canneries". Although the industry and economic progress of the Japanese people was commented on it was said that they still lived "in the same sagging shanties and the same muddy fishy smell."[6] What was not mentioned was that the housing was provided by the companies, which kept the Orientals in an essentially indentured state, and that the "muddy fishy smell" was just a part of the residential environment.

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5. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.1c-2c.

6. Anonymous, "A Cannery Town In Winter", Man-To-Man, Vo1.7, No.1 (January 1911), p.49.

Figure 1

An overview of the Steveston canneries looking east, early twentieth century, with the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in the centre. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84110.

Figure 2

"View of Steveston, B.C.", showing the business district, early twentieth century, B.C.A.R.S. photograph 82291.

The Life of Native Workers at the Steveston Canneries

At the turn of the century native Indians still made up a substantial part of the work force in the fishery. Native men made up a substantial part of the fishermen, and native women were a major component of the canning labour, concentrated in the washing of the fish and can filling. DeBeck had a strong interest in the native workers, and was closely involved with them. As these people came from different groups on the coast, for communication the old trade language, Chinook jargon, was used. This created opportunities for white workers that could speak it, as for the young Ned DeBeck:

> By the time I was sixteen I was thoroughly conversant in Chinook, and it was this knowledge that got me my first job with the cannery at Steveston in 1899. The manager was reluctant to give a young student a job until he

> heard that I could speak Chinook, as it was important to have someone in the cannery who could talk to the Indians who came to work at the cannery, all of whom spoke Chinook.
>
> I was also employed at Steveston to interpret in the police court when the regular interpreter was away (drunk)."[7]

Some of the social structure of the native groups was apparently brought to the canneries along with the workers. DeBeck wrote of how he met the famous Chief Capilano in Steveston:

> The Chief Capilano whom I knew so well first came to my attention in 1899 when I was working in a cannery. Chief Capilano, who was a real Chief of his people and felt responsible for their welfare, used to come to the cannery where many of his people were working. I would say he was then in his late 40% [sic]. I got to know him particularly well as he spoke fluent Chinook with which I was conversant.'

DeBeck described the arrival of the natives at the Steveston canneries at the beginning of the twentieth century, when they still made up a significant part of the fishing and processing labour:

> O.K. All is ready for the salmon run but the run is still a week or 10 days away and the Indians are not here yet. But we are ready. . . . But the Indians wern't [sic] here yet and they were essential to the operation as the women did all the work at the sliming tanks and practically all the filling.
>
> Well here they come on a flood tide in the late afternoon bowling along ahead of a westerly wind. Great canoes 50 ft and over, spread to an 8 ft beam, each with 4 sails, wing & wing. Some came all the way from the

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7. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 1, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Biographical Notes", p.2.

8. *Ibid.*, Box 1, file 10, "Miscellaneous correspondence 1950s", E.K. DeBeck to Fred Anesley, May 22,1963. DeBeck acted as Capilano's lawyer in Vancouver from 1908 until the latter's death at an unspecified date.

> Skeena and the Queen Charlottes butmostwere Kwakiutl ie Cape Mudge to Queen Charlotte Sound. They came in a flotilla about 12 of the big ones and an equal number of lesser ones about 40 ft or a little less. I'm sure one of the big canoes could hold up to 100 if you counted children but did not count dogs, mongrels all, short on pedigree but long on multiplicity of breeds. Most of them showed various stages of distemper or mange; they were quarrelsome and forever fighting.
>
> There were plenty of children as we found out in the next few hours. About 1/2 the flotilla kept on up the river to other canneries.
>
> There was considerable ceremony to the landing. A few hundred yards out sails were lowered and they started singing Indian songs until they got to 5 or 6 yards from the wharf. With a final shout a sudden silence. Dead silence for about a minute. Then the biggest chief stood and with a speaking staff in his hand made a short speech. A sudden stop. A barked order. And then all hell broke loose: every paddle clawing water to sidle the canoe up to the wharf; mooring lines made fast. The lower 5 or 6 feet was under water but we had planks ready to bridge it to the first canoe & then more planks over the first and second canoes to make a causeway for the outer canoes.[9]

The cannery crew had seen all this before, but to the young white seasonal workers such as DeBeck it was a picture of chaos. Be left a detailed description of the arrival of the natives from the north and their installation in cannery quarters:

> To us it looked like utter confusion. Everyone seemed to be rushing here & there with something whe [sic] dropped somewhere & ran back for more. Kids slithering through from the canoes in waves one after another. The first to come up were in pairs - a Siwash & Kloochman (I use these words as they were used at that time. They were soon to be deemed uncomplimentary and dropped into complete oblivion) each carried a load of iktas (things). These were dropped in a handy spot & the man took off for a truck or dolly. Then back to the canoe for more of the family all bringing more iktas. Up and down till their complete outfit was on the wharf. I didn't see anything more from the wharf. When the kids came up and started

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9. Ibid., pp.15c-18c.

rambling around completely out of control I high tailed it back to guard the lye vat.

Let me go back a bit. When word was flashed around that the canoes were in sight it was an order for all hands on deck to keep the cannery from being wrecked. Everything movable was put away or at least well out of sight. Alex came and as he passed the lye vat he saw that it was full. "Is the lye in that yet?" "Yes." "Well who in hell did that? Why is there no cover on it? Never mind then. DeBeck! Guard that vat. Don't let anyone come near it. If the kids or anyone ever got their hands in it they would be ruined"

Thats why I left the wharf on the double. You can hardly blame the kids for getting wild with excitement. Remember - they had been living in a canoe for a week or more, wedged in amongst their iktas, no water for washing, bathroom facilities over the gunwale. The last reach of the trip from Seymour narrows to the Fraser about 130 miles they always tried to make in one run. And they generally did it. Prevailing winds at that time of the year were westerly, generally starting in the early forenoon and dying at sundown. Sailing they could make over 5 knots with a brisk wind but paddling only about 3 plus. So they would be sailing about 12 hrs and paddling 12. In other words nearly 2 full days to make the run (I learned all this by talking to the Indians). With all that pent up energy it was natural that the kids would get out of control.

The lye vat was a heavy sheet metal vat or pan 6'x6' about 18" high set on the floor and nearly filled with a nearly saturate solution of lye, which is pretty lethal water.

I didn't have long to wait. A group of 5 or 6 little ones came up on the run. I jumped in front of them "Klatewa (scram) Hyak (quick) Thats death water in there. It will kill you if you touch it. Klatewa. Oh Hell heres more of them - Bill! Charlie! Lend a hand here. Get a club & help keep the little bastards out of that vat" All this shouting of mine was in good Chinook and good English. The kids understood but they didn't heed worth a cent. Their dirty little faces registered disbelief and their brains were figuring that if this needed a special guard it should be further investigated; it might be good to drink. "Get someone to get the firehose out" and in Chinook "Hey you there Peter Moses Daniel or Paul or whatever your name is get these kids away from here. If they get their hands in that water it will burn their hands off"

Word was passed back and up came a couple of Klooches. When I explained to them it was soon over. A good clout on the side of any head within range started them all back to help with the unloading. (I use the word "help" with reservations)

I got no more customers. So far as guarding the vats was concerned I could just as well have been sitting in an armchair reading poetry.

My station was at the back of the cannery a good 100 yds from the wharf where the confusion was. I could see where 4 or 5 chinamen were still stamping out covers. I saw the raid on the waste tin was nice shiny sheets each with 12 big round holes in it. True - each sheet had cutting edges and needle points. There was a mob urge to collect resulting in quarreling and grabbing; then a line of them going back dripping blood for first aid. This was of two kinds either a piece of dirty rag tied around it with string or a spanking & instructions to get down there and bring up more things from the canoe - each equally effective.

Fits passing through looked over at the charcoal stoves "Now what in hell do those little devils want with charcoal out of those stoves? No! dont stop them. Tell them to help themselves, fill their pockets take some for their brothers & sisters. Show them the boxes where they can get all they want. Tell them its good to eat. It's cheap, we've got lots more."

I didn't see much more, but I heard much when one removes half a dozen tins from the lowest stratum of a 6 ft high pyramid Newtons law comes into play and there is a whole avalanche of tins - noisy. Also you cant climb a column of stacked trays without having them come down over you. We had all these & more. Confusion, yes, but there was order behind it and finally everything was unloaded and stacked in mounds on the wharf. Alex gave the order to take what was needed for the nights; doors would be locked in half an hour and they could get the rest tomorrow.

The men moved the canoes on the high tide as close to shore as possible. Tomorrow they would be pulled up into the brush and carefully covered with cedar bark mats to keep them from cracking in the sun.

Next day they were back at sunrise to move their iktas to their houses. The men who were to fish in cannery boats had to be assigned and given their little book for the tallyman to enter each delivery of fish and

> initial it with corresponding entries in his own book. The women to get their places at the sliming tanks or filling tables - each one numbered."

Another author, Herbert Gowen, described the Indians arriving at a Fraser River cannery, probably in New Westminster, in 1893. His account agreed well with DeBeck's, and Gowen went on to describe the Indian camp:

> Tents and huts are erected in an incredibly short space of time, a few yards from the river brink; beds and bedding are passed from the women in the boats to the men on the shore; fires are lighted in such dangerous proximity to the walls of the tent that the absence of a great conflagration is a daily miracle, and before many hours there is the Indian encampment as though it had existed for months, with fires burning, and dogs barking, and fowls cackling, and an ancient fish-like smell asserting its supremacy in a peculiarly malodoriferous atmosphere."

Gowen went on to describe night time dances in the camp, with the women dancing, and the men playing pans and kettles. A more typical pastime was gambling:

> A more common, though less picturesque, recreation is found by the Indians in gambling, and for hours you may see them, squatting on the wet ground or in the smoky huts, eagerly handling the cards, and staking almost all they possess upon the result of the game.[12]

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10. Ibid., pp.18c-25c.

11. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser", The Canadian Maaazine, Vo1.2, No.2 (December 1893), pp.160-161.

12. Ibid., p.161.

Figure 3

"Indian Quarters", showing a long company-supplied row house divided into apartments, as well as a number of self-built shacks. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84159.

Figure 4

"Indians eating Lunch", showing native employees eating canned salmon outside a cannery, 1913. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84153.

Unlike the earlier description of New Westminster, the Indians at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery were apparently supplied with cabins. The same would apply to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, where "Indian Huts" were arranged as a "C"-shaped row house near the cannery." DeBeck compared the native way of life at the Steveston canneries to that of the Chinese and Japanese workers, whom he described as fastidious in their habits:

> The Indians were otherwise. They lived in cannery cabins on shore. Half of them were women with many children. Their way of life was very different I wouldn't say they were immoral but rather, amoral. It was not considered wrong for a woman to make a dollar at

13. Duncan A. Stacey, Sockeye and Tinulate: Technological Chancre in the Fraser River Canning Industrv 1871-1912, Victoria, British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1982, p.32.

the oldest of all professions.[14]

In 1911 the Indian houses in Steveston were described as "long brown sheds of the Siwash", which were separated into one room apartments. Over the doorway to each apartment was a board with a number on it, which corresponded to the numbers on the company boats in which the men were fishing for the season:

> The floor of the interior of these one-roomed houses is littered with blankets, furniture, cooking tins, fish gear, carnival masks, and usually three or four dogs."

Besides their families, dogs, and household kits, the Indians also brought some of their own foodstuffs with them, and DeBeck discussed their eating habits:

> The Indians brought some of their own native foods: sundried salmon, probably a hold over from last year, this may sustain life I refuse to classify it as food for humans; their smoked salmon and oolichans were quite good; the really valuable food for them was oolichan oil which had all the medicinal value of cod liver oil. They used it as freely as we would use butter or even more freely. I am of the opinion that the great incidence of TB which took such a heavy toll of life was due to their abandoning this valuable food for our butter and animal fats. They brought it along in quantities, mostly in coal oil cans (5 gal). They used to buy what we whites used as bedroom crockery - jugs, basins, soap dishes &c but they were for kitchen and table use by them - why not? Anyhow to see on their table a jerry pot half full of weak tea colored oolichan oil did anything but stimulate the white mans appetite.[16]

When the season was over, the natives were described spending

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14. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, Box 1, file 19, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.3c-4c.

15. Garnett Weston, "Steveston-by-the-Fraser", British Columbia Magazine, Vo1.7, No.8, August 1911, pp.775-776.

16. *Ibid.*, pp.14c-15c.

their earnings on various consumer goods. Particularly for some of the more remote groups, this would be their only chance each year to choose from a wide selection of items. Gowen saw them "wandering curiously from store to store, heaping together goods wherewith to fill their canoes for the return voyage northward."[17] This access to the cash economy and large quantities of consumer goods also meant that the potlatching system of the natives, whereby goods were distributed to gain prestige, was reinforced by the cannery work. Gowen described one example of a man who spent his season's earnings, a substantial $1,400, on muskets, crackers and blankets, all distributed at one such potlatch.[18]

Figure 5

"Indian Family Treat" showing a native group shopping at a vendor's cart in Steveston, 1913. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84160.

The Life of Oriental Workers at the Steveston Canneries

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17. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser", The Canadian Maaazine, Vo1.2, No.2 (December 1893), p.164.

18. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser", The Canadian Maaazine, Vo1.2, No.2 (December 1893), p.165.

By the turn of the century, the canneries were dependent on Oriental labour for their operation. This had started in the late 1880s, after a large Chinese labouring population had been brought in to work on the Canadian Pacific Railway. After this work was done, the contractors who had provided the labour crews were looking for new markets, and the canneries were looking for cheap seasonal labour. In the 1890s substantial numbers of Japanese fishermen started to arrive on the Fraser River, and eventually became the largest single ethnic group involved in the fishing. In the early part of the twentieth century, with restrictions on Chinese, but not on Japanese, immigration, more of the fishermen began to bring in wives and families from Japan. As a result, often the wives of fishermen who worked for the canning companies would themselves find work as cannery workers. The differences between the two groups *were* evident, but DeBeck generalized about the Oriental labour force to some extent, first concerning hygiene:

> The orientals were very clean about their persons. They always seemed to be washing clothes or bedding. At sun rise they would be outside with tubs of water, stripped to the waist briskly scrubbing themselves.[19]

He also discussed their foodstuffs, most of which were imported specifically for the Asian market:

> Rice of course was a staple for the Orientals. It came in cane mat sacks (50 lbs) and quantities In cane bound small tubs various sauces, fishes pickles &c Then in earthen jugs and crocks many condiments, fruits & other delicacies. They did not like our tea but had their own blends in metal sealed containers - maybe they

19. *Ibid.*, p.3c.

do yet for all I know.[20]

The Life of Chinese Workers at the Steveston Canneries

At the turn of the century, Chinese crews provided most of the labour inside the canneries. These crews were supplied by labour contractors, who in turn were paid a flat rate per can or case of salmon canned. Most of the Chinese men who worked in the crews were single, or had families at home in China, so lived a bachelor life, usually in bunkhouses:

> The Chinese . . . lived in large houses one or 2 stories [sic] high adjoining the Japs. I was never inside any Jap house but I was in several of the Chinese. Man oh Man how they were packed in. For instance the dormitories were of two kinds each with a 6 ft alley from end to end 30 to 40 ft
>
> In one kind the bunks were parallel to the alley about 6 ft long. The lowest bunk was on the floor and there would be 4 more bunks above it. The other kind was worse: the bunks were at right angles to the alley, 3 ft wide and five bunks high. Only the heads showed. These people soon broke their bondage and when they had accumulated enough money would bring a wife over from China. Their descendents are now some of our finest citizens."

Figure 6

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20. Ibid., p.15c.

21. *Ibid.*, pp.2c-3c.

"Steveston", showing some of the cannery houses in the early twentieth century. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #82292.

Jimmy Hing, one of the men who lived in such accomodation, described the life of working for a labour contractor. When the plant was working the contractor supplied three meals a day of rice, meat and vegetables, but on "slack days", when the plant was not working, just two meals were provided, breakfast at 9:00 A.M. and supper at 4:00 P.M.[22] In the bachelor environment of the Chinese bunkhouses, gambling and drinking posed a problem, and could have an impact of the future of the workers. As remembered by Jimmy Hing:

> The men gambled every night: *mah-jong, pai-gow*, fifteen-*wu*, those three games. But it was for very low stakes. ... The good boys made a few bucks and saved it, and they went back to China every three or four years. But those who liked to gamble, the lazy ones, the ones who drank - they never went back.[23]

The Life of Japanese Workers at the Steveston Canneries

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22. Paul Yee, Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1988, p.63.

23. Paul Yee, Saltwater City: An Illustrated History of the Chinese in Vancouver, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1988, p.63.

The Japanese, as already noted, made up most of the population of Steveston in the off-season. DeBeck described what he perceived of their social organization at the turn of the century:

> The Jap fishermen were in communities or maybe family groups operating anything from 6 to 30 boats. Each group operated under one name Suzuki, Tanabe, Matsumoto &c. Each group lived in a large wooden building 2 or 3 stories [sic] high.[24]

Unlike the "friendly" Indians or the Chinese, who were willing to fraternize with the whites, DeBeck thought the Japanese preferred to keep to themselves. This corresponds to other contemporary descriptions, such as Garnett Weston's 1911 account of a trip to Steveston, in which he noted [with strong racist overtones] the Japanese "forgetting" their English when spoken to, and turning their backs on the tourists. Weston contrasted this to the cheerful interest of the natives and the total indifference of the Chinese, basically supporting ethnic steroetypes. He also described the Japanese houses as "neat and clean as pins, but which smelled vilely for all that". Weston attributed the smell to the "strong odors engendered by their native foods and wares".[25] The clean houses corresponded to DeBeck's comments on the Orientals' personal cleanliness. However, the "vile" smell associated may have related more to the situation and condition of the company houses than to Japanese food. The location of the houses along the

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24. Ibid., p.2c.

25. Garnett Weston, "Steveston-by-the-Fraser", British Columbia Magazine, vo1.7, No.8, August 1911, p.777.

dyke has already been noted. The combination of dense population, damp low-lying land, open ditches and cannery waste all contributed to a less than attractive situation. The residential environment also had a negative effect on the health of the inhabitants.

Figure 7

"Japanese Quarters", showing the Japanese district adjacent to the Steveston dyke, 1913. Note the firewood for fuel. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84158.

Figure 8

"Japanese Family Treat" showing a Japanese children and men shopping at a vendor's cart in Steveston, 1913. This is the same vendor shown with the native group in Figure 5. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84162.

Around the turn of the century there were a number of outbreaks of disease in Steveston. In 1897 twenty-six cases of typhoid were reported among the Japanese, and in 1902 an outbreak of diptheria led to an investigation of conditions in the cannery shacks. These were in "deplorable" condition, filthy, and were thought to be a breeding ground for disease. By 1909, in spite of the district health officer's reservations about sanitary conditions in the plants of Steveston, only two cases of scarlet

fever and fewer cases of typhoid fever were reported in the Japanese community. In 1910 there was another outbreak of typhoid fever in Steveston, traced to rotten fish in the canal at the southern end of No.1 Road, and three cases of infantile paralysis among the Japanese.[26]

The Life of White Workers at the Steveston Canneries

The cannery crew and the white seasonal workers, such as DeBeck, made up the top echelon of workers in the canneries. They held the high-prestige and responsibility jobs, were paid the highest salaries, and were accorded the best conditions in housing and board. At the Scottish-Canadian Cannery the white quarters were grouped with the office and cookhouse "behind the cannery on the flats". DeBeck described the food provided:

> Lastly lets take a look at the food supplies. As for our own table we had nothing to complain about. We had good Chinese cooks who made freely, pies cakes cookies &c. We were much better off than logging camps in that we had unlimited fresh vegetables, meats and [14c] fruit in season, eggs, milk butter &c.[27]

After one of DeBeck's young friends got an office job, he initiated orders for ice cream and other luxuries at company

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26. Leslie J. Ross, Richmond Child of the Fraser, Richmond, Richmond '79 Centennial Society, 1979, p.64, citing *Minutes* of the Richmond council.

27. Ibid., pp.13c-14c.

expense, an imposition which was never questioned.

Working in the Cannery: Preparation for the Season

The description of the work in the canneries is based on the DeBeck reminiscences concerning the Scottish-Canadian Cannery. Other sources suggest there was a great deal of consistency in practice in the industry, and the DeBeck information agrees with most of this. Additionally, because both this cannery and the Gulf of Georgia Cannery were under the same management, were both two-line plants with similar production levels, and were built within four years of each other, it may be assumed that the description of the Scottish Canadian plant applies equally well to the Gulf of Georgia plant.

The activity in the canneries and in Steveston generally increased enormously during the summer canning season, but there was a great deal of behind the scenes preparation for the sockeye run. Besides the contract and seasonal labour brought on for the run, there was a core of skilled employees responsible for maintaining the plant and its machinery, along with the fleet of boats required for fishing. These cannery crews were normally made up of white men, and were the elite of the plants:

> Alex Sutherland was our boss. He was spoken of as the foreman but really was the manager and he was thoroughly competant in that capacity. Windsor seldom came out. Under Alex there was the permanent staff Jimmy

> Johnson for the boats; Gus --- a big Swede for the nets sails cordage &c Joe Mayhewthe carpenter and Fitzpatrick the engineer."

In addition to being the plant manager, Sutherland was an equal partner in the original Scottish-Canadian Salmon Packing Company Ltd., and remained a shareholder in the United Canneries of B.C. after they took over the plant.[29] As a white boy with some mechanical aptitude, and whose father was a friend of the owner, DeBeck worked primarily with this core group. These employees were often referred to in the industry as the "cannery crew" as opposed to the "Chinese crew" or "contract crew". The latter terms referred to those people working for the Chinese labour contractors. DeBeck saw the Scottish-Canadian cannery crew as the backbone of the cannery operations, and briefly described their backgrounds:

> Cur permanent crew were all good. Alex Sutherland a local boy had worked his way up in the canneries. Jimmy Johnson was from Truro NS - a boatbuilder. Gus a swede had worked in logging camps & fished on the Fraser; Joe was from England, made into a carpenter through a 5 year apprenticeship, good but set in his ways; Fitz was quite a character, Scotch but without an accent. He got his standing as a first class standing [sic] working his way up step by step on steamships, fully certified on steam. . . . Alex & Fitz were in the mid 30's [sic], the other three around 50. None of them drank although once and a while Alex & Fitz would go to town of a Saturday night and hoist a few. There was never at any time any drinking around the cannery.[30]

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28. Ibid., p.18c.

29. B.C.A.R.S., GR 1438, Register of Companies, Film B.4416, file 170(1897), p.4; *ibid.,* Film B.4417, file 384(1897), pp.22-23.

30. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.31c-32c.

Prior to the start of the canning season, the cannery crew was responsible for getting the plant, boats, and all associated gear and machinery into good operating condition. Once the run started, the pace was frenetic, and maintenance or repair would cut into production time, and hence profits. In his second year at the cannery, DeBeck started work earlier, and participated in much of the preparation, including rigging the boats. In his view, most of the boatbuilder's work seemed to be painting the boats, which he found unappealing.[31] DeBeck described the boats and equipment:

> The boats were all freshly painted. The boats were the Columbia River type: that is round bottom, carvel, 26 ft long 7 ft beam, centre board & sail, 12 ft fir oars, good lines. The oars had new "Turks heads" braided around each for stops in lieu of leathers. Oars worn too far by friction in the rowlocks, or cracked, discarded.[32]

Another important job was getting the nets ready for the season. DeBeck described the nets used at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery:

> Nets overhauled and new nets hung on the float and lead lines. These nets were 6 strand linen, they came from Scotland and cost $100 for the 100 fathom of mesh which was more than the cost of the boat. This had to be considered when dividing up the proceeds for each boat. The fisherman and boat-puller got 2/3, the cannery got 1/3 for the boat and net.[33]

In preparation for the 1900 season, DeBeck worked with Gus on the nets. After describing Gus' appalling table manners, DeBeck was somewhat surprised at his facility with the nets:

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31. *Ibid.*, p.39c.

32. *Ibid.*, pp.5c-6c.

33. *Ibid.*, p.6c.

> Put Gus in the net loft with a net needle in his hand and you see a different man. Every move was smooth & like those of the man on the flying trapeze. The speed with which he could weave back the mesh in a ragged looking hole where a seal had gone through the net taking much [41c] of the mesh with him was amazing. . . . Copying him and learning the knots I got so that I could in a cumbrous way and at half his speed hang a net or mend a hole. Banging a net means attaching the mesh of a new net to the float & lead lines.[34]

Supplies that were brought in to the net loft for the nets and the boats' rigging included "the floats (still the same after 65 years), the nets and ropes of varying sizes hard laid 1/2 inch cotten [sic] for the float & lead lines; hemp for boat gear, mooring lines &c."[35] For drying and maintaining the nets during the season there were net racks located on a wooden deck adjacent to the Scottish-Canadian Cannery:

> I forgot to mention that there was a big area of flat deck between the cannery and Jap houses. There must have been half an acre of it. On it there was hundreds of cords of 4 ft cordwood which was the only fuel used; there were also the net racks for drying and mending nets; about a dozen of them. Each was two smooth parallel bars about 12 ft long and 8 ft apart also there were the vats for washing nets and the bluestone and greenstone vats. The charcoal was in a separate house for obvious reasons.[36]

Figure 9

"Japanese Fishermen drying nets at Steveston, B.C.", early twentieth century. Note the net racks, and the Gulf of Georgia

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34. Ibid., p.40c.

35. *Ibid.*, p.8c.

36. *Ibid.*, pp.7c-8c.

Cannery in the background. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #39971.

The wood provided the basic fuel for the cannery's boilers, while the charcoal was used in the soldering stoves to heat the soldering irons used in can production. DeBeck described how these fuels were received:

> The supplies that came in were interesting. Outside there was the cordwood in 4 ft lengths split. It came by scow or on the deck of one of the many small flat bottomed freighters then operating on the river. The charcoal in sacks was brought by an independent group of Chinese in a Chinese junk.[37]

The greenstone and bluestone mentioned above came in 20 gallon barrels weighing about 300 pounds each. These chemicals were dissolved in water, with the solution used to wash and soak the nets to clean and preserve them. DeBeck told of the heavy barrels being used in lifting contests among the younger white employees of the cannery.[38]

A number of other chemicals were used in the cannery for various purposes, ranging from flux for soldering, to lighting, to cleaning the finished cans:

> Then there were different chemicals: Muriatic acid (commercial HCl.) in 5 gallon flagons. This was put in large crocks and in it went sheet zinc place in the open air, as far away as possible as the chemical action eating away the zinc gave off dangerous inflamable [sic] fumes. The result left the acid ready for use as a flux in soldering.

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37. Ibid., p.8c.

38. Ibid., pp.10c-11c.

> Then there was carbide of calcium for the acetylene lights in 2 or 3 gal metal containers; and lye in similar containers. It was for the final bath of the tins of salmon to clean off all the grease &c. The lye always had a vicious look to me as I knew that a spot of it on your hand if not immediately washed off would leave a nasty burn. Now we used to have a good sense of humor and when a newcomer came to work we would tell him that the best way to wash dirty greasy overalls was to dunk them in the lye vat but handle them with tongs. It removed the dirt and grease all right but it also removed the overalls. A few minutes after he pulled them out they started to disintegrate. All the salvage he got was the buttons if made of metal. Good joke eh?[39]

Salt was also consumed in large quantities, both in the canning process and as a cleansing agent around the plant:

> The final chemical was salt. Salt by the ton about a teaspoonful went into each can and when you multiply our pack of 56000 cases by 48 cans in each case you have quite a bit of salt. . . . But the big use of salt was after a canning and the floor the slitting tables, sliming tanks and filling tables washed down, salt was liberally scattered around to keep things sweet.[40]

Besides fuel and chemicals, substantial stocks of hardware had to be brought in, both for plant maitenance and as consumables used in the operation. These included nails, which at the turn of the century were still primarily cut and clout nails; wire nails were still resisted, although this may have related to the conservative carpenter at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery:

> Then there were for the boats copper nails, all sizes, brass grummets [sic] for the sails and tarpaulins; brass or iron cleats, thimbles, eyes &c. Iron bars and pipes; lead and tin for solder & for lead lines on the nets. Zinc in sheets. In short it was a pretty good stock of hardware for all our needs.[41]

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39. *Ibid.*, pp.8c-10c.

40. Ibid., p.12c.

41. Ibid., p.13c.

Besides helping out with the boats and the nets prior to the 1900 season, DeBeck worked with the other members of the permanent cannery crew on carpentry and setting up the machines. He found working with "Fitz", the engineer, particularly interesting:

> One big job we had that year was to pipe the whole cannery for acetylene gas. By July 1st when the summer staff started I had learned enough to be trusted with such jobs as packing a pump, adjusting any of our machines, splicing a leaky pipe &c.[42]

As well as the cannery crew, some of the Chinese crew was employed prior to the start of the season to produce cans in anticipation of the run:

> The chinamen had been working for three months making cans. The tin was in sheets about 12" by 14" in insignificant flat boxes but when you tried to lift one you found it weighed 100 lbs. First a sheet would be cut on the square shears in lengths equal to the circumference of the can and in width the height of the can. Our pack was to be put in "squat" cans: that is a one pound can with the diameter = to the height. The strips went through a roller which made them cylindrical; these went to have the seam soldered which finished an open ended cylinder. The ends of the can were stamped on a die cutting out each disc, with a rim to fit on as a cover. The men operating these machines for three months working all daylight hours always had one leg developed bigger than the other. Peculiarly, it was the leg they stood on that got big. The bottom was put on by hand and hammered home with a wooden mallet. It was the next year that the Burpee capper came out and we got one. Then on to the soldering machine. This was a 6 ft long cast iron trough under which was a furnace. The trough was kept full of solder to the proper height. Into this the tins were rolled one by one at an angle of 45 degrees so that only the seam to be soldered was immersed in the solder. They were each pushed along gently by an overhead endless chain with arms about 6" apart each arm picking up one can. Each can had passed under a string saturated with acid dragging over the seam.[43]

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42. Ibid., p.44c.

43. Ibid., pp.6c-7c.

By the end of June, after all the preparation work was done, the cannery and its fleet of boats was ready for the fishing season to start:

> Everything mechanical in smoothe [sic] running order; cans in great stacks, covers in boxes, trays for the fillers, metal trays to go into the steam boxes and retorts, trucks & dollies oiled, the slitters have their knives sharpened to razor edges, solderers with stoves charcoal loaded, machinist and carpenter, for the moment with hands in their pockets, but ready for what ever might come up, one furnace going with steam up for the pumps, boats fresh painted inside and out gleaming with black numbers, net, oars, anchors on board sails furled and stowed, cordage ready; the Japs already had theirs from the cannery but the Indian boats still to be assigned."

Working in the Cannery: The Canning Line

In the boom year of 1893, just before the construction of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery, Herbert Gowen described the fishing and canning industry further up the Fraser, around New Westminster. At that time he described levels of production in a typical cannery:

> A good cannery can turn out from 1,000 to 1,800 cases a day, each case (as has been said) containing forty-eight tins; and the average pack of a cannery in the season is about 15,000 cases, representing a total of not much less than 200,000 fish.[45]

To produce at this level, such a cannery employed about forty

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44. Ibid., p.15dc [sic].

45. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser", The Canadian Magazine, Vo1.2, No.2 (December 1893), p.163.

workers. *Gowen* gave a simplified description of the canning process as he saw it:

> The fish is cleaned, and it is no uncommon thing for a Chinaman to clean as many as a thousand fish a day, working like a machine, without haste and without rest. Then they pass into the hands of the *kloochmen,* who wash the fish and prepare them for a sort of guillotine arrangement by which they are cut up into the requisite lengths. There is a certain amount of waste, but on the average, about thirteen fish go to a case of forty-eight cans.[46]

Gowen went on to describe the rest of the process, which for all intents repeated that described by DeBeck below. Henry Doyle, the initiator of B.C. Packers described a rather larger cannery crew some ten years later. The odd aspect is that the expected level of production was similar , with a one-line cannery intended to pack 1,000 cases of one pound tall cans or 600 cases of flat 1/2 pound cans per day. This crew pre-dates the introduction of the Iron Chink, which eliminated butchering jobs. The crew was in two parts, the first the skilled white workers, or cannery crew, and the second the non-white labour. Doyle's crew description included six white positions;

1 white foreman
1 fish tallyman
1 machine line man
1 bath room man
1 engineer fireman
1 bookkeeper storekeeper;

about fifty Chinese contract workers, including;

4 fish cutters
2 fish picklers
1 trucking fish

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46. Herbert H. Gowen, "Salmon Fishing and Canning on the Fraser", The Canadian Magazine, Vo1.2, No.2 (December 1893), p.163.

1 fish slitting machine
2 carrying fish to fillers
2 ticket punchers
1 filling light cans
1 carrying fish to wiper
1 feeding wiper
1 carrying cans to salting machine
2 feeding tops
1 crimper
1 solder machine
5 cooler fillers
[4] stopping off
4 cold test
2 mending leaks
8 bath room
3 lye kettle;

and about fifty-five "Klootchmen" or native women;

30/35 filling
20 in gut shed.[47]

In DeBeck's first season he was assigned the low-ranking [for a white] job of tallyman, counting the salmon unloaded by the fishermen at the cannery. He described the activity at this receiving area:

> Well the fish start coming in. I take my place over one of the fish boxes. These are about 5 ft below the floor of the cannery. The fisherman heaves them into the box and the chinamen take them and with their pike heave them up on to the floor. The pike has a shaft similar to that of a pitchfork and a hook at the business end. The hook is curved so that it can be jabbed into the head of a salmon yet hold the fish for the swing & throw. I said into the head because if in the body it shows a discoloured spot in the can: not so good.
>
> so I start counting fish - out loud of course so the fisherman can follow it & check any slip. I counted in Chinook for the Indians and at a suggestion from the Japs I learned to count in Japanese. The Chinese not to be outdone taught me to count in their language. Polyglot me yet!

47. Dianne Newell, editor, The Develovment of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industrv: A Grown Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, pp.lll-112.

> After counting fish for about an hour I learned something: namely that my white collar job was anything but white. In fact it was the dirtiest job in the cannery. When fish have been piled into the fish boxes on the boat they exude some blood and get a liberal coat of slime. These are swung in a wide arc swinging their tails the slime is flicked off high & wide. There is no chance to dodge and you get spattered from eyebrows to boots. Other fish handlers are protected by oilskin aprons. Next time out I wore my most expendible clothes.[48]

Figure 10

"Anglo-B.C. Packing Co. Receiving Salmon, Garry Point Cannery, Fraser River.", c.1891. This shows the activity at the plant built by C.S. Windsor prior to constructing the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Presumably the techniques used would be similar. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #18985.

Figure 11

"Pitching Salmon", 1913, showing the fish being taken from a box adjacent to the deck of the wharf, like the arrangement described by DeBeck. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84119.

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48. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.25c-26c [there are 2 pages numbered 26c in the manuscript].

This first stage took the fish from the boats to the floor of the cannery, as well as determining what the fishermen were due to be paid for their production. The tallyman position was normally held by a junior white worker, as it required some literacy and mathematical ability, as well as a sense of responsibility to the economic interests of the cannery.

After the fish were on the cannery floor they were processed by the Chinese contract crew and native women. The latter group was concentrated in the cleaning and filling functions, with the contract crew taking over after that:

> From the filling tables on, all work is done by the Chinese except a few Japs & whites paid by the contractor. The crew hired by the cannery was anywhere from 12 to 25 depending on the run.[49]

The canneries hired their crews through Chinese contractors, who would provide men on the basis of a set payment per case packed. The average cost to the canneries for a crew in 1904-1905 was around 50 cents per case, both on the northern rivers and on the Fraser. The total number of cases expected to be packed was specified, and based on that a guaranteed minimum payment was agreed with the contractor.[50] One of the prominent labour contractors in Steveston in the early years of the twentieth century was Lee Coy, who DeBeck described at the Scottish-Canadian

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49. Ibid., pp.29c-30c.

50. Dianne Newell, editor, The Develoomeent of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, pp.113-114.

Cannery:

> The Chinese were contract labour, all under one boss. He was a real boss - Big Shot: big fat Lee Coy. When he came out from Vancouver all the Chinese worked hard in fear and trembling. If he saw any slowing up he would take a wallop with his stick or give them a kick. We were told it was slave labour.[51]

Lee Coy was the B.C. Packers' Association's primary Chinese labour contractor a few years later, and was also the operator of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in 1906. Henry Doyle, the general manager of B.C. Packers, did not think much of Lee Coy as a labour manager, but admitted his usefulness as a union buster, for which the latter received a $2,400 bonus in 1904.[52] Once the fish were unloaded into the cannery they were the responsibility of the labour contractor. DeBeck described the first stages of the processing:

> The fish are now on the floor and from then on, till they are finally nailed up in boxes for shipment they are in the hands of the Chinese contractor. He pays all the help. The fillers are the ones on piece work; all others by the hour except the slitters who were paid by the week or month. These latter were specialists. The smoothness and speed of their work was worth watching. Grab a fish by the tail. Two or three flicks with their razor edged 10 inch butcher knife and the fins were off; off goes the head; one thrust and the belly open & the guts swept out and blood line inside the spine opened; off with the handle (the tail) and into the sliming tanks - 10 or 12

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51. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.2c-3c. Lee Coy was later to lease the Gulf of Georgia Cannery from Malcolm, Cannon & Company for the 1906 season.

52. Dianne Newell, editor, The Development of the Pacific Salmon-Canning Industry: A Grown Man's Game, op. *cit.*, p.70.

to the minute.[53]

Figure 12

"General View of Receiving Floor", 1913, showing the fish loaded on the floor, and the old cutting tables, which in the plant shown have been made redundant by the installation of the "Iron Chink". F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84121.

Figure 13

Hand butchering of salmon, 1913. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #68293.

In 1987 Jimmy Hing, who had been an unloader, butcher, timekeeper, and floor manager for the Anglo-British Columbia Packing Company, remembered from the inside what the job of the butchers was like:

> An experienced butcher will do about four or five fish a minute. They have to cut off the head, open the belly, and take off the fins. They're really going fast. They have two knives: they use one knife for two or three hours and when it gets dull, they change knives and keep

53. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, *'Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.26c-27c.

> on going until noon time. As soon as they eat, they touch the knives up again.
>
> The company supplies the knives, but some fussy ones bring their own. The experienced butchers have four or five knives to themselves. They sharpen them their own way, the way they like, razor sharp. When they slice through the fish you can hear it, whssst, right through! Hear it sing!"

After the butchers were through with the salmon, the fish were cleaned, with the heads, tails, and fins removed. Before they went in the cans, the salmon required a final cleaning, or "sliming", and were then cut to lengths appropriate to the size of can being packed:

> In the sliming tanks where the Klooches [native women] with scrubbing brushes scrub them clean and shining. On a belt they go to the man feeding the "Iron Chink [sic] which with revolving knives cuts them to the proper length for the cans and so on to the fillers.[55]

Figure 14

"Cutting Salmon", 1913, showing the gang knife in operation, cutting salmon to can lengths. F. Dundas Todd Collection.

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54. Paul Yee, Saltwater Citv: An Illustrated Historv of the Chinese in Vancouver, Vancouver, Douglas & McIntyre, 1988, pp.62-63.

55. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", p.27c. "Iron Chink" usually refers to the automatic butchering machines, such as the Smith Butchering Machine, which largely replaced the Chinese butchers at the start of the process. However, DeBeck used it here to describe a power fish knife, which cut the salmon into the can lengths.

B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84127.

The fillers were normally native women or Chinese contract crew, under the supervision of a white inspector, who would check for light or overfilled cans. DeBeck was promoted to this position in his second season at the Scottish-Canadian Cannery:

> Still I was promoted from tallyman to "Boss of the Gut Chute" though I prefer to call it "Superintendent of the Intestine Department". My duties were to supervise (i) the slitters who didn't need any supervision - they were specialists (ii) The sliming tanks - but didn't need any supervision. The man feeding the Iron Chink would throw back any fish he thought needed more washing. The Klooches didn't mind - they were paid by the hour. At his scowl they would giggle and keep on chewing their gum. (iii) the fillers needed close supervision. 90% of my work was here. The whites & Indians, when I would dump out an occasional improperly filled tin would accept it without complaint. For some of the Chinese speedy fillers who skimped their work I might dump out 4 or 5 tins. They would mutter and glare at me and grab their butcher knife snick-er-snee like. But I was brave: there was a good wide table between us, with a tray of cans on it, and a rack above with trays of empty tins and a rack below with trays of filled tins. Who wouldn't be be [sic] brave behind a rampart like that? (iv) the gut chute had to be cleared at low tide. That is I had to have a scow brought up and the contents of the chute sluiced onto the scow & then have the chute hosed clean.[56]

Figure 15

"Halfbreed Filling Cans", 1913. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84128.

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56. Ibid., pp.44c-45c.

Now the cans were filled, ready for a final weighing, salting and capping:

> From then on, on belts to the soldering tank. On the way first through the weighing machine where the light cans are automatically discarded and sent back to special fillers. Next one man lays a small piece of tin to protect the blow hole in the centre of the cover. Next a teaspoonful of salt; then the caps are fitted on and tapped into place ready for the crimping machine which crimps on firmly enough to prevent falling off in the soldering tank. Out of this they roll to a chute whey [sic] are turned upright. This must be smoothe [sic] as the slightest jar might shake off the still molten solder. By the time they reach the end of the chute the solder is set and they skid into square openwork sheet metal trays 14 cans wide. The blow holes are sealed and on all metal trucks they go on rails into the steam boxes. ["30 minutes 15 lbs pressure." written in, then crossed out][57]

Figure 16

"Capping Machine", 1913, perhaps like those installed in the Gulf of Georgia and Scottish-Canadian canneries. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84136.

Figure 17

"Soldering Machine", 1913. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #84137.

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57. Ibid., pp.27c-28c.

Figure 18

"Second Soldering, after first cooking", 1913, sealing the holes made to exhaust the cans. F. Dundas Todd Collection. B.C.A.R.S. photograph #81168.

After the steam boxes, the cans were exhausted through a small puncture, which was then soldered up prior to the final cooking in the retorts, effectively large pressure cookers:

> Out of the steam boxes and plunged into cold water to find leaks; leaky cans taken away for later repair. Punch a hole in remaining cans with a little mallet with a half inch brad in it like playing a xylophone; steam & water squirt out; hose the whole tray to clean off grease while tins are hot: solder up the holes and into the retorts 3/4 hour 45 lbs; out again & pick all those that are not swell heads, if not a swell head it leaks; dunk the remainder in the lye vat; hosed off and carted away; loose piled in a well aired place to dry & when dry close piled. Finis."

This "manual" canning process was used at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery until sometime between 1915 and 1923. With the number of processes involved, and the dependency on both machinery and human judgement in a factory environment, there was always the possibility of ineffective canning. Apparently the Gulf of Georgia Cannery had a fairly high incidence of such failures while it was operated by the United Canneries of B.C. [also known as Malcolm Cannon & Company] in the early twentieth century. Henry Doyle wrote concerning the 1905 pack:

> June says he learns from the Chinamen the Gulf of

58. Ibid., p.29c.

> Georgia had trouble with swells again this year, and that at least 800 c/s [cases] of fish had to be thrown away.[59]

Due to the number of spoiled cans, the labour contractor did not receive anything near the agreed price for his crew. Doyle described the financial arrangements following the 1905 season:

> This year the Gulf [of Georgia cannery] contractor could pay his men only 60¢ on the #1 [dollar] as MC & Co. charged them for swells, and also deducted $1,700 balance due from last season. The 60¢ was paid over to the men direct by MC & Co., and the contractors are trusting to luck to be able to pay off remainder from same outside source, or another season's profits.[60]

When DeBeck returned to the Scottish-Canadian Cannery for the 1900 season, there were a number of changes. A new law forbidding the dumping of cannery waste into the river had been enacted, and the offal now was to be taken to a nearby reduction plant. Within the cannery, the main change besides the acetylene lighting was the introduction of the "newly patented Burpee capper". One of these was installed on each canning line, and "after much fiddling and adjusting" was made to work perfectly." It was probably at the same time that the same machine was installed in the Gulf of

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59. Dianne Newell, editor, The Develovment of the Pacific Salmon-Canninq Industrv: A Grown Man's Game, Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989, p.142. "June", who gave Doyle this information, was probably a labour contractor himself. The number of spoiled cases was substantial, but not a large percentage of United Canneries of B.C.'s total pack of nearly 106,000 cases that season, Canada, Sessional Pavers 1906-7, Ottawa, King's Printer, 1907, Vol9, p.36.

60. *Ibid.*, pp.142-143.

61. B.C.A.R.S., Add. *Mss* 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.34c,36c.

Georgia Cannery, as it was listed on the 1902 plant inventory.[62] Prior to the 1900 season, both of these plants had been taken over by the United Canneries of British Columbia, and DeBeck remembered "quite a few changes":

> We had a tug boat of our own and a couple of scows.
>
> . ..*Our new tug* the *Unican* (a lot of brain work *must* have gone into the selection of that name for the United Canneries boat) had many purposes. It would tow the scowloads of offal to the reduction plant. It would tow long strings of boats out to wherever they wished to drift on Sunday afternoon, and on Saturday mornings tow them back. You see there was a shut off of all fishing from 6[00] am Saturday till 6 pm Sunday. This gesture must have been conceived in Ottawa without knowledge of what a salmon run was nor what the geography was like.
>
> ... The boat also did all our heavy freighting including carrying pack to the wharves in Vancouver. However, its principal function was to be as a collector of fish, saving the boats a trip up river every 2 days to deliver fish, thus increasing their fishing time. So it took off with a scow rigged up with fish boxes and 2 tallymen. But it didn't work out.[63]

DeBeck attributed the failure of this system to the fact that it was an off year, and by the time the collector had enough fish to make the trip back to the cannery, much of the salmon was spoiled. This meant rather than canning it, it was sent to the reduction plant, which produced almost no revenue.[64] DeBeck also

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62. Duncan Stacey, Gulf of Georsia Canners, Steveston British Columbia, 1894-1930, Ottawa, Canadian Parks *Service* Microfiche Report Series 129, 1981, pp.49-50.

63. B.C.A.R.S., Add. Mss 346, Box 1, file 19, Edwin Keary (Ned) DeBeck Papers, "Reminiscences - Canneries (Steveston, B.C.)", pp.34c,36c-37c.

64. Ibid., pp.37c-38c.

suggested that the off year created the situation leading to the famous fisherman's strike of 1900:

> But this was one of the lean years. The fishermen were not making much money so they went on strike. Fishermens meetings. Adjitators [sic] from Vancouver. More meetings soap box orators. Japs in a union of their own with complete solidarity Indians easily falling in line. Threats of net slashing or staving in of boats and threats of violence to the capitalists or to strike breakers."

With this DeBeck ended the description of his involvement in the Steveston salmon canning industry at the end of the boom period of the 1890s. Although much of the information he offers repeats, or is similar to, that given in other sources, it provides a relatively complete picture of work and life in one of the two Malcolm & Windsor [later United Canneries of B.C.] canneries in Steveston. This in turn gives more insight into how things were at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery when it was one of the leaders in the industry.

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65. Ibid., p.45c.