

Interviewed: March 5, 1976

Mr. Tom Johnson,

1814 - 10th Avenue,
New Westminster, B. C.

- There was a shortage of fishermen during WW I as war plants (ship-building, etc.) required the manpower.
- "The fishermen got better returns for their days work by going to the plants."
- The price jumped up to 50¢ a piece during the First War.
- When the war ended and the price was lowered to 35¢ which caused the strike.
- There was a good market for fish during WW I "The thing was to get the fish to Allied Armies in Europe. Food was the question in those days".
- Soldiers returning from WW I to Rivers Inlet found that it was taken over by seine boats, so the soldiers burnt many of the boats.
- About the effect that the internment of the Japanese people had on the fishing industry he says "I don't think that it affected a great deal. But some extent yes, there was a shortage of fishermen of course, that amount of boats taken out, but then the Whites seemed to take the boats over and fished...but the facts still remain that injustice was done to take them all away from the coast, but then war is war, you can't avoid that kind of thing".
- There was no antagonism between the returning Japanese fishermen and the White fishermen at the end of WW II according to Mr. Johnson he states: "The union was in favour of it (the returning of the Japanese fishermen)...and they were a very peaceful lot of people...I haven't heard any grievances against them at all. In my opinion, they are good fishermen and good willing workers and also good union men. They tried to get along with people, that's an established fact, they are good racial people".
- Housing in Steveston around 1920 "wasn't much"... "Housing started to improve when the Japanese boys came back. They had no homes to go to hardly. The companies went to banks and financed most of their homes to start with, which was nothing but right and I do believe today they own mostly all of their homes".
- In the fishing, canning, industry women have been a traditionally hired to process the fish (in canneries).

- Women have also worked on the boats with their husbands: "I have my wife with me there in the summer months, when we're packing or collecting fish from the fishermen...wife was with me for several years... grandma or somebody looks after the children when we're away but not when they were very young...we done it that way".
- He says that a possible reason for accidents on the sea is that boats are sometimes top heavy thus they are easily overturned plus they often have no ballast.
- He puts concrete on the bottom of his boats which makes cleaning easier and gives the boat greater stability or insurance against capsizing. He says this is lacking in a great many seine boats today.
- He does not believe that the U.F.A.W.U. has ever failed in representing the interests of the fishermen "We done the best we could...the officers of our union have done their very best towards the fishermen to get the prices and accomodations".
- Discusses safety regulations and the fishermen.
- The mechanization of fishing has resulted in more fish being caught in less time with less effort. Gives an illustration.
- He would like to see a Provincial Dept. of Fisheries in B. C. "When its all handled from back east, with the fellas who have no knowledge about this coast at all, my opinion is that when they establish this Dept. of Fisheries in B. C. it'll be a different tone in the bell all-together".
- Natural resource can be depleted completely if there is no check over it
- Discusses the buy-back program.
- Discusses the influence of forein^g fishing fleets.
- Discusses the proposed 200 Mile fishing limit.

MARINE -

Capt. E.L. Janes,
202 - 10th Avenue,
New Westminster, B.C.

Interviewed: April 10, 1973.

Went on to lightship in December 1924 - stayed until 1955.

Lightship put out of commission in 1956 and taken to Victoria.

It was originally a 2-masted schooner, 86' overall, 18' beam, about 100 tons, built in 1870 in Brooklyn - used as cutter, sailing ship and coal-carrier. Was put in position in 1916, at mouth of river, about 5 miles from Steveston. Mostly manned by 2 men, occasionally 3 - poorly paid work, therefore difficult to get good men. Had coal oil lighting at first. During World War 2 electricity was installed - had red and white alternating lamp, and foghorn. Anchored by 1½" steel chain attached to cement block (about 5 tons). Broke chain 3 times, twice went towards Point Roberts, once towards Vancouver.

Lightship had lead ballast between ribs. Capt. Janes thinks present owner (McKenzie?) has her housed in False Creek. B.C. Packers had her for a while - talk of re-rigging her and sailing her to Brooklyn - nothing came of it.

Prior to going on lightship, had been on deep sea ships, since age of 14.

World War 1 - spent 7 months with Australian Navy, then 4 years in army.

Used launch to commute to and from lightship, occasionally went on pilot ship.

Alex Moir