

Interviewed: February 18, 1976

FISHERMAN - ANONYMOUS (SKIPPER I)

This interview was conducted in B.C. Packers net loft coffee room; in the net loft itself; and finally on his boat.

IN THE COFFEE ROOM:

- Started fishing in 1951.
- Has seen quite a lot of changes in the fishing industry since then.
- Changes in electronics, gear, nets, etc.
- For gillnetters, the nets have gone from linen to nylon to present day monople.
- For trawling: "Everything getting to a finer gear"; "To compete you have to have the finest gear".
- 95% of his earnings come from trawling.
- Doesn't go gillnetting much because regulations only allow 1 or 2 days fishing, you can go trawling 7 days a week.
- Trawls mostly off the west coast of Vancouver Island...out of Tofino, Ucuelet, at times depending on the season he goes to American coast.
- There hasn't been much change in trawling regulations: "Trawling, because on the high sea, you see, it's outside of the surf line, that's why you could fish every day".
- Has never been involved in a ship wreck.
- Loran tells the fisherman his location in terms of longitude and latitude, it is very helpful in the fog.
- He is working less hours per week than he used to: "Especially for gillnetters when we start off, used to be 4 or 5 days a week but now for conservation and the scarcity of fish, lot of boats, the Dept. of Fisheries cut the gillnetters down to 1 or 2 days".
- There are no similar restrictions for the trawlers.
- When he started off he was strictly a gillnetter.
- With this restrictions he had to go into trawling.
- Before the war he used to give his father a hand on his father's boat, he gained some experience but then the war started and he was away from the place of his birth (Steveston) for 10 years, he moved to Winnipeg.
- He does not feel that his father got a fair return on his boat during war time.
- He was in grade 12 when the war started and does not remember the war so well.

- About the treatment of the Japanese-Canadians during the war he states: "Personally, you know, I don't have a grudge, of course I was born in Canada and raised here so it's just one of those things... that's the only way I can answer that 'question'".
- Has been a union member ever since he started fishing..."To begin with, especially for Japanese fishermen you gotta be in a union to fish, and at certain time when we could relocate right back to Steveston, the union in their constitution they stated, you know, we were coming back so naturally the Caucasian fishermen they were against it, but oh, the union constitution stated that regardless of race, creed or color, you know, that everybody's same, that's why we were allowed to come back and fish, we had a hard time at the beginning, I recall....."
- About the first year or two when the Japanese fishermen were coming back from the Interior he states: "We were really, I won't say discrimination, but we were, you know, tried to see that we are not capable of, or were, you know, that we weren't wanted in this fishing industry. But it's the union that really stood behind our back, that's why we're still here".
- About cannery houses: "Everything was cooked in a wooden stoves... it was an Oriental style bathtub. They were plain wooden houses no insulation, everything was heated by wood, there was no hot water facilities or anything, to take a bath you had to heat the water on the stove so it was a real old style way".
- He was born in the Fishermen's Hospital in Steveston but he can not recall too much about it.
- He has fished for B. C. Packers ever since he started: "They started me off and I have to keep my obligation to them".
- He had a boat built for him in 1951 and his present boat was built in 1970.
- He has been in the negotiation committee of the U.F.A.W.U. since 1968.
- Contracts used to be on a two year basis.
- For the last 8 years the union has been requesting a Provincial Dept. of Fisheries "we would get a better reaction and a better understanding for the Pacific Coast. Everything now is federal, so it's pretty hard for the Pacific Coast fishermen to get what we want".

INTERVIEW TAPED IN THE NET LOFT OF B. C. PACKERS:

- His investment, per net, is about \$1,800 each.
- He has about 10 nets plus trawling gear.
- He has a small white skiff for emergencies.
- Has propane tanks for his fridge and cooking stove.

INTERVIEW TAPED ON HIS BOAT:

- Propane fridges on boats are a fairly recent development, about 6 years.
- The fishermen used to use ice to keep things cool in earlier years.
- Propane stove is another recent development, 7 or 8 years.
- He has a sink on his boat with an electric pump for water; years ago water was pumped by hand.
- His water tank holds about 110 gallons and fuel tank holds about 452 gallons.
- His boat has radar used in fog....recording of the sound of his radar.
- His boat has a depth sounder and also a graph sounder.
- He has a emergency device on his boat which rings when the boat is out of water, oil, or if the boat is full of water, the warning signal can be heard anywhere on the boat. This is a recent technological development.
- Recording of the sound of the emergency device.
- Has numerous phones on his boat:
  - (1) Ship to Shore Phone - The boat operator phones B.C. Tel and they connect the skipper with any given telephone line.
  - (2) C.B.(Citizen Band) - Maximum output 25 miles, uses for "listening to all the gang".
  - (3) C.B.(Citizen Band) - Uses it for private calls.
  - (4) V.H.F. - Uses in case of emergencies.
- His boat has automatic pilot. As he works alone and spends a lot of time on the stern so when the automatic pilot is put in gear, it steers the boat for him. He also has a remote control from the stern: "It's just like having your wife on board steering the boat for you". Of all the electronic equipments, he says that the automatic pilot is the most useful.
- Has a clock, a barometer, 300 HP gasoline engine, a lavatory, a second stove for heating, etc.