

Buck Suzuki

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Delta, B. C.

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T54, S2 & T55, S1

- Began fishing 1925; 9 years old.
- Sockeyes, cohoes, pinks (every other year).
- Worked as deck-hand, on skiffs, square backs.
- Describes different types of motors and boats before use of high power engines; Fairbanks, Adams, Easthope, Yale, Bridgeport, Atlas was considered the best.
- Technology borrowed from the logging industry by Lorry Jarvis use of the drum adapted to the boat to haul out the net.
- Could use bigger boats now, boats were adapted to fit the drums, then bigger motors were introduced.
- As result fishing is changed completely.
- Weather does not bother the average fishermen now.
- Wider ranging and safer.
- Detrimental effect on the poorer fishermen who caught less of the catch.
- Describes buy-back program---very critical of it. It hurts the big fisherman and small.
- Centralization of the industry; brine tanks, ice-packers, all these small canneries are gone.
- He criticizes short fishing hours which made the men less co-operative.
- Fishing regulations were absolutely necessary for the survival of the species.
- Early unions were divided on ethnic lines which was good for the companies, not very co-operative.
- Japanese fishermen were deprived of certain rights--limits on area, catch, number of boats.
- Describes anti-Japanese sentiment before the war. Japanese people did not really understand the White communities' customs.
- Japanese were cut out of the industry in 1920's (40% in 1924).
- The companies were worried about losing the experienced fishermen.
- Whites were suspicious of Japanese expertise.
- Describes the subtle discrimination against the Indians.

- Two union groups are described: Extreme Left Trade Union...Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union and Right Wing Union...B. C. Fishermen's Protective Association.
- B. C. Protective...all White, very limited.
- Pacific Coast Fishermen's Union...a bunch of dreamers, radicals.
- Buck was a liason between the two.
- Companies did not like the Japanese people to join the Pacific Coast Union...it was difficult for the fishermen because the company owned everything; houses, tie up facilities.
- They had no choice but to straddle the fence.
- They were without franchise...they were second class citizens.
- Tells the story of the night of Pearl Harbour.
- Describes the orders given to the Japanese people to tie up their boats.
- Buck went to the naval office as spokesman for the Japanese people.
- Not completely surprised by the war, but he didn't expect the Canadian Government to be so harsh.
- He describes the confusion and the decision of the people to negotiate and co-operate rather than fight it.
- He maintains that the Japanese Community did not pose a threat, they were just Canadian Joes.
- The people were split three ways, some wanted to fight, some wanted to go with it.
- He advised negotiation and caution.
- He had no trouble after the war returning to the coast.
- He tells of his experiences being the first Japanese to return to the coast to Steveston.
- He became a longshoreman until 1948, then commenced fishing again.
- Other people had a lot of trouble, they obtained licenses but the canneries did not want them because White fishermen threatened to boycott them.
- **J.** H. Todd & Co. was the first company to take on Japanese fishermen.
- Tells the story of a White mob who threatened two Japanese.
- He phoned Homer Stevens who came and called a meeting and helped pave the way for the acceptance of the returned Japanese fishermen set up a committee to protect the Japanese.

- Then the companies reversed their policy and even began a recruiting drive to get Japanese from the East.
- Buck began work with the union...organizing fishermen, strike action, main job was Fisheries Regulations and International Law.
- Became Welfare Director of the Union.
- Romance has gone out of fishing, for example, the designs of the boats were different...all gone now...all the boats look alike.
- Originally only 400 Japanese allowed for District No. One.
- Describes the restrictions on the Japanese in early days.
- He assesses the industry today as very very sick.
- There aren't enough fish...too many boats and fishermen.
- Change from manual labour to mechanical labour.
- Only drastic reduction of fishermen would help...only need about 25% of the present fleet...criticizes the enhancement program of the government.
- He recommends use of fish traps that regulate fish catches and eliminate fishermen completely.
- Government is very weak in international negotiations.
- 200 Mile Limit is not the cure all for the industry.
- It is important to come to some agreement with the U. S. to protect and conserve the species.
- Criticizes the unequal catches given to the American fishermen.
- Need for better arrangement with U. S.
- B. C. Packers control 68% of fishery from here to Peru.
- Problem of what to do if there is only 15 - 20 days to fish.
- The union has stopped company exploitation and protected the fishermen.
- Gives the example of herring roe and salmon caviar and the company does not pay for the roe.
- No one should catch salmon except with the hook and line.
- Need trap net on the Fraser and regulate it, scientifically, buy out the fishermen and retain them.
- * - Fishing as a way of life is gone....the prospects for the industry is not good.

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