

FISHERMEN'S CO-OP (Continued from Page 29)

the beaches before they had to return for supplies. The packers serviced the boats while taking aboard the fishermen's catches.

Meanwhile, another "co-op" started, the North Island Trollers Co-operative Association, on Queen Charlotte Islands. Many of its members were Prince Rupert fishermen who headquartered on the Island during the fishing season in order to fish the better grounds outside. This association was able to buy two packers for \$10,000 each, with nothing down. The boats were paid for within a few years.

In 1939, both associations amalgamated to form, under another charter, today's Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative Association.

INTO LIVER BUSINESS

In 1941, halibut fishermen were suddenly faced with a depressing problem. Up until then only the salmon trollers had united but when fish-liver prices suddenly slumped alarmingly from 50 cents to 30 cents a pound, a committee of the Deep Sea Fishermen's Union and Canadian Halibut Vessel Owners' Association approached the PRFCA to process and market their fresh fish livers.

On condition that the halibut fishermen became members of the Co-op, a liver plant was erected.

Membership in the association was increasing steadily and it was thought its own marketing avenues should be explored. Together with the rest of the co-operatives of fishermen in the province, the Fishermen's Co-operative Federation was formed in 1944 which employed agencies in Chicago and New York to look for and sustain new markets.

This, however meant an entirely new approach to the fishing industry as far as the Co-op was concerned. It meant that large storage facilities had to be maintained, and that year a cold storage plant was built on the outskirts of Prince Rupert, using lake ice from Central British Columbia.

After the Second World War, even wider markets were sought and obtained through a new association, the Fishermen's Federation Incorporated, operating under a United States charter.

NEW COLD STORAGE

The first two plants had been financed entirely by members of the PRFCA. Would they approve

further expansion? To answer this, a new cold storage plant was erected, including a freezer, with storage capacity of 4,000,000 pounds and freezing rate of 120,000 pounds in 24 hours. Following this, an ice-making plant was installed, capable of producing 33 tons of ice a day and storage space for 3000 tons.

In 1947, the old liver plant was removed and replaced with one of modern design, including an up-to-date laboratory. Close on the heels of this last major expansion project came a filleting plant and an automatic smokehouse, for marketing of cured products.

With 10 fish camps operating and four packers, the PRFCA holds to date an investment of \$1,200,000, all of which was raised through bonds, purchased exclusively by members themselves.

World-wide recognition has come to the far-reaching efforts of a handful of fishermen who saw a means of their succor lying in co-operation. In his recent book on the co-operative movement in Canada, Andres Hedberg, International Chamber of Commerce representative of Sweden, devotes a whole chapter to the history and expansion of the PRFCA.

George Woodcock, British author assigned to present the Canadian way of life, now completing his book at Sooke, Vancouver Island, recently reported over the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation on his visit to the Co-op in Prince Rupert.

Throughout British Columbia the fishermen and farmers are tending more and more to handle their own affairs through such co-operative bodies and to my mind this represents a surer and more stable guarantee of freedom and prosperity than any amount of political coercion." Mr. Woodcock ended.

MAIN PRINCIPLES

Main principles followed by this organization of fishermen are:

1. One member, one vote, regardless of shares held.
2. No interest paid on share capital.
3. No restrictions as to race, creed or affiliations.

PRFCA is administered by a board of 12 directors, four of whom are elected for a three-year term annually.

What may be termed a "by-

Prince Rupert Fishing Capital of World Millions of Dollars Made By Thousands of Workers

Prince Rupert can indeed be termed "A Fishery Capital of the World," considering that its 2,500 producers in this basic industry received more than \$16,500,000 last year. And that is only the beginning. Millions more will have been realized when all the products have been marketed. The industry creates thousands of jobs and a huge pay-roll.

Prince Rupert has been known in the past more as a halibut fishing centre than for any other kind of fishing. Actually, there is more money made in salmon fishing and it constitutes a greater payroll in production.

Ten canneries in the Prince Rupert area canned something like 834,900 cases of all types of salmon last year. All told, 90,000,000 pounds of salmon were caught which netted fishermen \$10,000,000.

Salmon canneries operating in district No. 2, of which Prince Rupert is the centre, are Prince Rupert Cannery, by Canadian Fishing Company Limited; Port Edward Cannery, by Nelson Bros. Ltd.; Sunnyside Cannery, by B.C. Packers, Ltd.; Cassiar Cannery, by Cassiar Packing Company

product" of the Co-op is the Prince Rupert Fishermen's Credit Union, which serves fishermen with facilities of credit, banking and loans. The first credit union in Prince Rupert, it lays claim for the large percentage of Prince Rupert fishermen owning their boats and homes. Twice in succession this union has received the grand achievement award, symbolic of outstanding accomplishment in the province.

Its start came in 1940 and today its assets total \$1,000,000.

Throughout the course of its rise and fall, the co-operative movement in Prince Rupert has given much room for efforts of a strong-willed people who realized, when faced with a common problem, that "working together is the only democratic way to find a solution for a crisis," according to Jack Deane, first general manager of the PRFCA.

Ltd.; North Pacific Cannery, by A.B.C. Packing Co. Ltd.; Bute-dale Cannery, by Canadian Fishing Company; Klemtu and Inverness Canneries, by J. H. Todd and Sons, Ltd.; Namu Cannery, by B.C. Packers and Goose Bay Cannery by Canadian Fishing Company.

Licenses granted to salmon fishermen in Prince Rupert last year numbered 2,304, of which 375 were trollers, 1,725 gillnetters, 195 purse seiners and nine drag seiners.

Halibut boats operating out of Prince Rupert last year—435 of them—landed 15,500,000 pounds of halibut for which they received \$3,250,000 at the lively halibut exchange where the fish are auctioned each day. United States halibut vessels landed 3,660,000 pounds of halibut in Prince Rupert. American and Canadian vessels fish on the same grounds providing they are beyond the three-mile limit of the coast. Americans will sell their catch at Prince Rupert usually if they get a little better price on the exchange.

But, besides salmon and halibut, there is much activity in other types of fishing. The largest catch of herring ever recorded was taken from No. 2 district last year—120,000 tons, netting the fishermen \$3,250,000.

Almost year-round fishing is carried out for flat-fish, such as sole, and skate.

Cod-fishing is a major source of income in the winter months and prices for these products have remained high. About 25 boats engaged in this type of fishing.

Flat-fish have introduced the

filleting departments in fish-plants, of which there are four in Prince Rupert and two in the district. More than a million dollars worth of fillets were exported from Prince Rupert last year. Fillets are weighed and packaged, wrapped and then quick-frozen. Then they are kept in cold storage and shipped as demanded.

Several companies also operate smoke-houses where fillets of all type of fish, including cod and salmon are smoked. Alaska Black Cod is a delicacy which is renowned across the continent and much of the supply comes from Prince Rupert.

SHELLFISH

Shellfish, crabs and shrimp, totalled around 2,000,000 pounds, but it is expected this type of fishing will be greatly extended in the near future. At least one company in Prince Rupert is arranging for crab and shrimp packing. Millard Cannery and Queen Charlotte Cannery Ltd. see in this industry a bright future.

Three herring reduction plants operated last year making fertilizer, and a new \$250,000 plant is being installed at Prince Rupert by B.C. Packers for reducing herring to oil.

An important by-product of both halibut and cod fishing is the vitamin-A oil industry, which has added much to the income of fishermen and has opened a new field in this area. Prince Rupert Fishermen's Co-operative Association has been operating a liver reduction plant for several years, recently modernizing its equipment. Several tons of high-grade vitamin A oil is processed by them each year.

Prince Rupert saw its first cold storage plant in 1910, when a major initial step in the fishing industry was pioneered by the now absorbed Canadian Fish & Cold Storage Company. The huge plant, capable of storing 12,000,000 pounds and having a daily freezing capacity of 130,000 pounds, for some years has been operated by B.C. Packers. Atlin

Fisheries and the Co-op storage to Prince Rupert and greater ing will always play a role in the economy and a backbone of the city.

Tuna fish is relatively new for fishermen in Prince Rupert but several made good catches last year. Some 100,000 pounds of tuna were landed at local fish plants.

RESEARCH

The Fisheries Research board of Canada has been active for several years in Northern B.C. waters, and at present there are four projects in operation—two dealing with sockeye salmon, one with crab situation and a fourth an investigation including tagging and checking of flatfish.

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