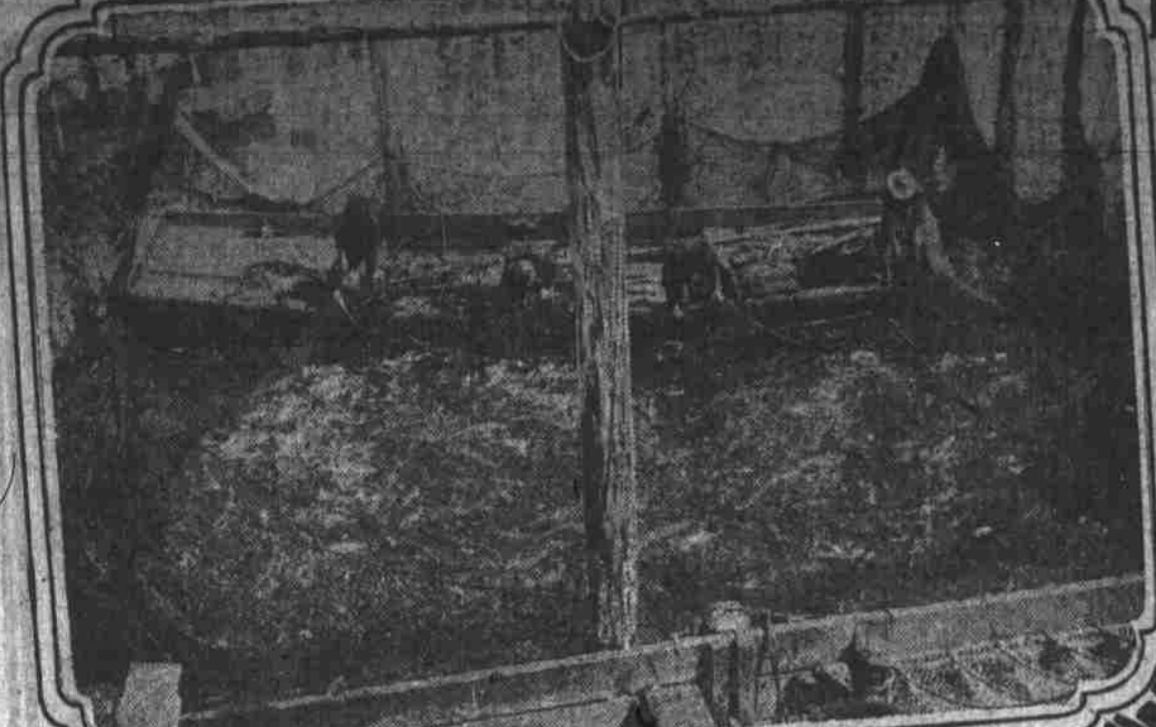
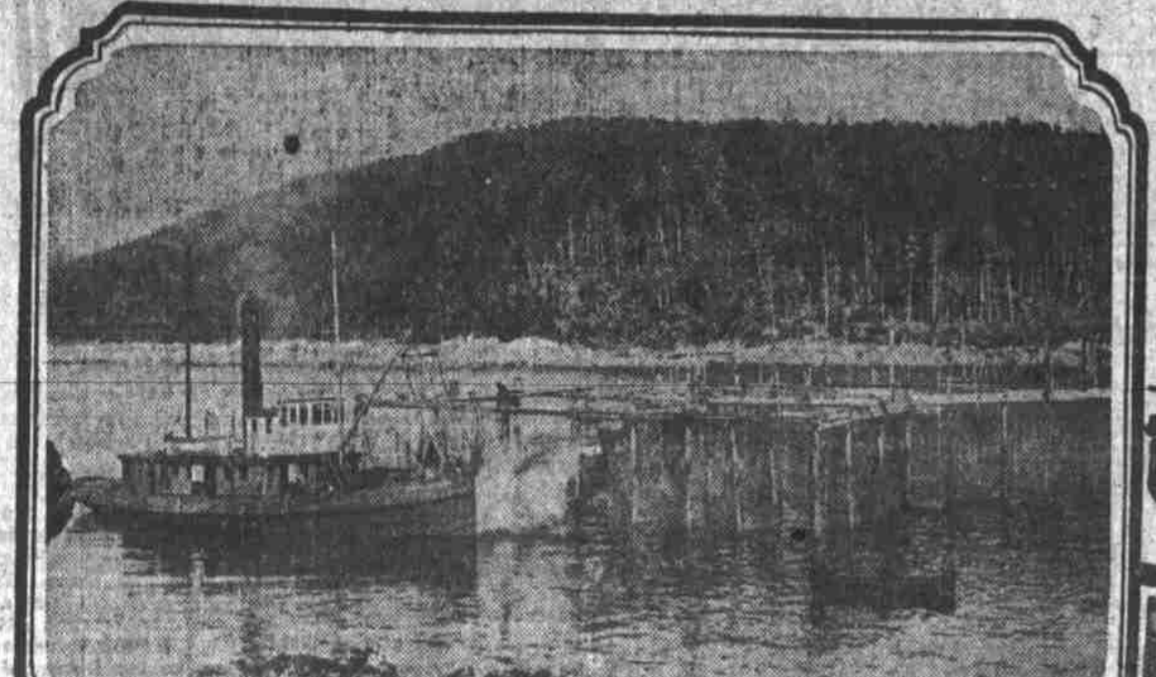


FISHERIES OF ALASKA

How the Salmon Supply from Northern Waters is Trapped and Made Ready for Market



LIFTING TRAP BEFORE DRAILING SALMON



SALMON TRAP IN ALASKAN RIVER

By Marshall N. Dana.
ALASKA is the world's greatest fishing grounds.

mysterious salmon may come up out of the deep places of the sea in greater numbers than ever before.

In Alaska there are a few streams upon which packing plants are located. There are numberless others emptying into the sea upon which no packing plants have ever been located.

Judge Munly mentioned the greatest reason why the salmon supply of Alaska will never be exhausted. Population will never be dense enough to pollute the streams with sewage, saw dust, the effluents of textile mills and other poisonous materials which have made the rivers flowing into the Atlantic unfit for most household purposes.

No one knows exactly what are the habits of the salmon. They are mysterious fish. This much is known, that in the spring and summer when the streams open they race toward headwaters out of the sea to deposit their spawn.

Although the history of the commercial fisheries of the Pacific coast covers a period of not more than 40 years, according to Judge Munly, the value of the annual output of the Pacific coast, including Alaska, is almost half that of all the fisheries of the country.

Although the business of salting fish is diminishing for next year the

Tells of Salmon Run.

Judge Munly remained in Alaska long enough to witness the annual salmon run. There it lasts but six weeks while on the Columbia river it lasts the season through.

SENATE'S FORMIDABLE WATCHDOG

EUGENE Hale, senior senator from Maine, is one of our leading aristocrats. He believes in the divine right of family—if the family happens to be wealthy—and if he had a motto it might be "Riches to the rich."

This characteristic leaning toward the moneyed classes has been noticeable not only in his social intercourse, but also in his legislative career in the senate. It is not intended to convey the idea that Hale is a toady. He is far too independent. But he believes in class, and his own class in particular, and he does not care to have anything to do with the world outside. Recently one of the elevator men at the capitol—a newcomer, or he would not have ventured—said politely to Senator Hale the latter entered the car.

With the possible exception of his work for the navy, Hale's work in the senate has been general. He has had an important part in framing more legislation than any other senator—none—but there isn't a single item you can put your hand on and say, "That is Hale's." There's an Aldrich emergency currency law, a Sherman anti-trust law, a Hepburn railroad rate law, but there is no Hale law.

Strong on Dignity. Senatorial dignity is a time worn phrase in Washington. Senator Hale has the characteristic of a greater degree than any others. It comes with time, they say, and if so, Hale comes by it honestly, for he has been in the senate longer than any other senator, 30 years. Dignity simply exudes from Hale. Some say that he is more arrogant than Henry Cabot Lodge, of Massachusetts, but this is hardly fair. Intolerant would be a better adjective. Senator Hale does not like to talk to many persons, and if you do not happen to be one of the elect, it is possible to get much quicker and better results by writing him a letter. He is punctilious about answering letters.



"IRON CHINK" WHICH BUTCHERS AND CLEANS FISH

salmon has been carried on in Alaska since its purchase from the Russians. It was not until 11 years later, 1878, that any attempt was made to pack salmon in cans. This cannery was built at Klwak, on the Prince of Wales island, by the North Pacific Trading & Packing company of San Francisco.

Conditions in Alaska were entirely unpropitious for the salmon canning business. There was but little market for the "Alaska Red," the pink salmon, most abundant in that part of Alaska where the first canning plants were established, was scarcely known to the trade at all.

Western Alaska produces five-sixths

of the red salmon output. Southeastern Alaska is the home of the pink salmon, which is one of the most valuable of the cheap food products. Pink or humpback salmon constitutes two-thirds of the pack of southeastern Alaska. By those familiar with its qualities it is regarded as the most delicate and one of the most nutritious of all the Pacific salmon.

When taken from the water it has the same pink color as the brook trout, and is not surpassed in taste or flavor by any species of trout. It loses its color, which in no manner affects its food value, nevertheless controls the market price, the value of salmon in the market being graded according to color in the order of red, medium, pink and pale, although the differences in nutritive value and flavor of the entire list is said to be slight.

Columbia Packers Pioneers. It is a long step from the primitive methods of salting and packing 40 years ago by the Hume brothers—the crude pots and hand implements—to the up-to-date canning plant of today.

"Portland men," Judge Munly continued, "were the pioneers in the development of salmon packing, not only upon the Columbia river, but in Alaska, too. The salmon packers of the Columbia river, as far back as 1878, pioneered the business in Alaska. In the beginning there were many failures in the far northern fishing undertakings owing to lack of knowledge of local conditions, to crude methods, want of machinery to take advantage of the short seasons and heavy runs of fish and other problems which experience has solved.

One of the most interesting sights that greet the summer tourist in southeastern Alaska is the cannery tender, as the steam tug is called which brings in great scows loaded with salmon, to the canneries. To the average easterner several hundred fish constitute a large catch, but think of catches of five, ten, twenty or even forty thousand fish a day. A cannery establishment which has a capacity of 2500 cases, or 150,000 pounds per day, requires not less than 50,000 fish every day during the season for a full day's output, and yet there are some canneries which produce more than twice this amount daily. The fish are caught in ice cold waters. They are taken in traps where they are held alive and fresh and brought into the canneries only as needed from day to day.



DRAILING SALMON FROM TRAP INTO SCOW

PHOTOS COPYRIGHT CASE & DRAPEE



NATIVE WOMEN EMPLOYED IN ALASKAN CANNERY'S

the quantity exceeds a packing plant's capacity. Perhaps the first thing to take the eye of the visitor to a first class Alaska cannery is one, two or perhaps three scows with eighteen to twenty thousand salmon in each. These fish are being pitched by natives using a single pronged pitchfork called a "pus" into a chute like elevator which carries them up into the cannery. A stream of fresh water is kept running on the floor of the elevator chute keeping it free and clear from slime. The salmon pass from the chute into the "fish house."

This part of the cannery is a dock-like apartment constructed over the water. This floor is washed with fresh water and then sprinkled with salt once every day. The visitor here sees men, natives of Alaska, Japanese, Chinese and whites busy piling fish from the floor to tables from which they disappear into drum like machines. Out from under the machine there is poured forth into a conveyor a stream of headless, tailless, finless salmon, split and gutted

slick and clean. Only a streak of blood along the backbone remains to be removed by the native women who stand over the great trough-like receptacles into which the machined fish is dropped by the conveyor. This ingenious machine which butchers and cleans the fish is called the "Iron Chink."

The women pick up the fish by the tail end and the streak of blood disappears before the point of a butcher's knife by a deft stroke. The fish is never, necessarily, touched by human hands in the whole chain of process. It is interesting, indeed, to note the rapidity with which the thousands of fish pass from the salt water into the pile of filled cans in the warehouse. It takes but two minutes from the cleansing tanks to the "bath room" where the filled cans are prepared for cooking in the steam reformer. In the journey there the salmon is forked from the tank just mentioned into conveyors which pass under the re-

volving knives, adjusted so as to slice the salmon to the exact size of the can. Without a stop the sliced fish goes quickly from the conveyor into the filling machine, and comes out in time which passes down a chute from the left above into the "filler" and spurts from that machine at the rate of about 75 to the minute. Two filling machines operate here, and a constant stream of filled cans goes from the fillers to the machine called the "topper" that puts on the tops. Later in the warehouse a force of natives and Orientals apply lacquer to the cans and label them according to the brand contained. Then they are filled, boxed and made ready for shipment. In these later processes the aid of machinery is also resorted to. There are other details of shipping by sea and rail and the handling of the myriad number of cans by wholesalers, middlemen and retailers until the canned salmon reaches the table. These processes are, however, like unto those used in many other branches of industry and need no extended explanation.

A HOME IN THE WILDERNESS



PART X John the Plowman

By Our Country Cousin. FROM their babyhood on through the long winter we had tended our little flock of pullets, which, after all contingencies were met, numbered six, but we had not had the satisfaction of hearing a cackle or of gathering a single egg. It was an important day when, after much deliberation, the brown hen Biddy H. laid the first egg and sang the first song of triumph over her deed. The little sparrow was in a state of high excitement until John came home to hear the news. After this the others gradually joined their voices in similar peeps and we had the satisfaction at length of offering at the trading place a dozen fresh eggs.

When one has only a half dozen hens one does not feed the family recklessly upon eggs. Eggs are money. Not in the sense in which time is money; this is not a philosophical problem to be worked out; it is an actual statement of fact. Eggs and butter are the country woman's currency, and when one is making a beginning in a new country they are eaten only as a high feast, with due ceremony and proper thanksgiving.

Butter Making. We assayed butter, too. I had seen butter, bought butter and eaten butter through a sufficient number of years, but I had never seen any made. John was wiser. In his boyhood days he had stood by and watched. John, therefore, began the butter making. He first warmed the churn, then he scalded the cream, and then he began churning vigorously with a home made dasher that resembled the paddle wheel of a steamboat. He splashed and pounded industriously until the remainder of the family sat around and watched with proper gravity and respect. Again he

would cease plowing to peer with a cautious and knowing eye at the substance within the churn. And then he pounded and splashed again. After some minutes of this labor he said impressively: "It's coming," and we gathered more closely. And then he lifted lid of the churn and we peered in. Sure enough, there was something. John said it was butter. It looked like soft soap and it tasted like spoiled whipped cream.

And then came in a neighbor lass, and though she was but a handful of years old, she knew about butter. "You got it too warm," she said. Acting upon her suggestion we finished its making, and so had some fairly eatable but scarcely marketable butter. When I learned to make real butter, however, we found our cow with the crumpled horn a very real asset, as she contributed four pounds of butter a week toward living expenses, besides furnishing all the milk we could use for the table and for cooking.

By working for one of our neighbors, John was able in return to have the use of his team to do our plowing. So early in the spring we finished clearing the hillside back of the house, and John plowed it and seeded it to oats.

John hadn't it in him to give up, however, once he had begun a task, so he labored on until it was ready for the plow. When Gray wrote, "Their furrow off the stubborn glebe has broke," I wonder if he knew how exceedingly stubborn is the glebe of newly cleared fir timber land. The long lateral roots lie so near the surface that at every few steps the ax has to be called into service to allow the plowshare to go through. Then

there are the tough roots of maple, hazel and dogwood to be broken. The plowman at this kind of labor does more work lifting the plow than the horses do in pulling it. When John would return the team and I would see him coming slowly home, tired and footsore, I would have a new realization of the line: "The plowman homeward plods his weary way."

Toil's Reward. But there are the new potatoes, all white with bloom, where before the trees stood stony and thick; and where in lies, too, the satisfaction of having done the thing one set out to do, which, after all, is one of the big rewards of life. We had a stump in the garden too close to the house to be blown out, and John decided to make use of an acid treatment for its removal. This recipe he had cut from a newspaper, one upon a time, and he had carried it about a long time, waiting for a chance to use it. The directions called for two acids, and these he purchased on one of his rare trips to our nearest town.

According to instructions he bored a large hole deep into the middle of the stump. Then he made a plug of wood to fit this and coated it with paraffine, generously contributed to the cause by my jelly glasses. When all was ready, an attentive family gathered about. John poured one of the chemicals into the hole. Then he carefully poured in the other, and sealing the hole, attempted to drive in the plug.

With a report like the Fourth of July, out shot a steaming, boiling liquid into the air, while the plug performed an aerial flight far above the roof of the house. It may be going yet. Nobody saw it come down, but a new realization of the stump still stands in the middle distance of the garden patch. It is quite ornamental in the spring, with yellow daffodils growing upon it. Then I took off the daffodils and planted asters. It makes a good flower garden. The chickens can't eat up the plants there. John decided not to use the acid treatment on the stump land. It is spectacular, to be sure, but it doesn't seem to remove the stumps.

Next Sunday, Part XI—Venture in Chickens