

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

D. C. IRELAND, Editor.

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Canned Salmon—Season 1878-79.

In the American Grocer, which is standard authority in the United States, respecting merchandise in stock, valuations and probabilities for future trade,—we find the following well written article upon canned salmon, and the season of 1878-79:

The total packing for the year reaches 625,000 cases, of which 450,000 cases were put up on the Columbia river and about 10,000 cases further north. Fraser river contributed 105,000 cases, the Sacramento 30,000 cases, and 40,000 cases were from other small rivers, such as the Eel, Rogue, Skeena, etc. The bulk of the supply has been forwarded to the United Kingdom: from Columbia river direct, 212,528 cases; from San Francisco, 165,528 cases; and 70,224 cases to Australia, New Zealand, New York and other points. The receipts of salmon in the United Kingdom exceed those for 1877 by nearly 150,000 cases, to which was added a stock of 15,000 to 20,000 cases carried over. The article has not been as much in favor as formerly with consumers, due to a variety of causes, principally hard times and poor stock sent by packers careless of their reputation.

The English market is at present glutted, notwithstanding that prices are exceptionally low, the last London prices at hand quoting one pound five shillings, per dozen against 7s. in 1877 and 7s. 3d. in 1874.

The development of salmon packing has been much more rapid than has been the growth of the demand. If the consumers of the United States were thoroughly acquainted with the merits of this table luxury, we are confident that this country would absorb the entire catch. If a sum of money equivalent to that which will be lost on canned salmon this year in Europe, could be spent in acquiring consumers throughout the United States of the value of salmon as an article of diet and its low cost in comparison with fresh fish, a demand would result that would repay the expenditure many times over. Outside of large cities and villages, its sale is greatly restricted, and throughout farming communities people are unaware that such a commodity is procurable. Let it be known that one pound of cooked salmon can be bought at retail for twenty cents or less, and that it is the equivalent of two pounds of the fresh fish, costing from twenty-five to thirty cents per pound, and we believe the demand will increase rapidly.

Until something is done in this direction it is folly to go on building new canning establishments and enlarging the capacity of existing ones. Improvements in the direction of improved machinery and facilities, in order to reduce the cost of canning are to be commended. Each season adds to the knowledge of the packers and reduces the quantity of "swells" to a minimum. Hereafter the catching of fish in the Columbia river is restricted to the time between April 1 and August 1, including Sundays. This shortens the season thirty days, and in the present condition of the salmon trade will prove beneficial. The largest packers upon the Columbia during the season of 1878 were as follows: Booth & Co., 24,045 cases; George W. Hume, 27,125 cases; J. G. Megler & Co., 27,754 cases; Badolett & Co., 29,041 cases; Europa Packing Co., 29,207 cases; Oregon Packing Co., 29,946 cases; Doolin & Co., 18,988 cases; Cutting Packing Co., 18,554 cases; Warren Packing Co., 21,012 cases; J. West & Co., 16,123 cases; J. Hume, 16,032 cases; Fishermen's Packing Co., 14,900 cases; Hawthorn & Co., 15,526 cases; and twenty smaller factories, turning out from 5,000 to 15,000 cases each. Most of the Fraser river fish went to England, the quality of which is reported by authorities to be excellent.

The outlook at present is far from encouraging to the packers, and thus far we hear of no contracts for 1879 packing. The future course of the foreign markets will be watched with interest. Prices must of necessity rule very low. Fully five-sixths of the 1878 packing was put up in one pound tins, in cases of four dozen each, the balance in two and a half pound tins, two dozen in a case, or a total of 27,450,000 cases.

In January last one pound tin sold here at \$1.39 per dozen, the market ruling dull and weak through the month, closing at \$1.75, at which figure it remained until the last of March, when it touched \$1.70. In April prices fell off to \$1.60. About the middle of May the markets stiffened, rising to \$1.75 by the 1st of June, at which figure it ruled steady. In July and August it was strong at \$1.70. Towards the close of the latter month spot stock became very scarce, as the demand up to that time had been supplied from stock carried over.

This being heavy at the time that shipments of new were usually made, it deterred shipments of new catch from the Pacific coast. The result was that stock became exhausted, and prices began to rise the latter part of August. Throughout September salmon was scarce at \$1.80 to \$1.85, and in October spot goods sold as high as \$2.00, with sales at \$1.85 to arrive. For most of November it sold at \$1.80, becoming weak towards the close of that month, ruling so in December, and selling at the close of the year at \$1.70. The present price is \$1.60, with the stock here about one-third what it was a year ago.

We urge upon packers that quality be the first consideration, and that every effort be made to stop the canning of poor fish and short weights. Let new markets be opened up at home and abroad, and a demand created sufficient to make the packing of salmon a very profitable industry. There is a heavy stock on the Pacific coast and abroad, and unless the packing for 1879 is greatly reduced is little promise of a successful season for those engaged in this business on the west coast.

We believe the facts above to be more carefully and truthfully

stated than we could have done it. Every person agrees that the condition of things, the future outlook generally,—is anything but encouraging. In this matter we feel vitally interested; it is the life or death of our whole business, and at the request of men deeply interested, we should like to offer a suggestion. Probably of all the canneries employed last year, eight or ten will not be employed this year, which will reduce the number of boats in the river, now were the balance of the canneries to still further reduce the number of boats, they would be able to make a saving of from \$15,000 to \$18,000 each, to apply on the credit side of the deficiency account.

Supposing that the number of boats be reduced proportionate to the pack of last year,—it has been estimated, by those best informed, that for each thousand cases of fish put up last year the proportion of boats in use was more than two. In other words: to put up the 400,000 cases in 1878 over eight hundred boats and nets were used. Reduce the number to the proportion of one and a half boats to the thousand cases, and only six hundred boats and nets would be used. For the season of 1879, from the present outlook, we think one boat to each thousand cases of last years catch, say four hundred boats on the river, would be ample. By thus reducing, cannerymen could secure the fish for less money, as the number of boats now on the river gives the fishermen scarcely average wages at fifty cents a fish. Take off half the boats, and fishermen can fish for less per fish, making more money for themselves, save the loss, and wear and tear of nets, secure better men, etc. Cannerymen would save money also, and if the pack should turn out less it will be so much better for the market. Should the four hundred boats catch nearly as much as eight hundred boats, fish would be obtained so much cheaper that canneries could afford to sell at present rates, and thereby make the business profitable. We hope that the cannerymen will get together and talk this matter over. In union there is strength. Run the same number of boats or more than were run last year, put up all that can be put up, and what will be done with them? Where will a market be found at anything like reasonable prices? Any packer reading the above extract from the American Grocer must certainly see the necessity for reducing the pack of the coming season.

The Harbor of Refuge.

An appropriation has been made for commencing the construction of a harbor of refuge on the Pacific coast,—one account says \$250,000 and another \$150,000. The latter is, we think, the correct sum. Of course it is not expected that this amount of money will do more than make a beginning. One of the telegrams to California journals on the subject states that the report of the engineers, made last winter, leads to the belief that the harbor will be constructed at Trinidad, to which the Oregonian of the 12th, says:

We cannot credit or accept this, since that point is too far south to be of real utility as a harbor of refuge. California would, of course, like to secure this great work within her own borders, and her delegation will work for that result without much regard to the real interests of the commerce of the northern coast. But our delegation should make every effort to prevent this. The harbor should be somewhere on our own coast, at an available point, so that it would be, as its name implies, a harbor of refuge. At Trinidad it would be almost useless, as the strong southerly gales from which it is desirable to obtain refuge exert their greatest force north of there. The harbor should not be south of Port Orford, and would be better even north of that point. Now it seems to be settled that such harbor is to be constructed, every exertion should be made both

by our representatives at Washington and by our citizens at home to have a proper point selected which will afford a harbor of refuge where such harbor is most needed,—on the northern coast. It would be better for our Board of Trade to make representations on this subject to the office of engineers at Washington, and for the Chamber of Commerce at Astoria to take similar action.

Free America.

That this nation is becoming too massive for fair legislation on the part of congress, is partly shown by the following which we find in the East Portland Call of the 8th:

The bill in aid of the Portland bridge failed in the senate as was expected, and it now remains to be seen whether the opinion of one man, and he a resident of the state of New York, shall be the cause of depriving the county of Multnomah and the state of Oregon of the benefits to be derived from a bridge across the Willamette river, at this place. We feel confident in making this assertion, from the fact that we are credibly informed that Col. Gillespie, United States engineer, resident at Portland, holds that he, as a representative of the United States, has no right to interfere with rights granted by the state legislature.

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This house is in the best location in the city for the restaurant business, being furnished in first-class style with every modern improvement, including a

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Neat work at reasonable prices. We are a call.

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Best quality of LAGER BEER, etc., per glass on hand.

Choice Wines, Liquors, and Cigars always on hand.

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The best lunch the season will afford furnished day and night FREE.

GUNS, LOCKS, AND SEWING MACHINES REPAIRED.
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HAVING ENLARGED MY STORE have now on hand the finest and best assortment of plain and French candies in town, also, all kinds of

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Retail candy from 25 to 75 cents per pound.

Fresh Eastern and Sealwater bay oysters served in every style.

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CRYSTAL SALOON,
On the Roadway, - - ASTORIA, OREGON.

The very best quality of wines, liquors and cigars at wholesale or retail.

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Importer and dealer in
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SMOKED SALMON.
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