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WATERFRONT WHIFFS

Halibut Boat Owners and Fishermen Agree—Saga Here Enroute to Banks—Important Fishery News This Week

Halibut boat owners and fishermen of Prince Rupert are to be congratulated at having come to agreement this week on fishing terms for the coming season. It was particularly gratifying that the settlement was reached before any great controversy or feeling over the matter developed. At that, there was not a very great issue at stake. Yet often little things like this develop into more serious affairs than at first might be expected. The effect of the agreement is that the boat owners accept the amended offer of the fishermen whereby the latter will not be responsible for share in "hole" trips after a month of disablement or tie-up has elapsed. On this point there was a compromise on both sides, the fishermen having previously asked for a period of three weeks while the boat owners were desirous of maintaining the old agreement whereby there was no limit of time wherein the fishermen might be still responsible for share in the liabilities of "hole" trips. While there is apparently no weakening, as yet, in the ruling of the fish buyers whereby first class fish in future will be that between 10 and 60 pounds instead of between 10 and 80 pounds as before, prospects are that most of the Prince Rupert halibut fleet will get to work by March 1, the date agreed upon, or soon thereafter. Happily enough, the situation here is much different to that in Seattle where the boat owners and the fishermen are still deadlocked over the issue of what shall constitute a boat's share, the owners demanding 25% for boat's share whereas the fishermen will not countenance anything but the former 20%. It is confidently expected that the decision on the part of the local boat owners and fishermen to delay the start of the season's operations to March 1, two weeks after the statutory opening, will result in considerably higher prices for fish when buying gets under way. There seems to be good reason to anticipate that this may prove to be the case. At that, the fishing season will be cut from nine to eight months this year, in view of the treaty decision between the United States and Canada that the close season shall henceforth start on November 1 instead of November 15.

"The use of too much gear," says Hon. S. L. Howe, provincial commissioner of fisheries, "has made it necessary, in the interests of conservation, to reduce fishing seasons so much, that it is often difficult for fishermen to make a living. For the same reason the overhead cost of producing canned fish is increased, as operators must use as much gear as possible to make a reasonable catch in the limited season allowed. This, in turn, affects the sale of British Columbia fish in foreign markets in competition with the fish of other nations which do not experience similar difficulties."

Frank W. Allen, for several years a member of the staff of Edward Lipsett Ltd. here, has been promoted to a post with the company in Vancouver and will be leaving soon for the south to assume his new duties. Mr. Allen has become popu-

lar among many friends during his residence in Prince and his departure will be regretted. He has taken quite an interest in yachting affairs while here, being the owner of the power cruiser Colifer which, it is understood, he will take south with him.

The canned salmon export market is still in the uncertain stage. The next few months should show more clearly what is to be expected as an ultimate return for the pack. Russian canned salmon is no new thing—as some people seemed to regard it—and the quantity available for consumption in Europe is no greater than has been in other years. British and continental brokerage houses and importers may have shown more caution than usual in the placing of orders this season. But the closest observers are confident that those orders, however belated, will materialize.

Enroute to the halibut grounds on its first trip, the 45-foot halibut boat, Saga, Capt. Hendrick Hendricksen, was in port this week from California, having arrived Tuesday night. The Saga, as stated before in these columns, was built during the past two years in California where Capt. Hendricksen had to go for the benefit of his health. It is a trim craft and was examined with interest during its stay here. The vessel is equipped with a 40 h.p. Fabco-Tuxham diesel engine. Accompanying Capt. Hendricksen was his wife, who herself played an important part in connection with the building of the boat, and Ed Marks. The little vessel made the long trip up from California entirely under her own power.

The licence of the British Columbia Fishermen's Co-operative Association to erect a salmon cannery at Coal Harbor, Vancouver, has been renewed after considerable controversy by the city of Vancouver. The association held a licence in 1930 and did some dredging in preparation for construction but did not erect the new building. The application for the new licence was finally allowed.

Possibly more progress was made during the past week toward the object of co-operative handling of fish at Prince Rupert than has been achieved at any time in the past. Both producers of salmon and halibut seem to be quite keen about the idea and it is quite evident that not a few of them are willing to cough up the hard earned cash to help the thing along.

The gathering last Saturday night in the City Hall when salmon fishermen got together to discuss the proposal to co-operatively handle and process their fish was possibly the largest fishermen's meeting that has even been seen in the city. Great enthusiasm was also displayed and it may be judged that, if the fishermen do not establish a cannery of their own here, it will be only failure to secure the necessary funds that will prevent them. In fact, if all salmon fishermen are to be taken care of under a co-operative plan, it will be necessary to have a cannery to handle their product. Like enthusiasm for the idea of co-operative market exists among the halibutters, both boat owners and fishermen having during the week endorsed the proposal of deducting 2½ percent from the gross stock of every boat in order to create a fund with which to carry on co-operative marketing.

The Sitka Cold Storage Co., of which W. P. Mills, prominent Sitka business man is the head, has completed negotiations for the purchase of the cold storage plant of the Booth Fisheries at Sitka and will operate it in future as a public freezer and storage. The plant, established in 1913, has a storage capacity of 1,500,000 pounds of frozen fish and manufactures sixteen tons of ice daily. The plant will be in charge of W. W. Knight, who was bookkeeper under the Booth regime while J. P. McNeill, who has been superintendent of the plant for years, will remain in that capacity. The deal is of much interest to the halibut fisheries of the whole coast.

Mariners are advised by W. I. Stamford, acting agent of the marine department that the pile dolphin marking the shoal off Dundas Point in Metlakatla Passage, B.C., has disappeared and this shoal is now being marked temporarily by a red spar buoy.

A worth while pack of canned clams was put up during the past season on the Queen Charlotte Islands whence also came quantities of fresh abalone.

The past week has been a particularly eventful one from the standpoint of news of interest to the fisheries. Among the more important events have been the following:

Saturday—Federal fisheries regulations for 1931.

Five halibut boats so far leave for the grounds.

Six local halibut boats drift into harbor from Cow Bay moorings.

Mass meeting of salmon fishermen approves formation of Association to engage in handling and processing of salmon.

Sunday—Halibut boat owners accept fishermen's terms for 1931 halibut fishing operations.

Monday—Halibut boat owners agree on principal of deducting 2½ percent from gross stocks to finance co-operative.

Tuesday—United States Senate approves international halibut treaty which adds another half month to yearly close season.

Prince Rupert halibut fishermen agree on principal of deducting 2½ percent, from gross stocks to finance co-operative.

Wednesday—Seattle halibut owners and fishermen fail to agree upon fishing terms for season.

Thursday—Boat owners appoint trustees to handle co-operative marketing fund.

Friday—Eleven halibut boats have so far returned from halibut banks to Ketchikan. Fish receiving 12c. and 15c.

Allan M. Davies returned to the city on the Princess Mary yesterday afternoon from Kelowna where he attended a Loyal Orange Lodge convention recently.

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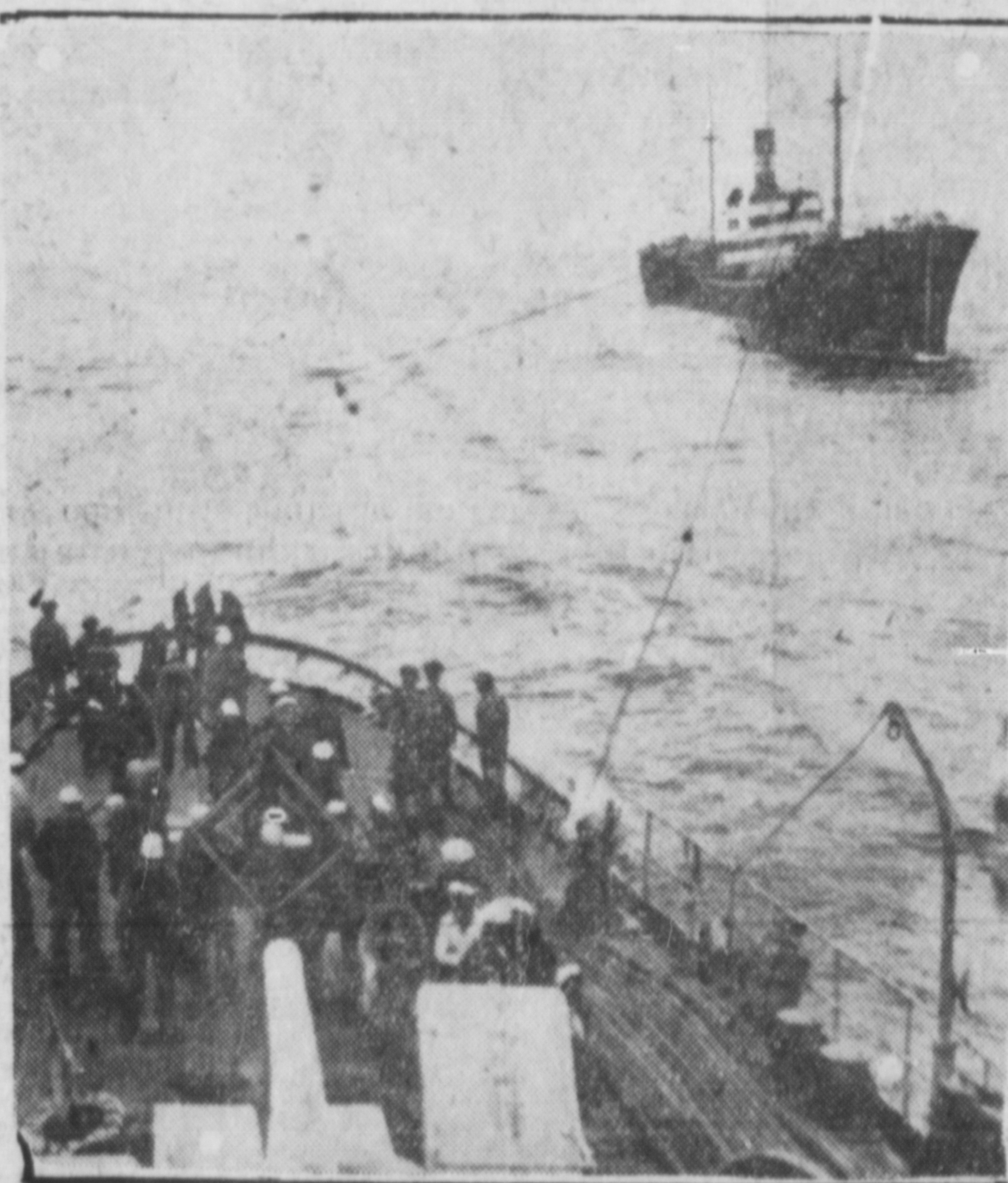
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Mon. & Tues.—Norma Shearer in "LET US BE GAY"



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