

# Side plant will start May 1; wide range of products sighted

Island Packers, the ultra modern fish processing plant now under construction at Queens Wharf in Summerside, will go into operation on May 1, it has been announced by Fred J. Arsenault, one of the directors.

Preliminary operation will be only on a partial scale until the equipment is fully installed, but later almost every product from lobsters to Blueberries will be processed and canned. It will be one of the largest plants in the province and the

most modern in the Maritimes.

Concentrating on lobsters as the main product the new plant will house the complete processing operation all the way from the ship to the consumer.

#### LOWERED TO TANKS

The ships will be able to bring their cargoes to the dock in front of the plant where they will be unloaded by the plant's crane. If the cargo is lobsters they will be lowered immediately into four cooling tanks on the dock.

After cooking they are lowered into two cooling tanks and then taken into the plant where the meat is separated by hand. This hand operation will

eventually mean employment for 360 persons.

Other products, meat or fruit will be handled in much the same manner, once inside the plant. From the hand separation they go into the vacuum canners where they are sealed in one of three can sizes, quarter, half or full pound sizes.

The three canners are adjustable and if necessary can be made to use any size can available.

A quick freezing room will be able to freeze 50,000 pounds of any product every 24 hours. The equipment for the process is supplied by Lewis Refrigerator Co. of Vancouver and is the latest made.

The 162 by 75 feet plant will also house a cold storage area capable of keeping well over half a million pounds after being frozen.

#### "DOING IT RIGHT"

Raw products for processing at the plant will be brought from all parts of the Island. The markets will be within the Maritime area and overseas as well. Much shipping is expected to the United States.

Mr. Arsenault, speaking of his half million dollar project said, "It's costing a lot of money... but that's because we are doing it right!"

He went on to explain that similar processing plants al-

ready in operation in New Brunswick "are employing 500 to 600 people and yet much of their raw material is from P.E.I. Something has got to be done about this and that's what we are trying to do. Sixty per cent of the Island's products are being processed in New Brunswick when this should be an industry of our own."

Island Packers' plant was built by M. F. Schurman Limited on a specially constructed wharf and dock in order to provide easier unloading from ships.

The directors of the company in addition to Mr. Arsenault are James Burden, Everett Champion and James Cousins.

## Lobstering methods still same

The methods and equipment of the lobster fisherman have remained basically the same over the years, with some improvements. The boat type is not the same, but the boat itself is larger. The lobster traps are the same, but most fishermen have more of them. One of the biggest assets has been the addition of a "hauler" to the boat.

Previously, every lobster trap had to be hauled to the surface by hand. This was a very tiring task, and slow. Since the fisherman could only haul a certain number of traps each day, they had to limit themselves in the number of traps they had in the water. Since they have added the hauler, their task, while still not easy, has been considerably lightened, and they have added greatly to the number of traps they've been able to put in the water.

The method of fishing has remained the same for many years. Each year, on opening day, the fishermen wait for the signal, and when it's given race for the fishing grounds and for the best possible sites.

#### MARKER AS MARKER

Those fishermen with the fastest boats naturally get the best spots. Once at the site the first job is to set the lines. These lines are the ropes to which the lobster traps are attached. They are hooked to buoys, which keep them in place, and at the same time serve as a marker for the fisherman.

Setting the lines takes most of, if not all of the first day on the water. Some fishermen do manage to get some traps into the water. The second day is devoted to pulling the traps into the water, and possibly pulling them out later in the day to set a few lobsters. The third day is also used for setting traps, but, usually all fishermen attempt to haul their traps on this day. These fishermen will set large fleets of traps, usually 500 to 600 feet, and haul one-half size day, and the other half the following day.

A fisherman's day starts early and lasts until sunset. Usually, they rise about 5 o'clock in the morning and set on the fishing grounds around 6 o'clock. All day he hauls traps and then lands his lobsters. If possible, they try to finish around four in the afternoon. But, his day is not over then. His engine must be repaired, other repairs made and a fresh supply of bait reached for the next day.

#### REASON SHORT

The lobster season is a short one, only two months, but at these hours, it's probably just as well. The season runs, if possible, from the first of May until the end of June. Some years, the start is delayed due to ice conditions. Even when it's not delayed, ice conditions sometimes make it necessary for the fishermen to use ice policy to keep their boats free from the ice. That puts more work and hauling to the fisherman.

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