

Sid Watts

Interviewed March 24, 1972.

394 Regent St., Steveston

Born in England - came to Canada 1920 - went to Winnipeg first - later to Steveston - 1924 went to work for Ben Rose at Steveston Machine Shop - Shop 75' x 40' - Rose considered very good with any internal combustion machine - 1927 Rose and Watts started making their engine Bensid Engine - also they invented a drum drive first called a net-winch - (discusses construction of drive) - no one at first would buy it because the fishermen thought it would tangle up their nets - Steveston fishermen better equipped than there U.S. counterparts - Shop also did all the work for the municipality - only shop in the Steveston area then so served farmers and fishermen as far off as Gulf Is. - discusses very early Marine Engines - early Bensid engines considered good enough to have many ordered well in advance by both white and Japanese fishermen - this was due to the great regard the people had for Ben Rose - (extensive discussion on the engine's features) - Made especially for fishing boats - more discussion on engine features - 1¢ cod, 5¢ sockeye, depression prices speaks about Japanese - discusses depression and the lack of financing of canneries by banks - speaks about Indians as fishermen - Steveston better off during depression than other communities because of fish being a constant if small income source - machine shop work often paid by fishermen and farmers by fish and produce - (electric welding story) - employed 36 men at peak of work - depression disrupted everything because no one had money for wages for parts - original wages 65¢ -75¢ hr. for machinist - canneries paid 15¢ hr. George Mackie was apprentice at shop - discusses patents with respect to engines (discusses Bensid engine operating features - discusses drum-drive patent - talks about other ideas developed at shop - discussion of water pipe boring apparatus to lay pipe under a road.

- 2 -

Mr. Sid Watts

Speaks about machine development in canneries - became partner after 1927 - built engine to keep shop busy during winter months - shop was accident-free - first lived on Garry Road in rented house for \$15.00 per month - later bought 1/2 block corner Regent and No. 1 Road - built own house 1929 (story about this) - discusses prices of wood and lumber during depression - -Mrs. Watts and Dr. Graves wife would put in laths - (plastering story) - first winter 2 ft. of water all about so he jacked up house by self with jacks borrowed from canneries - discussion about canneries - role in community - Imperial was biggest Cannery in British Empire - Great West employed Indians whereas often other canneries wouldn't - (Discussion about Japanese having financial backing from Japan) Indians came over from Gulf Is. to fish - also some lived in cannery houses - paid for rent with fish - doesn't remember 6:00 o'clock gun - May 24th big holiday featuring children and Maypole.

TAPE 11 - SIDE 2.