

It is perhaps worth pointing out that the information used in constructing the maps in these papers was obtained on various expeditions in different places in different years, and it is an example of how accurate observations made on one expedition can be co-ordinated with other observations and used to build up a valuable whole. Those making observations should always record the absence of aurora and notes on the amount of cloud.

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### EARLY CANNED FOODS FROM THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE

By the courtesy of the High Commissioner for Canada we have recently received a copy of a Report on samples of canned foods dating back to the time of the Franklin Search Expeditions. The samples were found by patrols of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in caches at Beechey Island in Barrow Strait and at Dealy Island off Melville Island. Franklin's ships the *Erebus* and *Terror* spent their first winter at Beechey Island in 1845-46, and there is therefore the possibility of some of the cans having been left by Franklin's party. The other locality, Dealy Island, served as a winter base for Kellett and McClintock in the *Resolute* and *Intrepid* as the Western Division of Belcher's Squadron in 1852-54, and any cans found there must almost certainly have come from the *Resolute* and *Intrepid*. It is not made clear in the Report where the different cans came from.

Examination by the Chemistry Division of the Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, has been made of four cans of Ox-cheek Soup, painted blue and stamped with the name of Gamble, Cork; one can of mutton painted red and without name; one can of carrots painted blue and with the name Gamble stamped on it; and two of sliced carrots, also Gamble products.

In the case of the Ox-cheek Soup two only of the cans were in good condition; the third had a pin-prick hole and the other had leaked. The contents of the two sound cans were more of the nature of a stew than a soup, and appeared to be in excellent condition. The fat indicated no deterioration. Tests for rancidity were negative. The contents of one of the cans were examined for vitamin B<sub>1</sub> and B<sub>2</sub>. Tests for B<sub>1</sub> (thiamin) were negative. B<sub>2</sub> (riboflavin) content was 3 microgrammes per gramme. Five gramme samples fed daily to rats for 14 days gave approximately the same gains in weight as milk.

The mutton can had rusted and was perforated, but the meat appeared to be in good condition, and the fat appeared unchanged. Five grammes fed daily to rats for 14 days gave normal gain in weight.

The carrot tin did not appear to have leaks, but the contents were unrecognisable as carrots either by appearance or flavour. The carrots were badly discoloured and quite inedible. The remaining two tins—of sliced carrot—were in bad condition; the contents were badly discoloured and quite inedible, and no analyses were made.

It is well known that Franklin's preserved meats and vegetables were supplied by Goldner, were painted red, and stamped "Goldner Patent". There is no record of official Franklin supplies having come from Gamble, but tins of this nature may have formed part of the officers' private stores. There is the same difficulty about the official Belcher stores, as Belcher himself states that his preserved meat, soups and vegetables were supplied by Hogarth. Kellett's command may, however, have had different supplies, and there is also the possibility of these being officers' private stores.

#### RECENT INTERNATIONAL WHALING CONFERENCES AND THE RESUMPTION OF WHALING SINCE THE WAR

Although the whaling industry was not entirely suspended throughout the war, the Antarctic season of 1945-46 was the first in which pelagic whaling was resumed on any considerable scale. A new era in whaling has begun, and this note is intended to be a short review of the present position. For this purpose it is necessary to recall that before the war the pelagic catches in the Antarctic had risen to a dangerously high level. In 1937-38 the total Antarctic catch reached 46,039 whales with 31 factory ships, but in 1938-39, in spite of an increased whaling fleet, it fell to 38,356 with 34 factory ships. Investigations, based on statistics of the catches and biological examination of the whales, showed that the stocks of Blue and Humpback whales had already been substantially affected, and although the stock of Fin whales appeared to be in a stronger condition it could not be supposed that they would long support an industry on the pre-war scale.

After the outbreak of war a slightly reduced whaling fleet operated in 1939-40, and a considerably smaller number in 1940-41. Pelagic whaling was then suspended, but whaling on a small scale was continued at certain shore stations, including one at South Georgia.

It will be recalled that the regulation of whaling is based on the International Agreement of 1937. The principal articles of this Agreement, and the Protocol of 1938, prescribed limitation of the Antarctic season to three months (8 December to 7 March), minimum lengths for each species, avoidance of waste in the treatment of carcasses, temporary protection of Humpbacks, a temporary sanctuary in the Pacific sector of the Antarctic, and certain other limits to the areas available for whaling. The Agreement firmly established the principle of international control, and the stock of whales would no doubt have been more severely affected if the regulations had not been in force. There is little doubt however that in the long run they would be inadequate for the permanent maintenance of the stock. The virtual suspension of whaling during the war provided an opportunity to consider whether the provisions of the Agreement could in any way be improved, but the situation was complicated by the world shortage of oils and fats, and the urgent need for a maximum production of whale oil as soon as whaling could be resumed.