**Fish Merchants**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Read pages 56 and 57 and answer the following questions**

1. What was the truck system?

This was a cashless system whereby in exchange for a seasons catch , fishermen and families received credit at the merchants store where they could then acquire such essential items as fishing gear, food, and clothing.

1. Fish was sold by the quintal which is 112 pounds or 51 kg.
2. How many grades of fish were there? 7
3. Where did the lowest grade of fish get shipped to? Why do you think this was the case?

The lowest grades of fish were sent to the West Indies. Students might give answers such as racism as the people of the west indies are primarily black and at that time in history prejudice would have been very prevelant.

1. How did the demand for fish in the markets impact the price that was paid to the fishermen?

The greater the demand the higher the price paid by international buyers to local merchants and then to local fishermen. When catches were low and the demand high, the merchants culler was less strict about the quality of fish. However, if there was a lot of fish in a year, then only the very top fish got a good grade (Merchants could afford to be picky)

1. What were some of the negatives of dealing with the merchants (use at least three supports)?
2. Fishermen could never be sure of the price their catch would be worth in the fall.
3. Often there was only one merchant in a community so it would be impossible for them to negotiate a better price.
4. Sometimes a family would find out that they would go into debt at the end of the season and then couldn’t get credit (refused credit by the merchant).
5. Merchants would sometimes “scam” a fishermen by giving the fish an unfair grade in order to resell the fish at a profit or they would rig the scales. So they paid an unfair price.
6. Not all merchants were bad to the fishermen. What were some of the challenges they faced at times?

Merchants often faced financial risk because of fluctuations in the price of fish. Sometimes they never get back the money owed to them. Merchants often supported families during the bad years by supplying them with food and goods so they could survive.

**8. Opinion Question**: Do you think you could have survived in the 100s, knowing what you know so far about their way of life? Why or why not?

You can ask students what they said here