

Let's Go Fishing: An industrial film showing commercial salmon fishing and canning in BC from 1948.
Video AAAA1216 courtesy of the Royal BC Museum and Archives.

This black and white video shows a male worker lining up the salmon so that the first blade of the iron butcher will remove the head. During the narration, the camera angle changes so you can see the fish heads being removed and falling down.

Narrator: "Butchering isn't done by hand anymore – not in British Columbia's canneries. Grim looking machines known to the trade as "Iron Chinks" do that job. The whole cannery is something like a streamlined factory; with the assembly line as the most efficient way of handling an involved process. First the heads are taken off, and the rest of the fish passes right along the assembly line."

The camera angle follows the fish through the blade which removes the head. The body of the fish falls belly up into a trough after passing by the blade. The gloved hands of a second worker are visible. This worker lines up each fish to feed it into the Iron Butcher.

The video shows a close-up of the salmon being gripped by the Iron Butcher in preparation for removing the fins.

Narrator: "Fed into the main machine, tail first, the salmon's ventral fins are first removed, after which the fish is split and the entrails removed. Scales and blood are scraped off, and finally the tail is removed, and the salmon, thus cleaned, proceeds along the assembly line."