EXPLORING UNCHARTED WATERS: GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND'S COD, LOBSTER AND HERRING FISHERIES, 1888-1913

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Exploring Uncharted Waters: Government's Role in the Development of Newfoundland's Cod, Lobster and Herring Fisheries, 1888-1913

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ABSTRACT

Dependence upon a single-sector economy often leads to cycles of prosperity and despair. The society that developed in Newfoundland based upon the exploitation of the fishery resource certainly reflects this description. Near the end of the nineteenth century a consensus evolved based upon an acknowledgement that the fishery in general was in danger. If the industry could not be sustained, the prospects for the four-fifths of the population that relied upon it for survival were bleak. Government demonstrated an awareness that unless changes were adopted, the day that it could no longer support the mass of the population might be perilously near.

Faced with declining catches, increasing competition in traditional markets, and an insufficient understanding of the scientific basis of the fishery, government in 1888 established a Commission of Inquiry. The centrepiece its report was a recommendation that Newfoundland establish a Fisheries Commission to study the fisheries and make recommendations for their improvement. When this proposal was accepted, the basis was laid for the creation of a formal Department of Fisheries in 1893. Equally important, by embracing this recommendation government was also tacitly accepting the principle that increased public intervention in the affairs of the private sector was acceptable. Once involved, government continued to take initiatives in this sector. The new Department was an important part of this new activism. It served as a medium to continue cod and lobster propagation initiated by the Commission; to expand and improve rules and regulations for the preservation of stocks and the production of a standard output; and to stimulate the production and export of herring.

Though these initiatives were for the most part based on rational assumptions, not all achieved the level of success promised by their proponents. In part, these shortcomings can be attributed to a distinct preference to adopt models developed abroad rather than attempt to construct solutions suited to Newfoundland conditions. As well, government's desire to keep control of the fishery and its predilection to use fishery reforms for political purposes weakened the initiatives. Finally, a climate of mistrust between government, the Department, fishermen, merchants and exporters worked against the successful implementation of reform.

The result was that at the outbreak of World War I, the fishery, despite a quarter-century of government attention, looked remarkably similar to its condition in 1888. Remaining overwhelmingly dependent upon the export of a single staple--dried cod--to the same markets that had been favoured for more than a century, the fishery still offered dubious prospects for those who depended upon it for their livelihoods.

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I also owe a special debt of gratitude to the staff at the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial. The staff was untiring in providing assistance in searching and retrieving relevant material. Margaret Gulliver generously shared her office and computer with me, and her unique sense of humour relieved some of the drudgery associated with the completion of this type of study.

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INTRODUCTION

"Fully developed, our fisheries are richer than the gold mines and silver mines of Peru," claimed Edward Patrick Morris.[1] Moreover, D.W. Prowse maintained that "Wellington's army...could never have marched and beaten the French out of the Peninsula but for the dried cod from Newfoundland."[2] Both these observations were made in 1909 and reflect positive assessments of the contribution that the fishery could make to the Newfoundland economy if developed and managed according to scientific and business principles. Though this perceived potential was the focus of debate within and without the House of Assembly, it has never received the full attention it

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[1]This was taken from a speech made by Premier Morris June 4, 1909 on the second reading of the Newfoundland Board of Trade Bill; see Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1909, p. 75. This appears to be a version of a statement made by Lord Bacon that "the gold mine of the Newfoundland fishery [is] richer than all the treasures of Golconda and Peru," in the prospectus he prepared for the London and Bristol Company for Colonizing Newfoundland. See D.W. Prowse, "Old Time Newfoundland," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. X, No. 2 (October 1910), pp. 17-19. In 1905, a mining comparison, which again could have been based on Lord Bacon's statement, was used by the Department of Fisheries to describe the value of the fishery: "[it] rivals the production of the most famous mines;" see Newfoundland, Annual Report of the Department of Fisheries (hereafter Fisheries, Report), 1905, p. 141. In describing the value of the Newfoundland fishery in The Story of Newfoundland (London, 1938), p. 91, J.A. Cochrane quoted Bacon as saying the fishery "contained richer treasures than the mines of Mexico and Peru."

[2]D.W. Prowse, "Fish and Fish Markets," Evening Telegram (St. John's), July 27, 1909.

deserves from either contemporaries or historians. Instead, studies have tended to focus on the economics, production, marketing, rivalries, and scientific developments of the fishery, as well as on the need for diversification to lessen dependence upon a single economic sector.

The principal question posed in the thesis is rather simple: given the widespread perception that the cod, lobster and herring fisheries had great potential, what actions were taken by the Newfoundland government to develop this between 1888 and 1913? The beginning of the study has been chosen because it marks a new departure in government involvement in fisheries development; where before government measures to assist the fishery had been more or less ad hoc and short-term, with the creation of a Commission of Inquiry in 1888, a Fisheries Commission the next year and finally a Department of Fisheries in 1893, government embarked upon a new direction. The outbreak of World War I, which created severe dislocations in the fishery, has been selected as the end of this study.

The answer to the principal question posed in this study is more complex than the original query. The overriding argument is that government involvement, though on occasion little more than "lip service," was indeed more intense than suggested by past historians. It is clear that government took some initiative in introducing new technologies and procedures into what generally remained, in David Alexander's words, a

"traditional fishery." But this does not mean that the state shed completely its past tendency to respond rather than to anticipate. Indeed, for the most part, government policy toward the fishery tended to be reactive rather than proactive. This, it will be argued, was unnecessary, since once government established the Fisheries Commission, it had in place a body which would have enabled it to engage in constructive long-range planning. This was particularly true during the life of the Commission and the first few years of the Department of Fisheries, when the government had the services of a remarkable Norwegian, Adolph Neilsen. The evidence suggests that Neilsen understood the fishery better than most people; certainly no one during his stint in Newfoundland came close to matching his expertise and vision. During Neilsen's period of employment, ministers were deluged with reports and recommendations, many of which, with the benefit of hindsight, seem remarkably omniscient. Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons government failed to respond to most of his recommendations. Often the rationale was a shortage of funds, an excuse which no sane person would discount entirely, especially in the crisis-plagued years of the 1890s. But even more often it appears that government did not act for political reasons. The major groups who made their living from the fishery--fishermen, merchants and exporters--exhibited a profound distrust for each other, and each

exercised an important role in Newfoundland politics. Unwilling to alienate any of these groups, government often resorted to procrastination and inaction. Yet notwithstanding these observations, it remains undeniable that after 1888 government was more interventionist in the fishery than it had been previously.

The body of the thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 includes a review of the literature and sets the basic context within which the remainder of the study is situated. Chapters 2 and 3 examine three species: the principal one, cod, and two which had potential, lobster and herring. The earlier chapter examines initiatives during the Commission period, while the latter looks at the period following the establishment of the Department of Fisheries. Chapters 4 and 5 deal basically with attempts by government to enforce regulations and to extend the fisheries into new types of catches and markets. Chapter 4 examines government policies on cure and marketing, while chapter 5 analyzes programmes concerned with bait and cold storage, as well as the establishment of the Fisheries Protection Service. The conclusion brings the arguments together.

CHAPTER 1

THE CONTEXT OF THE NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERY, 1888-1913

Any study of the role of government in the fishery during the quarter-century prior to World War I takes on a special significance in the context of the existing literature on the fishery. While a close examination of the body of writing on Newfoundland economic development will indeed yield comments on the fishery, most studies have been written on the macro-level and are restricted to general comments about traditional catches and markets. On the other hand, little attention has been paid to what we can call "micro-developments," dealing with tropics such as new catching, processing or marketing techniques.[3] More important for this thesis, there is virtually nothing on the government's role. Indeed, the best historian of the modern Newfoundland history, David Alexander, has written that "in Newfoundland there was no government initiative in the fisheries equivalent to that in Iceland and Norway."[1]

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[3]An exception to this generalization is Shannon Patrick Ryan, "The Newfoundland Cod Fishery in the Nineteenth Century" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972), which discusses the history of the lobster and herring fisheries, as well as the establishment of hatcheries, curing, culling and tal qual.

[1]David Alexander, "Development and Dependence in Newfoundland," in Eric W. Sager, Lewis R. Fischer and Stuart O. Pierson (comps.), Atlantic Canada and Confederation: Essays in Canadian Political Economy (Toronto, 1983), p. 17.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, historians and interested commentators were basically optimistic about the Newfoundland fishery, suggesting it held great potential if fully developed. Beckless Wilson, Patrick Morris, and Lord Birkenhead all suggested that this promise could only be realized through "modernization." Included among their lengthy lists of suggestions were projects such as the provision of cold storage facilities, bait depots, and expanded markets through improved transportation networks with Europe, Canada and the United States.[2] True to the prevailing ideology of the day, however, none of these recommendations had much to say about the potential role of government in bringing about change in the fishery.

But if the commentators were basically optimistic about the future, government's position was more ambivalent. While this dichotomy cut across the entire period, it can be seen

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[2]For further information on these and other remedies see Beckless Wilson, The Tenth Island, Being Some Account of Newfoundland, Its People, Its Politics, Its Problems, and Its Peculiarities (London, 1897), pp. 70-80,; Lord Birkenhead, The Story of Newfoundland (London, 1920), pp. 15-16; Edward Patrick Morris, "The Economic Position of Newfoundland," in Thomas Worswick (ed.), The Economic Resources of the Empire (London, 1927), pp. 22-34; Morris, "Newfoundland and Its Industries," Doubleday's Encyclopedia (Garden City, NY, 1930), Vol. VIII, pp. 28-29; Isaac C. Morris, The Dawn of the Twentieth Century As Pertaining to Newfoundland (St. John's, n.d.), pp. 29-33; John Davenport Rodgers, "Newfoundland," in A Historical Geography of the British Colonies (Oxford, 1911), pp. 192-241; C.A. Harris, "Newfoundland, 1867-1921," in The Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge, 1930), Vol. VI, pp. 672-685.

especially clearly by dividing the era temporally. The new belief in the ability of experts to solve economic problems rationally, a vogue which swept Europe in the last third of the nineteenth century, obviously informed the thinking of Newfoundland politicians as well. This basic conviction that rational men if given sufficient evidence could design programmes to overcome problems can be seen in the decision to establish a Commission of Inquiry into the fishery in 1888 and a Fisheries Commission the next year. But it was not just a rational faith that impelled government to become involved. There was also the very real fact that Newfoundland was overwhelmingly dependent upon the fishery for both employment and income. The 1884 census, for example, showed that eighty-two percent of employed persons relied upon the fishery.[3] At the same time, as David Alexander has shown, almost seventy-nine percent of realized national income was derived from fishing.[4] Given these levels of dependence, no government could have ignored this sector of the economy.

The other side of the coin can be seen most clearly in the frenetic attempts, particularly after 1905, to diversify the economy. The heart of this drive for development culmi-

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[3]Newfoundland, Eighth Census of Newfoundland, 1884 (St. John's, 1886), pp. 206-207.

[4]David Alexander, "Economic Growth in the Atlantic Region," in Sager, Fischer and Pierson (comps.), Atlantic Canada and Confederation, p. 67.

nated in the signing of a series of at least eight major development agreements with foreign-based concerns. While most proved unsuccessful, the most significant point is that only one--with the Orr Newfoundland Company (discussed in chapter 4)--concerned the fishery. At the same time that government attempted to intervene to develop the fishery, it also attempted to diversify the economy in such a way as to provide additional job opportunities outside the primary sector.

Once the high point of the traditional inshore fishery was reached in the mid-1880s, the number and proportion of Newfoundlanders employed in the fishery declined. While historians accept that it would be a gross over-simplification to suggest that all Newfoundlanders suddenly turned their backs on the fishery, it is clear that none have focused upon the ability of government to encourage or discourage such occupational shifts. To the extent that governmental programmes to affect the fishery are discussed in the literature, the most standard method is simply to portray the politicians as indifferent. For example, Michael E. Condon has argued that:

> it is to be regretted that the fisheries of Newfoundland never received the attention that their importance deserved...Nothing has been done to thoroughly develop the great mine of the sea which the country holds [and] no attempt has been made to modernize the methods in vogue in securing its

> treasures...Governmental neglect has been lamentably evident with possible one or two exceptions.[5]

Another observer contended that "in this country no attention was paid to the fisheries until the last administration appointed the Fisheries Commission."[6] The same onlooker concluded that:

> here, every action, scientific or otherwise, that is taken to benefit the staple industry of the country--the fisheries, is opposed principally by those who have no knowledge whatever of the subject...[while] in all other fishery countries in the world, every possible inducement is held out to the fishermen to vigorously pursue their avocation, and every aid granted to them to better reap the harvest of the sea.[7]

Rev. Moses Harvey added that prior to the formation of the Fisheries Commission in 1889, the fisheries had been neglected.[8] Indeed, in the 1888 report of the special ad hoc Commission of Inquiry established to examine what might be done to save the fishery, special reference was made to Harvey's efforts over the years to induce government to

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[5]Michael E. Condon, The Fisheries and Resources of Newfoundland. "The Mine of the Sea" National, International and Co-operative (N.P., 1925), p. 37.

[6]Evening Herald (St. John's), January 16, 1893.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid., February 9, 1893. This article was reprinted from a paper entitled, "Artificial Propagation of Marine Food Fishes and Edible Crustaceans," presented by Harvey to the Royal Society of Canada, June 1, 1892. The original is published in Proceedings and Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada for the Year 1892, Vol. X, pp. 17-37.

establish a formal Department of Fisheries.[9] D.W. Prowse also credited Harvey's role in this movement.[10]

By the outbreak of World War I William Carson Job was admonishing members of the British Royal Commission on Natural Resources that Newfoundland:

> requires some measure of scientific development of our fisheries along the lines that have proven so successful in Norway, Canada, and the United States. We have at present no scientific knowledge whatever regarding our fisheries, and no hatching or artificial propagation of fish of any kind, and have no scientific adjunct to our fisheries administration.[11]

After the war, one of the more scathing accounts of the fishery was provided by A.W. Parsons, who blamed:

> a lack of a clearly formulated policy for the fisheries, the absence of any form of fishery organization, the individual and decentralized nature of the industry, and until recently, an

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[9]For a summary of Harvey's argument, see Newfoundland, Report of the Fisheries Commission appointed by His Excellency the Governor in Council to Investigate the Operations of Fisheries Departments in Other Countries (hereafter, Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report), 1888, pp. 3-4.

[10]D.W. Prowse, "Hon. A.W. Harvey," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 4 (March 1903), p. 6. Harvey died on February 7, 1903.

[11]See the memorandum on the Newfoundland fishery presented by the Hon. William Carson Job to Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, Trade, and Legislation of Certain Portions of His Majesty's Dominions. Minutes of Evidence taken in Newfoundland in 1914 (London, 1915), pp. 39-48. (Hereafter Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, 1914.)

> absence of any form of scientific research all contributed to the stagnation of the industry...[12]

Parsons went on to argue that writing the history of fisheries development in Newfoundland from an economic perspective had never been attempted.[13] As late as 1943, J.T. Cheeseman, a former member of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, reported that he was "convinced that with the application of modern methods of catching, processing, storing, transportation and marketing our sea fisheries can be made to provide not only the present, but a much larger population, with a reasonably steady income" and he ventured "to suggest that we can put our fisheries on a sound economic basis, if we will industrialize them."[14]

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[12]A.W. Parsons, "An Economic Study of the Newfoundland Fisheries" (Unpublished Honours Thesis, Mount Allison University, 1935), p. iii.

[13]Ibid., p. 1. Parsons went on to provide a good overview of the work carried out by the Fisheries Commission under Adolph Neilsen and later by the Department of Fisheries; see especially pp. 12-13, 86, 94, 106-107.

[14]Daily News (St. John's), December 29, 1943. Cheeseman was first elected to the House of Assembly for Burin in 1919. Appointed Chief Inspector of Fisheries in 1933, he became Chief Fisheries Officer under the Commission of Government the following year and served on the Fisheries Board from 1936 to 1942. Under the Smallwood government, he chaired a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the south coast fishery and thereafter became Minister of Fisheries in Smallwood's cabinet. See Robert H. Cuff, "John T. Cheeseman," in Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography (St. John's, 1990), 58. See also Daily News (St. John's), February 23, 1968. For a brief history of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board see C.T. James, "The Newfoundland Fisheries Board," in Joseph R. Smallwood (ed.), The Book of Newfoundland (St. John's, 1937),

Some of the above statements, made both before and after the outbreak of World War I demonstrate that the wave of fisheries innovation initiated by the Fisheries Commission and continued by the Department of Fisheries did not fulfil the hopes of its proponents. Although an explanation of some of the failures will be addressed, this is a distinctly secondary goal of this thesis.

Before embarking upon a discussion of government initiative in the fishery, it is first necessary to understand why the "state" became involved in fisheries development. Unfortunately, this is not a simple question with a specific answer. Instead, there were a multitude of operative factors, including increased foreign competition in traditional markets; changing consumer demand in North America (and the perceived potential that this market held for Newfoundland); the influence of American fishing technology in Newfoundland waters;[15] increasing population and decreasing catches; and fisheries' developments in other countries. Developments in other countries, especially Norway and the United States, stimulated governmental interest in innovations such as cod

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Vol. II, p. 311.

[15]For additional information on the influence of American technology on the Newfoundland fishery see William George Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins': Modernization and the Newfoundland-American Relationship, 1898-1910" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Maine at Orono, 1987).

and lobster propagation, cold storage and bait depots, drift-net fishing, secondary processing and the exploitation of species other than cod.

The fact that other countries were beginning scientific investigations aimed at gaining a better understanding of their fisheries and the methods by which they could be improved meant that if Newfoundland failed to follow a similar course of action, it was likely she would experience further difficulty in existing markets. Up to the early 1880s, the fishery was based overwhelmingly on the production of dry, salted cod for markets in Spain, Portugal, Italy, Brazil, and the British West Indies;[16] diversification of output and market orientation were for the most part absent.[17] It appears that as long as traditional markets continued to accept

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[16]For a detailed analysis of Newfoundland's saltfish trade see Shannon Ryan, "Newfoundland's Saltfish Markets: 1814-1914" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1982). For the importance of the Spanish market, see Shannon Ryan, Newfoundland-Spanish Saltfish Trade: 1814-1914 (St. John's, 1983). For a detailed study of Newfoundland's markets for the one hundred years ending in 1914, see Shannon Ryan, Fish Out of Water: The Newfoundland Saltfish Trade 1814-1914 (St. John's, 1986). On French output, see Harold A. Innis, The Cod Fisheries. The History of an International Economy (Reprint, Toronto, 1978). See Appendix I for Newfoundland dried cod exports to these countries and Appendix II for total dried cod exports 1888-1913.

[17]The term "market orientation" as used in this thesis refers to the propensity to consider the demands unique to individual markets in deciding upon output. The continued reliance upon a uniform product--salt cod--is evidence of the lack of market orientation.

Newfoundland's output, there was little perceived need to alter output or to obtain new markets. However, by the late 1880s and early 1890s, Newfoundland was facing increased competition from Norway and elsewhere in its customary markets. It is also important to note that Newfoundland perceived the potential of expanding markets in the United States for salt and non-saltfish products. This, optimists believed, was to be accomplished by the negotiation of a reciprocity agreement with the Americans.

Newfoundland therefore faced a dual problem: first, how to meet competition in traditional markets; and second, how to establish new markets for traditional and non-traditional output, if such were to be produced. The potential of the American market assumed a particular prominence in both contexts. To overcome the second dilemma, however, government embraced the creation of an infrastructure encompassing cod and lobster hatcheries, bait depots, cold storage facilities, steamer service, market information, standardized output, new products and an educated workforce capable of implementing new ideas and utilizing modern technology.

It will be shown that Newfoundland's response to these challenges was not in its broad outline atypical. Indeed, Newfoundland was merely endeavouring where possible to follow the course laid by other countries; only when necessary did the colony attempt to blaze its own path. In fact, developments in

the fisheries of other countries were for the most part being spurred not by the private sector but rather through public initiative and financial backing. Therefore, for the Newfoundland government to intervene in the fishery was not out of the ordinary but followed the leads of the United States, Canada, Norway and Great Britain.[18]

In one instance, Newfoundland attempted to work with the Canadian government in fisheries research. Dr. Harvey, while presenting a paper to the Royal Society of Canada in 1892, suggested that Canada establish a biological station for fishery research.[19] In doing so, Harvey said that if such a facility were established in the Maritimes, Newfoundland would share construction and operating expenses. His reason for supporting this facility was based on the premise that rules and regulations for the protection and preservation of fish stocks, if they were to be successful, must be based on a scientific study of fish life. Without this body of knowledge, legislation would be nothing more than "groping in the dark; and all efforts for their preservation and improvement will

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[18]Government intervention in the fishery on a sustained basis dates from at least 1857 in Norway. See Fritz Hodne, An Economic History of Norway 1815-1970 (Oslo, 1975), chapter 4. The standard work on the Norwegian fishery remains Trygve Solhaug, De Norske Fiskeriers Historie 1815-1880 (2 vols., Bergen, 1976).

[19]Kenneth Johnstone, The Aquatic Explorers: A History of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada (Toronto, 1977), p. 25. See also Harvey, "Artificial Propagation."

come short of the objects aimed at."[20] In response to Harvey's speech, the Royal Society decided to appoint a committee to consider the scientific study of Canadian fisheries. The following year, the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries appointed E.E. Prince, a specialist in fish embryology at St. Andrews Marine Laboratory of Scotland as Commissioner and General Inspector of Fisheries for Canada.[21] With support from the Royal Society of Canada, the Canadian government in 1899 voted $15,000 for the construction of a barge-based research station.[22] The main focus of the Board's research was on the life cycles of Canadian fish with an emphasis on spawning habits, hatching, survival, growth, and range.[23] As the report of the 1892 committee no longer exists, there is no way of determining definitively whether Harvey's suggestion for a scientific study led directly to the commencement of a

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[20]Johnstone, The Aquatic Explorers, p. 25.

[21]Ibid., p. 28. See also Joseph Gough, Fisheries Management in Canada, 1880-1910 (Ottawa, 1991), pp. 12-13, 32.

[22]Designed as a floating laboratory, it was built on a barge such that it could be moved from one location to another. In Atlantic Canada it operated from St. Andrews, New Brunswick; Canso, Nova Scotia; Malpeque, Prince Edward Island; and Gaspé, Quebec.

[23]"The Department of Fisheries: Organization and Purpose," in Canadian Department of Fisheries Basic Training Course for Fisheries Officers (Revised ed., Ottawa, 1967).

research station.[24] Nor is there any surviving evidence to indicate whether Newfoundland provided financial support for the research station or if Newfoundland was privy to any of its findings. Nonetheless, it is reasonable to assume that Harvey's proposal was at least part of the cause that led to the creation of the laboratory.

Though David Alexander's thesis that Newfoundland turned its back on the sea in favour of land-based development is generally valid, it does require modification, as William Reeves has suggested.[25] Reeves has demonstrated that developments in both catching and processing in the American fishery influenced Newfoundland by providing a stimulus for "many Newfoundlanders and some outsiders to improve the industry's performance."[26] In this respect Reeves has shown that there was both local and foreign interest in developing the fishery along the lines of the American industry. This, of course, required structural change. There were a variety of sources from which such a metamorphosis might have arisen. It could have come from the efforts of fishermen, but this period was prior to the prominence of William Coaker and his brand of

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[24]H.B. Hachey, History of the Fisheries Research Board of Canada (Ottawa, 1965), pp. 31-35.

[25]Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins'" pp. 2-3.

[26]Ibid., p. 593.

"fishermen's power." On investment in the fishery from this source, the Board of Trade said:

> It is to be regretted that many of our people secrete part of the savings...in such places, as that, in the event of their death it will be difficult for any member of the family to find its hiding place and besides which it may be lost be fire.[27]

Indeed, evidence given at the Royal Commission in 1914 suggested that the amount of gold hidden away by fishermen--in their gardens, cellar, cupboards, and or beds--amounted to approximately $3.5 million dollars.[28]

In a similar tone the Royal Commission of 1933 reported that:

> very few men today...would dream of outfitting themselves on a cash basis. The great majority would regard any such procedure as speculating with their own hard-earned money, they would prefer to speculate with the merchant's money and to hoard their own at home or deposit it in a bank.[29]

Once deposited in the bank, "fishermen consider their money to be sacred, and the majority of fishermen would prefer not merely to be continually in debt to the merchants but even to go on the dole rather than draw on such reserves."[30] In short,

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[27]First Annual Report of the Newfoundland Board of Trade (1909), p. 5.

[28]Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, p. 46.

[29]Ibid., p. 80.

[30]Great Britain, Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933 Report (London, 1933), p. 29.

fishermen were hardly likely to have been the source of capital needed to rejuvenate the fishery, either before or after World War I.

Although both Commissions were discussing the particular periods during which they sat, the unwillingness of fishermen to gamble with their own money is important for the pre-war period as well. Short of a survey of merchant's books and journals, there is no positive way to determine the extent to which fishermen were being outfitted in full or part by merchants and hoarding their own money at home or in banks.[31] Wayne O'Leary's discussion of the decline of the Maine deep-sea fisheries described the lack of investment by fishermen in new boats and technology for catching and processing fish by using the phrase "economic democracy."[32] Family operations, he believed, were marginal, with limited reserve capital and limited access to borrowed capital. Family operations in Newfoundland during this period could also be characterised in the same way.

If fishermen were unlikely to have been a source of investment capital, it could have come from the merchants and

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[31]This lacunae may be filled in part by the current study of the household economy of the Newfoundland fishery being undertaken by Rosemary Ommer and Robert Sweeny.

[32]Wayne O'Leary, "The Maine Sea Fisheries 1830-1890: The Rise and Fall of a Native Industry" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Maine, 1981).

exporters. While these men dominated the industry, they had in the past proved remarkably resistant to change. On investment from this venue, the 1933 Report asserted that merchants:

> have insisted on conducting their business on a basis of pure individualism without regard to the true interests of the country...intent only on outdoing their local rivals in a scramble for immediate profits.[33]

The Report concluded that, as a result, Newfoundland has always been anxious to attract outside capital. The low earning power of the people, the general lack of confidence which followed the bank crash of 1894 and the tendency of successful merchants to retire to other countries all militated against local investment and local enterprise.[34]

On the availability of merchant capital for re-investment in the fishery, James Hiller concluded that no fortunes were made in the late nineteenth-century, which implies that little or no capital was available for re-investment.[35] Hiller based his conclusion on the declining number of merchant houses in St. John's. In 1892, nine firms shipped fish to market, but the failure of P.& L. Tessier and J.& W. Stewart reduced the

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[33]Great Britain, Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933, p. 108.

[34]Ibid., p. 91. See also James Murray, The Commercial Crisis in Newfoundland. Cause, Consequence and Cure (St. John's, 1895), pp. 8-10.

[35]James K. Hiller, "A History of Newfoundland, 1874-1901" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Cambridge, 1971), p. 178.

number to seven by 1894.[36] Unfortunately, by itself the above statement does not present a valid account of merchant activity or, I would argue, the ability of existing merchants to reinvest in the fishery. Fish exports increased in these years (although there was a general reduction in per capita production), which indicates that although smaller firms or those in financial difficulty were forced out of the trade, the residue was picked up by existing firms, i.e., exports were becoming concentrated in the hands of fewer merchants. The logical conclusion to draw from a concentration of business in fewer hands would be higher profit margins (assuming, of course, no decline in demand), which would have left these merchants in a better position to reinvest in the fishery. That they did not reinvest in the fishery is explained by Hiller with reference to government policy stressing expensive development schemes: a "persistent need for large expenditure...drove up import duties...in the 1890s thereby increasing the costs of the fishery."[37]

John Joy presents a somewhat different view of merchant capital and investment potential, arguing that capital used to initiate manufacturing in St. John's came from the retained earnings of fish merchants. According to Joy, merchants

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[36]Daily News (St. John's), May 2, 1894.

[37]Hiller, "A History of Newfoundland, 1874-1901," p. 178.

invested moderate sums in a number of incorporated companies, protecting their import-export operations through limited liability laws and spreading the risk over a number of different enterprises.[38] The lack of reinvestment in the fishery was the result of stagnation and a lag in fishery technology. This in part was attributable to international events, but Joy also argues that the island's business sector was to blame in that they failed to adopt an "entrepreneurial role" in either the production or marketing of fish, and "were satisfied merely to complain about unfair competition and other external threats such as the French Shore and the Bait question."[39] To an extent, Joy was correct. Yet it will be shown that the business sector was not as complacent as he implies. In addition, his conclusion that there was a strong tendency to view the fishery as being without potential does not present an accurate picture.[40] Indeed, both government and the business sector placed great emphasis on the fishery and viewed its potential in a very positive light, especially because of reduced competition from the French and Norwegian fisheries and open access to the American market.

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[38]John Lawrence Joy, "The Growth and Development of Trades and Manufacturing in St. John's, 1870-1914" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977), p. ii.

[39]Ibid., p. 186.

[40]Ibid., p. 187.

Eric Sager attributes the failure of merchants to reinvest in the fishery during the 1890s as a result of their failure to "undertake the organization and regulation of production" as well as "the absence of any coordinated marketing procedures for the industry as a whole." As a result, merchants were "ill-equipped to meet their twentieth century competitors." The result was a redirection of merchant investment capital toward non-fishing sectors such as "a retail stores, bakery and a copper mine were security against future failures in the fishery."[41] Unlike Hiller, Sager does not argue that merchants were unable to invest in the fishery, but like Joy he ascribes their unwillingness to do so in a cyclic industry to local rivalries and international competition. David Alexander also attributed merchants' unwillingness to invest in the fishery to "a generally jaundiced view of the industry's prospects relative to returns in wholesale and retail trade and safe overseas securities..."[42]

With respect to the need to attract investment, R.K. Bishop put forward government's viewpoint that Newfoundland's small population implied that cash reserves available for

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[41]Eric W. Sager, "The Merchants of Water Street and Capital Investment in Newfoundland's Traditional Economy," in Lewis R. Fischer and Eric W. Sager (eds.), The Enterprising Canadians: Entrepreneurs and Economic Development in Eastern Canada, 1820-1914 (St. John's, 1979), p. 93.

[42]Alexander, "Development and Dependence in Newfoundland," p. 16.

investment in the fishery were insufficient. Moreover, Bishop alluded to the idea that those engaged in the fishery had their capital "so bound up...that they are unable, except perhaps now and then in an experimental way to venture upon an entire departure from the old methods."[43] Because of the lack of investment capital, Bishop predicted that until outsiders demonstrated what could be accomplished, local capital was unlikely to be invested.[44] While there may have been a certain truth in this, the argument was not entirely valid. This was demonstrated by the 1910 Manufactures Exhibition in St. John's, where local investors displayed a wide variety of new products.[45] It would appear that Bishop's statement was directed at large-scale investment involving complex catching techniques and processing facilities. Certainly, with respect to cold storage and bait depots, the Petty Harbour initiative (discussed in chapter 5) serves as an excellent example where the lack of capital investment was attributed as one of the reasons for the depot's failure. In fact, a local paper suggested that it was "situated near the best fishing grounds

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[43]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1911, p. 32.

[44]Ibid., p. 33.

[45]The Manufactures' Exhibition is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4 on "Cure and Marketing."

in the Island--a place easy of access for fishermen desiring bait between Cape Race and Bacalieu."[46]

Regardless, government provided financial incentives to foreign companies to establish such facilities in Newfoundland. While at the Imperial Defence Conference in London in 1909, Morris was reported to have "exerted all his powers to interest public men and capitalists in the development of our mainstay--the fishery." In addition, Morris looked for British assistance to expand Newfoundland markets in the Mediterranean and South America and to introduce fresh fish as a ration for the British Army and Navy.[47] Morris once again repeated the policy of attracting foreign capital for the development of Newfoundland's resources in 1910 when he stated that "we have an open door for everyone coming to the colony."[48] This article was reprinted from the Globe and Mail, with the added guarantee that Canadian capitalists would have the same rights in Newfoundland as a native.[49]

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[46]Trade Review, September 7, 1907.

[47]"Sir Edward Morris's Visit to London," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. IX, No. 2 (October, 1909), p. 8. On providing the British Navy with Newfoundland fish, see Frank Graham, We Love Thee Newfoundland: Biography of Sir Cavendish Boyle (St. John's, 1979), p. 153.

[48]Daily News (St. John's), November 16, 1910.

[49]Ibid., November 29, 1910.

As to the lack of capital invested in the development of mining and other resources, Morris in 1910 declared that "all the resources of local interests were applied to the development of our fisheries."[50] If true, this statement clearly does not suggest that the lack of success in the application of new technology for catching, processing and marketing fish could be attributed to a shortage of capital investment. But, while generally valid, Morris' comments went too far. Not all money derived from the fishery was in fact re-invested. Moreover, it will be demonstrated later that interest was shown by local merchants in new fish species, products and markets. Merchants in 1902 were described as being "very conservative people, and very tenacious of trade traditions."[51] For the most part, fisheries' profits were not the subject of detailed scrutiny in the reports of the Department of Marine and Fisheries. However, the 1905 Report concluded that due to the high price obtained for fish, the year was "very profitable for our fishermen." With respect to merchants, the Report observed that "the high price paid by them left but a slender margin, if any, for profit."[52]

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[50]Ibid., September 1, 1910.

[51]Trade Review, August 2, 1902.

[52]Fisheries, Report, 1905, Appendix, p. 142.

Ruling out fishermen and for the most part merchants, investment capital for the fishery would therefore have had to come either from government or foreign interests. Foreign investment in this industry prior to World War I was negligible; what examples exist will be discussed later in the thesis. This leaves government. While it is fashionable to argue that the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries marked the high point of laissez-faire, such a contention is both simplistic and, in the case of Newfoundland, erroneous. In Newfoundland, government involvement was the key to almost every advance made or experiment attempted in the twenty-five years prior to World War I.

Regardless of the reasons why neither merchants nor fishermen invested in the fishery or in research to bring about positive change, the fact remains that it was left up to government to do so. Government was also seen not only as the vehicle through which new technology was to be introduced but also as a mechanism for locating new markets and maintaining existing ones. Responsibility for placing the fishery on a firm footing was not left on the shoulders of those engaged in it but rather was assumed by government. This is best demonstrated through government's attempts on three occasions to conclude reciprocity treaties with the United States. Whenever the issue of opening up the American market for Newfoundland fish arose, it was correspondingly followed by debates on the

need to diversify the fishery, the adoption of new technologies such as cold storage and bait depots, the initiation of programmes of scientific study into the habits of cod, and the introduction of cod hatcheries.[53]

The very fact that successive Newfoundland governments attempted to obtain reciprocity with the United States demonstrates the central role that the state could play in bringing about change. Certainly, the attempts to negotiate a treaty stand out as the greatest effort to expand markets. Because of the perceived benefits reciprocity was expected to bring to the Newfoundland fishery and the economy in general, it is most reasonable to examine it from this perspective. In this context the question arises of the role of government in attempting to transform the fishery to make it competitive not only in the American but also in world markets. This is an important issue, especially in light of a statement by Bishop that "to the present government...nothing is regarded of equal importance, to a distinct development along modern lines for handling, curing and marketing the products of our fisheries."[54] In addition to Bishop's statement, another member interjected that "government has been willing and has demonstrated in various ways its desire to assist practically the

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[53]Ibid., 1895, p. 395.

[54]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1911, p. 33.

development and exploitation of the products of the fisheries."[55] To this end, some of the questions in this study deal with government's role in providing stimulus in the way of ideas; the attraction of investment capital; the erection of cold storage facilities and bait depots; the sponsorship of scientific studies on the fishery; cod and lobster propagation; a fisheries protection service; a bait intelligence service; the collection of up-to-date information on market conditions for Newfoundland fish through the placement of agents in the various markets; and the introduction of legislation for quality control in curing.

Developments in the fishery were to originate with scientific studies of different fish species and the fishery in general. Indeed, one of the original aims of the Fisheries Commission and later the Department of Fisheries was to obtain this information. To a certain extent, both the Commission and the Department were successful in meeting this goal. However, as the Royal Commission noted in 1933, "Scientific investigation cannot...give full results so long as the administrative services of government are inefficient and the industry itself remains unorganized."[56] By 1913, government agencies and

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[55]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1910, p. 436.

[56]Great Britain, Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933, p. 114.

organisations, including fish inspectors, agents in foreign markets, and a fisheries protection service, were more developed and effective than in 1888, though they still did not adequately perform their assigned duties and responsibilities. This in turn meant, as the Royal Commission suggested, that government was unable to take full advantage of its scientific inquiries. Thus, fisheries' development did not proceed as fully as might have been possible had government been better equipped to implement its findings.

There is also the question of the suitability of certain programmes and the manner in which they were envisioned and proposed to those involved in the fishery. While looking to Norway, Canada or the United States for examples was logical, adopting programs initiated by other countries may not have been the appropriate course of action for Newfoundland. For example, while Norway was an obvious model for a cod-hatching programme, Newfoundland's reasons for wanting such facilities were dissimilar. The southern Norwegian cod fishery was not as important that of northern Norway. In fact, the Norwegian cod fishery was less important than her herring fishery. Cod-hatching in Norway grew out of a desire to create a cod fishery in southern waters were one had not previously existed. Therefore, even the presence of a small number of cod in southern waters could be attributed to artificial propagation, thereby justifying the programme. Newfoundland's motives

were somewhat different. Artificial propagation was aimed at replenishing dwindling cod stocks, primarily in Trinity Bay. Unless stocks were increased to previous levels, the programme would not be considered totally successful. Moreover, irrespective of output from artificial propagation, seasonal fluctuations in water temperature and bait affected stock size in Trinity Bay (and around the entire coast), thereby making it extremely difficult to assess the viability of such a programme. In short, artificial propagation in Newfoundland would at best have been difficult to evaluate.

A element common to all remedies--revised or new--was that for the most part their success or failure cannot be attributed to a single sector of the industry. As will be demonstrated, each party was resistant to change; without cooperation from all, no change could effectively be introduced. If anything, all appear to have agreed that changes were needed if any branch of the fishery were to improve or develop. However, all attempts suffered from one or a combination of factors--the credit system; mistrust between fishermen, merchants and government; insufficient capital; lack of transportation facilities; foreign competition; an inadequate scientific understanding of the fishery; a skilled labour force well versed in proper curing techniques; or an insufficient understanding of existing and potential markets.

Overall, developments in the fishery could not be brought about by merely increasing stock size, implementing rules and regulations, or introducing new products and markets. Another common feature lacking in the above programmes was that each was initiated independently of the other. Rules and regulations for the protection of stocks and guidelines for the taking, processing and marketing of fish and lobsters failed to work cohesively. Rules pertaining to output were not tied to specific markets. Instead, markets were seen as homogeneous and attempts to produce for specific markets failed, although government encouragement for the production of a standard cure for salt fish was a step in the right direction. Yet with production resting in so many different hands, uniformity of output was all but impossible. Despite government and private sector attempts to develop the fishery along modern lines, the mainstay of the fishery in 1913 as in 1888 was dried cod.

To write about the role of government of course means being concerned with politicians. But since this is a thesis about the fishery rather than about politics, no detailed treatment of individual politicians has been attempted. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize that they were the progenitors of the decisions that form the core of this study. E.P. Morris and Sir Robert Bond, for example, were active in the pursuit of new markets, especially the United States, and in the provision of cold storage facilities. But the man in

office during perhaps the most important watershed was Sir Robert Thorburn, whose decision in 1888 to establish a Fisheries Commission marks the true beginning of government involvement with Newfoundland's most important industry.

CHAPTER 2

THE FISHERY UNDER THE FISHERIES COMMISSION, 1888-1893: COD, LOBSTER AND HERRING[1]

The first example of government involvement in the fisheries was the work undertaken by the Commission of Inquiry and then a year later by the Fisheries Commission under its Superintendent, Adolph Neilsen. While these Commissions marked the initial formal organization to investigate the fishery, concern over the problems in this sector far antedated their creation. In the Commission of Inquiry's Report, submitted in 1888, it was admitted that "the subject is not new, having been repeatedly under consideration, in both Chambers of the Legislature, in former years, and having occupied largely the attention of the general public."[2]

In 1876 the government voted to spend $2,000 to chart the Labrador fishing grounds. To carry out this work Professor Henry Y. Hind, an expert on the North Atlantic fishery, was engaged to draw up "Notes on the Northern Labrador Fishing

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[1]It is important to distinguish between the Fisheries Commission of 1888 and that with which this chapter is concerned. The Commission of 1888 was a Commission of Inquiry struck to gather information on the operation of fisheries' departments in other countries with a view to the establishment of a similar department in Newfoundland. The Fisheries Commission of which Mr. Neilsen was Superintendent was not created until June 1889. The focus of this chapter is the latter Commission, which was the direct result of recommendations made by the Commission of Inquiry of 1888.

[2]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 1.

Grounds." Hind examined the area of this fishery, with special concern for the types of boats and gear used; the physical characteristics of the coast; the relation of cod to stranded icebergs; the movement of cod along the coast; the length of the fishing season compared to Newfoundland waters; the climate and its affect on the fishery; destruction of young cod fry and ova; the effects of seals; the use of fish offal; and the source of food for cod. While the study was broad, not only in detail but also in subjects studied, it appears to have been of little value in that no practical policies derived from it.[3]

Three years later another attempt was made to establish a scientific body to study the fisheries. Using part of the monetary compensation received in the Halifax Award, the government agreed to appropriate "for the current year, a sum of $4,000...towards the prosecution of a through scientific inquiry into the fisheries of this Island."[4] However, there is no evidence to indicate that this amount was actually expended. Indeed, during the same session a petition presented by the Society of United Fishermen of Twillingate called for the appointment of either a Commission to carry out an inquiry into the Newfoundland fishery or a permanent Bureau of

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[3]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1877, p. 150. For Hind's report, see pp. 730-754.

[4]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 2.

Fisheries as a governmental department. In response, Premier Sir William Whiteway approached F. Buckland and S. Walpole, Inspectors of Fisheries for Great Britain, to recommend a suitable person to carry out a scientific inquiry. On their recommendation, Charles E. Fryer, Secretary to Buckland and Walpole, was engaged as Superintendent to head the inquiry. Once again nothing came from this attempt, perhaps because Fryer did not "possess that experience and practical acquaintance with salt water fisheries, which are required in any one undertaking the duties of Superintendent and investigating the condition of our fisheries."[5] It was discovered later that his expertise was in inland rather than saltwater fisheries.[6] After these initial failures, the topic apparently enjoyed a temporary hiatus.

In an 1883 report on the fishery in the districts of Twillingate, Fogo, Bonavista and Trinity, a member of the House of Assembly, Richard P. Rice, recommended the establishment of local Fisheries Boards responsible for particular districts. Rice reported that this idea was acceptable to fishermen in his district because a local board would be familiar with the issues of concern to the area. According to

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[5]Ibid., p. 3.

[6]Louise Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. XXXXV, No. 2 (June 1956), p. 32.

Rice, these boards would put an end to "bickering which not unfrequently spring up among our fishermen, owing to the absence of any established and recognized rules for their guidance."[7] In addition to resolving disputes among fishermen, these boards would monitor such factors as the size of catch and bait supplies.[8] Though not conceived as a scientific body to study the fishery, these boards reflect the recognition that progress and the protection of the resource could only be achieved by cooperation among fishermen. Despite the rationality of the proposal, Rice's suggestion failed to receive support outside the district or from government. This was later attributed to the scattering of fishermen in numerous bays.[9]

In 1887 the issue was raised once again in the House by the member for Trinity, Ellis Watson, who moved that a

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[7]Newfoundland, Fishery Inquiry, Report, 1883, pp. 751-760. Apparently disputes were arising between fishermen in Rice's district from setting trawls and nets along a line with the shore instead of extending from the shore seaward and the setting of trawls on principal fishing grounds prior to the arrival of fish.

[8]Concern was expressed over the destructive practice of trapping bait by obstructing small coves and inlets, thus preventing bait fish from escaping.

[9]It is interesting to note that this factor was not a problem with the organization in later years of the Fishermen's Protective Union. On this issue, see Ian D.H. McDonald, "To Each His Own:" William Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925 (St. John's, 1987).

Fisheries Commission be appointed to "study all branches of the fishery with the intent of formulating rules and regulations for their protection, the habits of the commercial fishes, habits which are injurious to them."[10] While this proposal was unsuccessful, the government did agree to establish a bipartisan Commission of Inquiry, with Augustus Harvey as Chair and Moses Harvey as Corresponding Secretary, to examine the fishery and to recommend whether a more permanent body to manage the industry was required.[11]

After its founding, the Commission of Inquiry set to work to obtain information on fisheries departments and related organizations in other countries, as well as the type, cost and success of programmes in place. In particular, the Commission requested specific information regarding cod hatcheries. In the first instance, circulars were sent to the United Kingdom, Canada, Norway and the US. The United States Fisheries Commission did not reply because no permanent successor had been appointed following the death of its head,

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[10]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 4; Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, p. 648.

[11]Other members of the Commission included Robert Thorburn, Edward Shea, Augustus Goodridge, Patrick J. Scott, John Martin, Robert Bond, Robert Munn, W.B. Grieve, Thomas H. Hodge, A. Penny, Charles Dawe, H.W. LeMessurier, M. Monore, W.J.S. Donnelly and William H. Whiteway. Evening Mercury, (St. John's) August 16, 1887. Also see Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, p. 648; Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 33: Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 38.

Professor S.F. Baird, in August 1887. Nonetheless, the Newfoundland Commission was granted access to the annual reports of the United States Commission. The United Kingdom, on the other hand, did reply. British opinion was that Newfoundland's declining cod stock was caused by over-fishing and the migratory habits of cod. The proposed solution was simply to place restrictions on fishing rather than to develop cod hatcheries, most likely because the British had no experience with them. The Commission received a great deal of information from Canada about its fisheries legislation, the formation and organisation of the Canadian Fisheries Department, and reports on fish culture and its beneficial results. On the artificial propagation of cod S. Wilmont, Superintendent of Fish-Culture for Canadian Fisheries who later visited the Dildo hatchery, responded optimistically to the Commission's enquiries concerning cod hatching. The Norwegians, who only a few years earlier had begun their own programme of cod hatcheries, reported that while such a venture was expensive, plenty of young cod had been seen in fjords and bays where they had previously been scare. Norwegian officials believed that their program was successful because the cod returned to the waters in which they were born for feeding and reproduction; this convinced them that it was feasible to establish hatcheries virtually anywhere as the basis of a local fishery. Norway therefore recommended that it should be possible to

replenish cod stocks around Newfoundland through artificial propagation.[12]

Despite its success at gathering information, the Commission still lacked an individual with a scientific background in fisheries to assist it in its work and also to serve more permanently in either a Fisheries Commission or a Department of Fisheries. To locate a suitable candidate, inquires were sent to the four countries with which the Commission had already established contact; no suitable person, however, was recommended for the position. In September 1888 Moses Harvey suggested that the position be offered to a Norwegian, Adolph Neilsen.[13] This recommendation was the result of a meeting between Harvey and Neilsen while the latter was visiting Newfoundland as one of two delegates sent by the Norwegian government to report on the North American and English fisheries during the summer of 1887. Neilsen accepted the position for five years at an annual salary not to exceed $3,000.[14]

En route to Newfoundland, Neilsen stopped in Hamburg to explore the market for Newfoundland herring and in the US to

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[12]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 36.

[13]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 615.

[14]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 37.

obtain equipment for the hatcheries and to visit the Ten Pound Island and Woods Hole hatcheries. Upon arrival in Newfoundland, he suggested that his duties include responsibility for the hatchery, formulation of rules and regulations for the fishery, initiation of improved methods of catching and curing, and the location of new markets for fish.

With its success in acquiring both information and a superintendent, the Commission of Inquiry recommended to government that Newfoundland not create a department of fisheries, but rather a Commission of Fisheries to initiate a program of cod hatcheries and to supervise and regulate the various fisheries. This proposal was based on the Commission's view that the organization of a department of fisheries would require more careful advance planning and could only be accomplished gradually. Of more pressing concern was the introduction "of the proper means for carrying on the propagation of fish, especially codfish, with the view to the restocking of our exhausted bays and fishing grounds near the coasts."[15] The Commission's endorsement of this course of action was obviously influenced by the success of Norway and the US; in light of declining catches, it was deemed the most appropriate course of action. A department of fisheries as in

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[15]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 29.

the US and Canada could be established after cod stocks were rebuilt.

The Act creating the Fisheries Commission was read for the first time in the House on May 3, 1889 and a second time on May 10.[16] On May 18 the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole on the bill and on May 20 it was read a third time. Royal Assent was given on June 1, 1889.[17]

Under the Act, the Governor was responsible for appointing a Board consisting of not less than twenty Commissioners whose duties were to include both research and regulation. The Commission was enjoined to undertake research in relation to all matters connected with the "preservation, maintenance, improvement of the fisheries, and trade, commerce, and interests of the colony, so far as the same are connected with or relate to the fisheries and fishery questions."[18] To enable it to function, Section XVI gave it the power to make rules and regulations for the inland and ocean fisheries on topics such as the length of the season, types of gear, and uses to which fish could be put. In addition, the Commission was

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[16]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1889, p. 171.

[17]Ibid., p. 251.

[18]Newfoundland, "An Act to Provide for the Formation of a Fisheries' Commission and For Other Purposes," Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-Second Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1889), pp. 63-66.

granted the power to fix and impose penalties for violations of its rules. Moreover, the Governor, on the recommendation of the Commission could appoint fisheries' officers, as well as an Inspector or Superintendent of Fisheries and Fish Hatching. The Superintendent, subject to the direction of the Commission, was responsible for the building and maintenance of all hatcheries for the propagation of cod and other fish. To ensure public knowledge of the regulations, they were to be published in the Royal Gazette. The daily management of the Commission's affairs was entrusted to an seven-person Executive Committee, consisting of the Chairman, ex-officio, and six elected members selected by the Commission at its annual meeting in January.

On May 30, 1891, Section XVIII of the Act was replaced by a stipulation that nothing in the Act would affect the "rights and privileges granted by treaty to the subjects of any State or Power in amity with Her Majesty."[19] Obviously, this section was included to protect French fishing rights in Newfoundland. More important, from the Newfoundland perspective it meant that actions taken by the government to protect and develop

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[19]Newfoundland, "An Act to Amend an Act Passed in the Fifty-second Year of the Reign of Her Present Majesty, entitled, 'An Act to Provide for the Formation of a Fisheries' Commission, and For Other Purposes," Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-fourth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1891), p. 136.

the fishery would have no effect on French activities. In essence, this meant that Newfoundland did not have control over that portion of her fishery resource encompassed by the French Shore.

The Fisheries Commission was thus established on a firm footing. Its subsequent actions--on cod and lobster propagation, curing and packing of fish, laws and regulations pertaining to closed seasons, type of gear used, inspections, and the like--were based on practices modelled on other countries but adapted to Newfoundland conditions. The colony thus created a Commission that while responsive to local needs was based on international input and standards. Indeed, it appears that international paradigms not only provided the motivation but also a kind of blueprint for future work. For example, through its international contacts Newfoundland came to realize how far behind it was in scientific advances in the fishery. As the Commission of Inquiry admitted:

> When we come to compare the intelligent guardianship over their fisheries exercised by the United States, Canada, England and Norway; their expenditure in connection with their improvement and protection...with the total absence of any arrangement of this character in this colony...the contrast is striking, if not humiliating.[20]

Concern was expressed about the future of the fishery and, more important, about its impact on all those who

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[20]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 27.

depended on it for their livelihood. In particular, given that the island's population was increasing, there were fears about the declining per capita output. Based on past experience, the Commission of Inquiry concluded that "regrets regarding past negligences are merely waste of time. The question presents itself, what can be done to remedy existing evils."[21] In response, the Commission proposed that:

> this can only be done by following the example of other fishing countries...suited to our means and circumstances...in ascertaining the present condition of our fisheries, the causes of their decline, and the proper remedies.

In conclusion, it warned that "there is no longer any ground for hesitation, after the success achieved in other countries."[22]

In 1893 the Fisheries Commission was replaced by a formal Department of Fisheries. Although the Commission's lifespan was relatively abbreviated, it made a fair start at addressing some of the more vexing problems in the fishery. While its interests were broad, an appreciation of its work can be gained by examining the topics to which it devoted the greatest attention: the cod and lobster hatcheries and the future of the herring fishery.

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[21] Ibid., p. 29.

[22] Ibid.

Cod Hatching

As suggested by the Commission of Inquiry, one of the central barriers in addressing the dilemmas of the fishery was a lack of information. As a result, the Commission first attempted to tackle this problem. As an initial step, it circulated prepared blank forms to various communities requesting monthly information on local conditions such as land and water temperatures, wind direction, currents, arrival and departure of various species of fish, spawning times, amount of fish caught and type of bait. To encourage participation, three prizes of $100, $50 and $25 were offered for the best series submitted over a year. Despite this inducement, only about twenty series were submitted, mostly from lighthouse keepers. Although we have no knowledge of how many forms were sent and hence what the return rate may have been, the results of the programme still must have been disappointing. Yet irrespective of its success or failure, the programme demonstrated the Commission's initiative to obtain information which it considered of potential value to the fishery.[23]

The following year, to solicit information on the location and availability of bait, the Commission in conjunction with A.M. Mackay, Superintendent of the Anglo-American

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[23]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, pp. 31-32.

Telegraph Company, established a Bait Intelligence Service to collect and distribute information about the location and quantities of bait available.[24] In 1891, bait information was supplied daily from August 15 to October 30 for fifty-six different locations. The only expense incurred for this service was a salary of $50 a month for Mr. Shortis at Whitbourne, which in 1891 totalled $325.[25] The Commission concluded that this service was of great benefit to the bank fishery by reducing the time spent looking for bait, thus

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[24]Government's initial effort to establish telegraphic communications in the colony came in 1851 when the House of Assembly granted £500 for a survey and passed an act authorizing the construction of a line from St. John's to Cape Ray. The following year, the Newfoundland Electric Telegraph Company was incorporated, although due to financial difficulties it collapsed the following year. In 1854 government provided a £50,000 guarantee for the bonds of the New York, Newfoundland and London Telegraph Co. By 1877, Trinity, Catalina and Bonavista were connected by telegraph, and in 1878 government lines were extended to St. George's Bay, Bay of Islands, Betts Cove, Tule Cove and Little Bay Mines. Greenspond, Twillingate, Burin, St. Lawrence, Lamaline, Grand Bank and Fortune were added in 1885, while two years later extensions to Fogo, Seldom Come By and Change Islands were completed. For a further discussion of telegraphic communication in Newfoundland, see Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, pp. 634-646; Alfred Bishop Moraine, "Telegraph Arbitration. Reid Newfoundland Co. vs. Government of Newfoundland" (Memorial University of Newfoundland, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, n.d.); Great Britain, Royal Commission on Natural Resources.

[25]This service was first suggested by Mackay and operated by him at no cost to the government. See Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, pp. 33-34. The following year, the Commission allocated $400 for this service; ibid., p. 97.

increasing the time available for fishing.[26] Nonetheless, the following year the Commission reported that the service was unavailable "due to circumstances beyond [our] control."[27] Although no details were provided, it would be reasonable to assume that it was cancelled for financial reasons. This marked the first, but hardly the last, time that government rejected one of the Commission's recommendations because of the state of the colony's treasury.

The Commission was not initially concerned with locating new markets for fish or with cures or standardized cull. Instead, along with obtaining current information on the fishery, it adopted a programme recommended by the Commission of Inquiry to replenish dwindling cod stocks on Newfoundland's east coast through cod hatcheries. The rationale for this program derived from two factors. First, fishermen were experiencing unsuccessful catches along this portion of coast:

> The steady decline, for years, of our shore cod-fishery which latterly became alarming, indicated that, from various causes, many fishing-grounds were partially exhausted, and were in danger of entire depletion unless active remedies were applied.[28]

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[26]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, pp. 9 and 70.

[27]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1893, p. 248. "Their control" in the report referred to the Anglo-Newfoundland Telegraph Company.

[28]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 5.

The decline of the stocks was attributed to the fact that since 1825 Newfoundland's population had more than tripled, thus increasing the number of fishermen.[29] Related to this were improvements in fishing gear, such as the cod trap, which made it possible to catch more fish than before.[30] In the Commission's view, the lack of regulations covering the type and size of gear used and fish caught were partly responsible for the declining stocks. As Harvey pointed out, there was no minister or department of fisheries charged with the duties of supervision or enforcement laws.[31] Those laws that were passed were often the work of men "utterly unacquainted with fish-life in any scientific sense."[32]

Though partly correct, Harvey's explanation did not consider the possibility of a natural cause for the declining stocks. As a result, Harvey's proposed solution rested in the hands of men--more specifically, the Fisheries Commission, government and fishermen. It was the lack of rules, the failure to enforce them systematically, the lack of a fisheries department, and carelessness by fishermen in keeping

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[29]Moses Harvey, Newfoundland As It Is in 1894: A Handbook and Tourist's Guide (St. John's, 1894), p. 145. Statistics on the population of Newfoundland will be found in Appendix III.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid., p. 146.

[32]Ibid.

under-sized or "young fish" that had caused the mess. While the Commission would be responsible for initiating changes to rectify these ills, these would only be successful if adopted by everyone connected with the fishery. This type of cooperation was vital to the success of the type of programmes adopted not only by the Commission but also later by the Department of Fisheries. Unfortunately, one of the themes that runs through the entire period is a distinct lack of trust and hence a lack of collaboration.

The second rationale was an awareness of developments in cod hatching in Norway and the US as a result of the survey conducted by the Commission of Inquiry. Norway's achievements were especially important in that Newfoundland was facing increased Norwegian competition in foreign markets. It would appear that the Commission assumed that to compete with Norway, Newfoundland would require a guaranteed supply of fish. Observations by Norwegian fishery officials had shown that cod returned to the waters of their birth to spawn. Through artificial propagation, Norway had in three years successfully hatched over sixty-seven million cod eggs for distribution along the coast.[33] In light of this success, and similar good fortune in the US, the Commission concluded that:

> When such practical people as the Americans and Norwegians, who are far in advance of us in the

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[33]Evening Mercury (St. John's), August 3, 1887.

> arts of conserving fisheries, are engaged in the propagation of cod, we need not hesitate.[34]

Impressive as this may sound, the Commission was not addressing the central problem faced by the fisheries. What was still being ignored was that in order to compete, Newfoundland fish would have to be at least as good as those produced by her competitors. If artificial propagation of cod had continued, it is possible that Newfoundland could have suffered from its own success in that increased output in the absence of new markets would have led to gluts in traditional entrepots, thus forcing down prices.[35] From this perspective, stock replenishment was not the most serious problem that the Commission could have tackled. Instead, efforts should have been directed not only at improving quality but also diversifying output to keep abreast of changing demand.

But the Commission's fixation on cod hatcheries may be regarded as example of foreign influence on Newfoundland decision-making.[36] While this ought not to be a damning criticism of the Commission, it does attest to one of the flaws in its work. Throughout the period it is apparent that

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[34]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, pp. 31-32.

[35]The over-supply of markets became especially acute when steamers were introduced into the fishery.

[36]For a detailed analysis of foreign (especially American) influence in the catching and processing sectors, see Reeves, "'Our Yankee Cousins.'"

proposals supported by evidence from abroad stood a much greater chance of being endorsed by government than did those which were unique. After a while, this led both the Commission and the Department of Fisheries to recommend foreign initiatives as a whole rather than adapt them to local conditions. As a result, many of the programmes were less suited to Newfoundland circumstances than they might have been. Nonetheless, to argue that Newfoundland should always have innovated would be equally fallacious. The colony certainly could learn and benefit from experiments carried out elsewhere. But for political reasons the Commission soon learned that foreign evidence was vital to having programmes adopted by government while all too often forgetting that what might have been appropriate for another country may not have been well suited for Newfoundland.

Regardless of what it might have proposed as a first priority, the Commission forged ahead with its programme of aquaculture. Dildo Island in Trinity Bay was chosen as the site for the Commission's fish hatchery. Work began on the facilities on April 30, 1889 and the facility was operating by July 18. Approximately seventy-five by forty-five feet, the premises were capable of hatching two hundred million cod ova per season; with alterations, two hundred and fifty million. It was not only reported to have been the largest hatchery in the world but also was fitted with "all the latest improve-

ments in its apparatus." From the Commission's perspective, "its situation is unsurpassed, and it possesses every requisite to secure success and to render it one of the greatest cod-breeding establishments in the world."[37]

Due to construction problems the hatchery was not completed in time to hatch ova as expected. To make matters worse, the Commission was wrongly informed by fishermen that spawning cod could be obtained at any time until the end of September. The reality, of course, was that spawning cod could only be secured during May and June, except in rare cases in Placentia, Trinity or Conception Bays.[38] Therefore, it was not surprising that although Neilsen continued his search for spawning cod until October, he was unsuccessful. Newfoundland's first attempt to hatch cod ova failed.

In one respect, this initial failure underscored the lack of scientific knowledge about the fishery on the island. Those supposedly familiar with the habits of cod were not sufficiently knowledgeable. For its part, the Commission passed over the failure with the solitary comment that "without the test of experience this could not have been ascertained."[39]

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[37]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, pp. 7-8.

[38]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[39]Ibid., p. 10.

One positive aspect of this incident was the demonstration that it was possible to learn from a mistake.[40]

Be that as it may, operations were hampered in 1891 by an outbreak of the grippe in the first week of June. Neilsen, his staff at the hatchery, and fishermen in nearby communities were prevented by illness from engaging in the fishery for about three weeks. When the disease had run its course, fishing resumed in July, but too late to catch spawning cod. In consequence, the season again was not as productive as hoped.[41] Still, the hatchery did manage to produce over thirty-nine million cod ova as compared to seventeen million in 1890.[42]

This improvement was in part attributed to the cooperation of area fishermen, who according to Neilsen were "anxious to assist me in securing spawning fish, and were willing to sell me all the fish that would be of any service, at a moderate price, which many of them did not care to do in previous years." He credited this support to sightings of

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[40]In November 1890 the hatchery was hit by a tidal wave, destroying wharves and fish wells in which spawning cod were kept. This was all rebuilt the following year. Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 16; Evening Telegram (St. John's), October 19 and November 16, 1987.

[41]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891. pp. 16-17.

[42]Harvey, Newfoundland As It Is in 1894, p. 162; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 3.

large schools of immature cod in waters surrounding the hatchery; because of these sightings, Neilsen suggested, fishermen were convinced that the hatchery would increase cod stocks and help to line their pockets.[43] He may have been correct, but assistance from local fishermen may have also been stimulated by an alternative economic speculation: the hatchery served as a alternative outlet for their catch which did not require processing. Despite initial problems experienced by the hatchery in 1891, operations ran from June 1 to July 28, when the last fry were released.

To improve hatching facilities, in 1891 a forty-seven by twenty-three foot saltwater pond was built. The idea was that fish would spawn naturally in the pond and the eggs would not have to be stripped manually. A specially-constructed collector was also installed to retrieve ova after being released, fertilized and conveyed to the hatchery. With this facility, Neilsen anticipated the success rate would increase to approximately sixty to seventy percent of the ova collected. It is noteworthy that the addition of the pond and collecting apparatus was a copy of similar operations in Flødevig, Norway. The construction was to be paid for through larger yields and a saving in manpower.[44]

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[43]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, pp. 17-18.

[44]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 18.

Another means of increasing output suggested by Neilsen was to utilize fish spawning off the coast from Port-aux-Basques eastwards in winter and early spring, since this would allow the hatchery to open at an earlier date. To do this the Commission required a specially-equipped vessel. Another consideration supporting this proposal was that the size and quality of Trinity Bay fish could be improved by a process of cross-breeding with the larger variety caught along the south coast during winter and early spring. Despite these arguments, government failed to appropriate funds for the ship.[45]

A continued discussion of chronological discussion of annual operations at the cod hatchery would serve little purpose other than to provide statistics. More important is an assessment of the overall trends and success of the facility. Therefore, what follows is a survey of the hatchery and its work until taken over by the Department of Fisheries in 1893.

During the period 1890-1892, the hatching of cod was hailed as a success, both locally and internationally. As Table 1 shows, the number of ova hatched increased almost ten-fold during the first three years of operation. At the same time, the Commission made major improvements in cutting the loss rate. The percentage of ova lost declined from just over

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[45]Ibid., p. 22.

forty-nine percent in 1890 to slightly under thirty-eight percent by 1892.[46]

Table 1

Cod Ova Hatched, 1890-1892

Year	No. Hatched
1890	17,100,000
1891	39,650,000
1892	165,244,000
Total	221,994,000

Note: Although the hatchery was operational in 1889, no cod ova were hatched. The use of the spawning pond in 1892 may account for the high number of ova hatched in that year.

Source: Fisheries, Report, 1893, p. 237.

In evaluating the hatchery and its overall benefit to the fishery, annual reports of the Fisheries Commission portray similar assessments. The 1891 Report is a good example. In that year, the Commission concluded that the work being conducted in Newfoundland compared "not unfavourably with that of any other country, when our means and resources are taken into account, and its value and practical importance are fully recognized by the highest authorities in other countries."[47] Professor Albert Bickmore of the American Museum of Natural History in New York paid a visit to the hatchery in 1890 and

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[46]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1895, p. 397.

[47]Ibid., p. 28.

was impressed with the facilities. His advice to the Commission was to:

> guard your fisheries, and bring science to bear on their protection and development. Your Fisheries Commission is a step in the right direction. All else should be secondary to the protection and restoration of your fisheries. These natural gifts, I can see, have been sadly abused.

Newfoundland, he concluded, was engaged in a solution to a problem of "momentous importance, not only to Newfoundland, but to the world at large."[48]

Local papers in the mid-1890s reported that bays which had been barren of cod for many years once again had an abundance of small fish.[49] In discussing the success of the programme several years later the Department of Fisheries reported that "a very striking increase of codfish...such as were never known before, in the head of Trinity Bay, during the last four or five years, can no longer be doubted."[50] The outstanding question, however, was whether the resurgence in the size of the stock was a result of the hatchery. The reappearance of small cod could have been the result of the life cycle or habits of cod; the result of climatic conditions; or the availability of food. Based upon the available

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[48]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1890, p. 30.

[49]Harvey, Newfoundland As It Is in 1894, p. 165.

[50]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, p. 352.

evidence, perhaps the most reasonable conclusion would be that the hatchery was part, but not all, of the solution.[51]

The replenishment of the stocks was one measure to increase the potential of the catch. To protect immature cod and to foster natural increase, the Commission proposed a series of regulations. One set of controls dealt with the type of gear used. Fishermen and politicians alike had voiced their concern that cod traps destroyed immature and spawning fish. Indeed, in 1888 an act had been passed banning their use. Any person convicted of violating its provisions was subject to a fine not to exceed $400; in default of payment, the offender was subject to imprisonment for up to six months. Traps used in contravention of the act would be confiscated until the trial and sold at public auction if the individual were convicted. The proceeds, after payment of court costs, were distributed between the person prosecuting the offender and the Receiver-General.[52]

After investigating the problem, the Commission in 1890 decided that while a continuation of the total ban on traps

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[51]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, pp. 29-30.

[52]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-first Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1888), pp. 74-75.

was too harsh, some limitations on their use were still required.[53] As a result, it became illegal to place a cod trap or mooring in Newfoundland waters prior to June 15 and off Labrador prior to June 25.[54] Significantly, these rules did not apply to "the fisheries on that part of the coast where the French have treaty rights, until the approval of Her Majesty has been obtained."[55]

The following year the prohibition on the use of traps early in the season was extended, but in addition regulations were enacted limiting the size of mesh. To protect immature fish, cod traps with walls or sides containing mesh less than four inches were outlawed.[56] Even this measure, however, does not appear to have subdued opposition to traps. Neilsen continued to speak out on their destructiveness on immature fish and in 1894 traps were banned until July 20.[57] Moreover, it was also made illegal to use herring or caplin seines to

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[53]"Report of the Select Committee to Consider and Report on the Rules and Regulations, Submitted to the Fisheries Commission in Relation to the Cod Fishery, April 21, 1890," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1890, pp. 100-101. The committee consisted of James Murray, W.H. Whitely, William Duff, E.R. Burgess and Robert S. Munn.

[54]"Rules and Regulations Respecting the Lobster and Cod-fishery," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1890, Appendix, p. 328.

[55]Ibid., p. 329.

[56]Ibid., p. 328.

[57]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 88.

catch cod. Despite these laws, some fishermen continued to use traps with a smaller mesh, thus destroying large quantities of small fish which were reported to have been "not worth handling nor the salt they are cured in."[58]

Questions were also raised about the use of cod or gill nets. As with traps, this gear was also blamed for killing immature cod. Neilsen claimed that if they were abolished, "immature fish would have a chance to spawn and replenish the waters again."[59] A south coast correspondent for the Trade Review in 1903 claimed that even a four-inch mesh would do much to reduce the cull of small fish, arguing instead that it should be illegal to possess fish under a certain size. To make such a law effective, he suggested that St. John's merchants cooperate with the Fisheries Board to enforce the rules.[60] While nothing was done immediately, in 1905 mesh size was further reduced to three and one-half inches.[61]

These first endeavours by government through the Fisheries Commission to increase stock size and to ensure the survival of immature fish through both hatcheries and regulations can be considered at least a partial success. While it

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[58]Ibid., pp. 44-45.

[59]Ibid., p. 43.

[60]Trade Review, February 7, 1903.

[61]"Rules and Regulations Respecting the Fisheries of Newfoundland," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 11.

is impossible to measure precisely the impact of these measures, it is significant that the long-standing debate on the use of traps and nets subsided after 1905, which suggests that some rejuvenation of the stock likely had occurred. Moreover, the actions spurred by the Commission had other benefits, which while less tangible, were nonetheless important for the health of the fishery. For the first time, issues relating to the fishery were addressed substantively, not only by government acting independently but also through collaboration. Not only did fishermen occasionally cooperate with government, but there was a greater degree of harmony among those involved in catching, processing and marketing. Though the programmes may not have been as successful as their advocates predicted, they nonetheless provided a valuable learning experience and a base from which future improvements could be made. Equally important, the efforts made by the Commission provided a foundation upon which the Department of Fisheries could build. In the short term, the Commission demonstrated the potential value of both the hatchery and regulations in replenishing depleted stocks. The real test, however, would only come with the passage of time. Unfortunately, as the years advanced, the directions charted by the Commission came under fire not only from opposition politicians but also from the general public.

Lobster Hatching

Cod was not the only species for which the Commission investigated the possibilities of artificial propagation. The potential of lobster hatcheries soon assumed an importance equal to cod. Whether Neilsen had initially planned to hatch lobster is unknown, and while the possibility of artificially propagating lobsters was not raised by the Commission of Inquiry, attention was paid in its Report to the need to pass rules to prevent over-harvesting. One possibility raised was the use of a closed season. Because lobstering was seen as a growth industry, the Commission of Inquiry believed that "there is need for prompt Legislative measures to save this fishery from lasting injury."[62] In supporting this stance, the Commission cited the declining lobster catches in the Maritimes as an example of what could occur in Newfoundland if action were not taken.[63] That the Report should discuss lobsters at all reflected a dramatic change in the attitudes of local fishermen toward lobsters. Previously, these crustaceans were regarded primarily as a menace to traps and nets;

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[62]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, p. 34.

[63]Ibid. The Report contained extracts from the Canadian Department of Fisheries for and the Fisheries Department of Prince Edward Island for 1886, as well as from a report by Professor Baird on the American lobster fishery; see p. 36 and Appendix, pp. xv-xix. See also Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 12.

indeed, trap owners often paid bounties as high as fifty cents per hundred for their destruction.[64] Over time, however, fishermen came to recognize the economic potential of lobsters; as their importance increased toward the end of the century, the need for conservation became apparent. In 1874 the entire Newfoundland lobster catch amounted to only 119,370 lbs., a figure which soared to 7,152,540 lbs. by 1878 and 14,248,730 lbs. in 1897. Despite this long-term growth, the lobster fishery was highly unstable, with good years alternating with bad. Indeed, those who worried about the viability of the industry had good reason: 1897 marked a high point for this fishery, and catches declined thereafter to a low of only 759,460 lbs. in 1924.[65] Artificial propagation was seen as a means by which a degree of stability could be introduced.

The decision to begin a hatcheries programme in 1889 appears to have been related to the initial failure to obtain spawning cod. Although the Commission was unsuccessful in the early years at obtaining suitable cod because of confusion over the proper dates of the spawning season, Neilsen found it

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[64]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 39; Reports of the Newfoundland Fishery Research Commission, Vol. 1, No. 4, (1931), p. 15.

[65]W. Templeman, The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery: An Account of Statistics, Methods and Important Laws (St. John's, 1941), p. 12. Details on the catch and value of the lobster fishery are presented in Appendix IV.

far easier to collect "berried lobsters" (lobsters with roe).[66] On July 19 the first supply of lobster eggs was brought to the Dildo hatchery. During this season, 4,039,000 eggs were hatched and planted in the waters of Trinity Bay.[67] This, as the Commission reported, was an impressive beginning, especially since the hatchery was fitted for cod rather than lobsters. Due to the initial success, observers predicted a great future for this endeavour, which was perceived as a means of safeguarding the industry from over-fishing while also introducing lobsters to areas in which they were previously not found.[68] Indeed, the Commission reported that in no other country had lobsters been hatched on such a large scale as in Newfoundland. Testimony to this success took two forms: reference to the potential value which the lobsters represented to the overall fishery and the stream of inquiries from the Canadian Department of Fisheries seeking information on the methods employed in Newfoundland.

To demonstrate the economic potential, the Commission presented some hypothetical calculations. By assuming a twenty-five percent survival rate of all lobsters hatched in

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[66]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, pp. 10-11.

[67]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 38. See also Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, pp. 11.

[68]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 12.

1889, and an average export value for each lobster of 2.75 cents, the value of the fishery was estimated at approximately $30,000. A survival rate half as high would yield revenues of about $15,000.[69] Canadian interest in Newfoundland's lobster hatchery programme must have been flattering. After some investigation, Canadian officials came to the opinion that their country indeed lagged behind Newfoundland in this area.[70] In 1890 S. Wilmont, Superintendent of the Canadian Fish-Breeding Department, visited the hatchery; his observations, published in the Commission's Annual Report and the Annual Fisheries Report of Canada for 1890, concluded that a similar operation in Canada would preserve her lobster fisheries from destruction. On his return to Canada, Wilmont selected a lobster factory near Pictou, Nova Scotia as a testing ground for Neilsen's innovative floating incubators.[71] A lobster hatchery established at Bayview, New Brunswick on the Northumberland Strait in 1891 was also based on the Dildo model.[72] Similarly, Royal Navy Lieutenant Gorden, commissioned to write a report on the Canadian Fisheries Protection Service in 1890, also visited Newfoundland, speaking highly of the

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[69]Ibid., p. 14.

[70]Ibid., p. 15.

[71]Newfoundland, Inquiry, Report, 1888, pp. 30-31.

[72]Joseph Gough, Fisheries Management in Canada, p. 16.

hatchery programme and echoing Wilmont's sentiments about Neilsen's incubators.[73] It is clear that Newfoundland was one of the pioneers in lobster propagation.

With the early success of propagation, plans were proposed to expand the program to cover a larger area of the island. This was not to be accomplished by building additional hatcheries like the one at Dildo, but rather by a system of floating lobster incubator boxes developed by Neilsen in 1889. The Commission suggested that each lobster factory be given one incubator in which lobster ova could be deposited to ripen and hatch.[74] The rational was based on the destruction of lobster ova during processing in factories. Placentia Bay, where forty factories were in operation in 1889, was used as an example of the benefits. On the assumption that the average number of fertilized eggs carried by a single lobster was between twelve and eighteen thousand, Placentia Bay was considered capable of producing in the vicinity of fifty million lobsters per year.[75] Another argument in favour of this programme rested on the premise that transporting lobster ova over long distances to the hatchery at Dildo would result in a high mortality rate.

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[73]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1890, pp. 32-33.

[74]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 13.

[75]Ibid., pp. 13-14.

In 1891 floating incubators were used at nineteen different locations, an increase of five over the previous year. This resulted in an estimated 541,195,580 lobsters being planted, in addition to 10,274,300 from the Dildo hatchery.[76] Hatching at Dildo was below the previous year, when 15,070,800 were hatched and planted. This decline was attributed to a high mortality rate for ova, which was believed to have been caused by the need to transport the eggs from Long Harbour, Placentia Bay, a distance of approximately twenty miles.[77] The cost of producing lobsters in the hatcheries was calculated at one cent for every 2,760 lobsters. The value to the commercial lobster fishery (based on a survival rate of ten percent of the lobsters planted), at eighty cents per hundred, translated into roughly $440,000.[78]

As a result of the success of lobster incubators, several packers requested to work them at their own expense, under the direction of the Superintendent. In response, the Commission looked to government for assistance. During 1891 and 1892, 432 lobster incubators were in use; because of the success of the programme, the Commission requested that government provide at

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[76]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 19.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid., p. 20.

least two hundred more.[79] Yet for the 1892 season no new incubators were provided since "the means at the disposal of the Fisheries Commission did not allow...for any increase in the number." Nonetheless, the Commission requested funding to provide an additional 200-300 for the coming season. In support of this recommendation, the Commission argued once again that the destruction of lobster ova because of the lack of incubators was enormous: "to prevent this, incubators ought to be operated at every factory."[80] Nonetheless, the total number of lobsters hatched and planted in 1892 was 429,785,000.[81]

In 1889 the Commission decided to expand its operations to ship live lobsters to the US and the United Kingdom.[82] This was not a new idea: in 1879 three tons valued at $100 were shipped to Canada and 4,000 live lobsters were shipped to the US in 1887.[83] Nonetheless, nothing seems to have come from this decision, for in the Commission's 1892 Report the prospect was raised once again as meriting further study.

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[79]Ibid.

[80]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, pp. 12-13.

[81]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, p. 6. Data on the number of lobster hatched and planted from floating incubators may be consulted in Appendix V.

[82]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 54.

[83]Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery," p. 19.

Apparently, the previous year Neilsen had been working on an "apparatus" for the shipment of live lobsters and turned his work over to G.C. Fearn, who planned to ship live lobsters to the United Kingdom.[84] It does not appear that Fearn was successful in this initial attempt, as Customs Returns for 1891 and 1892 do not list live lobsters as an item of export. In 1893 $20 worth (quantity was not listed) were exported to the United Kingdom. The following year one case valued at $5 was shipped to Britain.[85]

Artificial propagation of lobsters was but one measure adopted to replenish stocks and increase output; as with cod, regulations were also enacted as tools.[86] In deciding upon this route, the Commission looked to Canada as an example. Because of declining stocks along the eastern seaboard, many American packers had transferred their operations to Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (some eventually came to Newfoundland as well). To prevent American packers from destroying lobster stocks, the Canadian government in 1873 passed protective

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[84]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, pp. 13-14.

[85]See the Customs Returns listed in Newfoundland, Journals of the House of Assembly, 1891-1893, Appendices.

[86]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 12.

laws. Newfoundland decided that a similar approach was necessary if stocks were to remain healthy.[87]

Laws to protect the lobster stocks were first enacted in 1878. That first act placed restrictions on the taking of lobsters during certain seasons and specified locations at which they could be caught. Violations were subject to a fine up to $100. In case of default or inability to pay, an individual's property could be forfeited and the violator sent to jail for as much as three months.[88] Yet the act placed no size restrictions on lobsters that could be kept nor required individuals to take out lobster licences. Ten years later, this original law was amended in "An Act Respecting the Fishery of Lobsters," which went a bit further both in terms of locations, dates and size of lobsters that could be taken. As of January 1, 1889, it became illegal to keep lobsters under ten and one-half inches in length, a limit reduced to ten inches in 1897 and to eight inches by 1904.[89] In addition, the law also imposed a closed season from August 31 to January

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[87]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1911, p. 498.

[88]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland passed in the Forty-first Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1878), pp. 75-76.

[89]This size limit was retained until the end of 1928; it was increased to eight and one-half inches the following year.

1. Penalties consisted of fines not to exceed $100 or ninety days in jail.[90]

In 1890 this Act was revised slightly to compel those engaged in catching and canning lobsters to have a license obtainable free of charge from the Receiver-General or any Justice of the Peace, sub-Collector of Customs or Fisheries Prevention Officer.[91] Anyone catching or canning lobster without a license was subject to a fine of up to $400 in addition to having his gear sold at public auction.[92] Moreover, anyone convicted under the Act could be prevented from holding another lobster licence for as long as one year.[93] Revenue obtained through penalties and the sale of forfeited gear was divided equally between the "person prosecuting the offender to conviction" and the "Receiver General for the use of the colony."[94] By 1893, renewal of a lobster licence was contingent upon factory owners returning a statement detailing the number of cases packed, employees, traps, etc., during the

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[90]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Forty-second Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1879), pp. 78-79. For details of the size limits, see Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery," p. 28.

[91]"Rules and Regulations," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1890, Appendix, p. 325.

[92]Ibid., p. 326.

[93]Ibid., p. 327.

[94]Ibid.

previous year.[95] The logic behind this measure was the desire to obtain current information on the lobster fishery upon which government could make regulatory decisions. The 1890 Act closed the fishery from August 5 through April 1 under a penalty of up to five dollars for each lobster taken.[96]

In 1892 Neilsen called for even stronger measures to protect lobster stocks. These included limiting the number of lobster factories, defining the fishing grounds for each factory and determining the closed season based on spawning and shelling times.[97] Neilsen's concern with closed seasons may in part have been a response to his discovery that lobsters have two spawning seasons: large lobsters spawn from mid-July until mid-August, while small and medium-sized lobsters spawn in late October and early November.[98] Neilsen suggested the current closed season be amended to run from April 1 to August 1 on the coast between Cape Ray and Cape

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[95]Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery," p. 8.

[96]"Rules and Regulations," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1890, Appendix, p. 326.

[97]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892. p. 76.

[98]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1890, p. 12. The Report did not provide measurements or any indication as to what constituted a large, medium or small sized lobster, nor whether different size lobsters were found in particular bays or inlets.

Race and from April 1 to August 5 between Cape Race and Cape St. John's.[99]

Neilsen also agreed with "a great many packers" that all factories be closed for a period of three or four years to allow lobster stocks to replenish and immature lobsters to grow. He realized, however, that to do this would bring hardship to many packers and fishermen who depended on this fishery. The number of small lobster factories, worked by one or two men or a man and a few boys or girls, was also reported to be increasing. This in part was the result of declining stocks; as the number of lobsters decreased, larger lobster factories, sometimes employing Canadian labour, found it difficult to compete with smaller operations. As a result, some had no choice but to suspend operations. Soon a common practice developed in which a group of fishermen combined to pack their own lobsters, employing no salaried help but only members of their families. The extent to which this practice was adopted can be seen in that in 1891, 340 lobster factories valued at $179,288 were operating in Newfoundland; by 1901 the number had risen to 1,479 factories valued at $92,332.[100]

The increase in the number of lobster factories would not have been a problem, of course, if lobster stocks were

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[99]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 77.

[100]Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery," p. 20.

increasing through the efforts of artificial propagation. In this case, however, the size of the stock was not the issue. Instead, as Neilsen pointed out, the difficulty was that these factories were operated by individuals who:

> enter into this business without the required knowledge of canning lobsters, and who care nothing about what kind of an article they manufacture, or what is inside the cover, as long as they get the tin to weigh one pound.

The obvious effect of such practices in the long term was to diminish the quality of the pack and hence Newfoundland's attempts to obtain a reputation for quality. Indeed, Neilsen was quick to point out that the consequence of this type of operation was the production of an inferior cure which "result[ed] in numerous complaints...about Newfoundland canned lobsters."[101]

To combat this problem, Neilsen proposed a new method of issuing licenses for the packing of lobster. Under the system in place in 1892, anyone could obtain a license free of charge. Neilsen suggested two alternatives for the future. The first was to charge a fee in the range of $25 to $50, while the second was to require managers of lobster factories to pass an examination demonstrating their competence. The second method was rejected on the grounds that it would be impractical. But Neilsen argued that the former would have the desired

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[101]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 78.

effect in that those who were qualified and had the proper facilities would purchase a licence while unqualified packers would not find it worthwhile to purchase a licence at the suggested price.[102] Opponents of this plan complained that it would effectively prevent an independent fishermen and his family, lacking the necessary money to purchase a licence, from engaging in the industry. As a result, families would be prevented from earning a living from the lobster fishery. This, would in turn create a quasi-monopoly in that the industry would be controlled by those with the financial resources to enter the industry. To this Neilsen countered that for the benefit of the industry it would be better if only those willing and able to produce a quality product be admitted. Government in the end rejected both alternatives, preferring to avoid alienating lobster fishermen and packers.

Up to the First World War, rules were adopted and amended annually, although without many significant changes. But after 1892 regulation of the lobster fishery came under the jurisdiction of the newly-created Department of Fisheries; the Department's success in developing the fishery will be dealt with in the next chapter.

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[102]Ibid., p. 79.

Herring Fishery

For the most part studies of the Newfoundland fishery have concentrated on cod. While herring, traditionally regarded as a bait fish, did not have the same economic value, during the late nineteenth century this perception began to change. This shift was not due to anything that the Commission of Inquiry recommended. Indeed, the Commission made no reference to herring in its Report. Considering the state of this fishery, such an omission was indeed surprising. An example of the manner in which the herring fishery was prosecuted was provided in 1885 by Thomas P. Withycombe, the Inspector of Pickled Fish. In the Bay of Islands, herring were not cured as well as possible since the tradition was to allow them to freeze prior to being covered in salt. As a result, the salt did not fully penetrate the fish. This Withycombe blamed on the "lack of knowledge on [the part of] both curers and Inspectors."[103] In Battle Harbour, Labrador, Withycombe reported that fishermen stored herring in anything resembling barrels, including tubs and puncheons, without being salted. Upon his return to Battle Harbour with salt and barrels, he gave strict orders to inspectors that no "bulk-tainted

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[103]"Report of Thomas P. Withycombe, Inspector of Pickled Fish, 1885," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1886, pp. 700-705.

herring" were to be exported. It is obvious that problems with curing, as well as with packaging and marketing, were not confined to the cod and lobster fisheries.[104]

As elsewhere, the Fisheries Commission attempted to remedy problems in the herring fishery. Like cod and lobster, Newfoundland herring enjoyed a poor reputation in international markets because of its imperfect cure. Unfortunately, the search for better methods of curing, packaging and marketing was not always successful.

The first Report of the Fisheries Commission concluded "that, by due care, the value of our herring fishery may be vastly increased."[105] This assessment was later supported in a survey of the Sound Island herring fishery conducted by Neilsen the previous year in which he found that many fishermen simply dumped their catches of herring overboard. Neilsen was concerned that this practice might cause permanent damage to the spawning grounds of other species. In his report, he concluded that no damage had been caused; his recommendations therefore were aimed solely at protecting the fishery from future injury. Significantly, he made no comment on the state of the herring fishery. But in 1890 the Newfoundland Chamber of Commerce enjoined all parties involved in the herring

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[104]Ibid.

[105]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, p. 42.

fishery to take greater care in curing their catch and to make use of better packaging.[106]

As a means of addressing these problems and obtaining information not only about how to produce a higher quality product but also how to make fish for specific markets, James Moore, Inspector for Pickled Fish, left St. John's on July 24, 1890, for the French shore, Labrador, Montréal and Boston. While in Montréal, Moore received complaints concerning the short weight of Newfoundland barrels. Buyers were demanding barrels of 200 lbs. while Norway was shipping barrels of 220 lbs. In addition, Moore described some Newfoundland herring as arriving in a "condition which could not be worse." Moore also reported a case of 1,500 barrels of herring from Halifax labelled as coming from Labrador. In Boston, a buyer refused to accept Newfoundland herring, as the contents of the barrels did not match the inspection brand which they bore.[107]

Upon returning to Newfoundland, Moore received a letter from one of the firms he had visited expressing approbation "that the Newfoundland government is taking such an interest in the herring fishery, the importance of which they cannot

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[106]Royal Gazette and Newfoundland Advertiser (St. John's), September 2, 1890.

[107]"Report of James Moore, Inspector of Pickled Fish, 1890," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1891, p. 440.

overestimate."[108] As a result of his trip, Moore put forward a number of recommendations to improve the quality of herring exported. His first suggestion was that Neilsen visit Labrador to determine when herring spawned, since thereafter they were "almost unfit for food." To improve marketing, Moore made several suggestions. First, he recommended that iron hoops be used to fasten the ends of barrels, since birch hoops, which were often employed, had a tendency to become brittle. He also advised that the "bulking" of herring be discontinued and that a limited number of quarter-barrels be produced for the trade to the western US. To improve the quality, he suggested that more attention be paid to the Norwegian cure, which had an excellent reputation. Finally, he made a series of recommendations designed to improve the consistency of exports. He believed that the grading of herring should be delegated to the Inspector of Pickled Fish; that inspections ought to be made more stringent, especially in St. John's and other centres from which herring was exported; that a heavy penalty be imposed on shippers acting fraudulently; and that printed instructions about the size of packages, market demand, and methods of cure be distributed to fishermen. Nonetheless, he made it clear that the most important evil was herring

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[108] Ibid.

receiving false grades without an inspector's name being attached to the barrel.[109]

As in other branches of the fishery, around the turn of the century the American market for herring was considered "well worth our best efforts to endeavour to secure at least a proportional share of the supply."[110] With a population in excess of sixty million, the American market possessed an overwhelming allure. Moore concluded that without "the slightest doubt...the great future for our pickled fish industry is in the markets of the US and even at the present time, Montréal is but a distributing centre for the markets in the western States."[111] From this observation he concluded that "no person can doubt the possibilities of expanding the herring fishery with the adoption of new methods such as drift-net fishing are almost illimitable." Such statements were more often than not followed with an explanation of how Newfoundland could penetrate this market. In the case of herring, Moore blamed Newfoundland's problems in the American market on "the looseness of colonial inspection, the cupidity

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[109]Ibid., pp. 441-442.

[110]Ibid., p. 436.

[111]Ibid.

or dishonesty of traders, the badness of fish, and the unsuitability of the package."[112]

There was certainly no immediate improvement. The Fisheries Commission Report the following year described the herring fishery as being conducted in "a most unsatisfactory character."[113] As a result of the "slovenly and unskilful" methods of cure and packing, the reputation of Newfoundland herring had fallen even lower in foreign markets, resulting in prices which in many instances were "unremunerative."[114] In addition to incurring losses overseas, it was also reported that the reckless and wasteful manner in which herring were being taken threatened to ruin the fishery "at no distant date."[115]

Action to prevent this occurrence was taken in that year with the passage of regulations for the protection, prosecution and cure of herring. In addition, a problem-solving mechanism was introduced to resolve disputes between fishermen. To protect the stock, it was made illegal to catch herring unless it was likely that the fish would be used for either human food or bait. It was also prohibited to "barr"

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[112]Ibid.

[113]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 4.

[114]Ibid.

[115]Ibid.

herring in a seine of less than seventy fathoms in a dry condition, in water less than three fathoms, for a period exceeding forty-eight hours, so tightly that there was a danger of the fish perishing or in waters where the bottom was fetid.[116] To prevent the dumping of herring in bays or harbours, Harbour and Sanitary Commissioners were appointed in 1905.[117] Additional rules were drafted to facilitate the settlement of disputes between fishermen. For example, it became illegal to destroy other fishermen's gear; to set a seine too close to another; or to set nets in such a manner as to submerge others' nets.

The above regulations applied only to Sound Island, Placentia Bay. An additional ten articles in the 1891 Act covered the entire island. These included provisions to ban the catching of herring for manure, to place herring on scaffolds in warm or "soft" weather, or to throw ballast, sand or rubbish in waters where herring were known to frequent. Penalties for violations varied from $50 to $100.[118]

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[116]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1891, pp. 118-121. To prevent the dumping of herring in bays or harbours, Harbour and Sanitary Commissioners were appointed in 1905.

[117]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 187.

[118]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1891, pp. 118-121.

The following year the Commission basically repeated the previous laments over the imperfect cure and low prices in world markets. It would appear that Neilsen's pamphlet, The Cure of Codfish and Herrings, which was published in 1891, did not have an immediate effect.[119]

Neilsen's 1890 suggestion that a search for the summer location of herring be carried out with the intention of establishing a drift-net fishery was also scheduled to proceed in the summer of 1891. The Commission received a letter dated June 5, 1891 from then Colonial Secretary, Robert Bond, in which government:

> at the request of a number of merchants of Conception Bay, government had agreed to make some researches, during the present season, as to the deep water home of the herring, with a view to the establishment, in this colony, of such a fishery as is prosecuted from Norway...I am to request that the Fisheries Commission will place his [Neilsen's] services, for a month or six weeks, at the disposal of the government for this purpose.

This move was important, not only because it opened the possibility of gaining a greater understanding of the migratory summer habits of herring and the possibilities of expanding the herring fishery through the application of new modes of fishing, but also because the government's decision

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[119]Permission to republish the pamphlet was granted to the Irish Department of Fisheries for the benefit of their fishermen. See Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 7.

was a result of a direct appeal from merchants engaged in the fishery. To this end, government furnished:

> in a most liberal manner everything that was necessary to equip the vessel and secure the success of the operation. In a vessel of forty tons, with a crew of nine, Mr. Nielsen left St. John's on the 15th of August and returned on the 19th of October, having in that time, circumnavigated the island.[120]

The Commission reported that the study was "partially successful, and would require to be followed up by further researches."[121] Future investigations would in part be based on ichthyological and meteorological data which Neilsen had collected. Nonetheless, Neilsen was able to report the presence of a "great bank 115 miles in length off the western coast, which is the resort of herrings of a good quality...and that here a drift-net fishery could be prosecuted during the months of June, July and August."[122]

In addition to his survey of Newfoundland coastal waters, Neilsen visited the Labrador coast to examine the failure of the Labrador herring fishery during the previous few years. Indeed, for the 1892 season he described this fishery as "almost a total failure."[123] Fishermen in the area suggested

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[120]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 12.

[121]Ibid., p. 8.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 63.

that for some unknown reason the herring remained offshore and did not come inshore as in former years. After conducting a two-day search offshore, Neilsen concluded that physical alterations in the sea affected the availability of fish upon which herring feed; if bait fish remained offshore, so did the herring. Since this conclusion was based on only a brief investigation, Neilsen admitted that a more detailed study was required to explain the scarcity of herring.[124]

Neilsen also took this opportunity to discuss the inferior quality of the Labrador cure and to offer solutions. The most important explanation that he advanced was insufficient inspection, which he felt could only be improved by making inspection compulsory at selected places on the coast to which all herring would have to be bought prior to export.[125] Neilsen proposed that the coast be divided into four districts, each with its own inspector. In his closing statements on the Labrador herring fishery, he suggested that a similar inspection process would have to be adopted for the Newfoundland branch of the industry. This was of paramount importance in light of competition in the American and Canadian markets from the Scottish, Norwegian and Dutch

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[124]Ibid., pp. 64-65.

[125]Ibid., p. 65.

fisheries.[126] Surprisingly, Neilsen made no reference to Canadian and American production.

In addition to compulsory inspection, Neilsen also proposed a higher standard for barrels. This he suggested could only be accomplished through the adoption of regulations on barrel size and construction. A copy of the proposed rules attached to the report provided specifications as to height and diameter, the size of staves and the manner in which they were cut and fit together, and the type, size and number of hoops used.[127] He suggested that by shipping herring in stronger barrels and by recognizing the different demands in various markets, the reputation of Newfoundland herring would rise.[128] When exporters objected, however, government decided not to act.

The Commission's work to bring about improvements in the herring fishery must be assessed similarly to the cod and lobster fisheries. While the Commission certainly attempted to address the major problems, its good intentions often foundered either because of the lack of adequate enforcement

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[126]Ibid., p. 70.

[127]"Rules and Regulations for the Manufacture of Herring Barrels," Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, pp. 72-74.

[128]In addition to the above rules and regulations, it was reported in 1897 that a standard measure for the sale of herring was fixed. Moreover, Neilsen also proposed a Barrel Law to regulate the construction and size of herring barrels.

mechanisms or because government chose to ignore the recommendations. The Commission was also stymied by geographical and seasonal characteristics of the fishery, which meant that fishermen, merchants and exporters were more concerned with quantity than quality. This latter trait was not only a thorn in the side of the Commission but also would continue to bedevil later attempts by the Department of Fisheries to regulate the Newfoundland fishery.

In general, the government's efforts to carry out its three major endeavours--cod and lobster hatching and developments in the herring fishery--had mixed results during this early period. While by and large the signs were positive, the Commission would not survive to see the fruits of its labours realized, for it was soon to be replaced by a formal Department of Fisheries.

CHAPTER 3

THE FISHERY UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES, 1894-1913: COD, LOBSTER AND HERRING

"By 1893," Louise Whiteway has written, "public confidence in the Fisheries Commission was established."[1] On May 12, 1893, Premier Whiteway took the next logical step in developing Newfoundland's most important resource by giving notice in the House "that on tomorrow...[I] will ask leave to introduce a bill relating to a fisheries department."[2] The bill was suitably introduced, given second reading, sent to the appropriate committee, and amended. On May 24, 1893, the Legislative Council reported:

> that they have passed the amendment made by the House of Assembly on the amendments made by the Council in and upon the Bill sent up entitled 'An Act respecting the Department of Fisheries' without amendment.[3]

The day-to-day workings of the department came under the direction of a Commissioner of Fisheries. Appointed by the

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[1]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 41. See also Moses Harvey, "The Newfoundland Fisheries Commission," in Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, p. 650.

[2]Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland Department of Fisheries," p. 41. See also Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1893, p. 143.

[3]Ibid. The bill passed both houses at the conclusion of the Legislative session of 1893. A.W. Harvey was appointed Commissioner and Adolph Neilsen Superintendent of Fisheries.

Governor in Council, he was responsible for the administration of laws, management, regulation and protection of the sea, coast and inland fisheries "and all matters and things relating thereto and assigned by the Governor in Council to him or to the Department of Fisheries." To oversee this work, a Fisheries Board was created, comprising the Commissioner (who also served as President) and four appointed members. Under the Board was a seven-person Executive Committee, including the President, ex-officio, and six elected members.[4] Powers and duties of the Board were:

> to make enquiries and researches upon and in relation to all matters pertaining to the preservation, maintenance, improvement, and development of the fisheries, and the trade, commerce and interests of the Colony, so far as the same are connected with or relate to the fisheries and fishery questions; to devise, organize and maintain such methods of collecting, preserving, and diffusing such knowledge and information as they may consider best adapted to the attainment of such objects.[5]

In addition, the Department was given the power to make regulations pertaining to the fisheries, such as to determine closed seasons, to control the methods and gear used to capture fish, and to fix penalties for violations under the Act. A weakness of the Department's authority, however, was

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[4]Under Section XII of the Act, members of the former Commission become members of the Board.

[5]"An Act Respecting the Department of Fisheries," Newfoundland, Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1893), pp. 30-33.

its inability to regulate foreign fishermen, a power which remained firmly entrenched in Britain. Given the number of foreigners who continued to fish off Newfoundland, this gap was of great importance, effectively denying the dominion's right to regulate a major part of the fishery.[6] To ensure public awareness all new rules and regulations had to be published in not "less than three numbers of the Royal Gazette and not less than two other newspapers in this colony."[7]

Given the success of the Fisheries Commission and the mandate of the new Department, it is hardly surprising that most existing programs--hatcheries as well as regulations pertaining to catching, curing and marketing of fish--were continued. Indeed, in its initial Report, the Department admitted that it "followed up the work on the same lines, and endeavoured to develop and improve the methods which were initiated and applied under the Fisheries' Commission."[8] Nonetheless, new initiatives, including the provision of cold

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[6]Until the dispute over the French Shore was resolved in 1904, the most obvious group of foreign fishermen excluded from Newfoundland control were French.

[7]As the Fisheries' Commission was no longer necessary, Section XI repealed the Fisheries' Commission Act. However, regulations enacted under the Fisheries' Commission Act continued until the next sitting of the Legislature, at which time they were adopted by the Department.

[8]The first report of the Department in 1893 was shorter and less detailed than the earlier reports of the Commission. Thereafter, their quality and length varied greatly.

storage and bait depots, the establishment of a Fisheries Protection Service and bait intelligence services, the placement of trade agents, and the fostering of product diversification (all discussed in later chapters), soon gained equal importance. The Fisheries Department would become the agency through which government encouragement to the fisheries would expand beyond earlier priorities.

This chapter will deal with the Department's activities up to World War I in the three areas of greatest concern to the Commission: the cod, lobster and herring fisheries. Much of what the Department did in its first two decades built upon the foundations established by the Commission. Yet the Department also forged important new programmes for these "traditional" sectors of the fishery.

Cod Hatching

One of the projects inaugurated by the Commission which was continued by the Department was the artificial propagation of cod. In its 1894 Report the Department presented a favourable evaluation of the hatching facilities developed since 1890. A careful reading of the Department's remarks suggests a three-fold strategy. First, it was clearly attempting to delineate its jurisdiction. At the same time, it was trying to capitalize upon the favourable perceptions of the work of the

Commission. Finally, by discussing the efforts of other nations in aquaculture, the Department was seeking not only to validate continuing efforts in the field but also to convince government that the approach was worth pursuing.

The last part of the approach was of particular importance to the Department, and its writers went to great lengths to demonstrate the wisdom of Newfoundland's policy. "Practical and scientific men are everywhere giving increased attention to artificial propagation," its 1894 Report asserted, "as a means...for manufacturing and increasing the wealth of the sea and of the inland lakes and rivers."[9] Lest a hasty reader miss the point, the Department hammered it home by maintaining that "this concurrence of opinion" ought to "increase our own confidence in it, and lead to its more extended applications in the colony."[10] Indeed, Neilsen, who remained as Superintendent of Fisheries, also inserted a section on similar work being conducted in Britain, Norway, Scotland and the US.[11] The fact that Newfoundland was not alone in pursuing aquaculture programmes long remained a significant part of the Department's defence of its programme.

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[9]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 6.

[10]Ibid., p. 7.

[11]Ibid., pp. 28-30.

The need to place its hatchery programme squarely in tune with international developments was critical for two reasons. First, there is some tangential evidence suggesting that some fishermen remained sceptical of the programme; such doubts were an obvious political liability. More important, the Department had plans to expand its activities in this area. In 1894 it announced plans to expand the programme, both to continue to rejuvenate the stocks and to assuage doubts by bringing more fishermen into contact with it. That year the Department began for the first time to transport cod fry to locations outside Trinity Bay, using two vessels, the Fiona and Lady Glover, provided by the government. The first shipment of twenty million cod fry was transported to Bloddy Reach, Bonavista Bay, while two additional shipments of the same size were sent to Bay Roberts in Conception Bay and Goose Bay in Bonavista Bay.[12]

The following year, the Department took a more assured tack, suggesting that inasmuch as the principles of artificial propagation were familiar, there was no need to repeat them.[13] The source of this confidence was obvious, for its 1895 Report for the first time presented evidence of the success of artificial propagation. After asking whether there was "any

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[12]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[13]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1895, p. 396.

evidence to show the work of the hatchery has increased the number of fish in the bay," the Department reported that the results in Trinity Bay were sufficiently encouraging to merit continuation. Given that any increase in the size of the stock was likely to be only gradual and that the methods of estimating stock size were rudimentary, the evidence was qualitative rather than quantitative. The Department pointed out that in 1893 large catches of cod of uniform size were taken with small mesh traps; the fish, according to the description, were believed to have been two years old. The following year, not only were more cod reported in the head of Trinity Bay, but "at that time there were none in either Bonavista or Conception Bay."[14] The logical explanation, the Department deduced, was the success of the Dildo hatchery.

In 1895, the Report continued, it was reported that cod were seen around Dildo long before they appeared on either the eastern or northern coasts. And the Department presented documentary evidence to support its claims:

> eight of the most intelligent residents of Dildo who are engaged in the fishery sent to the Fishery Board a written statement, dated May 28, in which they record the foregoing facts and unite in declaring that there have been more fish in and around Dildo the last two or three springs than had ever been seen before... They warmly express their thorough belief in the success of the hatchery and anticipate very great benefits to the people of

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[14]Ibid., pp. 398-399.

> Trinity Bay. They strongly urge a continuance of the hatching operations.[15]

To provide further support for the hatchery, the Department defended Newfoundland as the ideal location for such a facility:

> there is no other country in the world where the natural facilities for the propagation of cod and lobsters are so great as in Newfoundland, and in no other country have operations been carried out on such an extensive scale.[16]

Moreover, it again resorted to the tactic of demonstrating that other nations were engaged in similar projects. For example, it asserted that in the US:

> evidence provided by the United States Fisheries Commission on the hatcheries at Woods Hole, Ten Pound Island and Gloucester, Massachusetts prove the work had been exceptionally successful in increasing the supply of cod on the southern New England coast, and that the expediency of continuing the propagation upon as large a scale as possible can no longer be denied.[17]

Similar programmes in Norway were no less successful:

> At the great Flodevig cod hatchery the success has been even more remarkable. Fishermen, dealers in fish, business men, shipowners, commercial societies and the inhabitants generally have forwarded testimonials to the Board of Directors of the hatchery expressive of their gratitude for the benefits received.[18]

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[15] Ibid., p. 400.

[16] Ibid., p. 401.

[17] Ibid., pp. 400-401.

[18] Ibid.

The Report concluded that increased stocks in both countries were the result of their hatchery operations.

The Department also attempted to provide some "quantitative" evidence to support its claims. To do this it resorted to estimating the rate of return on investment based upon a series of assumptions. On the premise of a five percent survival rate of the roughly 200 million cod planted annually, stocks would increase by ten million fish per year. This would translate into approximately 142,800 quintals, based on an average of seventy fish per quintal; at $3.00 per quintal, this would imply gross revenues of $428,400. Since the operating costs for a season were estimated at no more than $1,000, the Department concluded that the hatchery was a resounding success.[19] While its technique of estimation and its various assumptions are at the very least open to question,[20] the Board had no difficulty in finding defenders. In

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[19]Ibid., p. 401.

[20]There is no evidence in any of the various Departmental reports to support any of these estimates. On the cost side, it is highly doubtful that the operating expenses of $1000 per year were correct. While this figure may have represented some portion of the variable costs actually incurred at the Dildo site, it is questionable whether it included expenses for activities such as collecting the cod roe. Further, it clearly did not include the proportion of administrative salaries devoted to the facility or the cost of maintenance. It is also certain that fixed and capital costs were excluded from these calculations. On the revenue side of the equation, the major problem is with the survival rate, which was almost certainly too high; if it were not, the Department would certainly have been able to find evidence from abroad of comparable rates.

support of this scenario, the report quoted Dr. Wemyss Fulton of the Scottish Fishery Board to the effect that if "only one in a thousand" fish survived, and if "the marketable fish...[were] sold at only one penny each," this would still be sufficient "to cover the expenses of the work."[21]

Therefore, the Report concluded, work carried out at the Dildo hatchery thus far ought to be considered a success. Indeed, it was presented as a model for others to emulate, since the facility was:

> thoroughly equipped with the best apparatus having all the latest improvements, and is not surpassed by any other establishment of the kind in the world. It may therefore be fairly anticipated that in the future it will work more efficiently and produce still better results than in the past.[22]

The Department was not alone, however, in concluding that the hatchery project was working. In 1894 a newspaper reported that Trinity Bay was "swarming with small cod. They are seen in shoals...where they were never seen before, and the fishermen pronounce them to be 'Neilsen's Hatchery fish'."[23] The same year, John Pretty, a fishermen who hauled his trap at Dildo Island three times a day, secured a skiff load each

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[21]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1895, p. 401.

[22]Ibid., p. 397.

[23]Daily News (St. John's), June 12, 1894.

time. Such was Pretty's confidence that he suggested if he had hauled his trap every hour it would be still full![24]

Despite all its efforts, the Department was not completely successful in allaying doubts about the hatchery. Its 1896 Report argued that to discontinue operations would be "most unwise, and is strongly to be deprecated," since "it would be to sacrifice the whole plant and lose the money already expended."[25] As a matter of fact, the Dildo hatchery in 1896 was operated "without expense to the colony. The whole was borne by Mr. Neilsen out of his private resources." Though unstated, it would appear that questions were being raised about the value of the hatchery to the fishery. Like the previous report, this one tried to counter this concern by discussing the growing stocks of young cod in Trinity Bay. Like its predecessor, it was optimistic, although concluding that more time was required to determine the success of the hatchery.[26]

In addition to reporting on the Dildo operations in 1897, that year's Report again provided a brief synopsis of work

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[24]Ibid., June 16, 1894. The same paper carried articles supporting the hatchery on July 3, 5 and August 30, 1894.

[25]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1896, p. 311.

[26]Ibid., p. 312. While the government accounts for this period make it difficult to prove or disprove this claim, the fact that Augustus Harvey is alleged to have paid for operations in 1897 lends some credence to the existence of this practice.

conducted elsewhere and also took a defensive stand of cod hatching. "Hasty condemnation because striking and conclusive results are not reached at once is manifestly unfair," the Department claimed.[27] The principal defence was that since cod require three to four years to mature, more time was needed to restore depleted fishing grounds.[28] As before, the Department reported that it had received written statements from "those who were doubters or disbelievers [but] are now unable to resist the evidence thus furnished."[29] The sceptics, the Report asserted, were forced to concede that:

> during the previous three springs they had seen more fish than they had ever before observed and also much earlier in the spring. They also expressed their belief in the hatchery and strongly urged a continuance of its operations.[30]

No information was provided about who made these statements, nor was their number indicated. Similarly, if any negative comments were received, they went unmentioned. Nonetheless, the report reiterated previous admonitions that "to abandon it now would be to lose all that has been gained." The Report concluded with the warning that:

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[27]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 352.

[28]Based on current fishery research, this estimate was incorrect, since it takes approximately eight to ten years for cod to mature.

[29]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 353.

[30]Ibid.

> if the work were to be discontinued the plant would be sacrificed as well as the money already expended. The Board strongly recommended the resumption of operations next summer, and a continuance, until the success or failure of the experiment is thoroughly determined.[31]

Despite all the rhetoric, the more important point is that the hatchery's days were numbered. The bank crash of December 1894 led to financial panic. As a result, an increasingly beleaguered government began to reduce its financial assistance, which is why in 1896 Neilsen was forced to maintain the hatchery. The following year Augustus Harvey provided the funds to operate the facility.[32] Thereafter, the Dildo operation was apparently closed.[33]

The demise of the hatchery also coincided with the end of Adolph Neilsen's tenure in Newfoundland. Due to failing health, he was compelled to return to Norway. The Department took the opportunity to praise him for the "invaluable work" he performed for Newfoundland, which it believed "other generations would appreciate more than the present, as they will reap the benefits more fully." Testifying to his main activities, the Department acknowledged that as a result of his efforts, "all the fisheries of Newfoundland have been careful-

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[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., p. 312; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1898, p. 354.

[33]Evening Telegram (St. John's), November 16, 1897.

ly studied and examined by a scientific man who...is perhaps second to no other," recognizing that "he has thoroughly organised a system by which our fisheries may be protected and improved, and saved from the dangers which were impending." In conclusion, it summed up neatly the import of his contribution. "Before he came," the 1897 Report admitted, "the fisheries were almost uncared for. That reproach is now wiped away. We have now an organized Department of Fisheries which time and experience will duly improve and modify."[34]

Neilsen's premature departure had wide-ranging effects on the development of the fishery. In particular, it doomed the cod hatchery, which was very much his creation. Even before Neilsen left, the Dildo hatchery was in trouble; once he was gone, despite all the effort expended in its defence, it languished. Indeed, the annual reports of the Department of Fisheries for the years 1902-1906 made no mention of the cod hatchery.[35]

It appears that the Dildo facility limped along for a few years. Even publications which might normally have been expected to support development projects, like the Trade Review, neglected it, applauding rumours in 1902 that it would

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[34]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 355.

[35]Annual Reports of the Department for the years 1898 through 1901. They were not printed in the Appendix of the Journal of the House of Assembly or as separate reports.

be shut down. The paper was not against artificial propagation in principle, supporting similar programmes for salmon, lobster, trout and other fish it believed had "prescribed habitats," unlike the cod which the paper referred to as "a gay rover of the Seas." The paper suggested that money should be spent on projects which would likely have more beneficial results than cod hatcheries, such as collecting market information and introducing new technology. Soon the debate was moot. By 1906 "the idea of hatching codfish seems to have been abandoned."[36] The facilities at Dildo were "falling into a bad state of disrepair, and if not looked after pretty soon, the machinery will be destroyed by the rain, which leaks in through the roof in many places."[37]

How successful was the hatchery? To answer this question adequately would require a survey of the cod stocks in and around Trinity Bay. In the absence of such a study, this question is impossible to answer definitively. Moreover, the short life of the programme also complicates any assessment. Assuming that the numerous sightings of small cod to which the Department constantly referred were correct, these could have been the result of other factors, such as an unusually high survival rate or an abundant supply of food capable of

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[36]Trade Review, January 13, 1906.

[37]Ibid.

sustaining a large cod population. In the end, perhaps the most reasonable judgement that can be made about the hatchery is that it represented a serious attempt by a poor dominion to come to grips with a problem which threatened the livelihood of a significant portion of its population. In the context of an historical literature which suggests that government and its agencies turned their collective backs on the fishery in the late nineteenth century, this assessment suggests the need for a re-evaluation of a cherished historical paradigm.

Lobster Hatching

Upon assuming responsibility for this programme, the Department decided on expansion not only to produce increased numbers of lobster ova but also to diffuse it spatially. In its first Annual Report, lobster propagation received considerable praise. In fact, the Department claimed that in no other country was lobster propagation carried on to the same extent as in Newfoundland.[38] This assertion rested largely on the extensive use of lobster incubators, which in 1893 were employed at twenty-three government-operated locations, hatching and planting 518,258,000 lobsters.[39]

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[38]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, p. 239. This assertion was restated a few years later.

[39]Ibid.

As encouraging as were these results, the Department believed that additional incubators were required, since of approximately three hundred lobster factories in operation during 1893, only about seventy collected ova for hatching purposes.[40] To overcome the destruction of such a large volume of eggs, government provided funds with which "a considerable number of new incubators" were to be constructed. Additional incubators, however, were regarded as only a partial solution, since government could not afford to pay individuals to operate them. Indeed, the following year the number of government stations operating incubators decreased from twenty-three to twenty-one with a decline to 463,890,000 lobster ova hatched and planted.[41]

To overcome this dilemma, government asked lobster packers to agree to operate incubators free of charge. A number of them agreed to do so. The Department prepared instructions on proper procedures and in the end the government was able to provide a small remuneration ranging from one to four dollars, according to the number of incubators operated, to be paid upon the presentation of an account of their work at the end of the season. The number of incubators

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[40]It was not stated whether the ova collected was hatched by these packers or if it was transported to government stations.

[41]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 7.

furnished to each packer ranged from two to as many as twelve. In total, forty-seven packers agreed to operate incubators.[42]

Despite high hopes, the results of this trial were not encouraging. One problem was that not all packers performed the work in the manner expected. The packers responded that it was difficult to give the incubators the attention required without hiring an additional person, whom they could not afford. This lack of attention may account for the high proportion of ova lost, estimated at eighty percent or sixty-two million potential lobsters, compared to a loss rate of nineteen percent at government facilities.[43] In addition, the department found that not all packers had sufficient knowledge or experience to operate incubators. This conclusion calls into question the quality of the information packages provided to each packer. Regardless of the reasons the results varied, less than half the packers returned records of their work. This, the Report stated, indicated "a discouraging want of interest in that work."[44] Based on this experiment, the

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[42]See Appendix VI for a list of these operators and Appendix VII for communities where incubators were located.

[43]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 8.

[44]Ibid., p. 14. In 1894, 310 licenses were issued to lobster packers as opposed to 284 the previous year. These factories operated 89,133 lobster traps and employed 3,382 people who packed 30,093 cases of lobsters. Since each case contained forty-eight one-pound tins, this amounted to 6,231,768 lobsters.

Department recommended that in future the incubators be operated by government employees. Though more expensive, it was felt that the expertise required to operate incubators could not be obtained in a day.

Though the cod hatchery received a good report for 1895, lobster propagation did not fair as well. For reasons not specified in the Report, although the season began "unusually early, work commenced somewhat late." Moreover, despite the poor results from private operators, the number of government stations was further reduced to seventeen in order to curtail expenses.[45] In conjunction with a reduction in the number of berried lobsters available, this result was the hatching and planting of only 174,840,000 lobster, a decline of more than sixty percent from the previous year. Nonetheless, the Department was quick to point out the immense importance of the programme, since experience had shown that over-fishing and other destructive practices, such as taking immature lobsters, rapidly decreased stock size.

The Department also took this opportunity to survey the results of the programme since its inception. Catch had increased during the preceding three years by fifty percent to 1.5 million lobsters annually. This was sufficient to elicit inquiries about Newfoundland's programme from other nations,

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[45]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1895, p. 401.

including Britain, France, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Spain and Italy.[46]

By 1896 the Department reported that the lobster fishery, which prior to 1880 was of minor significance, was "a very important item in the means whereby our people earn their bread, and holds a prominent place among our exports."[47] It concluded that "this amount of success should encourage us to use still greater efforts, when we find such favourable results visible; and especially so when we take into account how this fishery, before any protective measures were taken was diminishing from year to year."[48]

The Department's Report for 1897 is of particular importance, since twelve of its twenty-nine pages were devoted to lobsters, commenting on every aspect of the industry. The reason for this detailed report may in part be found in the following statement:

> Whatever difference of opinion there may be regarding the artificial propagation of other fishes, there is now practically none in reference to lobster. The cost of carrying on the process is exceedingly moderate. Twenty-five men are employed in working the lobster incubators at twenty-eight stations. Their wages and passages and other expenses do not exceed $1,000 per annum.[49]

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[46]Ibid., p. 403.

[47]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1896, p. 302.

[48]Ibid., p. 303.

[49]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 336.

Since, as we have seen, the artificial propagation of cod was coming under attack, the Department may have been felt that its lobster hatching programme would also come under fire. Similar to its defence of cod hatching, the Department reported on work carried out in the US, Canada, Scandinavia and the United Kingdom in lobster propagation and its value to those countries. In addition to merely reporting on the previous year's activities, the Department provided a complete background of the industry prior to the beginning of artificial propagation. "It would be difficult to over-estimate the importance of the Lobster Fishery to Newfoundland," the Department claimed, pointing out that "now it is only second in value to the cod fishery." While in no other country, the Report asserted, "is lobster hatching conducted on such a large scale as in this Colony, or on such an economical plan," nonetheless "in Canada and the US strenuous efforts are put forth to preserve the lobster fishery on the same lines as here."[50] Obviously, the Department was attempting to make the strongest possible case to support its work. Moreover, unlike cod, lobster propagation was conducted over a wide area involving fishermen and factory owners interested in operating floating incubators. Since the general public was involved,

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[50]Ibid., pp. 329, 336-337. The cost of the program in 1897 was $1,600.

the Department apparently reasoned, acceptance of the programme was more likely.

Another important issue discussed in the Report was the length of the season. After "the most careful inquiry and lengthened deliberation," the Department decided to proclaim a new season.[51] On the southern and western coasts, the season would close on August 10 and on the eastern and northern shores on August 20.[52] The decision to abolish the fall lobster fishery was a response to the increased number of lobster fishermen and factories. The Department believed that unless the season were curtailed, over-fishing would "bring about the extinction of lobsters."[53] In addition, the Department cited problems with quality control in the fall fishery. Lobsters caught and canned in the autumn were often discoloured or injured and the meat was given insufficient time to mature before canning.[54] Leaving the lobsters in the water until the following spring would not only enable the meat to mature but also result in greater profits.[55] Despite shortening the season, however, the Department reiterated that it

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[51]Ibid., p. 334.

[52]Ibid. Specific locations defining the shoreline affected by the closed season were not provided.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid., p. 335.

[55]Ibid.

remained legal for fishermen to capture lobsters at any time for food.[56]

At the same time, the Department promulgated new rules about acceptable sizes. For canning or selling, lobsters had to measure at least ten inches from the tip of the rostrum, or frontal projection, to the end of the telson, or tail, under a penalty of up to five dollars for each offence.[57] To ensure that undersized crustaceans were not captured, the two undermost laths on each side of lobster pots were required to be "not less than one and three-quarter inches apart thus securing an opening by which small lobsters may escape."[58]

Unfortunately, since reports of the Department are not available for the period 1898 through 1901, there is no account of the lobster fishery for those years. But the

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[56]Over time, the lobster season continued to contract. In 1904, the open season ran from April 10 to July 20 west of Cape Race and from May 10 to August 1 on the eastern coast north of Cape Race. With the opening of the French Shore to settlement, regulations were extended to this portion of the coast in 1905, with the season running from April 20 to July 31 from Cape Race to Cape Gregory; May 1 to August 10 from Cape Gregory to Flower's Cove; and from May 10 to August 10 from Flower's Cove to Cape St. John. By 1910, open seasons were as follows: April 20 to July 24 from Cape Race to Cape Ray; April 20 to July 31 from Cape Ray to Cape Gregory; May 10 to August 20 from Cape Gregory to Flowers Cove; May 10 to August 1 from Cape Race north to Cape John and May 1 to August 10 from Cape John to Flowers Cove. These open seasons continued in force until 1921. See Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery," p. 24.

[57]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 326.

[58]Ibid., p. 334.

reports for 1902-1906 reflect some marked changes in the industry. One difference is the lack of consistent statistical data. Indeed, the Department appears to have had difficulty in monitoring the hatching programme. For example, in 1905 it reported that "hatcheries are kept up in Fortune Bay, Bonavista Bay and Green Bay...but the Fisheries' Board cannot speak definitely about the actual results from these hatcheries at present."[59] Another shift was that greater attention was being focused on the actual production of canned lobsters and the need for stringent regulations. For example, in 1903 the Department considered having lobster cases marked to enable packers to be traced.[60] By 1905, in an attempt to make it possible to locate those who sold an inferior product, a regulation was introduced to make it compulsory for all packers to label their tins. By April 19, 1906, every packer and canner was required to stamp each tin with a license number.[61] It was hoped that being able to trace inferior products would enhance the quality.[62] The Department was convinced by the end of 1906 that the programme had achieved

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[59]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, pp. 148-149.

[60]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1903, p. 142.

[61]"Rules and Regulations Respecting the Fisheries of Newfoundland 1905," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 5.

[62]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 149.

some success, concluding that labelling tins promoted "superior packing" and was a "protection to the honest and experienced packer."[63] In 1907, there was a further improvement in the quality of pack over previous seasons. Once again, this was attributed to the numbering of tins.[64] However, unlike other years, the obligation to insure a quality product was extended to include exporters. To this effect, the Fisheries Board considered making the law more "drastic as far as the exporter is concerned."[65] By 1911, these laws were considered "as near perfection as it is possible to make them, but the system of carrying them out does not give the desired effect."[66] The biggest problems obviously were enforcement and convincing packers that it was in their best interest to produce a quality product.[67]

In its 1913 Report the Department asserted that it had "done faithful work during the past four years."[68] Despite this self-praise, the problems in the lobster fishery remained

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[63]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, p. 172.

[64]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, p. 145.

[65]Ibid., p. 146.

[66]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1911, p. 492.

[67]The enforcement of regulations in the lobster fishery is further discussed in the section on "The Fisheries Protection Service" in chapter 5.

[68]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1913, p. 560.

virtually identical to what they had been in 1888: overfishing, inadequate pack, and the destruction of eggs and immature lobsters. To encourage the release of fertile lobsters, a bounty of five cents was paid for each one turned over to government. As these creatures were generally larger than infertile lobsters, they were worth more to a canner than five cents.[69] Unless this amount were increased or a greater emphasis placed on inspection, it would be difficult to end the practice.

Government's failure in this area can be measured quantitatively. Though additional licenses were issued in 1913, two million fewer lobsters were caught than the previous year, a loss estimated at more than $135,000.[70] The shortfall in the catch was also reflected in the price per case, which rose by $3.00 to $21.00.[71]

Two factors contributed to this decline. First, there was the weather. While the last two weeks of April were fine, the

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[69]Ibid., p. 550.

[70]In 1889, 284 factories produced 76,226 cases of lobsters; assuming two hundred lobsters per case, then 16,445,200 lobsters were taken. In 1913, 3,762 factories caught 3,745,460 lobsters or 12,699,740 less than twenty-four years previously. In addition, government statistics on the effort put into the fishery each year were inadequate. Although attempts were made to count the number of fishermen, nets and gear employed, the government was unable to come up with an accurate account.

[71]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1913, p. 545.

first week of May was cold and the seas rough, destroying many traps. Even those spared were moved about on the seabed; lobsters, it was believed, stayed away from moving objects. But the poor weather conditions were likely less important than the fact that those engaged in the trade were "destroying more lobsters in one year than nature can supply in ten."[72] The Department claimed that "it is now an acknowledged fact by fishermen themselves that this valuable fishery is quickly slipping from them, and the question on every man's lips is, how can we save it?"[73] The officials believed that this showed "in a conclusive manner that the actions of fishermen in the past, and some in the recent [sic], whether through ignorance or otherwise, have been robbing the fishery of the billions of eggs so necessary for its maintenance."[74]

While fishermen were catching, and factories packing, both fertile and immature lobsters, should those involved in the industry bear all the blame for the declining stocks? I would argue that blame should be shared with exporters and government. Exporters could have refused to ship cans packed with these lobsters and government could have been more stringent in enforcing laws protecting immature and egg-

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[72]Ibid., p. 549.

[73]Ibid., p. 559.

[74]Ibid.

bearing lobsters. Moreover, complaints continued to pour in from purchasers about inferior tins and the manner in which they were packed.[75] To overcome this problem, it was suggested that "more care be given to inspection and shipping," especially in St. John's from which the majority of exports were shipped.[76] In addition, the Department called upon all lobster packers to "join in a particular effort to assist the Department in conserving this valuable inheritance," admonishing them:

> that only by strictly adhering to the regulations can the present good prices be maintained; and this can only be done by care and attention to the pack, clean and well equipped factories, regardless of whether the Government regulations are being enforced or not.[77]

Deficiencies in lobster packing may be regarded in the same light as the inadequate cure of cod. With so many people engaged in the lobster trade competing for the same markets, there appears to have been a greater emphasis on increasing output rather than quality. This behaviour was based on the flawed assumption that the greater the output, the higher the profits. Unfortunately, this principal did not hold. If

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[75]Ibid., p. 540.

[76]Ibid., pp. 540-541.

[77]Ibid., p. 521. The following year government introduced a new act directed at increasing stock size and improving output. See Newfoundland, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1914, pp. 182-187.

anything, Newfoundland suffered from a reverse reality. That none of the parties did what it could have is testimony to the numerous problems inherent in the fishery, but especially to a myopic focus on short-term profits to the detriment of long-term stability. This may have been enforced in part by the variability of the catch. The accepted maxim appears to have been to reap the bounty when lobsters were plentiful to compensate for years when they scarce.

It may be argued that lobster embodied a greater potential for development than cod or herring. This conclusion derives in part from two obvious economies: lobsters required neither an elaborate cure nor complex packaging. As Moses Harvey pointed out, with lobster "there is no cullage or deterioration, the article is cash from the moment it comes from the water."[78] But in part the value of lobster also stemmed from the fact that demand for lobster--as for many specialized marine products--was rising more rapidly than demand for traditional output. This was especially true in wealthy countries like the US and Canada, the principal markets for Newfoundland lobster. This explains why Harvey could also write that, pound for pound, lobster was worth "six or seven times" the value of cod. Nonetheless, as a result of neglect and carelessness, the Newfoundland industry on the eve

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[78]Newfoundland, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1914, p. 33.

of World War I foundered from self-induced ills. Despite the best intentions, government and its agencies deserve a share of the blame for this state.

Herring Fishery

After providing a brief account of past endeavours by the Fisheries Commission to bring stability to this sector of the industry, the Department in its initial Report urged Newfoundland to capitalize on its comparative advantageous in the herring fishery. Of prime importance was its relative proximity to American and Canadian markets, as well as an abundance of herring of various sizes suitable for smoking, pickling, and shredding.[79]

That nothing was done to exploit these advantages became apparent the following year when the Department argued that it was "humiliating to find [that] these advantages are neglected and the total value of herrings exported does not exceed $250,000," especially since if "conducted in such a way to place us on a level with other herring exporting countries the value of this fishery alone would be not less than three million dollars." To this it added that "it is evident that there has been a culpable neglect of this great source of

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[79]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, pp. 244-245.

wealth and it is time that strenuous efforts were put forth to turn a better account of one of our finest natural resources."[80]

This lack of interest in herring was attributed to low prices, which were insufficient to induce fishermen to catch and cure herring in the manner suggested by the Department and the former Commission. In addition, like cod, the herring fishery suffered from tal qual buying.[81] Neilsen blamed the resilience of this trait on the credit system, which he asserted "has worked mischief among the people in this branch of the fishing, and perhaps been the principal cause of crippling and retarding the development of the herring trade." Neilsen also attributed the failure to enforce regulations pertaining to cure and barrel standards as factors that held back the herring fishery. To overcome these problems, he suggested that local men be sent abroad to learn curing techniques and to become familiar with the type of product demanded in different markets.[82]

During the following two years, the Department reiterated these comments, thus suggesting that the desired improvements had not materialised. In part this may have been a result of

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[80]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 11.

[81]Ibid., pp. 75-76. Tal qual refers to the purchase of fish without the benefit of cull.

[82]Ibid., p. 76.

the lack of markets for the type of herring being produced. If the Department were correct in describing local herring as inferior--packed and shipped in poorly constructed barrels--it is obvious that Newfoundland could not compete in world markets against superior products.

In 1896 the Department resumed its traditional reporting and recommendations, stressing that fishermen were not giving the herring fishery the attention it required, focusing instead on cod. For its part, the Department asserted that it had spared no effort to "remedy abuses connected with the fishery" and "to impress [on those engaged in the fishery] proper methods of cure and packing only in well-made barrels."[83] These reforms, in conjunction with "enterprise and capital," would make herring as valuable as cod.[84] The next year, without reference to "enterprise and capital," the Department concluded that conditions had not changed since 1894.[85] The reasons for this, it suggested, were chiefly "imperfection in cure and inferior barrels led to losses in foreign markets, either through the condemnation of large

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[83]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1896, p. 300.

[84]Ibid.

[85]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 346.

quantities, or the expense of repacking the fish on arrival at market."[86]

To provide an example for fishermen and packers, the Department suggested the establishment of two or three facilities in which herring could be cured and packed by experts. The output could then be exported by government at a price which would not only cover costs but also return a profit. It was hoped that this would "stir up the people to follow improved methods, and at the same time promote the sale of our herrings abroad." It was also recommended that prizes be offered for the best cured herring. To further increase sales, it was proposed that agents be employed in foreign markets.[87]

Over the next couple of years, the herring fishery began to experience a turnaround in both output and value. This was the result of the introduction and extension of the Scottish system of curing herring. In that year, approximately 7,000 barrels were prepared for market in this manner by Baine Johnston & Co., Harvey & Co., A. Goodridge & Sons, and Job Brothers & Co.[88] It was hoped that success in the markets would stimulate others to enter the trade in a similar manner.

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[86]Ibid., p. 345.

[87]Ibid. This issue will be examined in detail in chapter 4.

[88]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, pp. 16-17.

Another important factor in the lack of production for foreign markets was the presence of American fishing vessels looking for herring as bait in Newfoundland waters. In February 1902 the Evening Telegram reprinted an article from the Gloucester Times reporting that twelve American vessels had arrived with full cargoes from Newfoundland and that an additional nineteen were currently in Placentia and Fortune Bay awaiting cargoes.[89] In a later article, it was reported that the Bay of Islands herring fishery in 1902 was the best for many years, with as much as $2.25 a basket paid by the Americans for frozen fish.[90] The article continued "that many fishermen received $5.00 a barrel on their catches and 3 cents a herring was paid when the schooners were anxious to get away."[91] It is important to recognize that selling to American fishing vessels meant payment in either cash or kind, a distinct improvement over dealing with the local merchant under the credit system. This obviously provided encouragement for fishermen to sell herring as bait to American or Canadian

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[89]Evening Herald (St. John's), February 8, 1902. For a breakdown of the number of foreign vessels calling at Newfoundland ports to take on herring as bait for the bank fishery and as food for human consumption, see the appendices in the Annual Reports of the Department of Fisheries. Placentia Bay herring were selling in Gloucester at $3.50 per hundred pounds.

[90]Basket size was not given.

[91]Evening Herald (St. John's), February 12, 1902.

fishermen rather than as a food fish in either St. John's or Halifax where tal qual purchasing removed the incentive for quality. In addition, the Americans wanted herring either fresh or frozen rather than cured, thus relieving fishermen of the additional burden of curing the fish.

Nonetheless, by 1903 the Department still found little positive to report about the herring fishery. In fact, the Report began by lamenting that "this important branch of the Newfoundland fishing industry is every season subject to great chances and changes."[92] This statement appears to have been motivated by smaller than normal catches in Bonne Bay, Placentia and Fortune Bays, and off Labrador. While there is no definitive method of knowing about prospective improvements in either cure or markets, the generally pessimistic tone suggests that any improvements must have been negligible.[93]

In the 1905 throne speech, special attention was reserved for the herring fishery and the need to obtain the services of "a man possessing both a scientific and practical knowledge of fishery matters."[94] These qualities were found in a Scot named William Mair, whose appointment reflected not only his ability

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[92]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, p. 142.

[93]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1903, pp. 142-143.

[94]Newfoundland, Proceedings of the House of Assembly, March 31, 1905, as reported in Evening Telegram (St. John's), April 1, 1905.

but also Newfoundland's recognition that other nations, including Scotland, were well ahead of the island in prosecuting the herring fishery. There was a good deal of sympathy for the notion that by emulating the herring fishery of other countries, Newfoundland would be better able to "participate in a trade so lucrative to others."[95] What was needed in addition to new and improved catching and processing methods was the infusion of sufficient capital to push the endeavour beyond the experimental stage. The shortage of capital in this branch of the fishery was most likely a consequence of herring being perceived as less important than cod; as a result, most available capital was consumed by the latter. Indeed, the Department reported that:

> The past history of our local herring fishery has been characterised as one of spasmodic enterprise, never on an extensive scale, nor as a distinct business worth cultivating on its own merits. Hence, from one cause or another the undertaking has not expanded into one of national importance.[96]

The Department also alluded to the potential for a limited liability company, which would undertake such an endeavour

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[95]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 147. The idea of studying the fisheries in other countries was not a new concept; it was first suggested by the 1888 Commission of Inquiry.

[96]Ibid.

with sufficient capital to conduct operations on a "liberal and systematic scale."[97]

To encourage more participation in the fishery, government passed a Herring Act in 1905 to "encourage the fishermen of this colony to devote more attention to the herring fishery and to adopt that mode of fishing which has resulted so satisfactorily in other countries." Moreover, the framers of the law believed that it was "desirable to establish in this colony a method of curing and packing herring which will insure for such a ready sale in foreign markets."[98]

In reading the Act, it is apparent that a principal motive was to develop a drift-net fishery rather than to assist those already engaged in the traditional pursuit of herring. In this case, the Department had as its model a practice encouraged by the Canadian Department of Fisheries, which had imported a drift-net vessel and plant with an experienced labour force.[99] Under this bill, any person or company engaged in the herring fishery in the U.K. would, after demonstrating their intent to prosecute a drift-net fishery in 1906 or 1907 off the coast of Newfoundland, receive free entry of all necessary boats and gear. In addition, a

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[97]Ibid.

[98]Ibid.

[99]Ibid., pp. 147-148.

subsidy was also provided to anyone employing at least four "bona fide" residents of Newfoundland for a period of not less than ten months. The Act did not specify the size of the subsidy or how it was to be paid. Nor were the qualifications of the individuals to be hired indicated. Perhaps most important, it was silent on what was meant by the phrase "ten months": whether this was for each year of operations or a total per man. The Act also provided for a bounty of fifty cents per barrel on all herring cured and packed according to the Scotch method upon receiving a certificate from the Fisheries Expert attesting to the quantity and brand of herring produced. To enable local residents to obtain experience in drift-net fishing, curing and packing according to the Scotch method, the Act provided money to send up to ten fishermen to Scotland for training.[100]

The Department's enthusiasm for this project can be attributed to two factors. First, there was a report that Mair drafted on the herring fishery in which he asserted that "there is no reasonable doubt that herring could be caught by drift-nets [from] August onwards to the end of the year."[101] He also pointed out that with an increasing population, it was

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[100]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Sixth Year of the Reign of His Majesty King Edward VII (St. John's, 1906), pp. 141-142.

[101]"Report by William Mair on the Herring Fishery," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, pp. 200-201.

necessary to lessen the dependence on the cod fishery. The second factor was Canadian success in drift-net fishing, which lessened the risk in pursuing this tack. Indeed, since Newfoundland had an abundance of superior quality herring, it appeared to officials that such an endeavour was far less risky than in Canada.[102] Government also was impressed by the success of drift-net fishing by Great Britain, concluding that if similar methods were employed in Newfoundland, there were no obvious barriers to success.[103]

The promoters of this scheme also believed that drift-net fishing would solve a related problem: the irregular supply of herring. Once this was resolved it would be possible to establish a large plant, which presumably would be able to produce a consistent cure at competitive prices. From this, they believed, "everything else will follow in regular course."[104]

In an attempt to increase local knowledge in catching and processing herring, the Minister of Fisheries, Eli Dawe, was dispatched in 1906 to Yarmouth, England, to obtain information on the cure of British herring and how these techniques could be applied in Newfoundland. While abroad, the Minister was

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[102]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 148.

[103]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, p. 160.

[104]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 148.

also to test the possibility of drift-net fishing for herring in the open sea.[105] To do this, an agreement was completed with an experienced British firm to operate two steam drifters in Newfoundland waters for three years beginning in May 1907.[106] Under the contract, the company was to hire experienced Scots to cure the herring and to train Newfoundland fishermen to duplicate the procedure for fish destined for European and American markets.[107]

In the account of his trip to Great Britain, Dawe reported that he had found it impossible to charter a steam drifter and a crew on the terms specified in his instructions. He suggested that a subsidy of not less than £3,000 would be required to hire a steamer to carry on a fishery for five months.[108] An alternate means to experiment with drift-net fishing was to subsidize experienced curers from Great Britain to employ two or more sailing drifters for three years. Under this scheme, the master and one other man in each boat would be experienced Scottish fishermen, with the balance of the crew from Newfoundland. Dawe suggested that this would cost

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[105]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, p. 160.

[106]Ibid.

[107]Ibid.

[108]"Report of The Minister of Fisheries on His Trip to Great Britain, 1906," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, pp. 186-192.

less than chartering steamers and would be more "effectual" in covering three years as opposed to one. Moreover, it could be taken up by any fishermen who owned a suitable vessel.[109] In the end, the latter recommendation was accepted and the government entered into a contract with a the British firm of Flett. To assist, government built a curing station at Middle Arm in the Bay of Islands to be rented by the company. To cover the contingency that this operation might fail, the Department added that the facility "would be most suitable from its location for any fishery business."[110]

The enterprise was not an immediate success. Attempts to harvest herring using drift nets was "largely owing to circumstances beyond [our] control" not as successful as expected, the Department reported in 1907.[111] The first problem encountered was difficulty in recruiting crews for fully-equipped Scottish boats.[112] Failing at this, Flett purchased and converted two local Newfoundland vessels for the purpose. Four fishermen, four coopers and nine women were brought out from Scotland to assist in the operation. By the time everything was ready, it was the middle of June before the boats

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[109]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, p. 144.

[110]Ibid.

[111]Ibid., p. 193.

[112]Ibid.

arrived at Twillingate to begin operations. The first entry in their log books was for June 18, when they fished northwest of Long Point. Throughout the remainder of the summer and early fall, the vessels fished in White Bay, Notre Dame Bay and in the Bay of Islands. But bad luck dogged the enterprise. While at anchor off Twillingate on September 26, a northeasterly gale drove both vessels ashore. One was dragged off and repaired; it was able to continue to fish off Nipper's Harbour, South West Arm and Green Bay. The other vessel, however, remained aground.[113] The first year's results were disappointing. Only seven hundred barrels of herring were cured in 1907, of which 159 barrels were shipped to Danzig, Germany. The cure was so poor that Flett's agent advised him to send no more of the same quality. The remainder of the herring was shipped to New York, where it also met with little success because of its "poor quality." The defence offered for these poor results was that the herring shipped were caught early in the season; different results, it was predicted, could be expected from fish caught in the autumn.[114]

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[113]"Report by William Mair on Drift-Net Fishing," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, pp. 193-197.

[114]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, p. 195. The following year the Department reported that it believed that spring herring, because of their poor quality and absence of fat, were ill-suited for either the American or European markets.

Despite this initial failure, the plan continued to have adherents. For example, a writer in the influential Newfoundland Quarterly came out in support of drift-net fishing. The rationale was based on a comparison of prices. Newfoundland fishermen received approximately $2.00 per barrel for herring, which sold in the American market for about $6.00, leaving American middlemen the bulk of the profit.[115] The author argued that it was time that a larger percentage of this profit remained in Newfoundland. To this end, he praised government for "making every effort" to solve the problem."[116]

Despite such support, the drift-net fishery was doomed to a short life. In the spring of 1908 Flett decided not to return. At the same time, the Gorton-Pew Company, which had been operating for three or four years in Green and White Bays, also abandoned its facilities.[117] The supporters of a drift-net fishery were devastated.

The failure of this fishery of course demanded explanation. To the editor of the Evening Chronicle, the failure

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[115]The author did not consider expenses incurred by the Americans in getting the herring to the American market or other associated costs. Clearly, the difference between the price paid to Newfoundland fishermen and the selling price in the US was not all clear profit for the individuals or firms engaged in the trade.

[116]"The Yarmouth Herring Fishery, and the Use of the Drift-Net," The Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. VII, No. 1 (July 1907), p. 15.

[117]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1908, p. 292.

ought to have been expected. As evidence for this position, he cited an extract from Neilsen's survey of the herring fishery of 1891, which warned that:

> From my investigations I am led to believe that the physical and meteorological conditions of the sea, do not allow herring to resort to such a distance off the shore, for any length of time or so long, that a deep-sea drift-net fishery could be profitably established off the north-eastern coast. This is my reason for thinking that a drift-net fishery for herring in deep sea, off the eastern coast of Newfoundland never can be prosecuted with profit, and the experiments and investigations carried out of this expedition have confirmed this.[118]

Unfortunately, the extract that the editor used does not accurately reflect Neilsen's evaluation of the potential of a drift-net fishery off the northeast coast. In fact, Neilsen reached the opposite conclusion, suggesting that a drift-net fishery for herring could be operated between June and August.[119] This editorial provides a good example of how partisan politics could have negative effect on the fishery.

This brought an end to government's attempts to develop a drift-net fishery. Proximity to Canadian and American markets and an abundant supply of herring were not sufficient factors in this case to ensure success. This was government's last major attempt to place the herring fishery on a firm footing prior to World War I.

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[118]Evening Chronicle (St. John's), February 8, 1908.

[119]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 8.

Nonetheless, during the remainder of the prewar era, constant reference was made to the potential of this fishery and, as in previous years, government viewed this fishery as one that "up to date never been seriously viewed by the people of Newfoundland." In this light Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Russia, Greece and West Africa were in 1909 considered potential markets for salt herring.[120] To this was added that with the application of cold storage facilities, markets for herring could be "easily obtained."[121] The Department also suggested Newfoundland adopt trawlers as used in the North Sea to prosecute the herring fishery. This measure was supported on the basis of permitting fishermen to go to the herring when they failed to came ashore.[122] However, nothing ever came of this initiative.

In the last five years, little new transpired in this branch of the fishery, although private operators from time to time displayed interest in new projects. In 1910, for example, the New York firm of Whittaker and Potts visited Newfoundland to explore the possibility of establishing a herring packing plant in the Bay of Islands.[123] The proposed facility was to

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[120]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1909, pp. 390-391.

[121]Ibid.

[122]Ibid.

[123]Daily News (St. John's), October 19, 1910.

have been capable of handling 24,000 barrels of herring annually and to employ a large number of boys and girls in preparing herring for market.[124] The plant was never built.

Similarly, in August 1911 the Gorton-Pew Fisheries Co. of Boston and Gloucester purchased several properties in the Bay of Islands for a plant capable of processing not only herring but also cod and lobster for the American market.[125] The following month it was reported that along with the Gloucester firm of Cunningham & Thompson, Gorton-Pew was considering the erection of large plants at Placentia to handle salt bulk fish from April to November and herring from November to April for the American Market.[126]

In addition to American companies, the Fisheries Syndicate of London in 1910 sent two of the directors to Newfoundland to investigate the potential of the Bay of Islands for the production of smoked and kippered herring.[127] The syndicate proposed to ship these products to cities in England and the US.

Despite the interest by the private sector, the Department's concern with the herring fishery waned noticeably in

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[124]Ibid., October 19 and October 21, 1910.

[125]Ibid., August 17, 1911.

[126]Ibid., September 25, 1911.

[127]Ibid., October 26, 1911.

the immediate prewar years. For the most part, this branch of the industry was left to limp along on the fringes of the fishery. Although hatching cod and lobster did not meet with the success expected and although no new programmes to stimulate the herring fishery succeeded, this does not mean that it was losing momentum. Instead, the Department turned its attention to the promotion of other types of initiatives, the majority of which found even less favour with the politicians than those discussed thus far. These new schemes--including improvements in culling and curing, the establishment of a Fisheries Protection Services, the creation of bait depots and cold storage facilities, and market diversification--are the subjects of the next two chapters.

CHAPTER 4

CURE AND MARKETING OF COD

Scientific studies of the migratory habits and life cycles of fish, as well as hatcheries and regulations for their protection, were important steps by which government attempted to increase the stock size and hence the catch. Regardless of the success of these endeavours, problems with curing and marketing had to be overcome if the fishery were to be maximized. For example, in trying to penetrate the American market, the issue was not catching the fish, but rather producing a commodity other than dried cod.

Because cure and marketing are related, they are considered together here. Indeed, many government programmes testify to the fact that improved cure was perceived as a means of entering new markets and maintaining existing ones. Newfoundland at the same time attempted to create new markets for dried cod--trade diversification--while trying to find new markets for non-traditional output, such as fresh, frozen and tinned fish--product diversification. In short, the colony aimed for two kinds of diversification within a single-sector economy in which the main export accounted for an overwhelming percentage of total visible output.[1]

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[1]For the period, approximately ninety-eight percent of "visible" dried cod exports went to European and Mediterranean countries. The word "visible" is used here in recognition of the fact that not all exports were measured in the official statistics.

This chapter deals with attempts at improving the cure, expanding markets and promoting new products. As with other developments in the fishery, the Fisheries Commission and the Department of Fisheries assumed leadership roles in the quarter-century prior to 1914. The liability for inferior cures and stagnant markets were inter-related and both were in part responsible for the malaise in the fishery. Fishermen and merchants have often been assigned blame for this condition. While the discussion of their contribution to the problem will be cursory in this thesis, it is clear that their lack of cooperation was part of the cause. Traditionally, however, government has been chastised for failing to bring in regulations for improvements and for not actively seeking new markets. This chapter will show that this was clearly not the case: government was active in both areas, but the problem was that their attempts at intervention in these areas, as elsewhere in the fishery, were less effective than they might have been.

Cure

The earliest indication of interest in improving cure and expanding markets originated with the Fisheries Commission's publication in 1889 of Adolph Neilsen's pamphlet, The Cure of

Codfish and Herring.[2] The motive behind the publication was the author's belief that "by comparing the process [by] which fish is cured in other countries we have a chance to extract many hints which, if adopted, may be of great advantage to Newfoundland".[3] In essence Neilsen was attempting to solve an age-old problem, the lack of a standard cure.

The next year Neilsen suggested that government provide $2,000 "for experiments in trying to establish new trades, local as well as foreign, in different kinds of fish, put up and prepared in different ways."[4] He advised that government take the lead since private initiative, because of insufficient knowledge of markets, was ineffective. To ensure public awareness, results were to be published in local papers in order to encourage interest from the private sector. Neilsen proposed to concentrate the initial efforts on the curing, smoking, and packaging of cod, herring, lobster, salmon, eel and caplin for potential markets in Europe, Canada and the US.[5]

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[2]Louise Whiteway, "Inception of the Newfoundland department of Fisheries," p. 41. Two thousand copies were circulated.

[3]A.D. Nielsen, Report on the Cure of Codfish and Herring (St. John's, 1889), p. 3.

[4]Correspondence from Nielsen to the Fisheries Commission, "On Extension Of Fish Trade," Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1889, pp. 49-51.

[5]Ibid.

To provide a practical demonstration of the proper cure for herring, in December 1890 Neilsen established a pilot project at Sound Island, Placentia Bay. Of 100 barrels cured, ninety were shipped to New York, Hamburg and Chicago, where they sold for between $7 and $8 per barrel. At the same time, local herring cured and packed in the traditional way sold in New York for $5 per barrel. The new product not only received a better price but also encouraged American firms to show an interest in obtaining additional shipments. Those fish sent to Hamburg, which were used for smoking, garnered high approval and were considered by some buyers to be superior to herring from Scotland or Norway. The ten barrels not immediately exported were left outdoors on a St. John's wharf for ten months; when opened on October 30, 1891, the herring were in perfect condition. Shipped to New York, they sold for $8 per barrel.[6]

These results were significant because they showed that if Newfoundland herring were to secure a place in foreign markets, care had to be taken to ensure high quality. Moreover, it showed that strong barrels were necessary. Indeed, the Commission attributed much of the poor reputation enjoyed by Newfoundland herring to poor barrels. The Commission also recommended that herring should be produced specifically for

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[6]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, pp. 5-7.

individual markets rather than a uniform product designed for all.[7]

Neilsen attributed the experiment with rekindling private interest in similar operations. Unfortunately, this type of positive response was extremely localized. The number of boats and men employed in the herring fishery at Sound Island in 1891 exceeded any previous year; estimates suggested that at least 400 boats, 300 seines, 400-500 nets and approximately 2,500 men participated. Because of the large number of men and vessels, it is fortunate that rules to regulate the herring fishery, discussed in chapter 2, were in effect. To enforce these ordinances, a magistrate and fisheries officers were stationed at Sound Island. In addition, a Sanitary Commission, consisting of three inhabitants from Sound Island, were appointed to oversee operations.[8] Neilsen hoped that "the development now initiated in Placentia Bay will extend to all the other centres of the herring fishery."[9] Yet this never occurred: in 1897 the Department reported that inferior cures and barrels continued to result in the condemnation of large quantities of herring or the expense of repacking upon arrival at markets.[10] Nonetheless, the Sound Island demonstration did

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[7]Ibid., p. 6.

[8]Ibid., p. 7.

[9]Ibid., p. 10.

[10]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 345.

prove that when properly cured and packed, Newfoundland herring was competitive on world markets.[11]

The problem with the cure and packaging of herring was but one area of concern. Dried cod also suffered from similar deficiencies. Problems in this branch of the fishery led Judge Bennett in 1890 to conclude the cod trade had suffered due to "gross carelessness in handling." The inferior cure elicited "continual remonstrances from purchasers," while "circular and consular reports warned us that if we did not take more care and make better fish, the trade must pass from us to our Norwegian rivals."[12]

Bennett's concerns were echoed by the Department of Fisheries in 1894, which opined that Newfoundland dried cod was being sold to countries that could not afford a better quality product. In addition, it reported that Newfoundland fish had on occasion been stored until better grades had been sold, relegating such cod to second-class status which was "often a burden in the markets."[13] Neilsen qualified this judgement, pointing out that Newfoundland fish was not inferior in quality but in cure. He believed that four factors were responsible. First, there was the fact that the "cure was not in the hands of experts with a knowledge of foreign market

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[11]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, pp. 4-5.

[12]Report of Judge Bennett Together with Evidence Respecting Bait Protection Service 1890 (St. John's, 1891), p. 4.

[13]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 47.

requirements." In addition, there were "too many people... involved in the curing process," which he felt "should be concentrated in the hands of fewer people." Third, "control over cure was not in the hands of dealers and exporters," who were thus "forced to take whatever the fishermen produce." Finally, he claimed that "because of an inconsistent cure, exporters were unable to guarantee the quality of a shipment of fish."[14] To improve the cure, Neilsen suggested the credit system be abolished, that fishermen sell directly from the water for cash, and that curing be left to merchants and exporters, thereby separating catching and curing.[15]

Though Neilsen's suggestions appear sound, they were inappropriate for the time and local conditions. Abolishing the credit system and replacing it with a cash economy could not have been accomplished overnight. Accomplishing this in a colony in which few fishermen had experience with a cash-based system would also likely have occasioned more problems than it would have solved. Moreover, the fishery was characterized by a fixed set of interpersonal relations, such as between a fisherman and a merchant, which were governed by tradition. Altering this precipitately would have placed strains not only

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[14]Ibid., pp. 52-53.

[15]Ibid., p. 49. Several years later Norway's success in marketing dried cod was attributed to the fact that unlike Newfoundland, Norwegian fishermen were not responsible for cure. See the testimony of William Job Carson in Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, p. 38.

on the economy but also on the cultural precepts which underpinned the society.

Separating catching from curing would also have been difficult. The most important barrier was geography. To segregate the two parts of the process would have necessitated the creation of collection centres to which fishermen could bring their fish for curing. Because of the spatial isolation of many communities, transporting fish to such centres would have been difficult in the absence of motor vessels. Finally, the purchase of green fish was impossible in light of insufficient cold storage facilities.

By 1897 the Department had concluded more forcefully than before that government by itself could not bring about the desired change. Any improvements, it believed, required the support of all other participants in the fishery.[16] This was an insightful observation and marked a subtle but significant shift in bureaucratic thinking. While the Department, and especially Neilsen, had never been so naive as to believe that change could be induced solely through administrative fiat, it now explicitly acknowledged that transformations required a partnership between government and the industry.[17] Unfortunately, the Department was not completely successful in selling the other actors in the fishery on this idea. Through 1914 government would continue for the most part to behave as

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[16]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 342.

[17]Ibid.

though additional regulations would solve the problems, while fishermen and exporters were not above blaming government for all their woes.

Demonstrating that it was not listening, government took matters into its own hands, passing in the same year "An Act to Regulate the Culling of Cod-fish." This law required individuals who wished to cull fish to obtain a licence from either a Stipendiary Magistrate or Justice of the Peace.[18] In order to obtain a license, the application had to be accompanied by recommendations from at least three experienced cullers attesting to the applicant's competence. An initial license was valid for five years and renewable for a similar period. The fee was $1 and fifty cents per renewal. Culling without a license carried a fine of up to $10; in default of payment, imprisonment was allowed for as much as ten days. The act also made it illegal for a licensed culler to accept gifts, payments or rewards for his services in excess of the market rate for culling fish. Doing so carried a penalty not to exceed $50 or in default of payment, a period of imprisonment not to exceed two months and forfeiture of the individual's license.[19] While there was nothing wrong with the

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[18]Communities listed included: St. John's, Harbour Grace, Carbonear, Trinity, Catalina, King's Cove, Greenspond, Bonavista, Twillingate, Fogo, Burgeo, Harbour Breton, Gaultois and future locations designated by the Governor in Council.

[19]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fiftieth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1887), pp. 224-227.

motivation behind this law--and perhaps nothing wrong with the provisions of the act--by acting without consultation the government virtually guaranteed that the bill would be viewed with distrust by significant segments of the industry.

To underscore the failure of the 1897 law, Governor MacGregor in 1906 suggested anew that Newfoundland's markets "could probably be extended by improved methods of 'cure.'"[20] Since licensing cullers had not worked, the Governor recommended that a system of government food inspectors, as found in other countries, be established. He concluded that "one thing is certain, that the fishery of this colony has by no means reached its full development."[21]

It was left to the editors of the Trade Review to diagnose the problem correctly. Reminding readers that their publication had "time and time again pointed out the necessity for a revision of the culling laws," they castigated "fishermen, government and merchants" for refusing to assent. Although they ascribed no motives for the obstinacy of government and fishermen, the reasons for their objections are evident. For fishermen, the problem was economic. Unless they produced a higher grade of fish--which based upon historical evidence seemed unlikely--the enforcement of culling rules would have led to lower prices. For government, the problem appears to be party politics. Although there is no evidence

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[20]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, p. 429.

[21]Ibid., p. 430.

that the mass of politicians were opposed to more patronage positions to fill with their supporters, the difficulty arose in the battle for fishermen's votes. Any strict enforcement of culling regulations was virtually certain to upset some fishermen. Choosing the short-term goal of re-election over the long-term viability of the fishery, government opted to procrastinate.[22]

To overcome the barrier imposed by the political system, some merchants proposed that the competence of prospective cullers first be determined by a body appointed by exporters and merchants prior to appointment by government. Although feasible from the merchants' perspective, this suggestion drew the wrath of fishermen who feared that an inherent bias would exist in any culler who first had to win the support of the merchants. In short, a lack of trust made this tactic unworkable.[23]

Later that year the Minister of Fisheries, Eli Dawe, suggested an alternative to improve the quality of the cure. He proposed that government implement a policy similar to Canada's by providing bounties for high-grade fish. This, of course, was based on the assumption that economic incentives could induce fishermen and exporters to take more care with the cure. Concluding that "fish curing should be our special-

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[22]Trade Review, November, 9, 1907.

[23]Ibid. The term "merchant" was used in this article without reference to individual merchants other than that the merchants referred to were based in St. John's.

ity," the Minister optimistically proclaimed a bright future for his plan.[24] While he may have been correct in suggesting that it would yield the desired results, it was stillborn, most likely because of the perennial problem of funding.

During the 1909 election campaign, Premier Morris alluded again to the necessity of a standard cull. Unlike other countries, he argued, Newfoundland's cull varied with "the state of the market, arising out of the price of the fish or the shortage of the catch."[25] Upon forming a government, his Speech from the Throne renewed a call for cooperation between all interested parties. He also proclaimed the willingness of his government to establish better communications with countries to which fish were, or could be, exported.[26]

This call for an improved cure once again received support from the Trade Review, which charged that no improvement had occurred over the past few years, "despite the existence of sworn cullers." While the article criticized the state of the cure in general, it singled out the cull in outports for special censure. The problem was attributed to "many men engaged to cull cargoes" in outports who "know no law but their own sweet will, and almost anything goes when competition is keen or it is desirable to dispatch a cargo to

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[24]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, p. 169.

[25]Daily News (St. John's), March 15, 1909.

[26]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1909, p. 22.

market quickly." To surmount this difficulty, the journal suggested that licences be granted to cullers only after passing an examination given by a board established for that purpose. Moreover, cullers ought to be placed under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fisheries, beyond the control of either merchants or fishermen. To make cullers responsible for their decisions, they should be required to sign an inspection certificate for each cargo examined and "the retention of the cullers in their position...[should] be contingent on how the cargo" fared at market. To lessen the temptation for corruption, the Review also suggested that cullers be paid a fixed annual salary by the Department. This would replace the existing system under which a culler was paid two cents per quintal by the local merchant. Finally, the paper recommended that a chief inspector of cullers be appointed to oversee the work in individual districts.[27]

Not everyone, however, agreed with the Trade Review's plan. The Newfoundland Board of Trade blamed the failure of culling laws to improve the cure not on the lack of cullers or on individual fishermen, but rather on merchants who failed to take advantage of inspection services already provided for a fee by the Board.[28] Claiming that fish culled by the Board

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[27]Trade Review, January 16, 1909.

[28]Annual Report of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1910, p. 7. Also see H.T. Renouf, "The Newfoundland Board of Trade," in Joseph R. Smallwood (ed.), The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. II (St. John's, 1937), p. 309.

received favourable receptions in markets and expressing confidence that "buyers will soon demand that all their purchases shall be so inspected," the Board noted that a "very great deal of trouble" had been experienced in the Italian and Spanish markets by fish not culled or inspected by the Board.[29] The organization had little faith that government-appointed inspectors would ever remedy the problem.

While acknowledging the problem and stung by its critics, government still did not act. In 1911, it defended its failure to take up the question of a standard cull on the grounds that it did not "have sufficient information to justify bringing in a measure dealing with such an important matter."[30] Two years later, government still had not acted, leading the Board of Trade to charge that implementing a culling policy would now be more difficult than when the Board was established in 1909. The situation remained chaotic, with "no cull of fish to be standardized, all fish being bought tal qual."[31] This was attributed to the failure of fishermen, tradesmen, and the "commercial class" to work together to bring about a fair and unbiased cull. Reiterating its earlier proposal, the Board asserted that had it had been given authority in 1909 to make

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[29]Annual Report of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1910, p. 7.

[30]E.P. Morris to William Coaker, Fishermen's Advocate, January 14, 1911. This was an open letter.

[31]Annual Report of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1913, p. 6.

regulations for the cull of fish, it could have ended tal qual purchasing and improved quality.[32]

The Search for Markets

If government did little to improve the state of the cure, it was more active in the quest for new markets. To this end, it explored the possibility of employing trade agents, reducing tariffs, and negotiating reciprocity. Of these three alternatives, free trade with the US assumed the greatest importance. From 1890 to 1911, successive governments and many interested observers came to view the US as a lucrative market for fish imports. As the Evening Telegram proclaimed in 1901, "our great market of the future lies with the US."[33] Sir Robert Bond, writing to Joseph Chamberlain, argued that reciprocity with the US would increase existing trade.[34] In 1904, the Executive Council also looked to the US, rejecting Canada as a potential outlet on the grounds that she produced more fish

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[32]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[33]Evening Telegram (St. John's), March 27, 1901. For a review of reciprocity talks with the US, see Frederick W. Rowe, A History of Newfoundland and Labrador (Toronto, 1980), pp. 345-349; Prowse, A History of Newfoundland, pp. 531-534.; David J. Davis, "The Bond-Blaine Negotiations" (Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1970); P.T. McGrath, "The Bond-Hay Treaty" (Photocopy, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland, n.d.); Graham, We Love Thee Newfoundland, pp. 143-145.

[34]Sir Robert Bond to Joseph Chamberlain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, April 16, 1901, Colonial Office (C.O.) 194 (1904), CCLVI, Box 2256, p. 508.

than Newfoundland. The US, on the other hand, located nearby with a population of eighty million, was considered more promising, especially if free trade could be negotiated.[35]

One of the more outspoken advocates of the proposed treaties was Judge D.W. Prowse, who in both local and American papers advanced several reasons why Newfoundland was the logical source of supply for the American market. In the first place, with a scarcity of fish in the US and its inability to meet its own demand, it made sense for Newfoundland, located athwart the world's richest fishing grounds, should be an important supplier.[36] Second, he believed that the New England bank fishery was in decline because New Englanders, unlike Newfoundlanders, no longer cared for the hard and dangerous work. To bolster this latter contention, he pointed out that two-thirds of those employed in the American deep-sea fishery in 1901 were foreigners, including Newfoundlanders, Cape Bretoners, Portuguese, Swedes and Norwegians.[37] In a later piece on the American fishery, Prowse provided evidence (see Table 2) from the Boston Fish Bureau to support his claims of a declining American bank fishery.

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[35]Minutes of the Committee of the Executive Council, December 1904, 521, in C.O. 194, CCLVI, Box 2256, pp. 521-527; see also Evening Telegram (St. John's), March 27, 1901.

[36]Evening Telegram (St. John's), February 23, 1901.

[37]For additional evidence on Prowse's views, see a scrapbook kept by Prowse containing clippings of his articles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, MUN. The views expressed mirror those in his History of Newfoundland, pp. 531-534.

Table 2

Catch of Cod By American Vessels On the Grand and Western Banks, 1880-1906

Year	Quintals
1880	300,990
1881	355,640
1882	474,078
1883	578,735
1905	140,040
1906	142,465

Source: D.W. Prowse, "The American Fishery Question in Newfoundland," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. VII, No. 1 (July 1907), pp. 17-18.

Prowse's assertion of a declining American bank fishery, though correct, ignores the fact that Newfoundland's catch on the banks was also falling (see Table 3). By 1905-1906, American landings were double the output of the Newfoundland bank fishery. If anything, this suggests that the American bank fishery was healthier than that prosecuted by Newfoundland, which makes it appear extremely unlikely that cod caught by Newfoundlanders on the Grand Banks could have been on the leading edge of any significant penetration of the American market. On the other hand, inshore catches, which by 1905 comprised almost ninety-five percent of total Newfoundland exports of cod, were still a large potential source of overseas sales. But whether Prowse believed that such fish represented a likely reservoir from which to supply American consumers is unknown.

Table 3

State of the Newfoundland Bank Fishery, 1889-1913[38]

Year	Crews	Vessels	Tonnage	Catch (Cwts)	Percent of Total Dried Cod Exports
1889	4,401	230	18,890	236,821	20.1
1890	3,719	279	15,212	147,948	13.7
1891	2,175	165	9,838	103,688	9.9
1892	1,392	100	6,270	90,467	9.5
1893	957	71	4,409	58,494	7.4
1894	785	58	3,518	54,541	4.6
1895	565	43	2,537	46,984	4.2
1896	616	48	2,652	54,802	3.8
1897	872	66	3,684	58,762	5.1
1898	1,000	74	4,222	74,002	6.4
1899	1,163	90	4,722	97,399	7.9
1900	1,400	112	5,757	116,278	8.9
1901	1,531	118	6,282	113,841	9.2
1902	1,444	110	5,964	131,102	10.1
1903	1,386	100	5,529	89,321	6.2
1904	1,215	87	5,039	70,872	5.2
1905	1,161	83	4,838	71,329	6.0
1906	1,378	97	5,783	75,153	5.0
1907	1,261	83	4,286	88,086	6.2
1908	1,433	107	5,976	120,000	8.0
1909	1,377	100	5,818	131,452	7.6
1910	1,567	101	6,630	144,524	9.6
1911	NA	122	NA	149,924	12.7
1912	1,924	124	8,281	155,517	11.2
1913	1,830	104	7,551	152,374	10.8

Source: 1889-1906: William Macgregor, "Report on Trade and Commerce of Newfoundland For the Four Years ending with the 30th June 1906," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1907, pp. 398-503. 1907-1913: Shannon Ryan, "Newfoundland's Saltfish Markets: 1814-1914" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of London, 1982), table 1.15.

[38]In the sources, there is a significant misprint. The year 1904 appears to have been a typographical error and should have read 1906.

In addition to dried cod, Prowse believed that "the effect of the new treaty in Newfoundland will also be very beneficial," as "it will stimulate a fresh fish trade, now in its infancy."[39] And the Evening Telegram claimed that "all our winter cod will be sent away fresh to the U.S. It will give our fishermen cash for fresh fish."[40]

In support of the proposed Bond-Hay Convention, the Fish Exporters' Association asserted that the treaty was the best thing that could possibly happen to Newfoundland. To assist its passage through Congress, the Association suggested that a Newfoundlander go to the US to present the island's case. Indeed, the group volunteered one of its own members or someone chosen by government; in either case, it agreed to pay the cost.[41]

When in 1910-1911 the issue of reciprocity with the US arose once again, Newfoundland's Prime Minister, Edward Morris, advanced arguments similar to Prowse's. Morris looked at the size of the American population and concluded that if it wanted fresh fish, Newfoundland could provide it not only to coastal cities but also to the interior, where New England

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[39]Evening Herald (St. John's), November 8, 1902. The author of the article was D.W. Prowse.

[40]Daily News (St. John's), October 21, 1902. This article was reprinted from the Evening Telegram. In the Editor's Note of the Fishermen's Advocate, November 12, 1910, it was reported that fishermen on the west coast were still looking for a market for their winter fresh cod.

[41]Evening Herald (St. John's), December 17, 1902.

fish never penetrated.[42] He concluded that Americans who never "get a taste" of fresh codfish, could have it every day for four or five cents a pound.[43] Once again the sheer size and potential of the American market were regarded as sufficient reason for Newfoundland to increase its links with the US. The following year, Morris augmented his argument by contending that free trade in fish would go far to solve the problem of the high cost of living in the US.[44] The Minister of Marine and Fisheries reported that the high cost of living and the consequent desire for fish had created a strong demand in the US which would increase over time.[45] In 1910, H.H. Archibald of Harbour Grace claimed that "the high cost of living has contributed its share in popularizing fish as a necessity of diet to the American consumer."[46] This argument was similar to one used by Prowse in 1907 when he stated that Americans wanted cheap fish and restrictions of Newfoundland fish entering the American market had created a monopoly which had

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[42]Globe and Mail (Toronto), November 7, 1910.

[43]Daily News (St. John's), May 2, 1910.

[44]Evening Telegram (St. John's), January 6, 1911; Daily News (St. John's), September 29, 1910.

[45]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1911, p. 464.

[46]H.H. Archibald, Harbour Grace, to Editor, Daily News (St. John's), December 13, 1910.

kept prices high.[47] Thus, Newfoundlanders believed not only that the island would benefit from the free entry of its fish but also that such an arrangement would assist American consumers.

Although attempts to enter the export trades to the US in the period 1890-1911 were always couched in terms of reciprocity, there was little discussion of competing there without an agreement. In short, Newfoundland believed that reciprocity with the US by itself would modernize the fishery. The Evening Herald provided a summary of Newfoundland's expectations under reciprocity. In addition to opening the American market to Newfoundland fish, it would bring cold storage, new provisions for producing and curing fresh fish, the introduction of American capital and ideas, and an industrial boom that would exceed anything in Newfoundland's history.[48] Several weeks later, the same paper concluded that the prospect of reciprocity was indeed "splendid."[49] But would the ratification of a treaty have brought about this transformation? While no definitive answer is possible, the most likely answer would appear to be negative.

In addition to dried cod, the American market was perceived as an outlet for fresh cod. As previously pointed

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[47]D.W. Prowse, "The American Fishery Question in Newfoundland," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. VII, No. 1 (July 1907), pp. 17-18.

[48]Evening Herald (St.John's), October 18, 1902.

[49]Ibid., October 31, 1902.

out, Morris stated in reference to the Bond-Hay treaty that Newfoundland fresh fish could be sent to the interior of the US where fresh fish from Gloucester never penetrated. However, both the Bond-Blaine and Bond-Hay treaties stipulated that while "dry codfish shall be admitted free of duty, green codfish are not [included] in the provisions of this article."[50] And in Article II of the 1902 convention we find once again "it is understood however, that the unsalted or fresh codfish are not included in the provisions of this article."[51]

But the reality of the situation did not seem to be totally understood in Newfoundland. Despite the exclusion of fresh fish from any potential treaty, Prowse and Morris were quick to expound the positive effect the American market would have on Newfoundland's fresh fish industry. An editorial in the Evening Herald appears to have been somewhat more realistic in concluding that with the acceptance of the Bond-Blaine convention, it would have been impossible for Newfoundland to ship any kind of cod but dried; that being the case, the paper questioned the benefit that the treaty would have brought to

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[50]Evening Telegram (St. John's), April 7, 1891. The headline above the article read "That Convention, Bond as a Treaty Maker. Dry Codfish."

[51]Daily News (St. John's), December 16, 1902. The headline above the article read "Mountain and Mouse Bond = Hay Treaty. The Seals Affixed. Fresh Fish Excluded. NF Insulted and Fooled by Premier Bond."

Newfoundland.[52] The editor of the Daily News was even more prescient, pointing out that as a result of Article II, the American market would not be open to fresh fish from Newfoundland. Therefore, he argued that statements made by Morris concerning the benefit of the American market in this respect were "an untruth, a wilful, inexcusable piece of deception" and reported correctly that "the Bond-Hay arrangement would not provide for the free entry of fresh fish nor does it mention fresh fish in any manner." The editor concluded that all the talk of a market encompassing eighty million people was "twaddle, fit only for fools or children." The article also showed insight into the American market in reporting that not all Americans consumed dry cod; of those who did, few consumed cod cured in the Newfoundland manner.[53] Americans were eating fresh fish such as trout and salmon. This being the case, the article judged that "not a dollars worth of trade in fresh cod can be done by reason of the alleged treaty."[54] Several days later, the same paper added that not only was there no market in the US for Newfoundland fresh fish

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[52]Evening Herald (St. John's), April 7, 1891.

[53]See Appendix VIII for Newfoundland dried cod exports to the United States for the period 1890-1911.

[54]Daily News (St. John's), October 22, 1902.

but that, even if Newfoundland had the means, she could not pay the expense of sending it there fresh.[55]

The exclusion of fresh or green fish is an important issue and must be dealt with to understand its full meaning. First, as previously stated, the American market was looked upon as an outlet for fresh fish, or as Prowse put it, "as a stimulus to the fresh fish trade now in its infancy."[56] Clearly, as is evident from the proposed treaties, the US did not share Newfoundland's optimism. In the debate on the Budget Speech of 1910, Mr. Kent, the Liberal member for St. John's East, argued that improvements would first have to be made in packaging and the development of new markets. Regarding the development of fresh fish and corresponding markets, Kent concluded that except for a small local trade, there would not be much profit in the export of fresh fish. He did not doubt that such a venture could be profitable, but at the time he considered the condition of the industry inadequate to undertake the financial outlay necessary to create new markets or to supply them with fresh fish, believing that for years to come existing business would have to rely upon the export of dried cod.[57] His opinion of the value of the American market

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[55]Ibid., November 17, 1902. The headlines above the article read "Read, Mark, Learn, and Inwardly Digest! The Bond-Hay Convention which threatens Destruction."

[56]Evening Herald (St. John's), November 18, 1902.

[57]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1910, p. 502.

in the short and medium-term contrasts with the optimism expressed by the Newfoundland Trade Commissioner in New York, who as late as 1947 reported that Newfoundland fishing interests were fully aware of the potential outlet for Newfoundland fish in the US. While the American market at this time accounted for a mere four percent of Newfoundland dried cod production, he believed that if properly developed, the US could become one of Newfoundland's principal markets for salt fish.[58]

While numerous references were made to Newfoundland producing skinned and boneless cod for the American market, little discussion exists as to how this was to be accomplished. The independent family operation may have been able to produce such a product but it is not unreasonable to assume that if this course of action were adopted, it too, would have fallen victim to the ills of the salt fish trade: inconsistent quality, tal qual buying and periodic market gluts.

Since the US was regarded as embodying the greatest potential for these products, irrespective of tariffs or shipping costs, Newfoundland fish would have to have been as good as American production in order to compete in the US market. However, it appears unlikely that Newfoundland would have been successful in such an effort. American fish plants, centred principally around Gloucester, Boston, Provincetown and Portland, were based on a factory system employing men and

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[58]Family Fireside (St. John's), April 1948.

women on a piecework basis. Output was standard and packaged in containers according to market demand and consumer preference. In short, the Americans successfully created an organised factory system, one that Newfoundland would have required if she were to compete in the American market.

The fact that this approach was never suggested is an indication of the lack of organisation--and perhaps the lack of realism--in the Newfoundland fishery. It appears that without assured markets no great amount of effort would be directed at developing new products. One seems to have been highly dependent upon the other. The question that remains is whether if Newfoundland had been successful in negotiating a free trade agreement with the US, a similar factory system would have materialized in Newfoundland. While such a question is counterfactual, the most reasonable answer would likely have been negative in the short-term, but possibly positive in the medium and long-term. The negative prognosis for the short-term is based on the premise that it would have been virtually impossible to develop such a system overnight. Capital and expertise were both lacking and would have to have been imported at relatively high cost in the first instance. Moreover, a factory system would have been conducted on a wage basis as opposed to a credit or barter system. This would have been a major transformation, and both experience and culture would have made it difficult.

There was yet another potential barrier. Not all trade necessarily increases the total volume (or value) of exports. This is especially true if shifts in the direction of trade create an effect known as trade diversion--and there are good reasons for believing that this might have been the result of greater success in the US market. One reason for concern is that the output of the industry was declining. Given this fact, it is extremely likely that fish shipped to the US would have been diverted from traditional markets: some dried cod production would have been deflected to filleted fresh cod. While it can be argued that even if such diversion resulted Newfoundland would still have benefited in that boneless or fresh cod would have been worth more than dried cod, this does not necessarily imply a net gain, since the cost of producing this new commodity would have been higher in a number of ways. It would, for example, have required wage labour; the cost of facilities--plant, equipment, packages--would have been higher; and the removal of the credit system would have added overhead costs to "processed" as opposed to "dried cod."

Obtaining new markets and indeed maintaining existing ones was dependent not only on output but also on a means of reaching market. In the Newfoundland experience, the lack of adequate transportation links with the US, Canada, and Europe has been held partly accountable for Newfoundland's failure to

expand markets.[59] Yet it can be demonstrated that this statement, though valid to a certain extent, requires important modifications. While transportation links existed with all the above regions, it is their nature and quality that must be scrutinized to determine their suitability for the effective transport of Newfoundland fish. In the 1880s, when output consisted largely of dried cod requiring no elaborate transportation facilities beyond a dry vessel, existing transport links likely would have sufficed. But when Newfoundland began to explore seriously the possibilities of a fresh fish trade, the requirements increased dramatically. For fish to arrive at market in a saleable condition necessitated cold storage, both in Newfoundland and on vessels used to transport the catch. To a great extent the lack of such facilities meant that Newfoundland would have been unable to capitalize on its geographic proximity to the American market. Peter Neary and S.J.R. Noel have argued that given its geographic situation, Newfoundland was proceeding rationally in seeking to secure future prosperity through closer trade links with the US. They also perceived that the advantages of location extended beyond the fishery to the general economy of the colony.[60] Nonetheless, any advantage to be gained from close proximity to the

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[59]Testimony of Harry Craufuird Thompson to Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, pp. 19-22.

[60]Peter Neary and S.J.R. Noel, "Newfoundland's Quest for Reciprocity, 1890-1910," in Ian McDonald (ed.), Selected Readings, History 3120: Newfoundland Since 1815 (St. John's, 1976), pp. 262-275.

American market was lost because of Newfoundland's failure to produce products capable of competing there. That distance by itself was not a major determinant of market share is demonstrated by the fact that as early as 1894, Alaska cod was shipped as far east as Chicago, where it sold at prices lower than Atlantic cod and was considered superior in both fibre and flavour.[61] It is interesting to speculate whether Alaskan cod would have found a ready market if it were more expensive than the Atlantic variety. Certainly, by the last decade of the nineteenth century American per capita incomes had reached the point where large numbers of consumers were willing to pay a little extra for a better quality product. What was perhaps more important was that fish caught in Alaska, unlike its Newfoundland competition, was not subject to tariffs or duties artificially adding cost to the product. By 1895, the aggregate shipments from Oregon and Washington amounted to 236 refrigerated carloads, or 5,872,533 pounds of fresh fish, comprised chiefly of salmon for the northeastern market.[62] The point is that while proximity hardly explains the success of Pacific fish in finding markets on the east coast, neither did distance prove an insurmountable barrier. With further developments in cold storage and transportation facilities,

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[61]Bushrod W. James, "Alaska's Food Fishes and the Interests of Its Fisheries," Transactions of the American Fisheries Society, XXIII (1894), pp. 60-118.

[62]Charles S. Stevenson, "The Preservation of Fishery Products for Food," Bulletin of the United States Fish Commission, XVIII (1898), p. 383.

and the growth of coastal and Great Lakes fisheries, New England began to feel the pressure of internal competition.[63]

However, Newfoundland's alleged comparative geographic advantage was not one which she was well equipped to pursue. Robert Babcock, an agent for Job & Company in New York, reported in 1909 that there was a large quantity of locally-supplied fresh fish in the market which:

> has not been caught more than a few hours ago, and some of them are still alive, and it is those that the people are generally and most anxious for. First because they are clean and bright, and they are positively certain that the fish are fresh from their appearance, and naturally prefer buying those to taking a chance with other fish, the appearance which is not so attractive.[64]

Not only was their competition from local fish, there was also a lack of refrigerated shipping. Indeed, the failure of a cold storage plant at Port-aux-Basques was attributed to the lack of transportation facilities equipped with cold storage to ship the fish to market. The owner-operator of the facil-

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[63]Mary Ellen Chase, The Fishing Fleets of New England (Cambridge, MA, 1961), p. 139. For additional information on the marketing of fish and fish products in the US, see Edward Ackerman, New England's Fishing Industry (Chicago, 1941), especially pp. 148-264; and Oscar Edward Anderson, Refrigeration in America: A History of a New Technology and Its Impact (Princeton, 1953). For information on the Great Lakes fishery, see Ludwig Kumlien, "The Fisheries of the Great Lakes," in George Brown Goode (ed.), The Fisheries and Fishery Industries of the United States (Washington, DC, 1887), Vol. I, pp. 755-769.

[64]Robert Babcock to G.C. Fearn, November 18, 1909, Board of Trade Correspondence, Private Papers, P8/B11, Box 3, File 6, Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador [hereafter PANL].

ity, Mr. Downey, upon becoming a Member of the House of Assembly, reported in 1909 that unless a means of transportation were available, "no practical result could be hoped for" in experiments with cold storage.[65] James S. Benediot, the US Consul in St. John's in 1910, concurred that the lack of transportation was one of the factors handicapping Newfoundland's participation in the American market. He reported that only the Reid Newfoundland Company regularly engaged in the shipment of goods from Port-aux-Basques to the US and Canada. Benediot also reported that there were no other transportation companies interested, and all other shipments to foreign countries were made via St. John's. He was of the opinion that better transportation facilities, in conjunction with cold storage, were required to enable shipments to the US.[66] Even in the mid-1920s, J. Allen Taylor concluded that if

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[65]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1909, p. 27. In 1914, Mr. Higgins, expressed the opinion that the frozen fish industry could be "great" if only Newfoundland had a "regular and efficient means of transportation." See Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1914, p. 15.

[66]James S. Benediot to Hon. Assistant Secretary of State, February 23, 1910, US Consuls, St. John's, Newfoundland, Records of United States Consular Posts, St. John's, Dispatches, I (July 28, 1906-July 23, 1912), Microfilm #575, 169, no. 63, Centre for Newfoundland Studies, MUN. For additional information on the history of transportation links between Newfoundland, Canada, Great Britain and the US, see the following memoranda: Martin Williams Furlong, "The Growth of Our Ocean Steam Service" Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, pp. 22-25; James P. Howley, "Canal Scheme across Newfoundland" ibid., pp. 32-33; Howley, "The Approaches to the St. Lawrence: A Proposition Whereby the Chief Danger Zones Might be Avoided by Shipping," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. I, No. 4 (March 1902), pp. 6-8; Howley, "A Canal Across Newfoundland. Proposition II," Newfoundland

the American market were to be exploited by Newfoundland, fish would have to be delivered on ice at American ports by the vessels that actually did the catching. The introduction of steam or motor power was the obvious solution to achieve this end.[67] Yet as late as 1938, the Report of the US of America Fishery Market Survey concluded that there were no direct transportation links from many Newfoundland ports to the US.[68] The main barrier to the export of fresh cod from Newfoundland was the provision of the necessary transportation facilities.[69]

By now it should be clear that propinquity was by itself not a sufficient comparative advantage upon which to guarantee competitiveness in the American market. While proximity was important, especially prior to the 1890s, cold storage and improved transportation facilities lessened such an advantage. Newfoundland, of course, lagged in the provision of these

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Quarterly, Vol. II, No. 1 (June 1902), p. 17.

[67]J. Allen Taylor, A Report on the Development of The Fisheries of Newfoundland (Fleetwood, Eng., [1925?]), p. 5. This report was the outcome of a joint request by the Board of Trade and the Newfoundland Department of Marine and Fisheries. While the publication date is unknown, Taylor makes reference to Lt. Governor Sir William L. Allardyce, who served in this post between 1922 and 1927.

[68]J. Maurice, United States of America Fishery Market Survey, Newfoundland Department of Natural Resources, Economic Bulletin (Fisheries) No. 5 (St. John's, 1938), p. 140.

[69]Report of the Commission of Enquiry Investigating the Sea Fisheries of Newfoundland and Labrador other than the Sealfishery, Newfoundland Fisheries Board Economic Bulletin No. 3 (St. John's, 1937), p. 152.

later two factors. Without the appropriate infrastructure, location was simply not enough. But would a reciprocity agreement with the US have provided the impetus for investment in the necessary infrastructure and product diversification to enable Newfoundland to compete in the American market? Since no agreement was reached, this question cannot be answered definitively. Yet there is some evidence to suggest that reciprocity was not an absolute requirement for change. In February 1902, a number of St. John's businessmen acquired a large financial interest in a new steamship line, the Boston and Newfoundland Steamship Company, to operate from St. John's to the US. This line was to employ two first-class steamers capable of sufficient speed to make the trip in three and a half days.[70] The Evening Telegram argued that the need for such a line was undeniable, since it would assist businessmen to market their wares in the US and in return obtain better and more reliable supplies. This concern with imports likely reflected a dramatic switch in Newfoundland's pattern of visible trade.[71] While throughout the nineteenth century the island obtained the bulk of its imports from Great Britain and relatively little from US, by the beginning of the twentieth

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[70]The Evening Telegram, February 3, 1902. The Telegram listed the group of St. John's business men "as among them are Job Brothers & Co., Bell & Hiscock, Hearn & Co., Bishop & Monroe, Baine Johnson & Co., James Baird, Charles W.H. Tessier, Ed English, E.P. Morris, Sir Robert Thorburn and others."

[71]Ibid.

century the situation had completely reversed. In connection with the fishery, a St. John's businessmen expressed the opinion that such a line would make life better for the fishermen by lessening the cost of getting fish to market.[72]

However, it would be an less than fair to argue dogmatically that Newfoundland would have been unable to make this transformation despite all the obstacles. One of the more immediate issues was the development of new fish products to suit Americans and consumers in non-traditional market countries. It may be that press coverage and political speeches emphasizing the size of the American market and its potential for non-traditional output may have stimulated an interest not only by government but also by the industry to develop new fish products. Unfortunately, while the issue of size was frequently mentioned, there is little evidence that politicians or the media understood the demands of US consumers. If they did comprehend American tastes, they said remarkably little about them.

Outside the realm of reciprocity and the potential of the US, South American countries were also regarded as potentially-lucrative markets. As early as 1902 the Trade Review argued that the need to obtain new markets was never "so badly needed as now;"[73] it mentioned South America as a potential solution. In 1909 Downey suggested the time had arrived when

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[72]Ibid.

[73]Trade Review, November 22, 1902.

Newfoundland should look outside traditional entrepots. He pointed to South America, which with the exception of Brazil had been virtually ignored by Newfoundland exporters.[74] He claimed that with government aid exporters would be able expand markets in South America.[75] Assistance was in fact provided the following year, when in conjunction with the Board of Trade the government sent an agent to South America to explore new markets for Newfoundland dried cod.[76]

Indeed, in 1910 the Daily News, while suggesting that securing new markets would be difficult, offered a favourable assessment of markets south of the US. Potential outlets included South and Central America where, the paper asserted, "fish is a necessity, and yet not a quintal of Newfoundland fish reaches them." It was also argued that with improved methods of packing and preservation, Newfoundland fish could reach markets as far away as western India, China, and Hong Kong. However, for the time being it was South America to which Newfoundland would have to look for expanded markets.[77]

The above editorial is a good example of the continued emphasis placed on market size. Presenting a more realistic

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[74]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1909, pp. 26-27.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1909, p. 384.

[77]Daily News (St. John's), January 15, 1910. Some of the countries referred to were Argentina, Paraguay, Peru, Chile, Guatemala, Mexico, Ecuador, Honduras and Nicaragua.

assessment, the Newfoundland Board of Trade in 1910 stated that the lack of "satisfactory statistics on the fishery" left the marketing of fish under a serious disadvantage. The Board felt that government's attempts to obtain statistics had been unsuccessful, in part because customs officers showed little interest in their work.[78] A lack of statistics was not the only factor prohibiting Newfoundland from greater participation in new markets. A.B. Dallas, the agent appointed by the Board of Trade to open new markets, reported that unless cure was improved, there was little chance of selling fish in South America. A similar report by George Hawes, the Board of Trade agent in Spain, underscored the need for improved cure if Newfoundland hoped to compete with French and Norwegian fish. In a later article, Hawes reported that in addition to an inferior cure, Newfoundland fish was also more expensive than her competitors' in the Spanish market. As a result, Spanish buyers complained that if they had to pay more for the Newfoundland product, they at least expected "clean wholesome fish."[79] Hawes concluded that the challenge was not so much to obtain new markets as to retain existing ones.[80] Hawes' conclusions on the Spanish market were similar to those of

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[78]Ibid., October 18, 1910.

[79]Ibid., August 22, 1911.

[80]A similar statement was made in the Annual Report of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1913. pp. 8-9.

John Rendell, agent for Job Brothers and Bowring Brothers in Spain and Italy.[81]

The observations by Dallas, Hawes and Rendell were supported by Prowse, who also blamed poor markets on inferior products. Of fish going to Spain and Portugal, Prowse said that it was handled "unbusiness [sic] like [and was] entirely opposed to the methods of our rivals, the Norwegians." To compete with Norway, Prowse suggested that Newfoundland adopt similar business practices, such as employing agents who would maintain constant communication with buyers.[82] He suggested that government could participate in developing such a system by appointing agents recommended by the Board of Trade and seeing that agents received support from the Colonial Office.[83]

The Department of Fisheries, which was remarkable silent on the issue of markets, in 1910 attributed the lack of outlets to a concentration on salt fish products to the exclusion of alternate fish species. For example, local cod roe production was virtually nonexistent compared to Norway. This was not due to an inability to secure roe, which was "annually taken [in great quantities] and thrown overboard." If properly tinned, roe could be sold for 35 cents per pound,

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[81]Daily News (St. John's), October 18, 1910.

[82]Evening Telegram (St. John's), July 27, 1909.

[83]Ibid., July 27, 1909.

which for the industry meant a potential of $100,000 to $150,000 per year.[84]

During the 1909 election campaign Morris charged that for years government had made inadequate use of the monthly consular and trade reports it received from the US and British consulates. In fact, he claimed that even though government had been receiving these reports for years, "they only pile up and accumulate in the department, nothing comes from them."[85] As to the value of such reports, Morris concluded that "they are a very treasure of knowledge if properly digested and given to the trade."[86]

The practical value of circulars became apparent in 1902 when the Trade Review carried an advertisement from an unnamed French firm for the purchase of cod roe for the sardine fishery.[87] In 1904 the same paper carried published a request from an American company for information on the Newfoundland eel fishery and names of wholesalers or fishermen whom it could contact.[88] The paper did not say if the Department of Fisheries had been contacted by the companies in question for

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[84]Eels, salmon, smelts, sounds and tongues, along with by-products such as guano, fertilizer, glue, isinglass, and fish oil, were other examples used to demonstrate how Newfoundland's lack of diversification affected market potential. Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1910, p. 421.

[85]Daily News (St. John's), March 15, 1909.

[86]Ibid.

[87]Trade Review, August 30, 1902.

[88]Ibid., October 15, 1904.

information. However, in 1909 the Department received a circular from Stewart Munn and Co. of Montreal looking for green codfish for the Canadian market. In the flier, directions were given on how cod should be cured and packed. Salted or pickled fish were to be packed in barrels capable of holding 200-250 pounds; for extra large fish, barrels containing 200-300 pounds were advised.[89] It is unclear if Munn's request elicited any responses.

In reporting on Morris's election campaign, the Daily News claimed that one of the most important issues was securing new markets for fish. Calling upon fishermen to vote for Morris' People's Party, the paper asserted that it stood for new markets.[90] While nothing in Morris's manifesto alluded to government assistance in the development of new fish products, it did contain blanket statements promising encouragement of new markets and cold storage. Overall, Morris did not propose anything which had not been discussed in previous elections and by earlier governments. It may be that Morris said little about new markets or the development of trades other than dried cod because at the time no industry capable of exploiting them existed in Newfoundland.

To try to facilitate cooperation in the fishery (and other sectors of the economy), the government in 1909 created

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[89]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1909, p. 381. See Appendix IX for copy of this circular.

[90]Daily News (St. John's), April 21, 1909.

the Newfoundland Board of Trade.[91] Speaking during debate on the second reading of the bill creating the Board, Morris claimed that the impetus came from the private sector,[92] which wanted to establish an organization "upon which every industry of the Island would be represented--fishing, industrial, mechanical and agriculture." In Morris' view, "this movement is not a political one; there is no politics behind it."[93] In stressing this point, Morris was trying to convince the various constituencies that the Board was to work for the benefit of all Newfoundlanders rather than for vested interests.[94]

Morris' speech provided an inside assessment of the state of government's knowledge about the fishery, as well as its ability to make informed decisions about major issues. Morris

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[91]This was not the first attempt by business and government to establish an organization to foster business and economic growth. In 1852 a Chamber of Commerce was created consisting of business and government officials. For additional information, see Renouf, "The Newfoundland Board of Trade," pp. 309-310.

[92]Despite Morris' claim that the creation of the Board was not politically motivated, the initiative behind it came from Morris in a petition which he circulated to businessmen for their support.

[93]Speech by Morris in the House of Assembly, June 4, 1909, Journals of the Legislative Council, 1909, p. 74.

[94]Renouf, "The Newfoundland Board of Trade." The initial President of the Board was Sir M.G. Winter; First Vice-President, John Harris; Second Vice-President, W.G. Gosling; Secretary-Treasurer, G.C. Fearn; and Councillors, John B. Ayre, R.K. Bishop, John Harvey, S. Milley, W.A. Munn, D.A. Ryan, R.F. Goodridge, W.F. Horwood, W.C. Job, A.H. Monroe, John A. Munn, and J.J. St.John.

claimed that government was hindered in making decisions, since no body existed from which it could obtain information. As a result, "important matters are kicked around as a sort of political football, session after session."[95] To demonstrate the need for a Board of Trade, Morris stated that the previous year Newfoundland lost $300,000 in fish exports, either because of fraud, cull, or cure. Claiming that the lack of information made it impossible to pinpoint the precise cause, he posited a rhetorical (and illogical question): if it was impossible to provide a definite reason for the loss, how could a solution be found? The answer was the creation of the Board of Trade. In making this proposal, the Premier ignored the fact that within his own bureaucracy was a Department of Fisheries which, while perpetually underfunded and often ignored, had for more than fifteen years been providing annual data and interpretation on the fishery. And he also conveniently overlooked the fact in the election campaign he had praised the information collection abilities of the Department (see pp. 173-174 above).

At its inception, the Board's powers were somewhat limited. Morris claimed that this was because he did not believe that too much power to affect the fishery ought to be delegated to an extra-government body unless such a devolution

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[95]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1909, p. 75.

were sanctioned by fishermen through their MHAs.[96] Cutting through the political rhetoric, he did promise, however, to give it some unspecified "higher powers and greater duties" at a future date.[97] In the interim, decisions would remain with government. But to encourage the Board--and potentially to elicit more input from the public--he reminded listeners that anyone (or any organization) could present a petition to the House calling for change. Yet the Premier stopped short of actually inviting this type of input. While he asserted that the fishery was too important for politics and promised that legislation would be based upon need and facts, the reality of the new system ensured that in reality political considerations would remain paramount criteria in deciding about fisheries' programmes. Lest anyone miss this point, Morris concluded that the onus to bring about change was primarily "incumbent upon all those upon whom the responsibility rests, namely, the government." While also admitting that "all who handle the produce of the colony" also deserved a say, Morris clearly believed that real power over the fishery belonged to government.[98]

Just before the First World War the Fishermens' Protective Union (FPU) also became a prominent participant in debates on the fishery. Its primary organ was its newspaper,

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[96]Ibid., p. 77.

[97]Ibid.

[98]Daily News (St. John's), March 15, 1909.

the Advocate, which was not afraid to take stands on controversial issues. On government initiative in locating new markets, for example, the paper accused the Department of Fisheries and its minister, Mr. Piccott, of "being asleep" and called upon them "to wake up and find a market that will allow our fishermen three cents per pound for fresh fish." The union suggested that if the government sent outport businessmen to Canada and the US, markets could be secured "within a couple of weeks."[99] Morris responded that he could not find anyone suitable for such positions and suggested Coaker provide names. Although the union head put forward seven candidates, there is no evidence that any appointment was made.[100]

Newfoundland's inability to produce for specific markets limited growth potential. Perhaps of even greater importance was the lack of control she had over import duties charged on her fish. Nonetheless, there are several examples of success in achieving tariff reduction. With British assistance, the duty levied by Greece on Newfoundland dried cod was reduced in 1904 from 6s.4d. to 2s.6d. per quintal, in return for the duty-free entry of Greek currents into Newfoundland. The Department believed that the lower tariff would make Newfound-

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[99]Fishermens' Advocate, November 12, 1910.

[100]Coaker suggested Mr. Croucher, J.W. Lockyer, William Ashbourne, W.J. Scott, H.J. Earle, Mr. Devereaux, and D. Osmond; Fishermen's Advocate, January 14, 1911.

land fish affordable to more Greeks, thus increasing exports.[101] It also suggested adopting a similar strategy with other countries.[102] The next year it concluded that "one of the most important subjects in connection with our cod fishery is the opening up of new markets, and the extension of our business in the older markets."[103] Tariff reduction was to be a key method of attaining this goal.

Spain, Portugal, Italy and Brazil were of even more importance than Greece. In 1905 it was reported that Newfoundland was "suffer[ing] severely from the high duties charged upon dry codfish"[104] in Spain, which had imposed a tax of eight shillings per quintal, and in Portugal, which collected a duty of eight shillings and six pence.[105] While the Italian tax of two shillings and one pence per quintal was not as extreme as the Iberian rates, in Brazil, the most valuable of all the colony's markets, the tax per quintal was as high as five shillings and three pence. The Department called upon the

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[101]Greece, particularly the area around Corinth, was considered by many to be the most accessible of all markets. When this market failed to expand, the government and Newfoundland fish producers asked the Colonial Office to encourage Greece to import more Newfoundland fish.

[102]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 143.

[103]Ibid.

[104]Ibid.

[105]For a detailed analysis of the Spanish market, see Ryan, Newfoundland-Spanish Saltfish Trade.

Executive Council to devise some means for lowering these charges.[106]

Despite widespread optimism that negotiations could be successful, a decade later little had changed. The state of the Portuguese market was in important ways typical. Newfoundland's attempts to compete with Norway on equal terms were hampered by a controversy over Portuguese wines. Portugal imposed an extra duty of thirty-five cent per quintal on Newfoundland fish because Britain accepted wines produced elsewhere as authentic port.[107] In this instance, Newfoundland was caught in the middle, since neither the Portuguese nor the mother country were willing to compromise. In such instances, there was little the colony could do to improve the prospects for its fish.

Wastage

Although Newfoundland did not have much influence over tariffs, it did have control over production and wastage. The latter issue was a long-term problem; indeed, one observer

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[106]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905. p. 143. In 1892 Newfoundland, with assistance from the British Foreign Office, was successful in reducing Spanish import duties on dried cod from thirty-six to twenty-four pesetas per one hundred kilograms. See Ryan, Newfoundland-Spanish Saltfish Trade, p. 65.

[107]See memorandum presented by G.C. Fearn on the Newfoundland Fishery to Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, pp. 37-48.

estimated that about one-third of a cod was simply squandered. In the early 1880s Job Brothers and Company built plants at Catalina and along the "straits" to manufacture fertilizer from cod waste. This venture closed its doors after losing approximately $100,000.[108] To encourage new ventures, government in 1890 passed "An Act for the Encouragement of the Manufacture of Fish Glue, Isinglass and Gelatine," which provided manufacturers a rebate equal to the amount paid in duties on pure alcohol imported for the purpose of manufacturing fish glue, isinglass and gelatine.[109] The Act was to have effect until December 31, 1893, but it was renewed until the end of 1896. The only change in the revised law was to extend the rebate on duties to imported glass bottles.[110] In 1910, Job Brothers made another unsuccessful attempt to produce fertilizer at its whale factory at Aquaforte.[111]

Just prior to the war, the government made a renewed attempt to increase the value-added in the fishery. In 1913 it entered into an agreement with the Orr Newfoundland Company for the operation over a five-year period of five reduction

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[108]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, pp. 395-396.

[109]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-third Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1890), pp. 161-162.

[110]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1893), p. 109.

[111]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, pp. 393-399.

plants for the manufacture of fertilizer and glue.[112] To ensure success, the company was granted a five-year monopoly, giving it the exclusive right to manufacture fertilizer and glue from waste products and dogfish. Because the company was obligated to build at least one reduction plant each year, the protection was in essence granted on a declining scale: while a plant built in the first year would enjoy a five-year monopoly, one built in the fifth year would benefit for only one year. At the end of the contract period, the monopoly was to terminate. In defense of the scheme, government ministers argued that the monopoly would not interfere with reduction plants already in operation or with the rights of those currently engaged in negotiations with government for the operation of similar facilities.[113]

To supplement fish offal, dogfish were also to be utilised. As Newfoundland had no market for this fish, the undertaking was designed to take advantage of an underutilized species. The historical significance of the dogfish was not in its utility but rather its reputation as a nuisance. The Department of Fisheries reported in 1910 that

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[112]Ibid.

[113]Similar to agreements with other companies for the operation of bait depots and cold storage facilities, the Orr Newfoundland Company was also granted duty free entry on materials and machinery for the construction and operation of its facilities. For further details, see "An Act to Confirm an Agreement with the Orr Newfoundland Company Limited," Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland: Passed in the Third Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George V (St. John's, 1913), pp. 49-53.

dogfish had been a greater pest than usual and suggested that the establishment of a few guano plants would be an ideal method of combatting this menace. In 1912 Inspector O'Reilly attributed the poor cod fishery off the Avalon Peninsula to the presence of dogfish. Similar reports were received from Cape St. Mary's, Placentia Bay, Orderin, and Red Harbour.[114] After opining that "it is a pity that something could not be done in the way of erecting reduction works, such as the Government did in Canada," O'Reilly contended that "if the Government were to erect one or two reduction works it would be money well spent, and would be almost self-supporting."[115] Another observer called less specifically for "anything that will induce the capture of dogfish," adding that this would "be of immense benefit to the fishermen."[116]

It was in response to such complaints that dogfish were included in the Orr agreement. Indeed, to garner support for the package, Morris in the House presented a letter from Mr. Bursell, who was in charge of Job's establishment in Halifax, attesting to the success of that facility in utilizing dogfish and enumerating the benefits to the fishery from reducing the stocks of this creature. Included was a report from the

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[114]At Cuslett one fishermen was reported to have cut one of his cod nets in half because it was full of dogfish, while another was left on the bottom for the same reason. Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, p. 396.

[115]Ibid., p. 397.

[116]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1913, p. 154.

Canadian Minister of Fisheries on the manufacture of dogfish fertilizer.[117]

The negotiations with Orr were but another in the long series of attempts by government to encourage diversification in the fishery. It typifies governmental strategy in that it looked to outside capital and expertise. Indeed, throughout the period, programmes adopted in Canada, the US, Great Britain and Norway were most often the models for proposals and the yardstick used to measure accomplishment. While there was some value to this strategy, since it lowered costs by lessening the need for experimentation, it also helps us to understand why government fishery programmes so often failed. Despite its continual calls for information specific to the Newfoundland fishery upon which to base legislation, the government too often simply copied what had been done elsewhere, failing to take account of the unique conditions in the colony. By behaving this way, it virtually guaranteed a much higher failure rate than necessary.

Although attempts to increase value-added through waste reduction plants was a move in the right direction, such a plan little to ameliorate the persistent problem of marketing fish for human consumption. Without an appropriate infrastructure, particularly trade agents, Newfoundland's ability to present its wares was limited.

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[117]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, pp. 396-397.

International Exhibitions

One way to alleviate this problem was through participation in international exhibitions. These shows provided a unique opportunity for Newfoundland to show the world the produce of her fishery and to make contacts to develop new markets.

An early opportunity to participate in such an international gathering came in 1884 at the International Fisheries Exhibition in London. According to A. Shea, the Newfoundland Commissioner for the exhibition, the trade fair unfortunately was "too limited in volume or character to place the Colony in the light in which our people would have reason to feel that justice had been done to our resources or reputation." Although the number of Newfoundland displays were limited, exporters were heartened when Newfoundland dried cod defeated Norwegian competition to capture the gold medal. Newfoundland tinned lobster also garnered favourable comment, with Treadwell's receiving the gold medal. Newfoundland cod oil was judged "superior to any other exhibit of the kind in the Exhibition." Although Newfoundland herring earned only a second-place award because it was packed in half barrels, the jurors commended the fish as "exceptionally fine."[118]

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[118]Items on display included dried cod from Baine, Johnston & Co., Walter Grieve & Co., and Harvey & Co.; fish in spirits, such as caplin, squid, trout, salmon and Lance; cordage and lines from the Colonial Cordage Company; cod oil from P.& L. Tessier, S. March & Sons, Harvey & Co., and McDougall and Templeton; Labrador herring; tinned lobster from John Steer, G.& C. Forsey and W.C. Treadwell; and seal skins from Stephens & Sons. Non-fish products consisted of iron and lead ores, models of the Vanguard and Lion, and a model of a

The triumphs in London demonstrated clearly that at least on a small scale, Newfoundland was capable of producing first-class products. But the achievement was tainted somewhat by charges that part of the success may have been the result of the appointment of W.H. Ridley, formerly of Harbour Grace, as a judge.[119] Indeed, Shea claimed that "he worked well, and Norway was declared second to us" in dried cod.[120] Although this admission seems to suggest that the Newfoundland judge may have been less than objective, it would be foolhardy to attribute Newfoundland's success solely to partisan adjudication. While it is possible that Ridley influenced the outcome, it is important to note that he was only one juror on a multi-person panel.[121]

Another opportunity for Newfoundland to gain important exposure for her fishery products came when the colony in 1891 received an invitation to the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.[122] To accept, Adolph Neilsen estimated, the Fisheries Commission

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fisherman's home built by John Haddon.

[119]Evening Mercury (St. John's), July 3, 1883.

[120]Ibid.

[121]See A. Shea, "Report of Newfoundland Commissioner to International Fisheries Exhibition," Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1884, Appendix, pp. 715-736.

[122]A bill presented in the House during the same year for an industrial exhibition in St. John's was deferred until after the passage of a Supply Bill. No details were provided about the nature or size of the prospective fair were provided. Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1891, p. 123.

would require a grant of about $10,000, which he thought "would be sufficient to place a creditable exhibit of our fishery products and industries at the World's Fair." He claimed that the exhibition was an opportunity "which may never recur" to advertise Newfoundland's resources, and warned that failure to attend would be "discreditable, and injurious to the best interests of the colony." In addition to the opportunity to attract new customers, Neilsen asserted that the fair also represented a chance to attract outside investment.[123] In the end, however, the government decided against official participation on the grounds that it would have been "of doubtful utility."[124] Coming so close on the heels of the London triumphs, this decision is difficult to fathom. It represents yet another example of the government turning a deaf ear to the recommendations of its own fisheries officials.

Declining to participate in Chicago did not however mean that government was totally opposed to exhibitions. Indeed, it offered encouragement--and participated--in the Manufactures' Exhibition in St. John's in November 1910. The first fair of its kind in Newfoundland, it was a venue for manufacturers of all kinds to display their wares; the fishery was no exception. While press coverage was generally laudatory, the Daily

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[123]Newfoundland, Commission, Report, 1891, p. 41.

[124]See the evidence of Henry William Le Messurier to Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, p. 87.

News complained that it was "a pity that this excellent exhibit has not a more accessible location." Nonetheless, the same paper praised the fisheries exhibits as "characteristic of the present transition period in fishing matters."[125] Moreover, it added that the displays were likely to "encourage new methods," observing that "many of the results already achieved are offered in illustration."[126] In conclusion, the paper asserted that the overall effect was to demonstrate the "long series of steps which are leading and must continue to lead from the methods of the past to these methods which in the future bid fair to revolutionize the local fishery trade."[127] Obviously, the new and improved products showed that Newfoundland was attempting on at least some level to meet the challenges in local and international markets. One example was the Fish Food Exporting Co., which in 1910 shipped dried squid to China, where it sold for as much as eighty cents per pound.[128]

Despite such innovations, by the outbreak of World War I the Newfoundland fishery still looked much as it did in the

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[125]Daily News (St. John's), November 4, 1910.

[126]Ibid. Some of the items on display included smoked, cured, boneless and shredded cod, cod steaks, smoked caplin, tinned lobster, and dried squid, cold-drawn cod oil, bone fertilizer, fish glue and liquid glue. One of the more varied displays was mounted by Mr. Clouston. In fact, the Daily News devoted an entire article on November 3 to this display.

[127]Ibid.

[128]Ibid., September 16, 1910.

1880s. Dried cod continued to account for an overwhelming proportion of fish exports, and for the most part it was still shipped to traditional markets. Although government efforts to expand markets through improved cure and product diversification were steps in the right direction, an adequate solution would involve more than the passage of regulations and the licensing of cullers. Adequate enforcement and inspection was also required, although they were difficult to achieve in light of the ongoing financial constraints.

More important, improvements in the fishery required an entirely different approach than that exhibited by the government in this period. A successful strategy should have been based upon two components. The first was cooperation with the various participants in the industry. Although the politicians were seldom loathe to stress their willingness to collaborate in framing fishing policies, government did little consultation and was even less successful at breaking down the barriers of mistrust between key elements, especially the fishermen and the merchants. The second plank of a successful strategy would have involved more efficient use of the resources that government controlled. In particular, the fishery would unquestionably have been in better condition in 1914 if the government had better utilized the resources within the Department of Fisheries. Although politicians frequently complained of insufficient data on which to construct viable programmes, the evidence contained in the

Department's reports bear eloquent testimony to the specious nature of such complaints. While government hardly created the problems which faced the Newfoundland fishery on the eve of the war, it is difficult to deny that it had become part of the problem.

CHAPTER 5

BAIT, COLD STORAGE AND THE FISHERIES PROTECTION SERVICE

Bait and Cold Storage

Of all the problems facing the fishery, none bothered fishermen as much as fluctuations in the volume of fish landed. Variations in catch were attributed to a number of factors, one of the most important of which was an insufficient supply of bait. This situation, though not a yearly occurrence and often local in nature, was preventable with the establishment of bait depots or cold storage facilities. Initially, both were regarded as a means of preserving bait for the fishery as opposed to fish for human consumption. This changed when cold storage came to be viewed as a way of preserving fish as food, thus reducing the island's dependency on traditional output and markets. The Newfoundland government was actively involved in this area from the mid-1890s. In addition, the government established a Fisheries Protection Service. While this agency was charged with enforcing a variety of fisheries regulations, the largest part of its activity came to be associated with the subject of bait.

With the establishment of the Fisheries Commission, the issue of a stable supply of bait was subjected to scrutiny.[1] In its 1892 Report, the Commission asserted that "one of the drawback[s] in the shore fishery is the want of bait at certain times."[2] It called for the establishment of inexpensive bait depots which could be erected where needed and suggested that if funds were made available, it would be prepared to build a few as demonstration projects. Unfortunately, no money was appropriated by government for this purpose.

Nonetheless, this suggestion marked the beginning of sustained interest in bait depots. As with other issues in the fishery, government looked to the public for support. Indeed, the Commission had concluded its discussion of bait depots by indicating its willingness to assist private enterprise as far as possible in their construction. When this offer found no takers, the Commission had exhausted its initiatives in this area.

However, in 1893 the newly-formed Department of Fisheries embarked upon what it described as "a new and important

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[1]The earliest attempt to freeze bait in Newfoundland came in the winter of 1854 when a Gloucester fisherman exported frozen herring, cod and halibut from Newfoundland to Massachusetts for use as bait; A. Howard Clarke, "History of the Iced Fish and Frozen Fish Trade of the United States", Transactions of the American Fisheries Society (1886), p. 68.

[2]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 69.

departure by the erection of model refrigerating rooms for the preservation of bait by the freezing process."[3] The impetus behind this effort was a desire to introduce a model refrigerator which fishermen could see in operation and test. Officials felt that if this experiment proved successful, private enterprise might be induced to establish similar facilities.[4] In essence, the Department was acting on the Fisheries Commission's proposal of the previous year.

The location for the experiment was Burin. Two freezing chambers were built on the "ice-and-bait" principle. The smallest chamber had twenty-one galvanized iron cylinders with perforated bottoms and a freezing surface of 294 square feet; the other contained 392 square feet.[5] The initial success of this test became apparent that year when P. Sullivan of Presque, Placentia Bay, in addition to offering the Department a part of his store for similar freezing chambers, also offered to operate them at his own expense.[6] Needless to say, his invitation was accepted.

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[3]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, p. 247.

[4]Ibid. In 1913, Morris articulated government's rationale for encouraging the private sector to operate bait depots. "It was more economical, more serviceable and more efficient for the fishermen of the country," he said, "if we could induce a company to put this thing on a commercial basis." See Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, p. 228.

[5]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, p. 247.

[6]Ibid.

The following year the Department evaluated the results at both locations as satisfactory. At Burin, about ten thousand squid were frozen. When used in October, they were found to be as good as fresh. About forty barrels of caplin were also frozen and, like the herring, kept well. The Department considered this experiment a total success and asserted that further depots would be of great benefit to fishermen when bait was scarce.[7] Yet the issue of extending the programme did not assume much importance over the next few years.

In 1898 the Winter Government attempted to lure operators into the field of cold storage by passing "An Act for the Encouragement of Cold Storage and Other Business"[8]. This bill was rather general and provided little in the way of a regulatory framework within which prospective investors would have to operate. Instead, it merely stated that government would guarantee any company for a period of not less than one year and no more than five years "the sum by which the net annual profits of the company may be less than five per cent on its paid up capital to an amount not exceeding thirty thousand pounds sterling." In other words, government was willing to guarantee any company a five percent return on its

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[7]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 13.

[8]In discussing cold storage facilities in 1911, Morris stated that the 1898 Act was the first introduced in the House to deal with cold storage and bait depots. See the debate in Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Assembly, 1911, p. 61.

investment. In addition, the Act permitted the duty free entry of all plant machinery, implements, supplies and material necessary for construction.[9] As a politician later observed, this Act was "intended to encourage cold storage companies and the adoption of these principles in the handling of our fishery products."[10]

Perhaps the first to take advantage of this offer was J.J. Polson, a Gloucester pioneer in cold storage who towed into Placentia Bay the hulk of a barque fitted for refrigeration with the intention of freezing herring for the American market. When this proved unsuccessful, he turned his attention, with a government subsidy, to the provision of frozen bait to local fishermen.[11] In the same year, when government signed a contract with Gillespie Reid to operate the Newfoundland Railway, it required him to build two cold storage

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[9]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Sixty-first Year of the Reign of Her Majesty Queen Victoria (St. John's, 1898), pp. 356-357. See also W. G. Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum Reconsidered: The American Dimension in Newfoundland Resource Development, 1898-1910," Newfoundland Studies, Vol. V, No. 1 (Spring 1989), p. 14.

[10]Speech by Premier Morris in the House of Assembly, February 14, 1911 in Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1911, p. 61.

[11]Reeves, "Alexander's Conundrum Reconsidered," p. 14.

facilities. However, when this contract was renegotiated in 1901, there was no mention of cold storage.[12]

In 1902 a House of Assembly committee was established to study the potential benefits of cold storage and bait depots to the fishery.[13] In its findings, the committee concluded that bait depots were "absolutely necessary for the successful prosecution of the fishery and that no argument was necessary to prove their utility." It ended by recommending that they "should be established without any unnecessary delay in suitable locations."[14] In accepting the report, government pointed out that this recommendation, if adopted, should be carried out with "due regard to economy and efficiency."[15]

The committee also suggested that efforts be made to induce fishermen to form bait freezing associations to ensure the success of bait depots.[16] As to cold storage, the commit-

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[12]A. P. Penny, A History of the Newfoundland Railway. Vol. 1: 1881-1923 (St. John's, 1988), p. 70.

[13]The committee consisted of: T.J. Murphey, Minister of Marine and Fisheries; Sir Robert Thorburn; Hon. E.P. Morris; W.B. Grieve; Hon. R.K. Bishop; Hon. J. Harris; Eli Dawe, Minister of Mines and Agriculture; E.C. Watson, Jas. McGrath; Alex N. McDougall; J. Outerbridge; A. John Harvey and D.W. Prowse, Secretary to the Fisheries Committee. See Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, p. 10.

[14]Ibid., p. 5.

[15]Ibid., p. 10.

[16]Ibid., p. 5.

tee regarded such facilities as "thoroughly practicable"[17] since, along with proper transportation facilities, they would enable west coast fish to be shipped to the US and Canada.[18] The committee further stated that without government assistance, no private capital would be forthcoming.[19] As a result, government voted $5,000 for the establishment of cold storage depots for bait. While the Minister of Finance proclaimed that fishermen would recognize the vote as a token of government's desire to promote the interests of fishermen, the assistance package was not restricted to local men but was also open to foreign investors.[20]

The committee further suggested that any grants should be contingent on the condition that fishermen be able to purchase bait at low prices and that they should be permitted to deposit their own bait in the freezer.[21] As will later be demonstrated, allowing fishermen to store bait in private or company-owned freezers was one of the factors that led to the failure of some facilities. The committee also recommended

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[17]Ibid., p. 6.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., pp. 6-7.

[20]Speech of the Hon. Minister of Finance, March 12, 1902, in the House of Assembly, as printed in Evening Herald (St. John's), March 24, 1902.

[21]"Report of the Committee on Cold Storage," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, Appendix, p. 6.

that government follow the Canadian example by providing a grant of five dollars for every ton of bait frozen and to provide a grant equal to the value of half the cost of the building and plant.[22] It was recommended that in addition to following the plans of the Canadian Department of Marine and Fisheries for depot construction, an inspector "practically acquainted with all the details of cold storage construction" be appointed to oversee construction and that the full amount of the grant be paid upon receipt of the inspector's certificate of efficiency.[23]

To demonstrate the effectiveness of such a facility, the committee suggested that an experimental refrigerator be erected at Port-au-Basques with a capacity of at least twenty tons. The cost was estimated at $1,100 fully equipped and operational.[24] Its report was silent, however, on whether it should be built and operated by government or private industry. The selection of Port-aux-Basques was justified by its location at the terminus of the railway, as well as the fact that it was a year-round shipping port.[25]

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]"Report of Charles Way on Cold Storage," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, Appendix, p. 11.

[25]"Report of the Committee on Cold Storage, Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, Appendix, p. 6. Port-aux-Basques was also connected by rail with Bay St. George and the Bay of

Much of the information on which the committee based its conclusions was collected during a trip in 1902 to Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island by the MHA Charles Way. His mission was to obtain data on cold storage facilities and bait depots operated by the Canadian government and private industry.[26] For the most part, Way was favourably disposed to the adoption of similar procedures and practices in Newfoundland for the construction and operation of cold storage facilities. He was particularly impressed by the fact that the Deputy Minister of Fisheries of Canada gave bait associations a high rating. Nonetheless, Way suggested that bait depot associations would not be effective in Newfoundland because the majority of fishermen were too scattered and thus lacked the "concentrative power" to form such associations.[27] Instead, Way suggested that government look to established businessmen who "would gladly construct a freezer or freezers, provided that they would not be retarded by import duties, and too much 'red tapeism'."[28]

Islands, two principal herring centres.

[26]"Report of Charles Way on Cold Storage." The locales he visited included Ottawa, Montréal, New Glasgow, Canso, Petit-de-Grat, Alberton and Miminegash.

[27]Ibid., p. 12.

[28]Ibid.

Despite government encouragement, in 1902 only two bait depots were in operation; one at Channel, owned and operated by Mr. Clement, and the other at Ramea, owned and operated by Mr. Penny. The Channel plant was reported to have been rather primitive, using salt and ice in which small quantities of squid and herring were frozen. The Ramea plant, although it also used salt ice, was of an improved design.[29]

In 1903 the Department of Fisheries further underscored the need for bait depots by reporting that the bank fishery had suffered lost time and reduced catches as a result of an insufficient supply of bait. This loss for July alone was estimated at approximately twenty quintals per man. The Department suggested that this loss could have been prevented, since there were plenty of herring in June, but because of the lack of bait depots, they could not be stored. Moreover, the Department claimed that it had received dozens of telegrams daily, from both inshore and bank fishermen, attesting to the lack of bait.[30]

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[29]"Report of Joseph O'Reilly, Inspector of the Fisheries Protection Service of Newfoundland," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, Appendix, p. 27.

[30]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1903, p. 136.

In the same year, government introduced "An Act Respecting the Establishment of Cold Storage Factories and Houses."[31] Unlike the 1898 legislation, this law was not the result of government attempts to attract interest in cold storage, but rather the result of a proposed agreement with a Maine firm, the Newfoundland Cold Storage and Reduction Company, for the construction of cold storage and bait facilities.[32] The main impetus appears to have been the company's plea to extend the five-year guarantee provided under the 1898 Act to twenty years, a request which government granted. Like the previous Act, this one also provided for the duty free entry of all plant machinery, implements, supplies and material necessary for construction of facilities. In addition, land and buildings occupied by the company were to be exempt from direct taxation by any level of government.

Attached to the Act was a copy of the "Schedule" between government and the Newfoundland Cold Storage and Reduction Company. Under the agreement, the company was to engage in the freezing of fresh fish, the manufacture of fish offal, oil-bearing material and, important to the continued operation of

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[31]Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the Fourth Year of the Reign of His Majesty King Edward III (St. John's, 1904), pp. 6-13.

[32]W.H. Horwood to the Right Honourable Alfred Lyttelton, May 23, 1904, Keith Matthew's Collection, Series 3, Fisheries 13-A-M1-071, Maritime History Archives, MUN.

the fishery, the production and delivery of bait to fishermen. The facility was to be equipped to freeze at least thirty tons of fresh fish in a twenty-four hour period, as well as treating and reducing sixty tons of fish, fish offal or oil-bearing material and packaging and preparing for shipping at least one hundred tons of fresh fish. The facility was to cost not less than $250,000, including the cost of materials, machinery and labour. Annual expenditure for fish and fish offal and labour connected with the catching and shipping of fish to the facility was to be at least $200,000. With respect to bait, the company was to build, at locations determined by government, not less than five and no more than thirteen bait depots and to sell to fishermen bait at a price not exceeding one cent per pound above the cost to the company for purchase, freezing, storage and transportation. If any bait depot were unable to turn a profit under these guidelines, government agreed that it would pay the company the difference. In addition, government reserved the right to purchase, without notice, any bait depot from the company.

As to operating profits, government was obliged for the life of the contract to pay the company the difference on any annual profits less than five percent per year. For example, if the company made three percent on its investment, government would pay an additional two percent. If the company made five percent or more, government was not liable for any

further payments. However, the amount for which government was liable was not to exceed twenty-five-thousand dollars in any single year. To be eligible for this guarantee, the company had to have its cold storage facility in operation and spend the agreed amount for the purchase of fresh fish and offal. Two-thirds of all fresh fish purchased had to be exported, excluding any that was canned or tinned. Moreover, cod livers were excluded from the quota of fish offal. Finally, as a means of protecting the fishery from foreign competitors, the company was not permitted to sell bait to any fishermen not resident in Newfoundland.[33]

Supporters of this approach to developing the fishery asserted that it would be "impossible to calculate the good that will be derived by the country from it."[34] Indeed, in an understated fashion, government described the agreement as "liberal."[35] Yet despite all the concessions that government granted, the deal fell through. The company withdrew its offer to construct the plant because of restrictions which "made it impossible for the contractors to obtain the necessary

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[33]Money expended for the manufacture of whale, cod and seal oil was to be included in the $200,000 the company was required to invest. Acts of the General Assembly of Newfoundland Passed in the 4th year of the Reign of His Majesty King Edward III, p. 12.

[34]Trade Review, May 16, 1903.

[35]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1904, p. 153.

capital." Apparently, the restriction which mattered most was the one preventing the company from selling bait to foreigners.[36]

In 1903 government also introduced some general rules and regulations for the establishment of bait depots. Public funds would be available for up to thirty percent of the building costs of any facility and equipment for a period not to exceed five years from the commencement of operations. Moreover, operators were eligible for an annual subsidy of up to twenty percent of total operating expenses.[37] Government's "willingness" to provide bounties to assist interested parties had by 1904 resulted in the establishment of six bait depots:

Location	Owner	Cost[38]
Bay Bulls	W. Weeks & Co.	$1,500
Petty Harbour	Cold Storage Co	2,000
Torbay	Simeon Roach	600
Port-de-Grave	G.W. Butler	300
Fogo	J.W. Hodge	2,000
Channel	Bishop & Monore	2,000

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[36]Speech by Premier Morris in Newfoundland, Journal of the Newfoundland House of Assembly, 1911, p. 61. The restriction was inserted in the agreement primarily because Newfoundland was engaged in an ongoing debate with Canada and the US over the right of foreigners to obtain bait in Newfoundland waters.

[37]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1903, p. 139.

[38]It is impossible to determine if the quoted costs represented the total cost or the amount paid by government towards the cost of the depot. If the former, it is unclear whether this reflects actual or authorized investment.

It was hoped that if these operations proved successful, they would stimulate the establishment of many others in places where required.[39]

Yet by 1905 no "further extension" of facilities could be reported. Nonetheless, government continued to present an optimistic view that:

> many more persons are about to take advantage of the liberal action of government and erect more cold storage buildings, particularly on the Western Shore, where the want of bait has caused severe loss this season, and almost every season.[40]

In the Department's reports for 1906-1909, no mention was made of cold storage or bait depots. This in part may have been the result of an abundance of bait during these seasons, thereby reducing the need for such facilities. In all these years herring, caplin and squid were reported to be plentiful and easily obtained when needed.[41] This lack of comment is an indication that government and those engaged in the fishery only took an interest in a particular topic, such as an insufficient supply of bait, when it became a problem. It appears that the general feeling at the time was that tomor-

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[39]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1904, p. 154.

[40]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1905, p. 144.

[41]See Joseph O'Reilly, "Report on the Fisheries Protection Service of Newfoundland for 1906" Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, Appendix, pp. 193-194. For 1907 see Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1907, pp. 182-183. The 1908 information is in Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1908, pp. 272-273.

row's problems would be dealt with when they arose; there was little long-range planning.

However, this should not be taken as an indication that no effort was being expended by the private sector in this field. Downey's on the west coast, Earle's at Fogo and a Petty Harbour plant erected by a group of St. John's investors were but three of the larger attempts to establish depots. Downey's failed because of an inability to acquire sufficient supplies of bait and inadequate transportation. The Petty Harbour depot, built in 1904, also failed, most likely because of a lack of initial investment by its backers. Earle's bait depot on Fogo, on the other hand, proved successful. This operation differed in key ways from the unsuccessful ones. One difference was that this operation was financed totally by Earle, which in turn meant that there were no shareholders or partners to complicate decision-making. Earle also set aside a portion of the freezer for individual fishermen to rent in which to store their own bait. In the remainder of the freezer, Earle stored bait which he in turn sold to fishermen who did not have their own.[42]

During the period 1907 to 1911, only two bait depots received government subsidies. The chief reason for the closure of the other depots was the lack of patronage and an

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[42]Trade Review, September 7, 1907. It is also possible that the depot was affected adversely by a shortage of bait.

aversion by the average fishermen to the notion of paying for bait.[43] The "halves" system, in which depots stored bait for individual fishermen, may also have been a contributing factor to the high proportion of failures. Under this system, if a fishermen caught 1,000 pounds of bait and stored it in the depot for personal use, half would go to the depot as payment for the cost of holding and freezing. This system encouraged fishermen to catch bait while it was available, but discouraged them from storing it. This meant that a few fishermen could control the stocks of bait at a depot by buying from the stocks and not using their own. When the depot's stocks were exhausted, they could then sell their bait to other fishermen at exorbitant prices. As a result, a new system was gradually introduced under which depot operators bought fresh bait from fishermen and held it for resale in time of need. The selling price was fixed at three cents per pound for frozen squid, two and one-half cents per pound for herring, one and one-half cents per pound for caplin and four cents per pound for mackerel.[44] While this approach eliminated the worst abuses of

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[43]G.C. Fearn to Alan Gooding, October 5, 1911, Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1911.

[44]Frederick N. Clarke, "The Newfoundland Bait Service," Historical Notes on the Catching and Preservation of the Bait Fishes (N.P., n.d.). This may be consulted in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, MUN.

the "halves" system, it apparently did not provide sufficient profit to induce new operators to enter the field.

Government subsidies, while inefficient in practice, were valuable in that they fostered diversification by reducing the industry's economic dependency on a single product. During the election campaign of 1908, Morris promised that if elected his government would provide bait for fishermen by placing bait depots at strategic locations.[45] Two years later, the Morris government passed a new cold storage act. For the most part, this Act was similar to the 1904 legislation. The changes were largely superficial: the five percent profit guarantee was reduced from twenty to fifteen years, and minimum prices that fishermen could be charged for bait or the use of cold storage facilities were not fixed as in previous Acts, although such rates were subject to government approval.[46]

Government soon introduced a new rationale for cold storage facilities to Newfoundland: the preservation of fish for human consumption. The Budget Speech for 1910 made specific reference to the benefits that the new Act would bring to the fishery and the economy in general. For example,

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[45]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, p. 227.

[46]Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1911, p. 62.

it alluded to the possibility that if a company were to pay an additional ten cents for a quintal of cod, it would put an extra $150,000 in the pockets of fishermen. In addition, it was suggested that government revenue would increase by approximately $50,000 through duties on imports associated with cold storage and bait facilities. Cold storage facilities would not only assist Newfoundland fish firms to break into the American market but also help to bolster prices for dried fish in traditional entrepots. The latter claim was based on the assumption that every pound of fish sent to the American market because of cold storage represented an equal amount that would be withdrawn from traditional markets, thus increasing the prices for dried fish.[47] This argument, which was also used by Newfoundland negotiators in discussing free trade with Canada around 1900, was clearly fallacious. One problem is that such logic assumes that output was fixed. More important, the assumption that the removal of a quantity of dried cod from traditional markets would lead to price increases failed to account for a problem with which Newfoundland was becoming increasingly concerned: competition in traditional markets from nations such as France and Norway. Even if Newfoundland diverted salt fish production to fresh fish and reduced shipments to traditional markets, the price

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[47]Budget Speech, March 21, 1911, in Appendix, Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1910, p. 323.

of dried fish may not have increased, since the slack left behind by Newfoundland likely would have been taken up by one of its traditional competitors.

In defence of cold storage, Premier Morris asserted that the profits would be enormous. Cod which could be bought fresh for one cent per pound could be kept for three or four months for a half cent a pound and sold during the winter months at eight to ten cents per pound.[48] Cold storage would also enable fishermen who received up to two and a half cents per pound for lobster to sell them in New York at forty to sixty cents per pound.[49] By establishing cold storage facilities, Newfoundland fish would become more competitive in the American and world markets. Cold storage would also assist Newfoundland in diversifying her fisheries. In the House of Assembly, John Harris warned that if Newfoundland were to keep abreast of the times, sooner or later she would have to adopt new methods in curing and marketing her fish products.[50]

Another argument government used in support of cold storage was the need to reduce wastage in the fishery. It was estimated that one-third of the fish, including the head,

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[48]Globe and Mail (Toronto), November 7, 1910.

[49]Ibid.

[50]Cold storage would also enable Newfoundland to catch and utilize species, such as flatfish, eels, and turbit, which at the time were not considered valuable; Newfoundland, Journal of the Legislative Council, 1911, p. 61.

tongue, sound bone, entrails and other parts, was discarded. If these parts were saved and manufactured as a by-product, the productive wealth of the fishery was predicted to increase by fifty percent.[51]

Government's interest in the potential of using cold storage as a way of preserving fish for food may also have been piqued by an approach from the firm of Trefethen and Lord of Portland, Maine, which in 1910 agreed to build five stationary cold storage facilities over a five-year period. In addition, the Maine investors agreed to operate a steamer equipped to travel the coast delivering bait and picking up fish. The firm also promised to construct five smoking houses; five fish packing factories; two glue factories; and facilities for the manufacture of fertilizer and other by-products.[52]

While the government was negotiating with the Maine businessmen, opposition to the agreement surfaced from several quarters. Sir Robert Bond, Leader of the Opposition, argued against the contract on the grounds that the people of Newfoundland would be forced to underwrite the company's losses for fifteen years.[53] Bond also argued that the contract

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[51]Ibid., p. 52.

[52]Ibid., pp. 24, 169.

[53]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1911, p. 79.

was so loosely written that the company could sell bait to Americans and Canadians, thus reviving that simmering issue.[54] Significantly, Bond did not argue against cold storage because he had become part of the consensus favouring this kind of development.

At the same time, the Fishermens' Protection Union (FPU) under William Coaker joined the battle against Trefethen and Lord. The FPU was not opposed to the creation of bait depots but believed that five depots were insufficient to supply some four hundred harbours and was against fishermen being charged for bait. Using the Fishermens' Advocate as a forum, Coaker reiterated his support for depots, claiming that with an adequate supply of bait the catch could increase by one-third, putting an additional $2,500,000 in the pockets of fishermen. Coaker proposed an alternative to Trefethen and Lord, calling for the construction of three hundred depots at a cost of $500 apiece. He claimed that seventy FPU locals were willing to donate their time if the government would provide the materials. While Coaker pledged that the FPU would do everything in its power to help Trefethen and Lord get established in Newfoundland, he clearly preferred a deal which would allow the fishermen to control the supply of bait.[55]

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[54]Ibid.

[55]Fishermens' Advocate, January 1911.

In the end, the concerns of both supporters and opponents were irrelevant, because the negotiations terminated in 1912 when one of the partners entered an insane asylum.[56] Unwilling to admit defeat, Morris travelled to New York to negotiate with the Booth Fisheries Company to replace Trefethen and Lord.[57] Averse to placing all its hopes on a single bidder a second time, the government also voted the sum of $5,000 to assist anyone who would establish bait depots in Newfoundland.[58]

Although the question of bait depots and cold storage facilities were matters of great concern to successive governments for two decades prior to World War I, none were able to implement successfully a government-operated program or to bring negotiations with private interests to a fruitful conclusion. Both the public and private sectors faced similar obstacles. Among the most important was the dispersion of the population over a long coastline and the difficulty of erecting bait depots at locations convenient for all fishermen. As well, there was the lack of interest by fishermen in perceiving bait depots as a form of insurance against bad years. In the end, the result was that despite all the debate

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[56]Newfoundland, Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, p. 228.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Ibid.

and rhetoric, Newfoundland fishermen on the eve of the war for the most part continued to lack a secure supply of bait. Moreover, the shortage of cold storage facilities continued to constraint the fishery from producing a stable supply of fresh fish would enable it to penetrate new markets, particularly in the US.

Fisheries Protection Service

Attempts to improve the catching, processing and marketing of fish through regulations were of course useless unless compliance could be ensured.[59] For this purpose the government established a Fisheries Protection Service (FPS). In addition to compelling adherence to regulations, the FPS also was used by the Department of Fisheries as a source of information on conditions in the fishery. Reports were made to the Department on topics such as bait supplies, licenses issued to foreign fishing vessels to take bait, cold storage and bait depots.

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[59]It is important to point out that the FPS was not only directed at saltwater fisheries but also to freshwater activities, such as the salmon and trout fisheries. This particular aspect of its mandate has been omitted from this study. For details on the FPS, see A.J.W. McNeily, "Game and Game Fish Protection in Newfoundland," Newfoundland Quarterly, Vol. X, No. 1 (July 1910), pp. 5-8.

As Adolph Neilsen pointed out in 1891, it was little use to pass laws if there was no adequate means of enforcement.[60] He believed that it was better to have no laws at all than:

> laws which remain a dead letter; and while failing to protect the fisheries, have the effect of demoralizing the people, and destroying that respect for law and government which ought to be maintained in every well-ordered community.[61]

The creation of the Fisheries Protection Service was the direct result of yet another recommendation by Neilsen, who in 1889 advocated the placement of "a small vessel in each bay, during the fishing season, having on board officials charged with the duty of enforcing the fishery laws." While government responded positively, it did so on an ad hoc basis. Throughout its history, the FPS was continually subject to the vagaries of the budgetary process. Indeed, Neilsen's 1891 lament was likely prompted by cutbacks to the FPS, by which "the means placed at their disposal being so limited, the Commission have been compelled to cut down this important branch of the service to a point far below what was intended."[62] As a result of the lack of funding, laws were reported to "have been violated in almost every bay."[63] Nonetheless, Neilsen hoped

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[60]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 38.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 15.

[63]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1891, p. 38.

that government would make provision for the appointment of wardens the following year. The cost, the Commission estimated, was only about $2,000.[64]

In 1892, government provided sufficient funds for the appointment of two wardens to police the area from Cape Ray to Cape St. John, one warden responsible for St. John's to Cape St. John and the other for the coast between St. John's and Cape Ray.[65] The following year, the service increased fourfold with the appointment of eight wardens, each responsible for one district between Cape Ray and Cape St. John. On the whole, it would appear that while the wardens attempted to be conscientious in performing their duties, the FPS was still far from satisfactory.[66]

The persistent lack of funding continued to frustrate the FPS even after the creation of the Department of Fisheries. Due to insufficient funds, only four wardens were provided in 1894 to patrol the coast from Cape Ray east to Cape St. John.[67] As a result, the area was divided into four dist-

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[64]Ibid., p. 97. $1,500 was also estimated for Salmon Rivers Protection Wardens.

[65]Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 9. Seven wardens were appointed to protect salmon and trout rivers; see ibid., pp. 16-17.

[66]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1893, pp. 245-246. Ten wardens were engaged for the protection of salmon rivers in this year.

[67]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 88.

ricts.[68] Neilsen, though supportive of the wardens, felt that the appointment of local men at insignificant salaries left room for improvement. He suggested that better results could be obtained by employing men from outside the district in which they were employed at reasonable salaries.[69]

Despite his plea for adequate and stable funding, little changed. Despite the fact that he described the FPS "as of the utmost importance," in 1895 the money available only permitted the hiring of two wardens.[70] Dividing the coast into two districts proved unsatisfactory; because of the size of each district, it was impossible for a warden to perform his duties in the manner required. Nonetheless, the unpredictable funding continued. In 1896, four wardens were engaged,[71] but even this

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[68]Ibid., p. 89. The distruct established were as follows: District A ran from Cape Ray to Point Crewe; District B from Point Crewe to St. John's; District C St. John's to Cape Freels; and District D Cape Freels to Cape St. John. John Moore of Dildo Cove was put in charge of District A, Joseph Wilson of St. John's of District B, and James Walsh of St. John's of District D, while District C was divided between five men each paid a small amount equal to the sum allowed one of the wardens with a large district. Those employed as wardens in District C were Levi March of St. John's, J. Coffin of King's Cove, G. Haines of James Cove, J.W. Cullen of Flat Island and P. House of Pool's Island, Bonavista Bay.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1895, pp. 403-404.

[71]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1896, p. 312.

number was insufficient, in part because of the increasing number of lobster factories.[72]

Compounding the problems caused by unstable funding was the lack of an adequate "job description." This was finally rectified in 1897, when the duties were enumerated:

> To visit repeatedly all the lobster factories, now 500 in number; to see the rules and regulations are complied with; to furnish each factory owner or operator with a license and blank returns to be filled up and forwarded to the Superintendent at the close of the season; to examine cod traps, nets, seines, etc., and see that the rules are complied with; and to prosecute offenders before the magistrate.[73]

Each warden was paid $250, out of which he was responsible for his own board and travelling expenses.[74] To charges that the service provided was inadequate, the Department countered that it was doing all it could to protect and improve the fishery by enforcing the regulations as well as it could given the means at its disposal.[75] Nonetheless, it admitted that "no small difficulty has been experienced in enforcing such rules; but we are satisfied that steady perseverance in the strict enforcement of the rules will in the end prove successful."[76]

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[72]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 335.

[73]Ibid., p. 349.

[74]Ibid.

[75]Ibid., p. 343.

[76]Ibid.

While the FPS had its critics, many informed citizens believed that given the funding constraints it was doing an adequate job. For example, Moses Harvey concluded that the fishery had been brought under control by rules and regulation based on a "knowledge of fish life" and their enforcement by the wardens. He concluded that injurious practices and destructive modes of fishing were gradually being suppressed.[77] Indeed, despite its constant requests for additional funds, the Department concluded by 1902 that the FPS was "very effective" in that only one complaint was lodged for a violation of the Bait Act.[78] The number of convictions, of course, is a problematic measure of the success of such a programme, since it tells us nothing about the number of cases prosecuted unsuccessfully or about the number of individuals committing violations which were unobserved or unprosecuted. Indeed, if the continual requests for more wardens had any basis in need, it is hard to accept that the wardens had been this successful in stamping out infractions.

With the settlement of the French Shore in 1904, the FPS was charged with responsibility for this shore as well. The

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[77]Moses Harvey, "The Newfoundland Fisheries Commission," p. 649.

[78]This was against T. Vallis of Rencontre, Fortune Bay, for exporting about one hundred and twenty barrels of herring to St. Pierre. "Report of Inspector O'Reilly on the Fisheries' Protection Service 1902," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1902, p. 15.

absence of roads and the isolated locations of many villages compounded the problem of enforcement.[79] Moreover, this part of the coast was experiencing a boom in the lobster fishery. This presented a dilemma: to refuse any of those who had previously engaged in packing lobsters a licence was difficult, but to grant permits to everyone would mean issuing between two and three hundred licences.[80] In the end, however, it was not lobsters but rather bait which caused the problem. The number of individuals convicted of violations of fishery rules reached thirty-six in 1904.[81] Most were the result of fishermen illegally exporting caplin and squid as bait to St. Pierre and about two-thirds of the violators were residents of the French Shore.[82] The supervising warden in St. George's, who was responsible for the shore, suggested that in order to enforce the Bait Act a station with a steam launch be established at Lamaline. He felt that such a vessel could control

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[79]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1904, p. 196.

[80]Ibid., p. 197.

[81]Joseph O'Reilly, "Annual Report of the Fisheries' Protection Service of Newfoundland for the Year 1904," Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1904, p. 187.

[82]Ibid. p. 188. Moreover, some fishery protection officers were charged with shipping bait to St. Pierre or encouraging others to do the same.

the traffic with St. Pierre and the "petty smuggling that is now going on."[83]

But the lack of funds made any reform of the system difficult. In his 1911 report on the lobster fishery, J.H. Dee judged that while the laws governing this fishery were "as near perfection as it is possible to make them...the system of carrying them out does not give the desired effect." On the continuing tradition of hiring individuals who themselves were engaged in catching and packing lobsters as wardens, Dee lamented the obvious conflict of interest, suggesting that police officers take over the work of wardens where possible.[84]

The lobster fishery remained the most difficult sector in which to enforce the regulations. The FPU was limited in what it could do because the numerous factories made it virtually impossible for officers to inspect them all. Fishermen and factory owners were thus for the most part left on their own. Moreover, if a fishermen or factory owner were convicted of a violation, the fines were high enough that they could represent a serious financial burden to his family.[85]

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[83]Ibid. See Appendix X for vessels engaged in this service 1902/1904-1908.

[84]Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1911, pp. 485-501.

[85]See memorandum from G.C. Fearn to Great Britain, Royal Commission on the Natural Resources, pp. 45-46.

For the remainder of the period, the Fishery Protection Service continued to enforce the regulations as best it could. In addition, it provided the Department with updated information on the fishery around the island. Indeed, it became an important source by which the Department could obtain the kinds of information which Neilsen suggested it collect in the late 1880s. However, the Department did not take full advantage of this information. And if this were true, government paid even less attention. As a result, policy-makers were often ill-informed. A more adequately funded and better utilized FPS would likely have improved the state of the fishery dramatically.

While the provision of bait and cold storage facilities was only a limited success, there is little question that the plans were nonetheless wise. Likewise, the establishment of an FPS was essential for the creation of a rational, modern fishery.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that the period 1888-1913 marked a new era in the development of the cod, herring and lobster fisheries of Newfoundland. During these years dogmatic adherence to the concept of traditional practices came under question. Equally important, the impetus for change increasingly came not from the private sector but from government. This is not to argue that there were not proponents of change outside in the private sector. Indeed, one of the hallmarks of this quarter-century was a growing consensus that transformations were required if the fishery were to meet the challenges of a rapidly-changing world. Nonetheless, it is inarguable that government moved more rapidly than other interested parties. In this regard the Fisheries Commission and the Department of Fisheries were the key organizations. While neither was perfect in diagnosing and proposing cures for the ills of the industry, because they were able to collect reams of data their proposals were generally sensible. Yet while these two bodies lobbied for rational change, government often ignored their advice. While this reluctance to embrace the recommendations proposed by its own agencies was sometimes justified by financial constraints, even more frequently its diffidence was based upon political considerations.

Government's initial efforts to transform these fisheries began with the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry in 1888 to collect information on the fishery in general and on Fisheries Departments in other countries. The ultimate mandate was to recommend whether the colony should establish a Fisheries Department to manage the resource and to implement change to strengthen the industry. While the Commission of Inquiry suggested that the establishment of a formal Department would be premature, it did propose the creation of an interim commission to continue its work and to manage the fishery until the time was propitious for the erection of a cabinet-level ministry.

The Fisheries Commission was the catalyst that sparked government to embark upon an entirely new approach to fisheries development. From its founding in 1889, the Commission inundated politicians with facts and recommendations. Under the leadership of a dynamic Norwegian, Adolph Neilsen, it was successful in reinforcing the ideas which had led originally to the Commission of Inquiry. Bolstered by the expertise in the Commission, government after 1889 increasingly proved willing to intervene to improve the fishery.

To gather information and to solicit ideas, the Commission canvassed its counterparts in Norway, Britain, Canada and the United States. The most pressing problem was the need to replenish the colony's dwindling cod stocks. Output declined

sharply from the mid-1880s in both volume and value. This decline was attributed to declining stocks, particularly in Bonavista and Trinity Bays. It was in direct response to this crisis that the Commission recommended the establishment of cod hatcheries along the lines pioneered in Norway and the United States. In convincing government to implement this programme, the Commission relied heavily on advice from these two countries regarding the type of facility required, potential output and associated costs.

While the results were not entirely favourable, the establishment of the Dildo hatchery was a much more interventionist step than had ever before been taken in the Newfoundland fishery. While the programme initially received favourable reviews from local and foreign observers, the honeymoon did not last. Part of the problem appears to be that the hatchery was not as efficient as it proponents had predicted. But just as important was the fact that government had not done a particularly good job of preparing public opinion. In the end, the scepticism and mistrust which was rampant among the various groups in the fishery triumphed; the hatchery was closed after 1902.

The lessons that government learned from this experience were mixed. On the one hand, the favourable reception, especially from abroad, undoubtedly encouraged ministers to continue interventionist policies. But on the other, it

appears that some in government drew a less appropriate conclusion. Rather than working to diffuse the mistrust, these men decided instead that any future government programmes had to pass a political litmus test. Rather than relying on the recommendations of its own experts, government increasingly opted for less decisive actions. It was better to adopt half-hearted measures or to procrastinate, they reasoned, than to risk politic defeat at the hands of one or another factious group. This is why so many of the future programmes were less successful than they might have been.

Nonetheless, this cautious approach did not prevent government from adopting plans to revitalize the fishery in other ways. In addition to cod propagation, a programme aimed at replenishing dwindling lobster stocks was initiated. Unlike the cod hatchery, lobster propagation continued throughout the period. This was in part because the cod hatchery became the focus of criticism. But the lobster fishery was never as central to the economy as cod and thus attracted less attention; this gave government greater scope to act than in the cod fishery. Moreover, the lobster propagation programme received even more international attention than its counter-part in cod. For example, upon inspection of the facilities, the Canadian Department of Fisheries decided that Newfoundland was far more advanced than Canada and that it would follow the colony's lead and adopt floating incubators. Indeed, the

floating incubator programme gave lobster propagation an advantage never enjoyed by cod. While the cod hatching experiment was localized, the use of floating incubators enabled lobsters to be hatched around the entire coast. This meant that all lobster fishermen and factory owners interested in the programme had the opportunity both to participate and benefit. Simply put, the broad-based lobster hatchery was able to survive because a greater proportion of its constituents came to have a stake in its success.

The programmes to increase artificially the cod and lobster stocks were the two major developments initiated by government in this period to revitalize the fishery in general. While the lobster plan was more productive than the cod, neither was a complete success. This raises the question of whether these measures were the most appropriate means to rejuvenate the Newfoundland fishery. With hindsight, a judicious appraisal must be mixed. The problem of declining catches was real and deserved to be addressed. But it is questionable whether this was the either the most pressing or the most important challenge confronting the fishery. Moreover, it is arguable that even if it were the most crucial issue, alternate approaches might have been more successful. One of the difficulties raised by the hatchery programmes--especially the cod hatchery--is whether a course of action adopted in large part because other nations were doing the

same thing was the most appropriate method of making policy. It is clear throughout the period that too little thought was given to Newfoundland's unique conditions; conversely, too great an emphasis was placed on conformity to international trends. This criticism applies both to the experts and the politicians. The former, of course, should have known better, but once they discovered that the ability to demonstrate that other nation's were proceeding along the same lines was an expedient means of influencing politicians, they increasingly came to rely upon this strategy. As for the latter, although the willingness to respond to demonstrable problems merits approbation, it is clear that when the chips were down they frequently placed a higher premium upon short-term political expediency than long-term economic development. Yet to expect a different orientation is perhaps to place too much of a burden on politicians. After all, we are considering a period in which, even if laissez-faire was not a dogmatic ideology, most people remained sceptical about the propriety of government intervention. Moreover, as an industry with no consensus about the best way of approaching problems, the fishery was a minefield for politicians.

While the programmes to increase stock size were important, it is important to recognize that they did not exhaust government initiatives. Government also adopted programmes to improve cure and marketing, as well as to regulate a multitude

of practices in the fishery. In my view, these were even more important issues than stock size. Government tried to tackle these problems principally through the passage of laws. While most reflected a least some rationality, the majority yielded less than satisfactory results. The reasons for this have been discussed above. Yet it is worth underscoring one factor: as long as government imposed reform with at best minimal consultation with the groups affected, the outcome was always likely to be less than adequate.

If legislation was a necessary component of reform, it was never by itself a sufficient guarantee of significant change. The ideal corollary, of course, would have been a concerted effort to change attitudes. But unwilling to tackle so daunting a task, government opted instead to enact mechanisms for enforcement. The most significant was undoubtedly the creation of the Fisheries Protection Service. Whether a reliance on coercion rather than persuasion could have succeeded is debateable. What is less open to question, however, is that this type of initiative failed to achieve the desired results. Despite its theoretical commitment to this approach, government was unwilling to guarantee sufficient funds or manpower. Starved of the necessary resources, the FPS was more potent on paper than along the coasts.

Yet even if the necessary resources had been forthcoming, it is questionable whether the Fisheries Protection Service

could have been successful. The probability of success was further lessened because government failed to refrain from using the programme to further political goals. Too often appointments as wardens became patronage plums. By viewing these positions as a method of rewarding faithful adherents, government ensured not only that enforcement would be inadequate but also that every action (or inaction) would exacerbate the mistrust between the various constituencies in the fishery. Ironically, the FPS may have harmed rather than helped the ailing industry.

Government initiatives to modernize the fishery through the establishment of facilities such as bait depots, cold storage and reduction plants were also generally unsuccessful. With only scattered exceptions, government failed to attract local capital to these schemes. While the issue of whether sufficient funds were available within the colony is not part of this thesis, the evidence suggests that a reluctance to invest--derived in large measure from a lack of trust in the strength of government's commitment to its programmes--makes the question moot. To overcome the lack of local investment, government turned to foreign capital. Its schemes for attracting this type of investment to the fishery look remarkably similar to the other development agreements in various sectors signed in the years prior to World War I. Legislation promoted an "open door policy," providing generous incentives for

prospective investors and guaranteeing returns on investment. Not surprisingly, there was no shortage of entrepreneurs who expressed interest. But when it actually came to assuming the risks and making even the minimal investments demanded by government, the record was less impressive. Even with the impressive dowry provided by government, the Newfoundland fishery was obviously an insufficiently attractive maiden to convince suitors to make a long-term commitment.

None of this is to argue that soliciting investment in necessary infrastructure reflected an inappropriate goal. But it does suggest that dangling public funds in front of capitalists in the absence of reasonable expectations of satisfactory economic returns is no guarantee that the desired response will be forthcoming. This observation is hardly unique to this issue; anyone who knows anything about the development programme adopted in Newfoundland in the years after 1949 will recognize that the same approach was followed. J.R. Smallwood's lack of success mirrored the failures in attracting investment to the fishery at the turn of the century.

One area in which the experts and the politicians alike correctly diagnosed the malaise of the fishery was in the need to find new markets for Newfoundland fish. As this study indicates, while government considered a variety of outlets, its greatest commitment was to penetrating the American

market. In promoting the advantages of the US market, government came as close as possible to forging a consensus among the various segments of the industry. The lure of American wealth proved an irresistible attraction to fishermen, merchants and exporters alike. While there was less agreement on the appropriate method of gaining entry, government opted for a policy of free trade. In attempting to negotiate reciprocity with the US in 1890, 1902, and 1910-11, government took concrete steps to achieve its objectives, even if the final result was failure.

Unfortunately, in placing so much hope on the potential of increased sales to the US, government built a strategy based on perceptions rather than facts. While it was true, as proponents of this plan argued, that the US was the world's richest market, and while US production of cod was unquestionably declining, the adherents of reciprocity misunderstood the nature of American demand. As their incomes rose, what US consumers wanted was not cod--and especially not the dried, salted variety produced in Newfoundland--but different species, such as salmon as tuna, that the Newfoundland fishery was not equipped to produce. In the absence of a drastic shift in the nature of Newfoundland's output, a successful conclusion to reciprocity negotiations would have done little to stimulate the fishery. And since the statistics suggest that this transformation of output failed to occur, despite some

attempts by government to promote it, it is difficult to conclude that reciprocity would have yielded the desired results.

In a very real sense, this fixation on the American market and the belief that reciprocity represented a panacea for most of the ills of the fishery mirrors much of what was wrong with government policy in this period. The problem was not that government was involved, but rather that programmes too often were formulated based upon political rather than economic objectives. Negotiating access to the US market was an ideal policy not because it would cure the ills of the fishery but because it promised votes.

Perhaps the best way to assess the results of a quarter-century of government involvement in the fishery is to examine the Report of the Department of Fisheries in 1913. The most obvious theme that runs through this document is the belief that although a great deal had been accomplished, an even greater amount remained undone. Despite attempts at fostering diversification, the cod fishery was still the most important branch of the industry and the cure remained inconsistent. Traditional markets remained under threat and alternatives were proving remarkably difficult to capture. Capital to provide infrastructure was still lacking. Reading the Report induces a kind of dejá vu; the similarities to the initial Report of the Fisheries Commission in 1889 are striking.

Perhaps the most important theme of this thesis has been that while officials in the Fisheries Commission and the Department of Fisheries possessed the necessary expertise to provide workable recommendations to reform the fishery, their advice was too often ignored by short-sighted politicians. On March 25, 1913 James M. Kent rose in the House of Assembly to provide eloquent testimony to the first part of this argument. "There is no Department of the Government more important" than the Department of Fisheries, he intoned solemnly. "The importance of this department cannot be overestimated."[1] The evidence that government disregarded or weakened many of the suggestions emanating from the experts constitutes a large part of this study.

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[1]Journal of the House of Assembly, 1913, p.205.

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APPENDIX I

Newfoundland's Exports of Dried Cod,
1888-1913
(Qtls)

Year	Spain	Portugal	Italy	Brazil	British West Indies
1888	23,672	260,520	25,422	276,058	77,439
1889	87,736	267,231	15,622	262,501	112,392
1890	65,574	208,474	16,850	218,833	107,173
1891	90,660	219,129	39,773	250,663	101,383
1892	86,695	198,568	35,394	255,347	93,176
1893	70,841	190,903	27,575	352,160	71,385
1894	29,546	187,335	20,121	356,929	73,697
1895	42,404	247,099	43,734	342,692	93,575
1896	60,424	352,214	40,374	338,193	112,328
1897	20,396	298,501	29,473	321,910	98,403
1898	28,632	235,368	16,838	402,724	107,250
1899	24,793	211,991	38,726	464,531	102,489
1900	67,380	226,366	24,114	458,240	68,166
1901	84,112	276,647	6,500	458,249	67,425
1902	60,115	333,130	24,711	367,398	93,267
1903	92,700	388,225	52,892	297,301	112,861
1904	85,583	377,924	107,647	315,112	75,926
1905	111,700	322,287	111,447	236,553	65,763
1906	174,970	304,203	273,453	301,487	68,226
1907	203,587	307,960	265,782	334,416	70,479
1908	274,998	292,651	252,173	341,203	75,319
1909	280,311	256,080	380,762	382,180	105,282
1910	199,662	321,296	253,542	395,143	93,885
1911	174,711	258,523	132,153	368,794	78,719
1912	214,934	206,206	212,061	423,980	90,876
1913	248,266	203,899	207,617	417,155	73,323

Source: Newfoundland, Journals of the House of Assembly, 1888-1913.

APPENDIX II

Total
Dried Cod Exports,
1885-1913

Year	Total Quintals Exported
1885	1,284,710
1886	1,344,180
1887	1,080,024
1888	1,175,720
1889	1,076,507
1890	1,040,916
1891	1,244,834
1892	1,049,310
1893	1,160,335
1894	1,107,696
1895	1,312,608
1896	1,436,083
1897	1,135,817
1898	1,145,540
1899	1,226,336
1900	1,300,622
1901	1,233,107
1902	1,288,921
1903	1,429,246
1904	1,360,373
1905	1,196,814
1906	1,481,025
1907	1,422,445
1908	1,509,269
1909	1,732,387
1910	1,502,269
1911	1,182,720
1912	1,388,178
1913	1,408,582

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries, Reports, various years.

APPENDIX III

Newfoundland's Population,
1804-1921

Year	Population
1804	20,380
1825	55,719
1832	60,000
1836	75,000
1845	98,703
1857	124,288
1869	146,536
1874	161,374
1884	197,859
1891	202,040
1901	220,984
1911	242,619
1921	263,033

Source: 1804-1891: Albert B. Perlin, "An Outline of Newfoundland History," in Joseph R. Smallwood (ed.), The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 1 (St. John's, 1937), pp. 162-194; 1901-1921: E. Wesley Hutchings, "Growth of Newfoundland's Population," in Smallwood (ed.), The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 3 (St. John's, 1967), p. 373.

APPENDIX IV

Catch and Value of the Lobster Fishery, 1888-1913

Year	Cases Exported	Value ($)
1888	70,014	385,077
1889	76,217	472,524
1890	69,344	520,078
1891	57,291	429,681
1892	32,506	260,048
1893	35,403	265,522
1894	48,056	312,364
1895	51,016	420,881
1896	45,662	376,711
1897	58,883	529,947
1898	61,951	619,510
1899	56,166	565,362
1900	37,523	441,202
1901	36,271	448,501
1902	38,369	412,256
1903	31,881	387,466
1904	31,575	410,405
1905	43,522	521,662
1906	31,328	376,490
1907	26,999	383,767
1908	26,060	418,605
1909	25,826	343,619
1910	26,058	337,835
1911	23,803	360,495
1912	28,924	507,132
1913	26,047	476,940

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Reports, 1889-1892; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Reports, 1893-1913; W. Templeman, "The Newfoundland Lobster Fishery."

APPENDIX V

Lobsters Hatched and Planted
from Floating Incubators,
1890-1894

Year	No. of Stations	No. of Lobsters hatched & planted
1890	14	390,934,000
1891	19	541,195,000
1892	21	427,385,000
1893	23	577,353,000
1894	21	463,890,000

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 37.

APPENDIX VI

Returns from Incubator Operators

Among the forty-seven packers furnished with incubators and offered to work them free of charge, returns were received from the following: W.P. Coaker of Pike's Arm; D. Lockyer of Herring Neck; E. Marsh of Old Perlican; William Bradshaw of Placentia; James Bishop of Flat Islands; C.D. Chambers of Harbour Buffett; G. Reeves of Garnish; J. Keeping of Lolly Cove; A. MacKenzie of Lolly Cove; S. Fiander of Coombs Cove; Charles Chant of Cinq Cerf; J.P. Rose of Seal Island; L. LeMoine of Rose Blanche; Thomas Farrel of LaPoile; J. Warren of Ragged Islands; J. Penny and Son of Rames; William Coffin of Haystack; George Collins of Pinch Gut; William Coffin of Little Harbour; A. McKenzie, Jr. of Fox Cove; P. Sullivan of Presque; J. Boyle of Long Harbour; William Mitchell of Ragged Island; and F. Steeres of Goose Bay Head Factory.

Source: Newfoundland,Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 35.

APPENDIX VII

Locations of Lobster Incubators

1892: Burgeo, Fox Island, St. John's Bay, Boxey, Push-through, Baine Harbour, Presque, Woody Island, Sound Island, Haystack, Harbour Buffett, Old Perlican, Swains Island, Musgrave Harbour, Herring Neck, Pike's Arm, Trump Island, Birchy Island, Exploits, Leading Tickles and New Bay.

1894: Fox Island, Deer Isalnd, Hermitage Cove, Pushthrough, St. John's, Boxey, Woody Island, Sound Island, New Harbour, Sweet Bay, Happy Adventure, Wesletville, Seldom-Come-By, Musgrave harbour, Tizzard's Harbour, Loon Bay, Knight Island, Nimrod Tickle, Long Island Tickle, Leading Tickle, Cottrell's Cove.

1897: Deer Island, Burgeo, Pushthrough, Hermitage Cove, St. John's, Bay-de-Loo, Harbour Mille, Sound Island, New Harbour, Happy Advent, Salvage, Flat Island, Wesleyville, Pinchard's Island, Musgrave Harbour, Ladle Cove, Indian Island, Herring Neck, Tizzard' Harbour, Arnott's Island, Birchy Cove, Cotrell's Cove, Leading Tockles, Rowsell's Island.

1903: New Bay, Leading Tickles, Rowsell's Island, Exploits, Fortune Harbour, Beaver Cove, Indian Cove, Exploits Bay, Herring Neck, Change Island Tickle, Change Island Harbour East, Island Harbour, Indian Harbour, Musgrave Harbour, Fredericton, Pinchard's Island, Wesleyville, Flat Islands, Happy Adventure (Big), Happy Adventure (Little), Salvage, Sweet Bay, King's Cove, Jamestown.

1906: New Bay, Leading Tickles, Rowsell's Island, Exploits, Beaver Cove, Easter Harbour, Comfort Cove, Change Island Tickle, Change Island Harbour end, Island Harbour, Indian Islands, Musgrave Harbour, Fredericton, Pinchard's Island, Wesleyville, Flat Islands, Happy Adventure (Big), Happy Adventure (Little), Salvage, Barron Harbour, St. Brencan's, Clode Sound, Boxey, Great Harbour, Sagona, Coomb's Cove, Pass Island, Hermitage.

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries Commission, Report, 1892, p. 39; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1894, p. 34; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1897, p. 357; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1903, pp. 149-150; Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1906, pp. 183-185.

APPENDIX VIII

Dried Cod Exports to
the United States,
1890-1911
(Qtls)

Year	Quintals	Total Dried Cod Exports	Percent to the US
1890	35,455	1,040,916	3.4
1891	38,173	1,244,834	3.0
1892	24,821	1,049,310	2.3
1893	33,557	1,160,335	2.9
1894	20,599	1,107,696	1.8
1895	16,393	1,312,608	1.2
1896	17,241	1,436,083	1.2
1897	19,049	1,135,817	1.6
1898	27,574	1,145,540	2.4
1899	24,926	1,226,336	2.0
1900	31,413	1,300,622	2.4
1901	37,594	1,233,107	3.0
1902	32,261	1,288,921	2.5
1903	34,115	1,429,246	2.3
1904	13,642	1,260,373	1.0
1905	8,072	1,196,814	0.6
1906	19,208	1,481,025	1.3
1907	19,962	1,422,445	1.4
1908	14,038	1,509,269	0.9
1909	24,732	1,732,387	1.4
1910	8,565	1,502,269	0.5
1911	16,234	1,182,720	1.3

Source: Newfoundland, Journals of the House of Assembly, 1890-1911.

APPENDIX IX

Instructions from Messrs. Stewart Munn & Company, Montreal for the Preparation of Green Codfish for the Canadian Market

"We invite attention to the preparation of green codfish for the Canadian market, and we suggest this as the best mode of disposing of late-caught fish. There is a great demand for this article from early in September until the beginning of Lent.

Curing and Packing--Either salt-cured or pickle-cured fish may be used. Fish that have been thoroughly cured in salt bulk need only to be packed into barrels, with plenty of dry salt between each layer, to keep them and prevent them from sticking together. Pickle-cured fish should be allowed to stand in pile for a day or two before packing, to let it drain. When packing use plenty of dry salt. Green codfish should be carefully cleaned, and blood and grease removed. Sun drying is not necessary, and tends to darken the fish, which should be as white as possible. Some packers remove the black skin from the napes, which greatly improves the appearance. From eight to ten pounds over the market weight should be put in each barrel to allow for shrinkage.

Packages--Slack barrels, holding 200 or 250 lbs. nett are preferred, the nett weight and grade being clearly marked. Old flour or sugar barrels suit very well. If shippers find it more convenient to ship their fish mixed, we can have it assorted, weighted and inspected here, at a cost of twenty-five cents per barrel. For extra large fish, boxes containing 200 to 300 lbs. are suitable."

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries, Report, 1909, p. 381.

APPEXDIX X

Vessels Engaged in the Fishery
Protection Service,
1902/1903-1908

1902

Yacht Minnie Clinton
Steamer Fiona
Yacht Victoria
Yacht Vigil
Boat Walsh

1904

Schooner Enterprise
Yacht Minnie Clinton
Yacht Vigil
S.S. Fiona
S.S. D.P. Ingraham

1905

Boat Star of the Sea
Yacht Minnie Clinton
Yacht Vigil
S.S. Fiona
S.S. Neptune
S.S. D.P. Ingraham
Yacht Verbena

1906

Boat Star of the Sea
Yacht Vigil
S.S. Fiona
S.S. Neptune

1907

Boat Star of the Sea
S.S. Mary
S.S. Fiona
S.S. D.P. Ingraham

1908

Boat Jane
S.S. Fiona
Yacht Ino

Source: Newfoundland, Fisheries, Reports, various years.