HUCKSTER SHOP TO SUPERETTE: AN ETHNO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OUTPORT SHOP ON THE SOUTHERN AVALON PENINSULA (NFLD.)

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HUCKSTER SHOP TO SUPERETTE:

An Ethnohistorical Analysis of the Development of the Outport Shop on the Southern Avalon Peninsula (Nfld.)

by

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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Anthropology
Memorial University of Newfoundland
October 1975

St. John's Newfoundland

ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to deal with a specific entrepreneurial phenomenon characteristic of many Newfoundland outports in the 20th. century -- the outport shop. To this end the study commences with an overview of the mercantile credit system of the 19th. century. The purpose here is to show how this system contributed to the emergence of the shop as a petty but crucial alternate supply system to the outport. Consideration is given to certain historical events of the 20th. century which furthered the shop's development owing to their impact on Newfoundland in general and the study area in particular. The use of credit at the shop was fundamental to their growth; hence, there is considerable discussion of this aspect of shopkeeping. In this context some attention is also given to the development of the shopkeeper-client relationship. The final portion of the thesis departs from a preoccupation with economic considerations to deal with the shop in a social context. The prime focus here is to examine the social costs and profits which are peculiar to small indigenous enterprises, not only in Newfoundland but cross-culturally.

For the vanishing outport shopkeeper:

"As the lights burned for the last time, then winked out in the hanging lamps over the scarred, battered counters, the country store retired before forces that could not be diverted or stayed. As the world grew smaller, the community became larger, too large for the simple mechanism of the general store. The institution of the old, cluttered, resolent, leisurely general merchandise store is now a memory and a tradition, recalled with affection and humor and that wistfulness which is often attached to the remembrance of things past."

---- Gerald Carson

PREFACE

This thesis deals with a particular entrepreneurial phenomenon of the Newfoundland outport; namely, the shop. My choice of topic reflects a personal interest based on experiences with shopkeeping and shopkeepers which have spanned some twenty memorable years. Both my own parents and those of my wife were shopkeepers in Ferryland and Renews respectively. This also explains my choice of the Southern Avalon and particularly these communities as a research area.*

From a strictly academic point of view, it seems appropriate that something should be written on these types of enterprises as there certainly is a deficiency of literature on the topic. Furthermore, the work of many writers, both historians and anthropologists alike, generates the impression that such enterprises are a modern phenomenon and are not very significant to the outport economy. As I shall attempt to show in my thesis, nothing could be farther from the truth.

In this study I have attempted to deal with the

* For reference to geographical area, consult Appendix B.

origins of the shop as a by-product of the mercantile credit system and to trace the development of the shop as a consequence of certain historical events of the 20th. century, which had strong economic implications for the study communities. An integral part of this discussion is the unique adaptation of the shop to the utilization of credit. Finally, the thesis attempts to depart from its pre-occupation with economic considerations and deal with the social costs and profits which frequently accompany the operation of such indigenous enterprises in small rural communities.

The study encompassed a sixteen month period of active research. During this time I gathered information from archival and other relevant literature. Owing to the paucity of material relevant to shopkeeping, however, the bulk of the research was carried out through field inquiry. A number of interviews were conducted with older residents of the communities in an attempt to gain an understanding of what shopkeeping entailed from about the turn of the century. In addition to this, interviews were also carried on with people closely associated with the now defunct mercantile houses once prominent in the area, as well as with former and extant shopkeepers and some of their clients.

There are a number of people without whose assistance this thesis would have been impossible. I wish to express particular thanks to my advisor, Dr. R.G. Stiles, for his constant direction and encouragement. His countless suggestions for improvement were invaluable. My thanks also to Tom Nemec, who volunteered access to his forthcoming Ph.D. manuscript. Thanks also to the Institute of Social and Economic Research, which assisted in the funding of my studies. Finally, thanks to my wife, Ida, for proof-reading and editing the manuscript and for organizing the appendices and compiling the bibliography.

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PART I

THE EMERGENCE OF THE SHOP

CHAPTER ONE

A MACRO VIEW: THE NEWFOUNDLAND ECONOMY IN THE 19TH. CENTURY FOCUSING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CREDIT SYSTEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The close of the Napoleonic Wars and the American War of 1812 heralded a new and depressing era for the condition of economic life in Newfoundland. Foreseeing the hardship that lay ahead, the large mercantile houses had begun to retreat from the Island as an immediate consequence of the peace. For the population, which had swelled during the boom war years, more than a century of 'hard times' were to come. It is true there were to be periods of prosperity, but little of this would accrue to the resident fishing population. Thus, the Amulree Commission Report of 1933 could still speak of the fishermen as being little more than "serfs", a century after the close of the American War in 1814.

For the Island's fishermen, the major event of the 19th. century, one which would adversely affect their welfare, was the gradual displacement of the old "truck" system by that of credit. Under the older system, the fishermen were

employees of the merchants. Their payment was in kind. After turning over their catch of fish to the exporting merchants, they received in return fishing gear and other supplies necessary for the continual prosecution of the fishery. In addition, they were supplied with adequate food and clothing to keep their families in moderate comfort throughout the year. The key advantage of this system was that the merchant assumed the responsibility of supporting the fishermen in relative comfort through poor as well as good years.

The credit system was simply a modification of "truck", but one which would threaten the fishermen's welfare. Under this modified system, the merchant would issue supplies to the fisherman at the commencement of the fishing season on account. At the end of the season the worth of the fisherman's catch would be balanced against the debt he had incurred. If the balance was in the fisherman's favor, then he might expect to obtain further credit -- a winter's diet. On the other hand, if no surplus existed on the fisherman's side of the balance sheet, then he might not be carried on credit over the winter. Even if he was, it would only be on a meager and inadequate diet. Furthermore, his bad debt would be reflected in the extent of the supplies he would be

allowed in the following spring's 'fit-out'. Often a fisherman's only recourse under this new system would be to seek out whatever government welfare was available. Though just a modification in principle, this was a far cry from the relative security which had been offered the fisherman under the truck system. (Perlin, 1971:31; Gunn, 1969:4-7; Newfoundland Royal Commission Report, 1933:89-90)

By 1815 the first of a series of economic depressions had hit Newfoundland. The major cause was European nationalism which had once again begun to reassert itself in an attempt to recover economic stability after the chaos which had ended in 1814. The first victims of the depression were the large firms at the apex of Newfoundland's economic structure. Since they were major suppliers of goods, as well as being fish buyers, their demise indicated imminent starvation for the local population.

> "Importations of provisions were inadequate and to add to the general misery, emigrants were flocking in from Ireland. By 1816, when communications with the outside were initially shut off, the dread spectre of famine threatened our unfortunate colony."
> (Prowse, 1895:404-5)

> "There is no written record of the appalling sufferings from hunger that must have been endured in the isolated settlements, but what happened in St. John's was all too well documented."
> (Perlin, 1971:29)

Within 20 years of this disastrous period which, given the nature of the Island's mono-crop economy, was very likely still having an impact on the welfare of the poorer class, another depression was upon the colony.

> "At the end of 1847 the commercial depression in England and the extraordinary pressure of the money market had its effect on the transactions of the merchants in Newfoundland trade, in England and in the colony. In December one major firm in St. John's was obliged to suspend business bringing down with it several smaller houses. The complex interconnections of all the establishments made further failure inevitable."
> (Gunn, 1969:107)

This particular turn of events, combined with a bank crash and the 1847 failure of the most important component in the outport subsistence sector, the potato crop, brought to the foreground the growing refusal of the merchants to care for the dependant fishing population. In the initial year of this latest depression, therefore, the merchants made it plain to the government that it was their responsibility to see to the welfare of the dependant fishermen during the years of a poor fishery or downward price fluctuation. In a report to the British Government, the resident governor of the colony stated this turn of events:

> "He reported to the Colonial Office that there were increased efforts by the merchants to foist the dependant fishermen on the Government. Merchants were now being seen almost invariably refusing to continue winter supplies and in many cases were even lessening their imports in order to avoid having to dole out provisions should famine occur." (Gunn, 1969:107; see also Perlin, 1971:38)

In this excerpt two strategies are evident by which the merchant would control and ultimately diminish the fisherman's subsistence capacity. The first was the simple practice of curtailing credit; the second and more effective strategy was to limit the variety of goods stocked and also the quantity of these goods made available. A third related strategy had been documented by a select committee on inquiry as early as 1841. At that time a Thomas Bowring testified before the committee:

> "that the fishermen of the outports had no protection against arbitrary charges for provisions taken up in the autumn and that the prices were always higher in the outports. He said also that most planters were kept in a state of perpetual dependance upon their merchants since they seldom knew the expense of the supplies they had taken up in the spring until their return from the fishery." (Gunn, 1969:79-80)[1]

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[1] Emphasis is my own.

Emphasizing the extent to which the credit system had spread even at this early date, a merchant, T.H. Booking, admitted in his testimony before the same committee that three out of every four of his clients were debtors. (Ibid.)

On March 24, 1854 the speaker of the Assembly charged that the trading practices of the merchants had prevented development of the Island's economy and "reduced our operative population to a degree of nursing and dependance". On July 28 of that same year the Executive Council further injured the welfare of the fishermen when it repealed the fishermen's right to guaranteed wages from the proceeds of the voyage. (Innis, 1954:390) It was now clear that given a poor year the fisherman, deprived of any income, would, despite his efforts, be thrown on the government and supported as a pauper.

Hence, the credit system, which would leave the fishermen of the colony in desperate economic straits for almost a century, was a stark reality by the 1850's. The time when the merchant would take it upon himself to act as an economic buffer between the fishermen and the outside world was over. This latter fact was made abundantly clear in the demand for welfare brought on by the failure of the fishery in the 1860's and by the extent of that demand. Gunn writes:

> "The new government was handicapped by a depleted treasury, by heavy demands, and by the successive poor fisheries from 1861 to 1864. The Record, blending piety with politics announced that failing fisheries and pauperism were the just chastisement of Newfoundland. Retrenchment in the expenditure for poor relief proved easier to preach than to effect. The successive failures in the fisheries and growing indebtedness led to decreased consumption of dietable goods and so a fall in imports, but upon the reduced revenue there was increasing pressure for relief. In the period of high revenue, the Liberals voted one tenth of the annual income for relief; in the recession, which followed, the vote rose to one fifth. This enormous drain was not stopped until 1868 when the administration announced the suppression of relief to the able-bodied poor."
> (Gunn, 1969:177)

The reaction of the fishing population to this situation was an effort to increase subsistence activity in an attempt to minimize dependence on the market system. (Wadel, 1969:16-20) However, in areas such as the Southern Shore, total self-sufficiency was by no means possible, given the local resource base. Attempts at household farming would remain supplemental rather than substantial. On the Southern Shore the merchant would continue to be an important source of supply. This situation was compounded by the fact that this was the poorest inshore fishing area in Newfoundland. (K. Matthews, personal communications) Hence, while it remained heavily dependent on supplies from the 'outside', it

had the least potential to sustain them.

Faced with simultaneous failures in subsistence production and in the fishery, as many individual fishermen must have been, life in this period was a grim prospect. Certainly the demand for retail goods exceeded the supply, which was channelled in from the 'outside' through the merchants.

CHAPTER TWO

A MICRO VIEW: THE IMPACT OF THE CREDIT SYSTEM ON THE SOUTHERN AVALON AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF MERCANTILE MONOPOLIES

After the Napoleonic Wars it would appear that the Avalon, as well as other parts of the colony, was undergoing a change in the nature of mercantilism. Competition developed in the area of fish trade as numerous small planter-traders[1] sprang up in response to the retreat of the large firms. Furthermore, small coastal steamers began to prosecute the trade and as a consequence fishermen began to renege on their debts to the merchant in order to sell their year's voyage to these coastal traders. Jukes, writing in 1839-40, states that this latter development was one reason for "the breakup of the old system; while political and religious differences completed the alienation between fishermen and merchants." (Jukes, recorded by Innis, 1954:386) Initially, it seems the

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[1] Early in the 19th. century this term was generally used in reference to independant fishermen, owning their own schooners, who brought their provisions directly from and sold their fish directly to England. In many cases they carried extra provisions which were traded with the local fishing population. Later in the century the term became synomymous with "fish merchant".

fishermen of the Southern Avalon enjoyed a privileged position in this new competitive era. Jukes further notes:

> "The fisherman (on the Avalon Peninsula) may carry his fish to any one he chooses and though he cannot fix the price at which it shall be sold, as the merchants fix that by common consent from the state of the foreign markets, he has still the great benefit of competition in the choice of the provisions and goods he is to buy." (Ibid.)

The continued potential for such competition through the mid 1800's is implicit in the fact that as late as 1871 there were two planter-traders in Renews, while in 1877 Ferryland still boasted several. (Lovells Directory, 1871; Tocque, 1878:166) However, it would be a mistake to hold that the fishermen of the Southern Avalon were an exception to the deprivation which accompanied the general economic chaos of the Island's economy through the 19th. century. Despite the apparent existence of competition suggested by the presence of several traders in some of the communities, the region was in a marked state of economic decline by the last quarter of the century due to falling fish prices and a decline in yearly catches.[2]

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[2]During the last part of the 19th. century considerable pressure was exerted on the government by fishermen along the Southern Avalon to put an end to the use of cod nets and seines. The intent and the result of this action was to

In 1877 Tocque, on having journeyed around the Avalon Peninsula, noted this state of affairs. In reference to two major settlements on the Southern Avalon, he wrote:

> "Trepassey was formerly a place of some note but is now a very inconsiderable fishing village." (Tocque, 1878:173)

> "..... within the last thirty years the trade and population of Ferryland have very much declined." (Tocque, 1878:166)

Elsewhere Nemec, utilizing census returns, points out that from 1820 on, the population of the Southern Avalon remained stable while an increase was characteristic in other parts of Newfoundland. This may be seen as indicative of a stagnation or recession in the local economy, in the light of Nemec's further comment in reference to this area:

> "While Ralph Matthews may be correct in saying that the Island's population continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century, the point should also be made that since the economic growth could not keep pace with population growth, to a considerable extent everybody had to live on less than they had before." (Nemec, 1973:18)

---

restrict the prime fishing grounds for the exclusive use of jigger fishermen in the communities of Petty Harbour, Bay Bulls, Fermeuse and Renews. (Journals of the House of Assembly 1888-1901; 1863 Appendix p.511; see also Kent Martin, 1973) This restrictive measure against the use of high yield gear would seem to indicate a marked decline in fish stocks.

Furthermore, whatever the situation was in terms of competition earlier in the century, by the 1890's, in the communities of Ferryland and Renews, competition was virtually non-existent. The Goodridge firm, which had started out on a small scale in Renews during the 1830's as a planter-trader operation, was by this time the dominant mercantile house on the Southern Avalon. It held a monopoly on the trade of three strategically important communities - Renews, Ferryland and Tors Cove -- and operated agencies in many of the smaller surrounding communities as well. In fact, by 1894 it ranked as one of the larger, if not the largest mercantile house in St. John's, where the Company's headquarters had been transferred from Renews in the 1850's. (cf. P. K. Devine, 1936:51-52)

The year-end account books for the firm's operation at Renews 1874-1882 and for the year 1890 indicate that the Goodridges were no different from other mercantile houses in their use of credit to create the usual patron-debtor relationship. In order to exercise a tight control over the amount of credit issued to fishermen, the variety and quantity of good carried were kept at a minimum. Only basic necessities were stocked; items such as sugar, butter, flour, etc., which could not be produced locally. Undoubtedly, the

merchant's intention was to generate subsistence activity. This would reduce the burden of demand on the merchant for supplies from the outside and would thereby reduce his risk.

Goodridge's most effective means of controlling credit was to set ceilings on the amount issued. The merchant, or his agent, decided what the ceiling would be for individual fishermen on the basis of their previous year's performances. Those who were indebted were subjected to severe cuts in allotment. These fishermen might receive little more than half their normal advance for spring fit-outs.

In addition, debtors were not permitted to add further to their accounts during the fishing season without first going directly to see the merchant or his agent, (a man of good standing, on the other hand, had but to approach the store clerk for whatever he wanted). Because of the intimidation frequently suffered during such confrontations, few fishermen ever sought additional credit, unless in desperation.

Given (a) that the merchant built high profits onto the cost of retail goods, (W. Goodridge, personal communications), (b) that, as local residents maintain, the prices paid for

fish were always kept at a minimum by the merchant's practice of holding the price down and/or cheating on the cull of fish; and (c) that the Southern Avalon is historically the poorest inshore fishing area in Newfoundland, hampered by its exposure to foul weather conditions, and a paucity of good fishing grounds, it might be assumed that in any given year a significant portion of the Ferryland and Renews population was in debt. In 1890 the number of fishermen in debt in Renews was 35, while the numbers recorded between 1872-1884 were often higher. (Merchants' accounts books) It may then be concluded that the merchants' practice of curtailing credit had the effect of leaving a fairly large local demand for supplies unsatisfied.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORTHODOX MODEL: QUESTIONING ITS IMPLICATIONS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL ACTIVITY

Most commentators rely on one orthodox model to explain the workings of the Newfoundland economy under the credit system during the 19th. and early 20th. centuries. (Gunn, 1969; Newfoundland Royal Commission Report, 1933; Wadel, 1967; Szwed, 1966; Noel, 1971; Faris, 1972; Innis, 1964) The crux of this model holds that at least up until the 1940's the extractive-exploitive nature of the Newfoundland cod-fishery supported an essentially two-class social system. The upper class, or 'merchantocracy', included clergy, politicians, and various government personnel; however, as the term specifies, it was largely a class of merchants. This was especially true for the rural sector, the outport. The subordinate class consisted almost entirely of people who fitted the general classification of fishermen who struggled to live on the sale of their fish to the merchant and by subsistence. Unfortunately, the low

potential of subsistence productivity, combined with the erratic nature of fish production and market prices for fish left the fisherman an indebted labourer of the merchant. As such the fisherman, usually illiterate and unaware of the market process beyond the merchant's wharf, was subject to his (the merchant's) whims and his abuse of the credit system.

Under this credit system it is implicit or explicit in the relevant literature that several factors operated to prevent the development of even small scale entrepreneurial activity, (e.g. a shop) independant of merchant domination. Consider: (a) that the system fostered control of the rural economy via merchant monopoly, hence negated any and all forms of competition; (b) that the merchant in order to insure against losses utilized his control of the market to exploit excessively the efforts of successful fishermen in order to pay for losses incurred through the productive inefficiency of those who were incompetent or unfortunate fishermen. This prevented the development of an economically independant middle class from which entrepreneurs might be recruited; and (c) that because of the debtor-creditor relationship, which existed between the fisherman and merchant,

cash exchange was not essential and seldom used. Therefore, a medium of exchange necessary to the operation of retail outlets, which would not be obligated to extend credit or depend on fish marketing, was non-existent.

To further this kind of analysis, there is the report of one historian, who said of Newfoundland in the 19th. and early 20th. centuries, "a middle class of traders and artisans was numerically insignificant." (Noel, 1971:18) Expressing a similar bias, a noted expert on co-operatives, visiting the Island as late as 1935, declared that while:

> "Intelligence is not lacking in most Newfoundland settlements ..... there is an absence of the simplest form of business experience as well as of accepted leadership." (Digby, 1935:23)

Like Noel and Digby, those commentators, specifically contemporary anthropologists, who rely heavily on the orthodox model to explain events in the modern period, see little significant change in the Island's outport socio-economic structure prior to the impact of a new cash flow to the Island from two major external sources; namely, the American bases, built during World War II and Confederation with Canada in 1949.

With the developments of World War II, particularly the cash inflow from construction of military bases on the Island by the United States, as well as the effects of various equalization payments through Confederation, the old credit system began to draw to a close as a new breed of entrepreneurs is said to have emerged. It is this temporal point which is held to coincide with the origin of the 'outport shop' or general store. Hence, concerning the effects of Confederation on the outport economy, Wadel, writing about the North East Coast, notes:

> "The fact that the various transfer payments were paid directly to the household and in cash would seem to have been a principal factor in changing the consumption patterns in the outports and in leading to a great proliferation of small cash stores." (Wadel, 1969:27)

Stiles, commenting on the increased flow of cash during the forties on the South West Coast, notes:

> "individuals developed a form of enterprise quite different from any which went before it, though similar in some respects to the small retail shops, which were becoming significant in centres such as Terminus." (Stiles, 1970-20).

In a similar vein, Szwed notes, for the Codroy Valley, after the 1930's:

> "With the disappearance of the traditional merchant class in the Valley, their function as marketing agents and shopkeepers was taken over by a few individuals who were able to mobilize enough capital to begin in a small way." (Szwed, 1966:173)

Virginia Dillon, dealing specifically with the Southern Avalon, argues for a somewhat similar pre-1940 merchant-dominated economy with a clearly delineated two-class system. She also sees the construction emanating from World War II and the later event of Confederation, as being the bright spots in recent Newfoundland history, which sparked change in the outports. (Dillon, 1968 Ch.II) Logically, if Dillon is correct in her model, then the outport shops, the small retail outlets in the Southern Avalon, should be just emerging at this time, when similar economic precursors of change were producing such enterprises in other parts of the Island. Yet, as I shall argue below, this does not seem to have been the case, at least for the communities depicted in this study.

The economic impact which the events of the 1940's brought to bear on the Southern Avalon is undeniable. Most certainly their consequences influenced the direction and rate of small business expansion in the area, particularly

that of the shop. However, it is my contention that the entrepreneural activity associated with the shop was present there at a much earlier date than suggested in the general literature, and in Dillon's thesis in particular. This fact is evident in the social history of the study communities, as gleaned from informants. In addition there is some more tangible historical evidence of this fact.

The Origins of the Shop

At just what point in time the huckster[1] shop appeared it is impossible to assess. On the Southern Avalon, by the last half of the 19th century, there was some trading being carried on outside of established mercantile interests. This trade was conducted along the lines of barter, as witnessed by the Reverend A. Gifford, a clergyman of the Church of England, who wrote from Portugal Cove, in 1861:

> "Storekeepers, as a respectable class, are only now gaining ground in St. John's, while almost the only attempt elsewhere takes the form of petty barter trade, between the more successful fishermen and his poor neighbours." (quoted in Tocque, 1877:190-191)

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[1] The use of this term is in line with the commonly accepted definition, i.e. a small retailer or a petty retail outlet.

Since the trade of the huckster shop, which I shall later describe, was removed from this simple method of exchange only by the fact that it physically institutionalized itself within the marketplace framework of a building, it is entirely possible that these shops emerged sometime between the 1860's and 1900.

The first documentation of the shop's existence was in 1904, when McAlpine's Gazette claimed there were six in both Renews and Ferryland. This fact was contained in the following description the Gazette published of both communities:

> "Ferryland, a port, money order, telegraph, preventative station, fishing and farming settlement, and capital of Ferryland district, nearest banks St. John's 33 miles, fare $2.00, mail twice a week by wagon, Reid Newfoundland mail steamer fortnightly, with mails from St. John's: contains 6 stores, 3 boarding houses, court house and gaol; 1 hall, 2 churches and schools, safe harbour, lighthouse on Ferryland Head. (McAlpine 1904:1031)

> "Renews, a post money order, telegraph, fishing and farming settlement in Ferryland district, nearest port of entry Ferryland 10 miles; railway station, St. John's 54 miles, contains 6 stores, 4 hotels, 1 church, 1 convent, 3 schools, 1 hall, population 580, coastal mail

steamer calls fortnightly from St. John's."[2] (Ibid. 1096)

Despite the barren and monopolistic economic environment of Renews and Ferryland, it is not surprising that entrepreneural activity such as small shop operations were present at the turn of the century. Dealing with a similar situation in North Norway, Barth writes:

> "Most local communities have had a combined fishing and farming economy, relying on the sale of fish for vital foods and other goods, and supplementing the imported foodstuffs with products from local farming. Price fluctuations on an external market have dictated the community's terms of trade, and dependence on that external market for vital goods is so great that withdrawal has not been a rational or even feasible defence. In each community, there is furthermore, a tendency for de facto monopolies to develop, whereby a single merchant buys all the fish landed

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[2] To the reader unfamiliar with conditions in Newfoundland outports at the turn of the century, the picture gleaned from simply scanning these unqualified listings of services available in Ferryland and Renews would seem incongruent with the socio-economic reality of 1904. This incongruity resolves itself in the fact that the hotels of Renews were no more than boarding houses, seldom called upon to give service; land and sea communications with St. John's was actually seasonal, for the cold winters physically isolated the outports even from nearby settlements for up to six months on end. Finally, the listings convey nothing of the fact that locally the store was defined as a room in which perhaps no more than half a dozen items of limited quantity were kept, not uncommonly for barter, rather than cash sale. However, despite the implied overstatement which results from this type of cataloguing, we can assume that at this early date shops were present on the Southern Avalon and specifically in both study communities.

> in a community and thereby has complete control over the fishermen's outlet to the market. This is frequently combined with retail selling.... Entrepreneural activity may be understood as a response and adaptation to this unequal economic relationship with the outside;...."
> (Barth, 1963:15)

As shall be shown in the following sections, the small shop was clearly an intricate part of the fisherman's adaptation to the harsh conditions imposed on him under the credit system.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HUCKSTER SHOP

The huckster shop was a petty enterprise. Ideally, any man with a little purchasing power in excess of that needed to satisfy his family's consumption needs would set up shop. It seems incredible, considering the impoverished economic environment of the Southern Avalon, that there could exist any person in such a solvent position outside the mercantile class (merchant and priest). However, it must be realized that not all fishermen were indebted, and many controlled significant capital investment in terms of fishing gear. While the bulk of the fishermen were reduced to fishing from punts and dories, by the last decade of the 19th. century some 'independant' fishermen did own seines, cod traps, skiffs and jack boats, and were able, not only to operate in the immediate off-shore waters, but also to travel to prime fishing grounds in Placentia Bay as well. In addition, there were a lucky few who did claim incomes from government sources, either on a part time or full time basis.

Nemec, in attacking Virginia Dillon's argument for a two-class society on the Southern Shore, has pointed out that communities in the area had a relatively complex social and economic structure in the latter half of the nineteenth century:

> "In the final analysis, therefore, a graduated scale of the local officials and authorities existed, which spanned various classes. Only certain official ranks fell within the upper class, the remainder quite likely constituted an incipient middle class. Of the latter, some carried on as inshore fishermen and subsistence producers since their public role demanded relatively little time or energy, clearly therefore, there was a wide social gap between the latter, who in essence were still manual labourers, and those few who found public service so lucrative that they could afford to give up fishing and subsistence production altogether." (Nemec, 1973:19; see also Dillon, 1968:78)

It is not surprising, therefore, that people who were post office keepers, or jailers or even successful fishermen were also the huckster shop owners.[1] Some other shopkeepers had even been small traders earlier in the century and undoubtedly had some capital to invest by way of that enterprise.[2] Ironically, one of the most successful huckster

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[1] For example, R.J. of Renews, who was the local post office keeper, had a shop in the 1920's.

[2] At the turn of the century, Tom Morry of Ferryland, operated a post office and a cod liver oil factory in addition to a small shop.

shops in Ferryland spanned a period from pre-World War I to 1958, and had been started by a merchant's foreman (master of voyage). He had invested savings from his salary drawn from within the mercantile operation of the Goodridge firm.

The successful shops stocked items such as molasses, tobacco, dry biscuits, sugar, butter, cheese, yeast, some cloth material, thread, stove blackening, boot laces, candy (often homemade) and on occasion, pork and beef. In contrast, the smaller shops, which were struggling to establish themselves (frequently unsuccessfully) carried but a fraction of this selection. If they managed to survive, however, this small stock could be enlarged upon through reinvestment of the small profits made.

Due to the economic context in which they operated, the shops remained only marginally profitable enterprises, at least until the start of World War I. It was not possible to expect to raise a family by simply keeping shop. These were small sideline operations which could contribute to the owners' standard of living, but little more. Hence, it was the norm for women to run the shops. In this way the menfolk were freed to provide the prime source of the family's income, through fishing, or some other form of employment.

The function of the shop in the outport was akin to that outlined by Belshaw for similar ventures in peasant societies. It provided an opportunity for small scale and emergency buying:

> "I am reminded here of the functions of the Figian (read outport) storekeeper in rural Figi (rural Newfoundland). The motive in accumulating stock is largely to make sure that there are ample supplies available to the community when anyone has a sudden need for a small item and cannot be running off to town (read the merchant) to get it. No one depends on such stores for their continuous staple purchases."
> (Belshaw, 1965:60; parentheses are my own)

Yet it must be remembered that the socio-economic context in which the outport shop existed was quite different from that of Fiji. So too were the motives and strategies which generated these enterprises. The outport shop was an adaptation, not to the effects of physical distance, as in Fiji, but to the economic environment of the outports where the credit system placed a financial distance between the villager and his supplier.

The shop was set up within the home of the owner, frequently in the 'front' (living) room of the house. Prior to their introduction to central heating, the people of the Southern Shore seldom used their 'front' rooms other than on

special occasions. Typically, the latter were weddings or funerals, which required extra house space. To convert such spare rooms into shops then, was really no great imposition on the life style of a family.

This utilization of the front room from an economical and logistical point of view was good strategy. The area was immediately available for use. There was no demand for heavy capital output to provide a physical structure in which to set up shop. If for any reason the operation had to close down, 'the shop' could easily be re-converted to its original function. For the wife, it was conveniently at hand so that both shop and household could be managed co-jointly.

The Economics of the Shop

Barter was the usual means by which transactions took place at the shops, where fish was the prime medium of exchange. In this respect the shop paralled the initial stages in the development of small merchants throughout the rural areas of Newfoundland toward the end of the 19th. and during the early 20th. century. Smallwood wrote in 1935:

> "And in nearly all the outports small new firms have sprung up in the

> past twenty, thirty, fifty years. These numbering in the hundreds, are now the well-known outport merchants. Many of them were once fishermen themselves. Some of them started with a few tins of bully beef and a handful of the proverbial "Gibralter candy". Such men grew gradually by barter: exchanging goods for fish and then selling the fish for more goods and even for cash to the large firms in St. John's."
> (Smallwood, 1937:17-18)

Higgling and haggling over the value given for fish may have taken place, but normally the value in cents per pound was fixed at a set rate by the storekeeper. This facilitated trade because it reduced the potential for disputes. Since there was no culling, there could be no conflict. The standardization of the price also made it possible for fish to be adequately used as a 'special purpose money' rather than a simple item of barter. (Polanyi, 1957:264-66)

The value given for fish was normally below that expected by the storekeeper for resale. This was fundamental to the economic viability of the shop. By contrast, from about 1840 on the merchant, despite the impression sometimes gleaned from the literature, did not actually trade goods for fish. After the credit system came into being, goods were issued to the fishermen in the spring and paid

for in cash in the fall. To make this possible, the merchant, at the end of the fishing season, converted the fisherman's catch to a cash value, as assessed on the basis of what the foreign markets would pay in that year. The amount of cash due each fisherman was then balanced against his debt. This cash conversion barrier between fish and supply made it possible for the merchant to at least hold his margin of profit on retail goods, since any actual dip in the market value of fish was passed on directly to the fisherman.

The huckster shop aimed at short circuiting this flow of trade between the merchant and fisherman, but the only way of doing it given; (a) the fact that the shop could not afford to extend credit, and (b) that cash was not readily in circulation, was to exchange retail goods directly for fish. In doing so, however, the storekeeper had no means of protecting his profits from the sale of goods against downward fluctuations in the price of fish, as did the merchant. He stood as exposed as any fisherman in having to absorb a loss, if the price of fish fell. These shops were too small to accommodate this loss and survive. Therefore, the shopkeeper took a calculated risk in setting the value of fish taken in so that it was sufficiently below what the

resale market might be expected to bring in order to secure his profits.

This practice of pricing fish below resale levels was further necessitated by the fact that some shops, particularly the smaller ones, were dependant solely on the profits the resale of fish to the local merchant brought them. They had no mark-up on their goods because they were supplying directly from the local merchant and paying his retail prices for their stock. Due to the low volume of trade, it was not feasible to bring the few items they could afford to carry from St. John's. The cost of shipping, the fact that the amounts of goods bought did not merit wholesale prices, plus the incidental costs in having to travel to St. John's to make the necessary arrangements were prohibitive.

The merchant could do little but accommodate the shop trade because of the proximity of St. John's. If it became necessary, the shops could have supplied from there, and in fact the large shops did just that. Should the merchant have attempted to phase out any of the shops, only the smaller businesses would have been hurt; consequently, the huckster trade would have concentrated itself on the one or two larger shops. Hence, the merchant would not only have

facilitated the growth of a potential rival, but he would have lost the profits normally made on: (1) the goods sold to the shops at retail prices and (2) the resale of the fish taken in from the shops at the price paid fishermen.

Consumption Restrictions and the Adaptive Strategies of the Clientele

The question which might be asked at this point is why fishermen were willing to sell their fish at the shop for less than the merchant would pay. The answer lies in the fact that due to the credit system fishermen, once indebted, were placed on a rationed diet, as dictated by the merchant. When the fisherman got himself in debt, there was little hope of being freed from it, due either to the burden of maintaining the characteristically large family, or continued misfortune in the fishery. These men sought a way around the consumption restrictions placed on them. The solution lay in taking some fish, without the merchant's knowledge, (despite the fact that the merchant had some lien on it) and bartering this fish at the shop.

On first glance, because the value given by the shop was lower than what the merchant would give, the fisherman seems to have suffered a loss in this transaction. But as

long as the merchant was kept unaware of who was trading at the shop, and the fisherman could continue to incur debt with the merchant as well as trade a few fish 'on the sly', this was not really the case. It is true the fisherman's debt increased in proportion to the fish not turned in to the merchant; however, this loss was only a reality on paper. As long as the merchant continued the policy of 'carrying' the indebted fisherman, albeit, on a meager diet, the real loss was the merchant's.

The goods carried by the shop were comparable to the kinds of stock the merchant offered in his store. Significantly, however, the local population referred to the items as 'luxuries'. They were in excess of what they expected to obtain through the normal supply channel, the merchant.

This clandestine fish trade was not restricted to the Southern Shore. It appears to have been an Island-wide practice, as Smallwood, writing on Briggs Cove on the Northern Peninsula, noted:

> "It can safely be said that in Newfoundland generally the fish produced by fishing crews is shipped to the merchant, who did the actual supplying. Ninety percent of all fish is shipped to the merchant who did the supplying.

> Still the remaining ten percent caused some trouble and a lot of bad feeling between fisherman and merchants." (Smallwood, 1937:18)

The Goodridge firm differed little from other merchants in their resentment of the huckster fish trade, and this was despite the fact that the bulk of a mass catch was still 'shipped' to the firm. Although there was little he could do but tolerate the shops, the merchant could still exercise some control over the fisherman. A threat was placed on every man that if he were caught 'stealing' fish, his credit would be cut off. Certainly this was feared by every man as the ultimate reprisal. It resulted in severe limitations on the amounts of fish traded by any one fisherman to the shop; however, it did not stop the trade. As long as enough care was taken to conceal such transactions so that the merchant could not pin-point blame on any one fisherman, there was little real danger.

The community generally facilitated the shop trade by maintaining a shroud of secrecy around it. The local attitude toward the merchant made such a co-operative effort possible. Despite the fact that some of the Goodridges and their agents were often looked upon as being fair and generous, the system they imposed was held as being exploitive

of the fisherman. This was an inevitable conclusion since even the merchant's agents lived in homes comparable in comfort only to that of the priest. (Nemec, 1973:18) As one fisherman put it:

> "Sure, they had to make their money somewhere, and they were merchants, so they had to make it off us the fishermen. I know we had nothing and I allows it was our money they made along with their own."

Furthermore, the fact that these were Irish-Catholic communities and Goodridge's was an English-Protestant company slackened many a good conscience when it came to deceiving the merchant. After all, what sin to steal from the Protestants? The long-standing feelings of hostility between fisherman and merchant, which Jukes had noted as early at 1840, was as evident here as anywhere else on the Island. (see Jukes as recorded in Innis, p.386) The following excerpt taken from a local song called Five Pounds in the Fall indicates this hostility:

> Bad luck to you old Goodridge
> And likewise Kelligrew[3]

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[3]Kelligrew was the dominant merchant in Renews early in the 19th. century, but by the end of this century he was bought out by the Goodridge firm. Ironically, Goodridge is said to have gotten his start as a clerk with Kelligrew. (Keith Matthews, personal communications)

And all the other merchants,
They are supplying too.
That we may rise and they may fall,
I mean the fisherman.
And we will all live happy,
When their souls are gone to hell.

The actual 'stealing' of fish was usually carried out by women. Taking several fish at a time from the flakes, the women, in order to conceal them, would wrap the fish in some part of their outer clothing. Hence, the terms employed to indicate such 'fish currency' were 'shawl fish' in Renews and 'apron fish' in Ferryland.

Women, rather than men, took the fish because it was more practical. The women were the ones who worked on the flakes making the fish during the daytime, while their husbands fished. They had ready access to it and they also knew best just what was needed for the household.

However, the fact that women did the 'dirty' work of stealing fish was also tied into the moral order of the community and is of strategic significance. My initial impression on first inquiring into the activity surrounding the huckster shops lead me to believe men were opposed to

this practice and tried to stop it. To an extent this may have been true, due to the severe consequences of being caught, and the fact that men were often unsympathetic to their wives' appeals for non-essential items, such as curtain material and face soap. However, the extent to which the shop trade was carried on over a number of years indicates that few husbands ever took effective measures to put a stop to the 'stealing'. More correctly, the men wished to appear not to know about such activity and not to be openly identified with it.

From the community's point of view it was important that men publicly uphold the moral order; to be honest and straightforward in any and all transactions. If we consider that much of the activity in fishing and subsistence production required a co-operative effort, the rationale behind this code of honour becomes clear. As long as it existed, conflict between men was avoided and there was no disruption of the co-operative ethic. (cf. Martin, 1973:84-88)

Women, on the other hand, were allowed more latitude in what they did and said. In part, this reflected the attitude of a patriarchial society toward women, who were readily considered weaker and subject to 'foolish' (irresponsible) behaviour. Often this attitude was supplemented

by the fact that women were 'strangers' who had married into the community. As such their behaviour could not be accounted for. Consequently, there existed a dichotomy between the expected behaviour of men and women.

Whatever the reason for this perception of women, it gave them considerable leeway in exhibiting deviant behaviour as compared to men. Nor could a man be held entirely responsible for his wife's unacceptable behaviour, which was more a function of being womanish and strange than anything else. Hence, for a woman to steal a few fish to barter was more in keeping with the moral order of the community. They could sidestep the issue more easily without causing an upset in the community.

By maintaining his position of non-involvement, the fisherman could simply stand behind his 'innocence', if his wife were caught trading at the shop. On the rare occasion, when someone was caught, this apparently worked quite well with the fisherman promising to bring his wife into line. I could find only one occasion where the merchant 'cut a man off' because of his wife's stealing fish. In this case the husband had been warned about his wife's activity only a few days before the agent walked into a shop to find her passing

fish over the counter. The man was suspended from any right to draw credit; however, the suspension lasted only two months. Still, this was a sufficient time to let both the fisherman and the community ponder the extent of the consequences in the face of the oncoming winter.

PART II

THE GROWTH OF THE SHOP IN THE EARLY 1900'S

CHAPTER FIVE

A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SHOP

It has already been established that the shop was a functional part of economic life in Renews and Ferryland by 1904. At that point its operation within the structures placed on the local economy under the credit system was almost, if not entirely, dependant on a small, illegitimate barter trade. Furthermore, as long as the local economy was based entirely on credit and controlled by a single merchant, who acted as supplier and fish marketing agent for the community, there was little room for the shop to expand. Capital poor, the shops, unlike the merchants' businesses, were unable to secure and exploit a regular clientele through the extension of credit.

By the 1930's this scene had changed somewhat. Though the local economy was still in the hands of mercantile interests, the shop had attained a much greater importance within the local economic framework. The medium of exchange at the shop was shifting from barter to cash. The larger

shops were extending a little credit and catering to a more regularized clientele. This suggests a change in the local economic structure. It is this change and the expansion of the shop, as a result of it, that I shall attempt to outline in this chapter.

With the failure of indigenous banks in the crash of 1894, Canadian banks moved to Newfoundland to fill the resultant vacuum. Unlike their forerunners, these foreign bankers did not restrict themselves to catering solely to the St. John's commercial community. Small banks were established in certain outports where it was felt they were necessary and feasible. In this way the process of extending the cash system to the rural sector of the Island was set in motion. (Innis, 1954:462)

The flow of cash to the rural areas did not, of course, result simply from the presence of banks in some outports. Rather, it was directly tied into a period of general improvement in the Newfoundland economy which was evident by the close of the nineteenth century. During the last quarter of the century, industrialization[1] had grown at a

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[1](a) In 1866 a number of small mines were opened up on the shores of Green Bay.

slow but definite and increasing rate. For example, the construction of the trans-island railway alone "pumped millions of dollars of cash into what had been an almost exclusively credit economy." (Noel, 1971:26) By the late 1890's the fishing as well was showing improvement, as catches were good and the export value of salt cod began to climb. With the advent of World War I, prices skyrocketed to an all-time high peaking at an unprecedented $14.40 a quintal in 1918. (see Figure I page 43) Of the war period, R.H. MacKay, an economic historian, wrote:

> "The economic effect of the war, after the first shock of bewilderment had subsided, was to stimulate trade and industry, thus bringing about a few years of exceptional prosperity. Spain and Portugal were open markets, and Italy was on the side of the Allies. Newfoundland's competitors in the dried-fish industry were unable to maintain production at pre-war levels,

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(b) In 1896 the trans-island railway was completed under the Reid Company, which subsequently enlarged its coastal steamship service to areas of Newfoundland inaccessible by rail.

(c) As a consequence of the railway service, a number of small sawmills opened up along the route.

(d) In 1909 the Island's first paper mill went into production at Grand Falls.

(e) In 1895 iron ore was discovered on Bell Island, where mines were in production prior to World War I.

(f) In 1920 an agreement was signed to commence work on the Island's second paper mill to be located at Corner Brook.

TABLE I

SALT DRIED CODFISH EXPORTS FROM NEWFOUNDLAND*

Year	Quintals	Export Value per Quintal in Dollars
1890	1,040,916	3.70
1891	1,244,834	3.90
1892	1,049,310	3.45
1893	1,060,335	3.60
1894	1,107,696	3.29
1895	1,312,608	2.92
1896	1,135,817	2.46
1897	1,145,540	2.82
1898	1,226,336	3.62
1899	1,300,622	4.19
1900	1,233,107	4.19
1901	1,288,955	4.27
1902	1,429,274	3.94
1903	1,360,373	4.37
1904	1,196,774	5.14
1905	1,480,734	5.31
1906	1,422,129	5.53
1907	1,509,020	5.10
1908	1,732,172	4.20
1909	1,502,020	4.08
1910	1,182,480	5.54
1911	1,387,930	5.07
1912	1,408,501	5.66
1913	1,247,234	5.80
1914	1,094,122	6.70
1915	1,421,014	7.31
1916	1,568,055	8.21
1917	1,821,206	10.33
1918	1,681,730	14.46
1919	1,787,849	12.67
1920	1,363,787	9.77
1921	1,592,046	7.34
1922	1,483,087	6.86
1923	1,264,668	6.78
1924	1,165,097	8.96
1925	1,366,461	8.82
1926	1,589,841	7.58
1927	1,573,748	7.33
1928	1,293,502	9.14
1929	1,252,479	9.20
1930	1,147,108	6.72
1931	1,111,007	4.52

*Statistics from The Book of Newfoundland, Vol. 1, p.325. This figure gives some indication of fluctuation in fish catches and prices 1890-1931. As is indicated, both were markedly improved for a period immediately after the turn of the century.

> whereas Newfoundland's were the biggest in her history. Money was plentiful, the demand for fish rose rapidly, and prices soared to heights never attained before. The shortage of shipping was met by pressing Newfoundland sailing vessels into service. Fishermen and merchants prospered."
> (MacKay, 1946:65)

With the exception of a brief post-war depression, this trend was to continue pretty well until the 1930's, when international trade generally collapsed. (cf. Table I) Hence, for the first quarter of this century industrialization and the fishery would both act as vehicles for the dispersion of cash to the rural sector.

The Introduction of the Cash System to the Southern Avalon

The initial impact of the cash flow to the rural sector during this period was undoubtedly felt in the industrialized areas, particularly the Island's north east region.[2] There the paper and lumber industries, plus mining, added a wage labour market to traditional co-adventurer

[2] Innis (1954:462-65) holds the view that industrial growth and the spread of the cash system freed the fishermen from the credit system and resulted in the decentralization of political power. He points to the development of the Fisherman's Protective Union at the turn of the century as an example of this change. Its origins and strength lay in the outports of the northeast coast, where the F.P.U. was responsible for the opening up of a number of cash stores. (cf. Gwyn, 1968)

forms of employment, the cod and seal fisheries. (cf. Perlin, 1959:39; also Noel, 1971:Ch.7) Yet, despite the fact that Renews and Ferryland would continue to exist primarily on a non-industrialized[3] fishery prior to the 1950's, cash was in circulation there in increasing quantity after the turn of the century. As one informant put it:

> "For a good many years before the War, (World War I) and for a few years after, there was lots of money on the go and things were good all around. For a while there after the War she went bad alright, but she came back again before the depression (1930's). How I can remember that now is because in 1928 I bought a horse from a fella in Calvert and I paid over fifty dollars for him in cash. In that same year I paid Lar over a hundred dollars to renovate this house."

Indications such as a sharp increase in capital investment by fishermen on boats and fishing gear, as well as on house construction between 1910-1930, tend to support this

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[3] "While certain sectors of the Island's economy underwent industrialization in the first half of the twentieth century, the fisheries did not become mechanized until after World War II. This was particularly true of the southern Avalon, where a relatively pre-industrialized, small-boat inshore fishery remains intact even now." (Nemec, 1973:21)

view.[4] But the most blatant evidence of the growing presence of cash, especially during the War period, was the construction of a bank at Ferryland in 1916.

Following the turn of the century, cash entered the local economy, as it did in other parts of the Island, by the wage labour market and the fishery. In 1911 construction began on a branch line railway from St. John's to Trepassey. Paralleling on the micro level the effects of the building of the trans-island line, this construction was the means whereby thousands of dollars were pumped into an economy which had operated almost exclusively on credit.

The effects of the cash circulated by the laying of the Trepassey line would probably have been short term, if

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[4] During this period the total number of codtraps, bultow lines and cod nets increased in both Renews and Ferryland. There was also an increase in the number of inshore fishing boats. (census returns, 1891-1921) But of more significance, and something which the census does not reveal, is the fact that the ownership of this fishing gear, especially traps, was now held by fishermen, particularly family crews; whereas previously the merchant had owned and operated the bulk of traps used in the study communities. In Renews, which relied more heavily than Ferryland on a 'hook and line' fishery, the western boats (medium-sized schooners 30 tons or over) which had been owned by the merchant disappeared, while fishermen gained ownership of a small version of the same vessel, the jack boat. Furthermore, it was during the First World War that the gas engine, used

it had been an isolated development within the no-cash vacuum of the traditional economy of the 'Shore'. Whatever money there was in circulation would eventually have found its way into the coffers of local or St. John's merchants. Without a mechanism to insure a return flow, the local pools of cash would soon have dried up. However, this was not the case. By the time the railway was completed World War I had broken out, and with the soaring price of fish, the recirculation of money to the outports was assured.

The presence of cash in the outports acted to contravene the operation of the credit system. Its natural function as an all purpose medium of exchange was to act as a corrosive agent on the power the merchant traditionally

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to propel small fishing craft, came into wide use though it had been introduced to the region in 1908. From what information I can gather, there were more houses built during the World War I period than for any relative period of time prior to the War or in the following interim preceding confederation. More striking, however, was the amount of repair and renovation made to houses at this time. Most houses underwent some alteration and were usually enlarged. It was during this boom period the bulk of the saddle-roofed 'salt-box' type houses, which had predominated the house style in both communities, underwent a metamorphosis in design to emerge as the 'flat-roofed' square-box design which is still common in the outports today.

wielded over the outport consumer. This power stemmed from the merchant's monopoly of the supply trade through his manipulation of the credit system to create a 'conversion barrier' preventing a direct exchange of fish for cash. In this way the merchant insured that the fisherman was always obligated to him through an ever ending series of credit transactions. (cf. Bohannon, 1967:123-35) By the turn of the century, however, this situation was changing to the advantage of the consumer. Consider: (a) that the fisherman no longer had to accrue credit with the merchant on the sale of his catch and therefore was no longer tied to one supplying merchant; (b) that cash could be held in reserve by the fisherman without his undergoing deprivation, as was not infrequently the result with credit accrued, owing to the merchant's dubious manipulations of account books of which the ignorant fisherman understood little.

In short, cash gave the outport consumer a far greater degree of freedom than he had ever held before over where and what he purchased. It was then ideally possible, once cash was introduced, for the retail trade to be conducted by entrepreneurs not at all involved in the purchasing and marketing of fish, nor willing to become entangled in large credit transactions such as fitting out. Hence, for

outports such as Renews and Ferryland, who were affected by this cash flow, a fundamental change was brought about in the economic structure of these outports which made it possible for small operations such as the huckster shops to expand their trade beyond the limitations of petty barter.

The Impact of St. John's on the Development of the Shop

A. "The Return of Market Competition to the Southern Avalon and its Effect on the Supply Trade"

An early introduction of the cash system to Renews and Ferryland was very much a function of their geographical proximity to the commercial capital -- St. John's. For example, after 1910, with the operation of the Trepassey branch railway, a journey to St. John's from either of the study communities could be made in about three hours. Even prior to the railway, when sail was the predominant means of transportation, it was possible to reach St. John's in less than half a day.[5] Therefore, it is not surprising that the Southern Shore, more readily than most isolated non-industrialized sections of Newfoundland, (see Smallwood,

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[5] Initially fish was exported to St. John's daily by train.

1934:18; also Szwed, 1966:23-42) reflected the economic developments centered in the commercial capital at the turn of the century.

With the increase in the market price of fish after 1900, the interest of St. John's merchants[6] in the Southern Shore fishery was rekindled. Either by sending out traveling buyers in the fall, or by establishing permanent agents in the outports, these 'outside' merchants invaded the territory of the Goodridges. Many of these were willing to supply for the fishery and to pay cash to fishermen for what was owed them after the 'straightening-up' at the end of the season. As fishermen, emboldened by the prospects of a better deal, turned away from the Goodridges, a monopoly, born out of the economic stagnation of the 19th. century, began to crumble. Whereas previously cash seldom, if ever, changed hands in transactions between merchant and fisherman, by World War I this was no longer the case. Aware of the leverage given to them by the existence of competition, fishermen not only sought cash payment for what was coming to them after straightening up with the Goodridges, but for the

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[6]For example Monroe Export Company, Baine & Johnstone's and Bowrings.

first time they demanded detailed statements of goods charged against their summers' accounts.

By the close of the War the Goodridges had introduced a new policy to govern their transactions with fishermen -- 'half-truck half-cash'. Under this system, after 'straightening' his account, a fisherman was allowed to draw half the balance owed him in cash. The remaining half of the fisherman's clear earnings had to be taken up in supplies from the merchant's store. In the formulation of the 'half-truck half-cash' policy, it is implicit that (a) the supply trade was still a lucrative one for local merchants, especially where monopolies existed; (b) by World War I effective competition from other suppliers, i.e. the shops, did exist; (c) these other suppliers were attracting a significant portion of the existing cash trade to warrant the Goodridges' implementing a policy to protect their retail interests.

It must be realized that the need for credit or the credit system did not come to a dramatic end with the resurgence of competition on the Shore after 1900. Until government assistence, i.e. grants for gear and unemployment insurance, ended the need for spring fit-outs in the late

1950's, fishermen continued to obtain supplies on credit at the start of each fishing season and there were many fishermen who remained indebted to a merchant. In the main though, the price of fish, good yearly catches, and the effects of competition, made it possible for a fisherman to free himself from the entanglement of being perpetually dependant on and obligated to a single merchant. The monopolies, which had existed on the fearful knowledge that in any given year all that might exist between a man and starvation was the power of the merchant to extend credit, diminished when cash was placed in the fisherman's pockets. The psychological and economic burden which operated to retard the growth of entrepreneurial activity had eased considerably early in this century in both Renews and Ferryland as a direct result of their proximity to St. John's.

B. "The Development of St. John's as the Major Wholesale Centre for the Island and its Impact on the Shop"

The withdrawal of English mercantile interests from Newfoundland after the Napoleonic Wars paved the way for the emergence of St. John's as the centre of the Island's economic activity. Greatly expanded, as a result of immigration during the boom war period, the town was to harbour the headquarters of a few large firms which remained

in the Newfoundland trade. Through the maintenance of agents in the outports (Nemec, 1973:18) or by means of trading schooners (Faris, 1971:15), these firms continued to dominate the retail trade of the rural sector. Beginning toward the end of the 19th. century, however, there was a change in the structure of this internal trade system. This change would ultimately have a bearing on the development of the shop on the Southern Avalon.

Either as a consequence of the vacuum created due to the voluntary withdrawal of St. John's merchants from direct involvement in the outport trade, (Prowse, 1922:530) or as a result of the usurping, through business initiative, of the foothold these merchants held in the outports, (Smallwood, 1937:15-18) a number of small independant 'local' merchants began to emerge. Gradually a new class of middlemen was gaining control of the outport trade. Concurrently, the importance of St. John's as a retail centre gave way to the burgeoning wholesale trade which was developing as the town became the principal centre of supply for these middlemen. With industrialization and improvements in the fishery after 1900, the demand for goods on the rural markets increased. This factor, coupled with improved communication between St. John's and the outlying areas, plus

the effect of liquid 'cash', acted as a catalyst to the commercial metamorphosis of St. John's. (Innis, 1954:462)

The shift towards an emphasis on the wholesale trade was important to retail outlets, which had access to St. John's at an increasing rate after 1900. The capability of St. John's businesses to handle this trade was becoming more sophisticated. For example, new firms were established and old ones geared themselves to supplying clients of the retail trade. Furthermore, as the wholesale sector of the St. John's business community was no longer operating within a totally credit economy, or for the preservation of it, the traditional posture of limiting the quantity and variety of goods available to the rural populations diminished. Wholesale outlets, dependant only on the supply trade for their survival, attempted to increase the volume and thereby the variety of goods offered to retailers. (cf. pp5) Although whatever progress made in this direction must have been small by post-confederation standards, this was a significant change in commercial thinking towards the outport consumer.

The Peddlers

Prior to World War I and at an increasing rate during the prosperous war years, a new variety of 'merchant'

appeared on the Southern Avalon. These were the 'pack-men' or peddlers who carried in their backpacks and suitcases, in essence, a portable shop. Calling from door-to-door in each settlement, these men offered a wide selection of small items that normally were available only in St. John's, i.e. cheap toiletries, perfume, jewellery, children's toys, mirrors, clocks, religious artifacts, etc..

Paralleling the role of their counterparts in the 19th. century United States of America, these peddlers represented a transitional period in the opening up of rural retail markets. (Carson, 1965:161-70) They were part of the mechanism of the rural shop and simultaneously reflected the increasing ease of acquiring wholesale goods and the pressure on St. John's wholesalers to find an outlet for their wares.

The coming of the peddler also foreshadowed the development of the traveling wholesaler and salesmen who would cater solely to supplying the needs of the shops. With the advent of the motor car to the Shore in the late 1920's, the stage was set for the entrance of this new kind of peddler. By the 1930's small wholesalers in motor cars and trucks were beginning to enter the area. Some operated in the employ of St. John's wholesalers; for example, during the summer period the Aereated Water Works sent a truck out

regularly to sell mild beer and soft drinks. A few dry goods salesmen, who still operated small wholesale outlets in St. John's, also began to cater to the shops in an attempt to push the sale of their goods. With the outbreak of World War II the number of these peddlers increased fairly rapidly, reflecting new wartime prosperity. Until large wholesale firms began to operate in the area in the early 1950's, these small wholesalers, peddlers, or salesmen were to remain the chief source of supply for the shop on the Southern Avalon.

CHAPTER SIX

PROSPERITY AND THE SHOP: 1910 - 1930

The shops capitalized on the demands generated by wartime prosperity and the freeing up of the retail market from its bondage to the 'credit system'. Sensitive to the growing potential of the retail market, shopkeepers took the initiative and, in addition to increasing their stock of essential items, they broadened the variety of goods offered for sale. For example, they followed the success of the peddlers by cutting into the small but lucrative petty goods trade, which the latter had been developing since the turn of the century.

Certainly, one of the factors which contributed to the success of the shops was the inflexibility of the merchant's store to respond to new consumer demands. The latter were encumbered by their attempts to continue their operations on the principles and mentality of the old credit system; that is, they attempted to ensure the loyalty of their clients by fitting them out for the fishery, thereby incurring a large risk. On the other hand, they attempted to restrict the size of this risk by limiting the variety of their stocks to

essential items. Thus, they attempted to control consumer demands. The shops, however, were not involved in larger credit transactions (see pp.64) and were much more versatile in their response to changing market conditions. They stocked a relatively large selection of non-essential items; i.e. face soap, tinned milk, yard goods, etc., as well as a quantity of essential goods, all of which made it possible for the shrewd consumer to secure a little extra variety and quantity of 'imported' goods. Consequently, the shops attracted most of whatever cash trade there was in the communities, especially where the client wished to conceal from his main creditor, the merchant, the fact that he might have a little surplus cash on hand. (see pp.62)

The rift that developed between the Goodridge firm and dissenting fishermen, a product of renewed market competition, was another factor which operated for the benefit of the shops. The relationship which had existed between these two was normally highly personalized, with the merchant perceiving himself to be the benefactor of the fisherman. When the latter initiated an end to the relationship by taking his trade elsewhere, the consequences transcended the straightforward economic implications. (Szwed, 1966:42) Bad feelings arose between fisherman and

merchant which could not easily be resolved. This was especially true if the fisherman failed to clear all his debt before terminating the relationship and where the fisherman and/or merchant publicly condemned one another.[1] In this case, the fisherman could not openly patronize the merchant's store without a loss of face. Since the dissenting fisherman's new supplier usually either operated out of St. John's, or at best a nearby settlement, there was an increased dependance on the shop as an emergency supply depot.[2]

In 1914 prohibition was to provide the basis for the development of the shop in a direction that was, at the local level, considered to be completely remote from the

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[1] It was not uncommon for fishermen to 'stick' (not pay) his supplying merchant. This was done by withholding the sale of fish from the supplying merchant and selling it to an independant buyer at the season's end. During periods of peak competition, the merchant would normally not attempt to force a fisherman to pay. The reason being that in most cases by the time action could be taken against a man, there would be nothing to collect other than to seize on his house and land. The merchant could do this only at a high social and economic cost. Both land and house were crucial to survival and as such were sacred in the outport; therefore, the censure of the community towards seizure, which could be translated into a decline in clientele, prevented the merchant from taking such drastic action. Some fishermen were well aware of the merchant's dilemma and wherever 'sticking' constituted a feasible strategy, they employed it with little hesitation.

[2] The firm of Walter-Monroe did have an agent in

supply trade. The scarcity of liquor made it possible for the shops to add homemade hop and spruce beer, and even blueberry wine, to their list of goods sold. This 'brew' was usually peddled at a few cents a glass and consumed in the shop. There was another aspect to the liquor trade however. With the growth of alcohol smuggling between St. Pierre and Newfoundland, in response to prohibition, the shops on the Southern Avalon were frequently used as fronts for local distribution.

One additional effect produced by the interjection of cash into the local economy was the development of a petty community market system in which the shop often played the central role. As well as fish, which was still bartered at the shops, other items were also purchased and resold. Eggs were perhaps the main item traded in this fashion. The shops resold these eggs either locally or collected them over a period of time, preserving them in salt until they could be shipped to St. John's for resale. In season, locally grown fruit, such as crabapples and plums, were also circulated on this local market. By the end of the 1930's blueberries were added to the local produce purchased by the

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Ferryland for a time to service his clientele. In Renews however, the only local alternative supplier to the Goodridges was situated in Fermeuse, some three miles away.

shops; although they were not resold locally but were sent directly to buyers in St. John's.

The post-war depression produced a slump in the local economy, as the price of fish dropped sharply from 1921-23. This is substantiated by one reliable indicator -- population decline. During this period the populations of both Renews and Ferryland were reduced by about 20%, primarily as a result of out-migration. (Census, 1921-31) However, the overall effects of the depression on the study communities were not so ubiquitous as to restore the credit system to its former status, which is frequently assumed to have been generally the case for Newfoundland. (Noël: 1971:149-50) Nor were the shops reduced to their pre-war dependance on a small illegitimate barter trade. Though the depression did have a negative effect on the rate of growth experienced during the war years, economic conditions remained such that the shops were able to retain some of the foothold they had gained in the supply trade. For example, continued competition[3] over the purchasing of fish operated

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[3]One reason for this competition was undoubtedly the fact that the large St. John's firms rode the depression years fairly well and therefore remained competitive fish buyers. In the Seventeenth Annual Report ..... of the Newfoundland Board of Trade, 1925, it was noted:

to prevent the Goodridges from regaining monopolistic control over the local economy, which would certainly have given them the power to force the shops out of business. The price paid for fish would have been much lower than it in fact was, and this would have allowed the Goodridges to create once more an indebted and dependant clientele.[4]

One new source of cash which found its way into the shops at this time was the remittances paid by sons or daughters who had left the communities and found work 'away', i.e. the 'Boston' states. Remittance money, which came into the hands of a fisherman who owed on an account with the merchant, seldom found its way into his store. The reason was simple in that it could, and very likely would, be taken in payment on account. Therefore, it would be 'lost' as a source of income that could be spent on

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> "During the years 1921-24 many failures occurred; and by elimination of these weak concerns the commercial outlook was improved and business has shown a tendency to gravitate towards established houses which have the capital, credit and ability to conduct their affairs along approved lines."

[4]This is evident in that the price offered for fish by the Goodridges was frequently forced upward when an 'outside' merchant came into the communities in the fall and offered a better price for fish.

additional supplies.[5]

By 1924, with the value of fish again climbing on the foreign markets and with a general improvement in the Newfoundland economy, there was another wave of optimism over the fishing industry.[6] On the Southern Shore competition intensified and once more cash flowed freely as St. John's merchants and even 'foreigners'[7] vied with local fish buyers.

For the shop another period of accelerated growth was

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[5] Even today when people have regular accounts at a local store this practice continues where a client keeps the storekeeper unaware of the fact that he (the client) has control of a little 'windfall' cash.

[6] Increased exports of paper and minerals, plus improved market conditions for Newfoundland fish, brought the amount of exports in 1926-27 in excess of $30million. This was very near war time levels. (cf. Smallwood: 1937, Book 1; pp. 325)

[7] A merchant of Spanish origin, locally known as the 'Spaniard', established a premise at Bay Bulls and purchased fish all along the Southern Avalon. On at least one occasion a French merchant bought fish 'on the Shore'. Using his vessel anchored at Cape Broyle as a trading post, he issued supplies to fishermen on the promise that they would sell him their catch. Local reports suggest that he was 'stuck' that year and did not return again.

begun. Between 1923-30 the number of 'established'[8] stores increased considerably in both Renews and Ferryland. (see Appendix) In addition, there were a number of abortive attempts at setting up shop.

Credit in the Shop

By this time the small stores were seriously cutting into the merchant's control of the supply trade. The larger or established shops were already extending credit, though not fitting out for the fishery.[9] As one informant, who operated a shop in the twenties and early thirties, pointed out, to do any sizeable business it had become necessary to give credit in order to get the trade. Therefore, a client in good standing might expect to get from ten to fifteen dollars 'on tick' (credit), payable usually on a monthly basis.[10]

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[8] I have considered an established shop to be one with an estimated minimum stock of $100.00 and with an operating life span of at least two years.

[9] This still was considered to be the responsibility of the supplying merchant, if he wanted a man's fish.

[10] Such accounts were often tied into time periods concurring with old age pensions. Since the old people lived with one of their children normally, this income was tied into the family's budget. Other sources of cash, such as the annual few days' employment a man might get on the local roads, also were a basis on which credit could be received. (Dillon, 1968:100-110)

The credit relationship was based on a sense of trust between the shopkeeper and client. Speaking of shopkeepers on the Island's southeast coast, Stiles noted:

> "As with the traditional merchant, credit buying for the purchaser was normally a means of consolidating one's relationship with the shopkeeper, a kind of personal symbol of loyalty, or at least regularity."
> (Stiles, 1972:23)

The situation in Renews and Ferryland was little different. The use of credit by the shopkeeper, though limited in comparison to the merchant's, offered security to both shopkeeper and client; an alternate but frequently necessary source of credit for the client, and for the shopkeeper, a regular and reliable clientele.

With improved transportation between the study communities and St. John's, both by train and steamship, local shopkeepers were able to obtain stock from St. John's on a year round basis. Through ties developed with St. John's wholesalers, who would advance many of the shopkeepers short term (usually monthly) credit on demand, the latter were able to capitalize on this service. Whenever they needed a few items they just had to send an order to their wholesaler and the goods would be sent by the cheapest

available means. In this way the shopkeepers avoided what would have been an economically prohibitive expense, namely storing goods in bulk for long periods, as was the practice of the merchants. Consequently, though shopkeepers had to purchase their supplies through middlemen (wholesalers) while the merchant (at least the Goodridges) purchased most of their supplies directly from the exporting countries, thereby obtaining them at lower cost, there was little real difference in the rate at which either shopkeeper or merchant retailed their goods. The merchant, unlike the shopkeeper, had the cost of maintaining a staff and warehouses, plus the expense of the inevitable damage to perishable goods.[11]

For the business to operate smoothly the shopkeeper had to be able to determine with a fair degree of accuracy what his turnover would be. This was essential to avoid the risk of overstocking goods which were slow to sell. At the same time he had to provide an adequate service to his clientele and issue regular payments to wholesalers for goods received on credit. The regularization of the storekeeper's customers, through the utilization of credit transactions with

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[11] Flour, sugar and butter were commonly stored in buildings where temperature control was non-existent and where vermin, mainly rats, were a constant nuisance.

clients worked to this end. Certainly, while many shopkeepers did not deliberately use this type of strategy, there were some who did. The latter very carefully balanced their intake of stock against their expected sales, and these were the more successful shopkeepers because of it.

For the fishermen there were definite economic advantages in dealing with the shop rather than the merchant's store. In order to attract trade the shopkeeper held prices to a minimum and, if at all possible, sold at prices below those of the merchant's store. Also, the shopkeeper did not add a service charge on goods issued on credit as did the merchant. This meant a saving of at least 20% on shop goods gotten on credit. Frequently the saving was even greater as it was not uncommon for the merchant to add a higher than normal charge to the goods of clients considered to be bad risks. Furthermore, after receiving a fit-out from the merchant it was generally easier to get additional supplies on credit from the shopkeeper than from the merchant.

Now the yearly strategy of the fishermen was to seek a fit-out from the merchant at the start of the fishing season. This would involve a substantial amount of credit.

As these supplies began to run short, say towards the end of June, the fisherman would then seek whatever he needed on credit from the shop. By the middle or the end of July he would have some fish to 'put off' (sell). The returns from this would be divided -- one part going toward payment of his spring fit-out, the other going to the shop.

At the end of the fishing season the fisherman would ideally sell his catch and close his account with the merchant. At this time, if he were lucky, he would have sufficient money coming to him to buy a 'winter's diet'. But if he had any potential outside income -- from an old age pension, a guaranteed berth to the seal fishery, or from having kept back a few quintals of fish from the merchant to be sold elsewhere at a later date -- the fisherman might still carry a small account at the store. As with the spring fit-out, when some foodstuffs from his winter's diet were running out, he would supply in small quantity from the shop on credit. For the fisherman who dealt with a merchant outside the community, as many did during the periods of peak buyer competition, the ability to open or carry on a small credit account with the shop was almost a necessity.

As with merchant-client credit transactions, those of the shopkeeper-client were not free of 'sticking' (the client's refusal to pay his debt [cf. footnote 1 pp. 59]). The shopkeeper did not occupy the position of power in the local market system (i.e. exporter of fish) which the merchant did. He could not control his clients' abuse of credit through the manipulation for profit of the fisherman's ignorance of external marketing conditions.[12] (cf. Smallwood, 1937:20-23) Nor was the shopkeeper as essential to the fisherman's economic strategy as was the merchant, i.e. in extending spring fit-outs to start men off in the fishery. Therefore, the shopkeeper held a much more vulnerable position with regards to being 'stuck'.

He did, however, have some defense against his clients' abuse of credit. He could enforce strict limitation on the amount of credit issued to the client and on the period of time in which payment had to be met under normal conditions. In this way the client could not get to owe enough money to the shopkeeper to get a 'good root' at him. Therefore,

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[12] This must be qualified to an extent, in that the shopkeeper could, and still does, manipulate prices on some retail goods to his advantage. For example, it is not ususual to find excessive prices charged for not frequently bought goods (i.e. 'hardware goods') which, due to the infrequency with which they are purchased, are seldom bought with any consideration given to price.

while the short term gain from defaulting on a debt was petty, the long term cost of having no further credit, possibly with any shop in the community, was relatively high. This was so because the shopkeeper, usually facing little direct competition outside the merchant's store, could be, and indeed was, selective in issuing credit. In a small community he was in a position to have a fairly accurate knowledge of the credit rating of all potential clients.

The Depression: The Economic Crisis of the Thirties and its Impace on the Shops:

The world-wide depression of the 1930's was severely felt in Newfoundland.

> "The onset of the world depression found the Island with no reserves, its primary industry neglected and its credit exhausted. The glowing visions of a new Uthopia were dispelled with cruel suddenness by the cold realities of national insolvency, and today a disillusioned and bewildered people, deprived in many parts of the country of all hopes of earning a livelihood, are haunted by the grim spectres of pauperism and starvation."
> (Newfoundland Royal Commission Report, 1933:43-44)

By 1934 the economic and political state of the Island was such that, in compliance with the Amulree Royal

Commission Report of 1933, the government of the day requested that the constitution be suspended. On February 16, 1934, the last Prime Minister of Newfoundland, Frederick C. Alderdice, surrendered dominion status.[13]

As much as any region of Newfoundland, the Southern Shore suffered under the severity of this economic crisis. In fact both Renews and Ferryland, solely dependant on the fishing industry, were further impoverished by persistent catch failures from the mid-thirties through the early forties. The period of relative prosperity in which the shop had emerged to play a prominent part in the retail trade was over. Hence, as the local reserves became exhausted, so too did the number and quality of shops; for despite the limited use of credit, the shop was fundamentally tied to the cash flow. By the mid thirties only two very small 'huckster' shops remained in Ferryland. In Renews conditions were little better. Only one substantial shop remained in opposition to the merchant.

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[13] Unquestionably, the depression was the prime cause of the difficulties facing Newfoundland at this time; however, government mismanagement, i.e. excessive borrowing, from the turn of the century, was responsible for the extent of these problems. Yet, full discussion of this topic is outside the limits of this paper. Those interested may consult Noel's Politics in Newfoundland, 1971.

PART III

THE MODERN SHOP

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE 1940'S: PROSPERITY RETURNS TO THE SOUTHERN AVALON

The outbreak of World War II signalled an end to the extreme hardship that had plagued Newfoundland during the years of the Great Depression:

> "Full employment, rising prices and increased imports quickly pushed the Government revenue to an all time high of $23 million by 1942 producing a surplus budget of nearly $7 million." (Noel, 1971:243)

Though the price of cod was vastly improved (as a result of a decline in European fishery due to the War), the most important element in the prosperity of the Southern Shore between the outbreak of war and the coming of Confederation in 1949 lay completely outside the fishery. With the construction of a number of American military bases in Newfoundland, (two on the Avalon Peninsula itself) a new and relatively well-paying wage-labour market opened up. Since the local fisheries were poor, especially between 1935-45, work on the 'bases' became an essential source of cash income. Now it was not uncommon in the event of a

poor fishery for local men to seek temporary employment on the bases during the fall. When winter brought construction and non-technical maintenance to a halt, local men would return home to secure firewood for the winter and prepare for the next summer's fishing activities. In this way the impact of this new cash flow restored the economic viability of the fisherman, which had been completely eroded by the Depression.

The Impact of the New Cash Flow on the Shops

By the end of the 1940's some of the shops which had survived the Depression regained their former status in the retail trade. (cf. Ch. 2) Though the regeneration of the shop had necessarily been precipitated by the new cash flow stemming from the war-time activity, it would be incorrect to call these 'cash' stores. (Wadel, 1969:27) As with the shops of the 1920's, their economic strength did not lie in daily cash transactions, but in the use of credit. In fact, by the end of the 1940's, the rapid expansion of several shops was directly connected with their willingness to go so far as to 'fit-out' for the fishery in order to attract a substantial clientele. In this way the more successful shops were clearly ousting the merchant from his predominant position in the local retail trade by the early 1950's.

Yet, to discuss fully the process whereby this transfer of control over retailing came about, it is necessary to digress briefly and consider the economic impact of the Depression on the local merchants and their reaction to it.

The Depression forced the large mercantile firms to withdraw from supplying for the local fishery. Of the two large firms, (The Tors Cove Trading Company owned by Goodridge, and the Monroe Export Company) which had in the 1920's been directly involved in maintaining premises in a number of Southern Shore outports, only the former managed to maintain a small foothold. The Goodridge's once extensive operation now included only two communities, Tors Cove and Renews.

In reality then, all that remained to carry on the outport trade during the Depression years were a number of small independant 'dealers'. The latter were by-products of the large firms. They were, for the most part, local men who had been employed by the firms as agents or office personnel. Through the experience gathered from their previous employment, combined with business acumen, these men managed to carry on in a small way utilizing the premises

abandoned by the defunct firms. However, the 'dealers' (including the Goodridges), as these small merchants came to be called, were capital poor. Unlike their large forerunners, they could not absorb the credit losses that normally resulted from a poor fishery. Furthermore, they could not rely on a successful fishery elsewhere to offset their losses. These facts were clearly demonstrated in the Ferryland case where, due to economic difficulties largely caused by the inability or refusal of fishermen to honour their debts, the merchant's premises exchanged hands four times between 1930-37.[1]

Painfully aware of their tenuous financial situation, the 'dealers' quickly learned to be frugal in their use of credit. Regardless of the fisherman's need, the only credit issued now was a small spring fit-out. The extent of the fit-out was based totally on the dealer's assessment of what

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[1] In 1932 the Ferryland premises owned by Goodridge and called the Tors Cove Trading Co., were sold to J.H. and G. Johnson (a company of two brothers both of whom had been employees of the Goodridges). In 1934-35 the Ferryland Co-operative bought out Johnson. In 1936 the premises were sold back to the Johnsons, who operated under the name of the Southern Shore Trading Co.. In the late 1950's it was sold to Birdseye International, who finally sold out to Bernard Kavanagh, a local wholesaler who was rapidly expanding to cover most of the wholesale trade on the Southern Shore.

the fisherman should have. Consequently, the amount given normally fell far short of what the fisherman sought. Thus, due to the Depression and a series of bad fisheries, the restrictive tone of the dealers' credit policies was set for the thirties and forties.

Though it may have been difficult for the dealers to have done otherwise, the consequences of their cut-backs on credit were not easily accepted by the fishermen. The hostility which had traditionally been directed against the merchant, identifying him as the enemy of the fisherman, was intensified. This was especially true for those fishermen who, normally independant, now found they had to ingratiate themselves to the dealer while begging for enough food to keep their families from starvation and enough supplies to carry on their fishing operation.[2] (cf. Smallwood, 1931:22)

In addition, it must be realized that these new dealers were not 'black' Protestants or outsiders, but usually

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[2] There is at least one case where a Renews man starved to death after being denied credit from the dealer and dole from the relieving officer. After his death all that was found in his house by way of food was a part loaf of bread. This had been the only food for the man and his two children for over a week.

they were former local fishermen. Given that there tended to be a strong egalitarian ethic in both Renews and Ferryland, this fact did not help relations between the dealer and his client.

Hence, in any consideration of the rapid success of the shops in the forties, both the dealer's credit policy and the hostility toward him resulting from that policy must be viewed as elements of some consequence that worked to the shop's advantage.

Credit: Power Struggle Between Dealer and Shopkeeper

As the local economy flourished with the new cash flow from the bases, the shops once more began to use the same strategy in securing patronage that has been successful earlier in the century. They extended small amounts of credit to entice custom, but did not assume the high risk factor of fitting out for the fishery. This was still left to the dealer. In this way the shops were able to undersell the dealer, i.e. they sought no interest on credit extended. (cf. pp. 67)

This time, however, the dealers were not so amenable to the activity of the shops. By the close of the War they were flatly refusing credit to the fishermen who were not leaving the bulk of their cash trade with them.

Now, when a man who had earned cash working on the 'bases', but had left little of this cash at the dealer's store over the fall and winter, approached the dealer for a spring fit-out, he was curtly told to seek his credit wherever he had left his cash.

The dealer's strategy in forcing the shops to take an appropriate share of the risk in fitting out was not blind. Owing to the poor local fisheries and the restricted price of fish during World War II, (cf. Perlin, 1959:51) there was no great influx of outside competitors to Renews and Ferryland as there had been during the previous World War I period. (cf. pp. 49-53) Nor was it any longer possible for fishermen to deal directly with St. John's based merchants. The latter were no longer interested in supplying to the fishermen, except for a few men who remained regular clients throughout the thirties. Their prime interest now was in catering to the new and lucrative market stemming from the American bases, particularly Pepperell.

Secure in their position of power over local marketing then, the dealers did not hesitate to pressure their clients into abandoning the shops. The pressure would come by way of the old weapon of withdrawing the credit supply.

This strategy implied a not unreasonable assumption on the part of the dealer that most shops would not, or could not, undertake the high risk and capital outlay involved in fit-outs; consequently, the shops' clientele would eventually be forced to return to the dealer to bargain from the worst possible position. The dealer also realized that even if some shops did undertake the risk of fitting out, they would also have to add an insurance cost into the price of their services; i.e. interest on credit accrued. In this way the dealer would reduce or eliminate the competitive advantage held by shops.

This attempt to suppress shop activity was only a partial success. It is true that most of the smaller shops balked at fitting out, but this meant that trade gravitated towards those few large shops which were willing to do so. Hence, by the end of the forties, one or two shopkeepers in both Renews and Ferryland had become economically strong enough to challenge the position of the dealer as sole resident fish buyer. Ironically then, the dealer's strategy in coping with the threat of the shops had only bolstered the growth of economically powerful rivals.

This is a copy of a letter written to the local dealer by a shopkeeper-trapowner in 1953:

"To Mr. G.H. Johnstone,
Southern Shore Trading Company

I, the undersigned, as the owner of traps in which Seumas Ryan is shareman, state that I am not outfitting him for the fishery and will guarantee to turn in his share of fish to you, if you undertake to give him his supplies.

James A. Keough"

The letter conveys the fact that; (a) the shops were supplying for the fishery, and (b) that the fishermen were in the habit of supplying from two or more suppliers, when the opportunity presented itself, while intending to pay only one. In fact, this kind of pledge or 'note' was developed to insure the supplier that he would receive payment at the end of the fishing season.

Late Forties and Early Fifties: Variables and Strategies Affecting the Shop.

The shopkeepers of the 1940's were not immune to the client's practice of 'sticking', i.e. the refusal of a clients to honour a debt. (cf. Footnote 1, pp. 59) If anything they were more vulnerable than their predecessors and the dealers, for while they (the new shopkeepers) did not purchase their clients' catch, they did 'fit-out' for the fishery. Hence, though the risk incurred was greater than that of the 1920's shop, the shopkeeper still lacked the

merchant's access to the fisherman's income and thereby the guarantee of payment through the marketing of his (the fisherman's) catch.

The question then arises, why did the shopkeeper fit out for the fishery? Although the issuing of credit was a valuable move towards soliciting custom, such a rationale in itself was not sufficient justification for exposing oneself to economic ruin. This would surely result, if a large proportion of a clientele were to resort to 'sticking' the shopkeeper and carrying their business elsewhere, i.e. as a strategic choice in a poor fishing year. The fact is that while giving credit was seen as an incentive to gaining custom, there were a number of variables which affected the storekeeper's decision to become involved in fitting out. What follows is a consideration of what these variables were and the extent to which the shopkeeper could exercise control over them.

The Impact of Community Attitude and Consumer Strategy on the Shop's Success

Shopkeepers, despite their growing prominence, were not identified as merchants prior to the fifties; hence, the attitude of the community towards the shopkeeper was not shaped by the traditional mistrust and animosity which

existed towards the local dealer and his predecessor, the merchant. The shopkeepers encouraged this distinction by persisting in selling at generally lower retail prices than the merchant's store and by not seeking a service charge on credit accounts despite pressure from the dealers to the contrary. This was a crucial incentive, for those unfortunate enough to have to exist for the winter months on dole[3], to buy at the shops. In this way, during the direct competition over clientele which evolved between shopkeeper and dealer in the late forties, the client increasingly opted for doing business with the shops. This switch not uncommonly came about with the client leaving the dealer a large unpaid debt. Given that initially there was normally only one or two shops in a community, apart from the dealer, who were willing to extend credit, the abandoning of the dealer seriously reduced the client's option of a supplier. The client who made such a decision did so with a strong committment to deal with his new supplier for an extended period of time.

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[3] In 1954, thirteen of James Keough's customers were dole recipients. This represented about 40% of his total clientele at that time. This assessment is based on extant account records for that year.

The shopkeepers were usually well aware if a potential client owed money elsewhere. (cf. pp. 70) In some instances, depending on the client's reputation, this was sufficient for credit to be denied; however, the shopkeeper was also aware of the man's poor chance of finding another supplier if he (the shopkeeper) were to be 'stuck' or 'stabbed'.[4] This knowledge was on occasion a factor which favourably influenced the shopkeeper's decision to extend credit to a person considered a high risk, for the shopkeeper knew he could exercise restraints over such a client's demand for credit without running a very great risk that the client would object or withdraw his patronage. This practice, of course, could only operate to the shopkeeper's advantage while the availability of credit from other sources remained extremely limited, a variably which would rapidly change after Confederation in 1949.

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[4] Chiaramonte in his Craftsman-Client Contracts notes:

> "The knowledge that any contract will be openly discussed acts both as a social pressure which binds participants to complete a contract, and as a restraint on the types of contracts made in the future."

This conclusion is highly relevant to the shopkeeper-client transaction. (cf. Chiaramonte, 1970:47-62)

Core Clientele

The shopkeeper, as always, guarded against being 'stuck' through a careful selection of a credit clientele. Credit was initially given only to those people who would most likely honour their debts. There were two specific sets of criteria on which this selection was based. The client was either a friend of the shopkeeper or a kinsman. The friendship between shopkeeper and client was established prior to entering into any credit transaction. On the strength of this dyatic tie it was determined as to whether or not a client could be trusted. With respect to kinship, it must be understood that in both Renews and Ferryland the extended family, from an economic point of view, was a major co-operative body which traditionally worked together for the corporate good. (cf. Firestone, 1967:45-84; also Arensbeerg, 1968:143)

For the beginning shopkeeper, even today, this group was and is the first looked to for support. Above all others his kin were and are generally trusted by the shopkeeper and traditionally accounted for a high percentage of the novice shopkeeper's incipient clientele.

In a sense, the size of this core clientele was reflected in the amount and rate of risk the shopkeeper would

take with regards to accepting additional credit customers. On the basis of the profit a shopkeeper might expect to accrue from his 'regulars' he accessed his ability to take on new clients whose previous patronage had generally been irregular. As unknowns, these potential clients were unpredictable in terms of honouring their debts. In some instances they already had a reputation of being unreliable in meeting their payments when dealing elsewhere. Such new clients normally had to be accepted as creditors with caution and at a rate determined by how good the shopkeeper's 'business' (rate of reliable trade) was.

A Peripheral Clientele and the Establishment of the Shopkeeper-Client Relationship

At this point it is heuristic to distinguish between two types of clientele: the core, which has just been defined, and the peripheral, which we will now talk about in the context of establishing the shopkeeper-client relationship.

A potential client did not just approach a shopkeeper for credit without first establishing to some degree a personalized relationship with him. Normally this involved a kind of preliminary stage-playing where the client, initially as a cash customer, approached the shopkeeper with whom

he wished to establish dealings. Over a period of time, usually a month or two, the shopkeeper might, if he valued his client's trade, endeavor to secure it by openly offering the client credit. Certainly, he would at least indicate to the client, through deference in his treatment of him at the shop, i.e. spending a lot of time catering to and talking with him, that he could get credit if he wanted it.

Once this preliminary play period was completed, if the client should receive credit, a reciprocal bond of obligation between himself and the shopkeeper was established. In time, if the client proved reliable, he received the full benefit of whatever services the shopkeeper could provide. In this case the client really became part of the shopkeeper's core clientele.

Alternatively, the shopkeeper during this period, might show no particular interest in extending credit to a client whose reliability was doubtful. In this instance the client was forced either to withdraw his cash trade and attempt to secure another source of credit, or to ask openly for credit. Where he chose the latter route the shopkeeper might very well extend him credit; however, since their relationship was not promoted by the

shopkeeper to be highly personalized, the client was well aware, without a word being spoken, that the shopkeeper intended to exercise strict control over the amount of credit issued and the regularity with which his (the client's) account would have to be paid.

This latter client, in not obtaining the full trust and friendship of the shopkeeper, usually never reached the favoured status of core client. As a consequence he remained on the periphery of the shopkeeper's regular clientele. As such, a sense of conflict or dislike often arose between this client and the shopkeeper. When the number of shops increased in the 1950's, this type of client proved problematic to the successful operation of the shop as credit-based operations. This became increasingly the case as clients, on finding a number of willing suppliers of credit, began to circulate their patronage from shop to shop, periodically 'sticking' the shopkeepers with sizeable unpaid bills.

The Shopkeeper's Strategy in Controlling his Clients' Consumption Patterns

Since the shopkeeper tended to operate at a comparatively low profit level of 20%, inevitably he faced seasonal periods when the demand for credit exceeded the

economic capability of his operation to extend it. There was that period of the year between March and June when clients were running short of cash. Dole payments were cut off and the fishery had not really gotten underway for the year. During these few months the shopkeeper found it necessary to control the amount of credit given to a client in the event that the client was considered a poor risk and/or was not exercising some temperance in the selection and amount of supplies sought on credit.

This control was frequently implemented by simply removing certain 'expensive' items, especially those considered luxuries, i.e. tinned fruit, 'fancy' biscuits, manufactured jams, etc., from the shelves and storing them beneath the counter or in a back room. Here they were kept until the fishery began anew and cash again began to flow into the communities.

Now, when a client came into the shop, his 'list' (a client usually took a month's goods at a time; hence, he listed his fairly extensive order on a piece of paper) was taken by the shopkeeper and he would begin to fill his order. When the shopkeeper came to an item he felt was unecessary he would simply point out that unfortunately he

was out of that item for the time being. Of course, a client who was held in esteem by the shopkeeper would not be treated in this manner. For such a client the shopkeeper would inconspicuously reach under the counter and produce the tin of fruit or whatever was asked for. In this way the shopkeeper expressed his appreciation for his client's loyalty and dependability without having to say a word.

In that the shopkeeper made distinctions in his treatment of clients, difficulties often arose when both a good credit customer and a non-dependable customer were present in the shop at the same time to have their orders filled. In most cases the conflict generated by this situation was resolved when the good client knew to 'hang back' and wait until the other was gone. Sometimes the shopkeeper might ask him to do so under some pretense of wanting to see him privately. In yet other cases, when the shop was really busy, the core client was taken into the shopkeeper's kitchen or the shop's backroom from whence, in short, he would emerge with his order concealed in cardboard cartons. By the early fifties the most common practice was for the core client to bring his written order to the shopkeeper a few days before he would pick it up.

This prevented both the shopkeeper and clients from confronting embarrassing situations.

Those clients who had a ceiling placed on their credit by the storekeeper were not unaware of the discriminatory treatment they received. This was inevitable in a small community such as either Ferryland or Renews. In some cases they may have generated open conflict between the client and shopkeeper ending further business transactions, but this would have been exceptional. The 'poor risk' client knew the shopkeepers were usually better people to deal with than the merchant, i.e. in terms of getting value for their money. Furthermore, the shopkeepers were not 'high-handed' in the way they limited credit, a marked contrast to the way the merchant or dealer treated fishermen when 'hard times' left them with no purchasing power for part of the year. This was evident in that shopkeepers subtly limited credit by maintaining that certain items were not in stock rather than issuing flat refusals of credit or telling the client outright that his credit was curtailed.

The Post War Economic Environment of Renews and Ferryland

An expected slump in Newfoundland's post-war economy

could have ended the renewed success of the shops. Following the peace of 1945 the boom employment period that had been touched off by the construction of American military bases came to an end. The bulk of those Newfoundlanders who had found temporary employment on the bases were forced to return to their outport homes. Once more they were solely dependant on the fishery which historically suffered from severely depressed markets in post-war periods. (Gunn, 1969; Noel, 1971)

The return to almost complete dependancy on the fishing industry seemed to indicate that the effects of World War II were no more successful than those of World War I in bringing about any fundamental changes in Newfoundland's economic structure. Yet, external developments were to forestall the return of an immediate economic disaster. Improvements in shipping during the war, combined with a continuing high demand for Newfoundland cod, enabled the fishery to absorb and sustain the re-entry of large numbers of men into the industry. (Watts, 1946:225)

For Renews and Ferryland the post-war years were prosperous. Towards the end of the war the cod, which had all but vanished a decade earlier, returned to the local fishing grounds in abundance. This, then, was a most

opportune time for the revitalization of the local fishery which had suffered a decline in capital investment since the thirties. Those men returning from the 'bases', the overseas forestry and armed forces, usually had access to cash, i.e. through veterans' assistance or personal savings. Hence, repeating developments in the fishery during World War I, local men were able to invest in new fishing gear and boats, while operating ihdependently or within the framework of the extended family.

Nor was the fishery, in any absolute sense, the only source of employment open to men from Renews and Ferryland. There was still a significant amount of seasonal work available on the bases. Commercial activity centered in St. John's was much expanded as a result of the war and offered opportunities -- especially to the young who had finished school. In Ferryland men still went to the 'lumber woods' each fall to cut pulpwood.

The cumulative effect of the economic activity after 1945, especially in the fishery, resulted in an increase in the prosperity of the two study communities. In fact, the high degree of success the shops enjoyed was more a result of this 'mini-boom' than a direct result of the World War II period. It was in the time span 1946-53 that the shops

usurped the 'dealers' control over the retail trade. This was evident in the physical expansion of the shops and in the growth of the clientele.[5]

Summary

The shops, by offering a better deal to their clients, had managed to usurp the dealers' prominant position in the retail trade by the early 1950's in both Renews and Ferryland; nevertheless, the shift from 'dealer' to shopkeeper did not represent a fundamental change in the mechanism whereby transactions between suppliers and clients were carried on. The principles of the credit system remained to govern most transactions, despite an increase in the local cash flow. Essentially then, the emergence of the shopkeepers as prominant suppliers, who on occasion attempted to get into the business of fish-buying, may be seen as nothing more than an increase in dealers; however, before the shopkeeper could achieve this new status, economic and historical events were to pre-empt such a development. These will now be discussed.

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[5] James Keough began with a small huckster shop in 1946. By 1953 he had a regular credit clientele of 32. His account book for 1956 shows that in addition to 14 clients, who brought their dole orders to him, there were 47 clients who had regular credit accounts with him.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE SHOPKEEPER --- DEALER

Prior to the 1950's the successful outport shopkeeper was confronted with the problem of expanding within the definite limits of the outport retail trade. Generally he was confined to exploiting the small retail market of his particular community and not unusually had to compete for a share of that market. To overcome the restrictions this placed on his entrepreneurial activities, the ambitious shopkeeper had traditionally sought to enter the fish trade -- normally the only other outlet open to his entrepreneurial capabilities. Extant data demonstrate that the shopkeeper used his shop as a means of creating a social and economic power base -- that is a clientele and surplus cash -- to ease his diversification into the fish trade. Shopkeeping also placed the owner in contact with the 'outside'. This enabled him to establish ties with potential 'backers' who could finance his entry in the fishery, or at least provide a market outlet for the fish he (the storekeeper-merchant) purchased. (cf. Stiles, 1972:28)

Several other advantages accrued to the shopkeeper giving him the ability to expand. For example, with the profits of the shop to sustain him, he was not bound to some other time-consuming activity, i.e. the cod fishery, in order to earn a living. Utilizing his family, for instance wife and daughters to tend the shop, he could devote time to any new venture undertaken. Furthermore, the activities of the shop generally reflected the rhythm of the local fishery. Once outfits were issued in the spring, the shop was not very busy until fishermen began to receive returns from the fishery beginning around mid-August. Consequently, during the summer months, when time was needed to prepare for the buying of fish, the burden of keeping shop was considerably slackened allowing the shopkeeper-merchant more time to devote to his fishing enterprise.

Utilizing these advantages, two prominent shopkeepers in Renews and Ferryland respectively, attempted to gain entry to the fish trade during the 1940's. These two cases will now be discussed briefly.

Case I: John D. of Renews had established a shop in the 1920's. He began buying fish for Halley and Co., a St. John's firm, early in the 1940's. However, the venture

lasted only a few years. Mr. D. hoped to profit directly from handling fish, but he also hoped that by buying fish he could control his clients' attempts at 'sticking' by directly collecting on debts as did the established dealer. This was done by withholding money owed fishermen for their catch and placing it against their accounts. Mr. D., however, in order to compete with the dealer, had to extend more credit than usual in seeking committments from fishermen that they would sell to him. In the meantime fishermen reneged on their accounts, selling their fish to the local dealer for cash rather than to Mr. D. as they had promised. By setting himself up against the dealer Mr. D. had simply increased the competition in fish buying and with it the opportunity of unscrupulous fishermen to 'stab' him. In time he might have overcome this problem and stabilized his clientele; however, he felt he could not take the chance given the loss he would have to sustain over the short run.

Case II: Jim R. of Ferryland, a World War II veteran, used his discharge pay as capital to buy stock when he opened a small shop in 1946. Realizing a small but immediate return on his investment, he attempted to expand his operation into the fishery. Initially, through partnership with a Mr. Benson of St. John's, he set up a small factory to produce

oil from cod liver purchased from the local fishermen. Following the war, however, the price of cod oil dropped drastically and the venture failed after two years. His next move was an attempt to capitalize on the fresh fish production for which there had been a high demand towards the end of World War II. With the backing of Harvey's, a St. John's firm, he hoped to set up a small filleting plant. Again market demand dropped and although he had built a wharf and some facilities, he realized no profit at all from this venture. In 1953 he made his last attempt to break into the fish trade as he began to truck fish to a nearby plant to be filleted. This operation was highly successful, netting him between forty and fifty dollars a day. Yet, despite the high profits, when a local politician gave Mr. R. the option of relinquishing his involvement in the fishery to a local merchant in return for a beer license, he choose the latter. Trucking fish, although profitable, was as unpredictable and as short as the fishing season itself. Beer, on the other hand, was lucrative and marketable year around in an economy newly bolstered by federal equalization payment.

The Impact of Economic-Political Developments in Shaping the Direction of the Shopkeepers' Growth in the 1950's.

The attempt by these two men to gain entry to the

fishery would be the last made by any local investor, i.e. shopkeeper, despite a general increase in the prosperity of shops in the 1950's. There were several reasons for this. In 1952 the salt fish market collapsed and was no longer an attractive area for investment. As one informant, a cod trap owner, recalled:

> "I walked Water Street almost daily for two months in search of a buyer. In the end Steers and Co. bought what I had in salt for a miserable $3.50 a quintal, and that was for prime (fish). Me and a lot of other fellows got out of the fishery that year. I sold my traps and got a job north. It wasn't hard to get work then, you know."

As the market price of salt cod fell drastically, there was at least a relative strengthening of the fresh fish market. For example, there was no longer a great disparity in the returns a fisherman might expect to gain if he sold his catch fresh or salted. In fact, to sell 'green' was, in terms of labour and time, much more profitable to the fisherman, especially if fish was plentiful. At this time in Renews and Ferryland, there might have been some investment in small fresh fish-processing plants, as was the case in other Newfoundland communities; (Stiles, Ibid) however, when construction of a large fresh

fish plant for Bonavista Cold Storage was begun at Fermeuse in 1951, such a development was circumvented.

Now the only room open to small investors was in buying and trucking fresh cod to this large plant. These opportunities were quickly taken by the established dealers, a development occasionally encouraged by political influence. (Ref. Case II above, pp. 96)

The closure of the fish trade to any attempts by storekeepers to diversify their operations in that direction normally would have barred any further expansion of their entrepreneurial activities beyond the limitations of shopkeeping, as it existed within the traditional outport economy; however, economic and political developments occurred almost simultaneously with the growth of the shopkeepers' personal wealth generated a phenomenal expansion of the local retail trade. This expansion provided an alternate outlet for the capital and energy of the ambitious shopkeeper.

After Newfoundland's political consent to join Canada and with it industrialized North America in 1949, the reciprocal rewards were immediate. Their effect on the socio-economic fabric of outport Newfoundland was enormous. Some sense of just how enormous may be gleaned from the

statistical overview of economic growth offered in Table II, page 101. (Noel, 1971:265)

The specific and direct impact this had on the purchasing power of the consumer in Renews and Ferryland was exemplified in such things as the increase in Old Age Pension benefits from $15.00 a month pre-1949 to $60.00 in 1951, and the inauguration of the 'baby bonus' at $6.00 per month per child. In addition there were Unemployment Insurance benefits and increases in welfare benefits, both for long-term disabled and for the short-term welfare recipient.[1]

Indirectly there were also benefits from jobs created by the construction and maintenance of a new 'highroad' from St. John's to Renews beginning in 1953, plus the construction of several small hydro-electric power plants. Furthermore, with the rapid post-Confederation expansion of St. John's as a service centre for the Island, jobs accrued directly to local family heads or their children from whom remittance in the form of cash was expected and normally received.

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[1] Prior to the introduction of Fishermen's Unemployment Insurance in 1963, fishermen who had collected no regular unemployment stamps received short-term welfare from about January to May -- this is about the same period covered now by Fishermen's Unemployment Insurance.

TABLE II

Post-confederation social and economic change: some statistical indicators*

	c. 1949	c. 1965
Total expenditure of the Newfoundland Government, 1950-65; on:	$30,011,000	$157,628,000
Education	$ 4,012,000	$ 82,000,000
Health	$ 5,538,000	$ 28,580,000
Social Welfare	$ 8,620,000	$ 19,009,000
Transportation and communications	$ 3,978,000	$ 47,371,000
Per capita personal income, 1949-63	$ 472	$ 1,029
Population, 1951-61	361,416	457,853
Population of incorporated areas, 1949-67	85,000	338,000
Number of municipalities, 1949-67	23	152
Road mileage, 1949-66	2,296	4,627
Number of motor vehicles	13,765	91,165
Number of public libraries	27	53
Number of books	127,000	311,000
Circulation	264,000	693,000
School enrolment	75,086	144,000
University enrolment, 1949-67	307	4,762
Number of television and relay stations, 1955-65	0	11
Number of radio stations	4	11
Number of telephones, 1949-62	18,688	69,777
Number of working doctors, 1949-64	150	330
Number of hospital beds, 1949-64	2,000	5,000
Percentage of reduction in mortality rates, 1948-64		
General	25	
Tuberculosis	95	
Diphtheria	95	
Infant	40	
Maternity	80	

*Constructed from data contained in R.I. McAllister, ed., Newfoundland and Labrador: The First Fifteen Years of Confederation (St. John's, n.d. [1965]); Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic State and Prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador (St. John's, 1967); and J.R. Smallwood, ed., The Book of Newfoundland (St. John's, 1967), III and IV.

International events, namely the Korean War, also had an impact on the economics of the study communities. With the onset of a new Communist scare, the tempo of activity on the American military bases, which had slowed after World War II, increased. Many of the young, who were affected by the slump in the salt fish markets, took advantage of other new job opportunities, particularly at Goose Bay, Labrador, where there is still a large percentage of residents whose origins were in Ferryland and Renews.

The Expansion of the Retail Trade

The cash from World War II, and especially from Confederation, which flowed into the hands of local consumers resulted in a much increased demand for 'store bought' goods. Nor was this demand restricted primarily to items of an essential nature. Exposure to the life style of greater North America, via work on the American bases, exposure to advertising from various media, initially radio and later television in 1955, plus increased communication with St. John's by daily taxi and later bus services, resulted in a rapid broadening of demand for variety in goods carried by the shops.

The extent of this demand and of the growing dependancy on the shops, as supply centres, may be inferred from the fact that subsistence activity in both Renews and Ferryland declined sharply after 1949. By the late 1950's, what was unthinkable a decade earlier, that vegetables, fresh meat, and even bread would be store bought, had become a reality. Even some of the established dealers now abandoned the business of buying fish so that they could devote their full attention to the retail trade.[2]

In attempting to respond to this demand and the constant badgering from a flood of new wholesalers, who now canvassed the local shops in search of outlets for the brand products they carried, the shopkeepers found a outlet for their entrepreneurial talents and surplus capital. Not only did they have to finance and manage a much larger retail output, but also to make sizeable capital outlay on new buildings in which to carry on their operations. With this development a new type of outport shop

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[2]In 1958 Johnsons' of Ferryland, following the death of a major shareholder and manager, Henry Johnson, abandoned the buying of salt cod retaining only one truck to transport fresh fish to the plant at Fermeuse. The principal efforts of the firm afterwards were directed towards the burgeoning retail trade.

came into being, more akin to the genre of the general store than the huckster shop from which they not infrequently had sprung. A selection of dry goods, hardware, groceries, and even footware were now offered to the customer.

CHAPTER NINE

THE DECLINE OF THE OUTPORT CREDIT SYSTEM

Credit in the Shop in the Post-Confederation Period

Rapid economic change affecting both Renews and Ferryland, especially after Confederation, unquestionably reduced the degree to which the local population was dependant on credit, and hence on a creditor. It was now possible for men on able-bodied relief to receive assistance on a year round basis, if necessary. Furthermore, with the opening up of the fresh fish plant at Fermeuse in 1953 and a Department of Highways depot at Renews in 1958, it was possible for quite a few men to find local employment, at least on a seasonal basis. These men were also entitled to unemployment insurance benefits which helped to carry them over the winter season.

Despite the fact that most fishermen continued to salt and dry their catches, the presence of the fish plant at Fermeuse made it possible for them to sell some of their fish 'green' throughout the fishing season. Therefore, there was

no longer the need to wait until the end of the fishing season, when the salt cod could be finally cured and sold, in order for the fishermen to receive some financial returns. With these developments the necessity of 'fitting out' men with supplies over the fishing season disappeared and the practice ceased.

Nonetheless, credit transactions remained fundamental to the operation of the local retail trade. The difference now was that the period of time over which credit would be extended was generally tied to the pay period defined by the nature of each client's employment. Hence, as competition over the local retail trade intensified, particularly in the late 1950's and early 1960's, it is not surprising that credit played a major role in a retailer's strategy in gaining or retaining a niche within the local retail market. Ultimately, however, the economic changes taking place, plus the rapid growth of competition between shops and from outside retailers, served to induce major changes in the nature of credit transactions at the shop.

A Change in Consumer Attitudes Toward Credit and Its Implications for the New Shops

Though the shops were more favourably looked upon as

suppliers than the 'dealers' ever were, particularly in the interim between World War II and the immediate post-confederation period, (evidenced in the shift of patronage to the shops) strains did emerge in the shop-keeper-client relationships. These strains were generated by a wide range of factors including: clients' tardiness in paying debts, a tendency on the part of the successful shopkeeper to assume a 'high-handed' attitude in dealing with his clients, straightforward personality clashes, minor price hikes, or even the belief that a shopkeeper was discriminating in his treatment of clients.

In some instances these rifts led to overt hostility between the shopkeeper and his client which usually ended in the withdrawal of the client's patronage. However, as long as he (the client) felt himself to be in an economically insecure position and therefore in need of ready access to a supply of credit, and as long as the number of shops willing to extend credit numbered no more than one or two per community, there was little a client could really do in expressing his dissatisfaction with the shopkeeper. Hence, the client continued to find himself in a weak bargaining position which, though not to the same degree, was similar to that which had traditionally existed

between merchant and fisherman. For this reason causes for dispute with the shopkeeper were frequently overlooked by the clients.

By the last half of the fifties, however, the bargaining status of the client was markedly improved; mainly because of the clients' change in attitude regarding the extent and immediacy of his need for credit. With a growing awareness that the prosperity which began with World War II and Confederation was not to be short-lived and that federal equalization payment effected locally, e.g. welfare benefits, were not short-term politically ploys, the local consumer began to experience a new degree of economic security and independance. Now, assured that the shopkeeper's credit was not to be the only buffer between himself and starvation during periods when cash was scarce, many disgruntled clients began to overtly express their dissatisfaction with their supplying shopkeeper. This was evident in the increasing frequency with which clients sought alternate sources of supply. To some extent, the growing reliance on mail order catalogues and large St. John's retailers as sources of dry goods, hardware, furniture and household utensils, reflected this shift away from total dependancy on local suppliers. A rapid increase in the number of local shops must also be considered as a

response to this demand for alternate sources of supply.

New sources of competition over the local retail market in the post-confederation period were both external and internal.

A. External Competition

Noel, in commenting on the economic impact of Confederation's benefits on Newfoundland, noted:

> "Fishermen and their families, who once had practically no disposable income, have come to enjoy a new status and dignity as independant consumers; if merchants want their custom, they have to earn it, for no outport kitchen is complete without two bulky mail-order catalogues -- Eaton's and Simpsons, twin symbols of the new economic order." (Noel, 1971:266)

Nowhere was this more true in Newfoundland than on the Southern Avalon, and particularly in Renews and Ferryland. However, these were not the only sources of outside competition. Around 1950 the local highway was upgraded and kept operable the year round with the introduction of snow-clearing equipment; consequently, contact with St. John's by daily taxi was now possible for a $5.00 fare. Then in 1961, with the inauguration of a bus service from Renews to

St. John's, this form of communication with the city was further bolstered and at a cheaper rate. It was inevitable then that the large St. John's-based local firms (e.g. Bowring's, Ayre's & Sons) and now a growing number of mainland firms (e.g. Woolworth's, Great Eastern Oil) also took a share of the local retail trade from both study communities.

The growing importance of these outside retailers gradually operated to reduce the importance of local shops in the supply trade (though this trend is now reversing). By the mid-sixties the shop's role was relegated primarily to the grocery trade and emergency supplies of small hardware and drygoods items such as teapots, socks, nylons, sewing thread, etc.. This was in part due to the inability of the local shop to compete price and quality-wise with large St. John's firms and the mail order companies.

The attraction of these external suppliers was not limited to price or quality, however. Most supplied their goods on a term payment basis. Even where financing was not directly available from the retail companies, in St. John's by 1954 finance houses were set up which were willing and eager to extend loans to the needy consumer. Even though

the interest rates on such loans were often high, even exhorbitant, this was seldom a deterrent to the local borrower. Credit was still very much part of his economic lifestyle. As one columnist for a local newspaper, writing on consumer credit, noted:

> "Ever since people lined up to borrow money from the H.F.C. Office that opened on Adelaide Street shortly after Confederation, consumer borrowing has been a way of life in Newfoundland." (Evening Telegram, April 19, 1975.

It had never really been any other way.

B. Internal Competition

Through the 1950's there was a marked increase in the number of shops operating in both Renews and Ferryland. In part this reflected the continued relative prosperity resulting from the post-confederation boom. Now it was possible for more and more people to amass personal savings or to otherwise gain control of sufficient capital to start small businesses, if they so wished.

Given the limited fishery-based economic framework of the study communities, and little or no alternate resource potential, plus a generally low educational level, it was

predictable that any new business which did arise would be in the form of a shop. The pattern for the development of such enterprises was locally well-known. In fact, the establishment of new shops was encouraged by the success of those entrepreneurs who had set up shop after World War II. As one informant noted:

> "The fact that a few (people) who owned stores looked to be doing alright convinced everyone around there was a fortune in running a shop. The next thing you know anyone who could get his hands on a dollar or find someone to back him was opening a shop. They thought that's all there was to it -- open a shop and wait for the money to roll in. Well, they soon learned there was no fortune in peddling bubble gum. But still they spoiled it for the few already at it."

Predominantly, it was the role of the wholesaler as backer, rather than personal savings, which acted as the financial catalyst for the new shops. Operating in a highly competitive situation, the wholesalers were eager to find new outlets for their brand products. To this end they were willing to extend to any person felt to be reliable, sufficient stock on credit to set him up as a shopkeeper. This was especially true if the proposed shop was to be located in the vicinity of another (shop) which did not

regularly purchase goods from the wholesaler from whom backing was sought.

Competition: A Catalyst to the Practice of Sticking

In dealing with easy-to-get credit from outside suppliers, the local consumer, unwise in the ways of modern consumer credit and encouraged by radio advertisements plus direct contact with 'slick' salesmen who visited the outports, frequently over-extended the capability of his earning power to pay debts incurred. As a result, some of his creditors could not be paid. Unfortunately for the shopkeeper, in such cases it was rarely the 'outside' retail creditor who was stuck.

Credit collection agencies, finance companies, etc., were not always scrupulous in their attempts to pressure clients into paying up. As one commentator noted:

> "These companies 'encourage people to pawn off goods' and urge[1] them to borrow from a grocer or neighbour in order to meet payments, ..." (Evening Telegram, April 19, 1975:13)

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[1] Emphasis mine. In the outport where the grocery trade was conducted on a credit basis at the local shop, this meant not paying the grocer's bill.

Since these companies were seen by the outporter as being large, impersonal unknowns, ruthlessly efficient in their ultimate response to being stuck, the local consumer feared their threats much more than those of the local shopkeeper. Considering that no shopkeeper had even taken legal action and seldom overtly attempted to force clients to pay their bills, this is understandable.

The increase in the number of shops, after the mid-fifties, further weakened the financial position of 'supplying' shopkeepers in both Renews and Ferryland. As already noted, the influence of outside competition had cut into the local retail market. The increase in shops concurrent with this event only served to fragment that part of the outport trade that remained localized (now mainly a grocery trade). This was especially true during those years where two or more new shops opened while the local market was not expanding at a rate fast enough to support them.

It is true that for many small sideline operators who were starting out at this time, the existing market limitation posed no real problem. The latter were geared to picking up the neighbourhood's petty cash trade. However, for the individual who intended to make his living from shopkeeping, such a haphazard patronage was inadequate. Such a

man needed to regularize sufficient trade to allow the shopkeeper a constant and predictable source of income. This income would carry him over periods of the year when trade was slow. For this reason, during the late 1950's and early 1960's, as competition increased, so too did the shops' attempts at attracting and holding clients, primarily through an intensified use of price-cutting and the issuing of credit.

The latter policy completely disrupted the balance which previously had be struck between shopkeeper and client over the use of credit. (see pp. 72f.) Now the shopkeeper who extended credit found he had no real leverage, (i.e. the threat of withholding credit from a client; it was available elsewhere practically on demand) which could be used against a client who wished to abuse his privilege. This, coupled with the over extension of clients' spending power through the misuse of credit both externally and internally, was to lead to a very disruptive period in local shopkeeping. Many clients became highly mobile in their spending patterns. They began to carry their trade from shop to shop as new suppliers became available. With this development the incidence of 'sticking' increased sharply as clients moving from one supplier to the next left behind a trail of unpaid bills.

The Client's Strategy

The strategy usually employed by a client planning to find a new supplier was first to establish ties with another shopkeeper. This process was initiated by the client who began to patronize his intended new supplier by opening a petty cash trade with him; i.e. the purchase of cigarettes, or a few small grocery items. This cash trade would then be expanded until such time as the client felt: (a) that he had established a sufficiently personalized relationship with the shopkeeper to be able to ask for credit, and (b) that his trade was valuable enough to the shopkeeper to use as a lever in securing this credit. If credit was given, then the client's old supplier was abandoned. If the client was having problems in paying his account prior to such a move, almost invariably he left the previous shopkeeper with a sizeable unpaid balance, commonly up to and not infrequently in excess of $100.00.

Should the client at some point once more run into difficulty paying his account with this new supplier, the credit-seeking cycle would be repeated with another shopkeeper. From the client's point of view, he would prefer to deal with a different shopkeeper each time he moved; one with whom he had no previous dealings. However, sometimes

he attempted to go back to his former supplier. The strategy here was for the client, in addition to starting off with a little cash trade, to make a start at paying off his old debt, if any. He hoped that the shopkeeper, to get his trade plus the old bill paid off, would take him on again as a debtor. In fact, while competition between shops was high, this often worked.

Of course, not all clients changed shops leaving unpaid bills behind. Sometimes it happened after a 'falling out' between shopkeeper and client, often over subjects not at all related to shop matters. In other cases kin or friendship ties with a man who opened a new shop caused the loss of certain clients. Nonetheless, in this period of intense competition, disputes or the imminence of disputes with shopkeepers over unpaid bills were foremost in the reasons for the high inter-shop mobility of clients.

A. The New Shops and Credit Abuse

New shopkeepers generally occupied a weak position within the community-based retail market of either study community. (cf. Stiles, 1973:23) This was probably true for all phases of the shop's development; but, owing to the unprecedented growth of competition in the late 1950's and throughout the 1960's, the position of the incipient

shopkeeper was perhaps more tenuous than at any previous time. In the manner of self-fulfilling prophecy, as the number of shops increased sharply (not necessarily bearing any accurate relationship to the growth of demand) so too did the likelihood that fewer would survive the initial difficulties involved in becoming established.

The immediate problems facing the new shopkeeper were: (a) to attract clients and, (b) to insure that these clients would continue to make purchases from him. Traditionally both the dealer and later the shopkeeper utilized the extension of credit to achieve these ends. As early as the 1920's credit had been used as a 'starting mechanism' (Gouldner, 1960:176) to encourage and also to regularize trade. (cf. Ch. 6, pp. 66-67)

The incipient shopkeeper of the 1950's continued to utilize the extension of credit on the assumption that it would serve the same strategic function; however, owing to the changed economic and marketing conditions after Confederation, the eclectic and conditional extension of credit primarily to desirable customers was no longer effective. Eventually (as with Paine's notion of the genesis of a patron), the shopkeeper found himself attempting to create a need for his services by extending credit indiscriminately

to clients without qualification as to their previous credit rating. Initially, at least, there were no clearly established ceilings on the amount of credit that would be extended and no time limit for making payments. The usual understanding given to the client was "pay when you get a chance". Even when new clients requested definite arrangements for payment, the storekeeper, after the fashion of the patron who wishes to create the impression he is "not keeping ledger on resources dispersed, gained or lost", (Paine, 1971:14) would frequently insist that the customer "straighten-up later".

This essentially unconditional dispensation of resources, while it did create good will, was not without its drawbacks. The highest percentage of clients initially attracted were those who might be classified as poor risks. Well aware of the weak bargaining position of the new shopkeeper, vis-a-vis his clientele, these clients deliberately and unscrupulously exploited this weakness. For example, they frequently ran up sizeable bills with the shopkeeper while being negligent in making any real effort to pay the debt incurred. This placed the shopkeeper in an extremely awkward position.

On the one hand he faced the prospect of openly

confronting the clients with their delinquency, thereby running the risk of having the client withdraw patronage, i.e. on the grounds that his honesty had been questioned, leaving the bill still unpaid. In fact, clients on occasion wished for and pushed for this result. On the other hand the shopkeeper could continue to extend the client credit in the hope that he would in the long run receive some payment on the existing debt. But this often served to worsen the problem as the client continued to avoid payment. In particular, within the community of Ferryland, between 1955-65, this syndrome was a major variable in the large number of abortive attempts at establishing new shops. (cf. Appendix for an indication of the rapid turnover of shops)

Certainly the clients' default on payment did not necessarily mean the closing of a shop. In many instances, where shops were established with the backing of a wholesaler, the shopkeeper simply passed the loss onto his supplier. While this certainly reduced the shopkeeper's dependability in the eyes of the other wholesalers, it was not impossible for other sources of credit to be found by the shopkeepers, due to the proximity of St. John's and the large number of wholesalers serving the area. Hence, a few

shops managed to establish themselves at the expense of their initial backers.

At present the new shopkeeper is still willing to extend credit in order to attract trade. Owing to the growing difficulty of getting goods on credit, some control had been regained over credit abuse. Nonetheless, it is increasingly problematic to find any shopkeeper willing to act as a supplier.

B. The Established Shops and Their Reaction to Sticking

As always, during this period of crisis (over sticking) the shopkeeper did have the option of taking legal action against a delinquent debtor. To take such action, however, was generally felt by shopkeepers to cost more in economic and social terms than it was worth. For example, where a client had a large family to support, but a low income, the courts would not be able to force the client to pay a large amount of money to the shopkeeper. In fact, the settlement in the courts could be as low as five dollars per month plus the possibility of trouble for the shopkeeper in collecting even this amount of money. As several shopkeepers indicated, when there was no fuss made in public over an unpaid bill

there was always the chance that some form of conciliation might be possible between shopkeeper and client. On the other hand, a dispute brought to the courts and thus publicized lessened the likelihood of the shopkeeper receiving compensation, while he was assured of making the client an enemy for life. In addition, a court dispute could result in other clients, i.e. kin and friends of the prosecuted client, siding with him and leaving the shopkeeper. It was generally felt that in such a case 'the family name' was being besmirched. Hence, for the most part, shopkeepers were wary of taking this legal step for fear that the gain would be far outweighed by the cost in money, time, effort and social disapproval.

In the late 1950's, when this crisis period was pretty well at its peak, however, some shopkeepers in Ferryland, through the initiation of a local fish merchant, did discuss the possibility of collectively hiring a lawyer to prosecute some of the more serious debtors. The plan was to recover some of their losses and thereby control the incidence of sticking. This proposition never really got off the ground, partly due to the reasons already cited, but also because shopkeepers did not readily

co-operate with one another, preferring generally to remain independant and to manage their own affairs. Several feared that though all might agree to send out lawyers' letters of warning to delinquent clients, some would renege in the hopes of gaining whatever custom was lost by those who did attempt to collect on their debts in this manner. Finally, not all shopkeepers had suffered large losses through sticking and in a highly competitive environment, they were not about to assist those who had.

Although the shopkeeper could take few corrective measures against a client who reneged on his debt, he did have access to the gossip channels of the community which he could use as a restraint on sticking. For example, when a client defaulted the shopkeeper could discreetly make it known that 'so and so' was not a very trustworthy person to do business with.[2] While this tactic did not particularly upset the unscrupulous client, for some who wished to avoid public ridicule it was reasonably successful. Furthermore, once a client had stuck a number of shopkeepers, via the merchanism of public disclosure of his

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[2] This practice is further elaborated upon in a discussion of the phenomenon of the 'special client', pp. 169.

unreliability, it would become increasingly difficult for that client to obtain credit anywhere. This could include creditors outside the community as well, since St. John's businesses regularly contacted local shopkeepers for information on clients who applied for credit.

It might also be noted that the shopkeeper in many cases acted as confidante to the client when the latter experienced personal difficulty. When the client defaulted on his debt the bond of trust between shopkeeper and client was broken. It was then possible for the shopkeeper, if he wanted 'to be low enough', to divulge to the community gossip channels any personally damaging information he might have gleaned from his previous relationship with the client.

C. The End of Credit at the Shop

The above mentioned methods of controlling credit, while being possible deterrents to sticking, were in effect inadequate. By the 1960's the situation reached a climax as another factor was introduced. Now clients, with the assistance of improved road transportation, once they had exhausted their local sources of supply, began to move to other communities in search of credit. This made it increasingly difficult to prevent clients from defaulting payment.

It was clear that credit was no longer a feasible method whereby the bulk of transactions at the shop could be carried on. Credit buying no longer acted as a bond of loyalty and trust between shopkeeper and client. Gradually shopkeepers began to withdraw from issuing credit to all but a few remaining core clients. This, of course, was only possible due to the continued and growing cash flow into the area in the last twenty years, i.e. through the year-round operation of the Fermeuse fish plant and the introduction of fishermen's unemployment insurance in 1963.

It was at this juncture in the shop's development, beginning in the latter part of the 1950's, that a number of shopkeepers began to seek ways and means to broaden their cash intake. Now, with a growth in car transportation, shops began to acquire gas pumps, open up juke boxes (dance halls) and small snack bars, seek licenses to sell brewers beer and even sell insurance. The retail commodities offered through these services were geared primarily to cash transactions and frequently to a much less community-oriented 'passing' trade.

The withdrawal of some shops from the credit trade somewhat reduced the number of alternatives facing a client who wished to obtain credit. In this way some

balance was restored to credit transactions which made it worthwhile for the few shops who still 'took the risk'. For the most part, however, the 1960's saw an end of the credit system which the shops had inherited from the old merchants. By the end of that decade 'NO CREDIT' signs were appearing more frequently in the shops.

The use of 'credit' in the local retail trade, however, has not ended. Since the mid-1960's a new brand of shop has begun to grow -- the variety store and the superette. The owners of these newer stores have made a serious bid to reverse the growing drift to the outside of a large portion of the retail trade. It is now possible to purchase anything from a T.V. to a snowmobile in one or another of the local stores. Yet these items involve a large capital cost. It is therefore essential that the modern shopkeeper provide the consumer some access to credit, if he wishes to market his stocks. For this reason several local stores have already established business liaisons with St. John's finance companies whereby the latter actually handle the financial arrangements. This is little related to the old credit system, however, since transactions are not based on any personal ties between shopkeeper and client, nor do they involve much, if any, risk-taking on the part of the shopkeeper.

PART IV

THE SHOP IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

CHAPTER TEN

THE SHOP AS COMMUNITY SOCIAL CENTRE

A. "The Cost and Profit in Card Games and Bootlegging at the Shop"

As far back as the turn of the century petty entrepreneurs in both Renews and Ferryland capitalized on the lack of public facilities for social gatherings, especially for the youth of the communities. To this end a man would allow a 'crowd' (usually young single men) to gather at his house where moonshine or homebrew beer was made available to them at a few cents a glass. On occasion such a entrepreneur might open his house for a 'kitchen racket'[1] (square dance) at which time young people from nearby communities might attend as well as the locals.

By the 1920's many of the huckster shopkeepers had incorporated this aspect of entertainment-cum-business into their small operations. Though these 'kitchen rackets' weren't a regular part of the evening gatherings, liquor,

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[1] Such events were in themselves often held with no intent for profit, the fiddler or accordian player only receiving a few cents after a pass of the hat.

usually homemade, was sold. In addition, during the winter evenings some shopkeepers held card games in their homes. These were attended by a somewhat different crowd of older, usually married people. At these games a small fee was asked of each player. This went to purchase some item from the shop which was then played for.

The shopkeeper's profit from these social activities was not only in petty trade, but primarily in the good will generated by allowing the use of his house for entertainment. Furthermore, this was of such significance that until the late fifties the supplying of a little liquor and playing cards was still very much a part of the service supplied by the shopkeeper during his evening's hospitality.

By the mid-fifties the card game at the shop had dropped off considerably. It was partially replaced by television and further interrupted by the increased business which made it cumbersome for the shopkeepers, who now usually operated their shops day and night.

The selling of alcoholic spirits at the shop, however, did not decline until the advent of taverns to the area in the late sixties. With the coming of brewer's beer to the area in the forties, this aspect of the shop's trade

increased markedly, as did the purchasing power of the local men. For many shops, in both Renews and Ferryland, the selling of beer quickly became a staple source of income since it sold rapidly and with a sizeable profit. Initially it was illegal for any shop to sell this product.[2] This meant that it had to be bootlegged and as such warranted a high percentage of profit to the shopkeeper who always ran the risk of being caught. Even today, though the Newfoundland Board of Liquor Control has rigidly enforced a standard price, to supply beer or in some cases run after hours[3] the retailer demands a little extra remuneration.

B. "The Juke Box"

As the youth of Renews and Ferryland demanded a continued and increased use of the shop as a gathering point, there developed a new phenomenon of the 1950's -- the juke box. This was a small dance hall which usually was constructed adjacent to the actual shop. The idea was

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[2]It is still illegal to have it drunk in the shop, a public place; however, this has long been a common practice.

[3]It is illegal in Newfoundland, except at a licensed tavern or club, to retail beer after 9:00 P.M. or on Sundays.

that the juke box 'crowd' could be served from the shop, often through an opening placed in the partition between the shop and juke box. This enabled the shopkeeper to keep the teenagers out of the way of his regular shop activity, while still making a good profit on the sale of confectionary goods and on the pinball games and pool tables housed in the juke box.

The juke box was a mark of the changing times in the post-Confederation communities of Renews and Ferryland. On the one hand, this period marked the end of the 'kitchen racket' as the need of the little cash earned from it no longer existed either for the fiddler or the host household. Secondly, under the influences of the outside world the young sought to be in vogue by abandoning the square dance and lancers for what the older people found intolerable, the new rock and roll era of the jive. Furthermore, the juke box was a product of the substantial cash held in the hands of teenagers to spend as they wished, certainly for the first time in recent history. Finally, the rapid increase in the number of automobiles added another function to the role of the juke box. With increased inter-community mobility these dance halls acted as a point of social interaction, in fact a kind of mating ground for the young.

In a society that tended to be exogamous it was here the young fellows from 'outside' communities would gather in pursuit of the local girls.

The advent of a number of local clubs tended to replace the role of the juke box. So too have the night-time activities of St. John's which, due to the completion of a paved highway to Ferryland in 1966 and Renews in 1971, is now only an hour's ride away.

The Role of Shopkeeper as a 'Go-Between' and a 'Broker'

The following section aims at illustrating the various roles the shopkeeper performed because of his position at a node of communication -- the shop. Despite the fact that all these roles involved the exchange of information, some distinction must be made between them due to differences in the kinds of information exchanged at the shop, and in the ends served by these exchanges with respect to the shopkeeper, the community and the outside world.

In an essay Robert Paine (1971:8-21) differentiates between a 'go-between' and a 'broker':

> "This distinction rests upon the issue of the way in which the purveyance between two parties is performed. Where it is made faithfully, without manipulation or alteration, we may

> well speak of a 'go-between'. The concept of a broker, on the other hand, essentially has to do with 'processing' of information (whether or not with the intent of mediation), and I reserve the use of 'broker' to one who, while purveying values that are not his own, is also purposively making changes of emphasis and/or content."

On the basis of this distinction, the roles of the shopkeeper as a purveyor of information and values will be discussed below.

The Shopkeeper as Information 'Go-Between'

In its role as a social centre and supply depot, the general store was an ideal medium for the exchange of information both inter and intra community. For example, women gathered there at specific times during the day to exchange greetings and gossip, as well as to make their purchases. At one store in Ferryland men, both young and old, congregated each Sunday morning to buy a Coke, a pack of cigarettes, or even a loaf of bread. In reality, however, these purchases simply justified their being in the store. The real motive was to get together with the 'crowd' to exchange information, to discuss politics or the Saturday night hockey game, or to blackguard a little. Previously such gatherings took place on the beach or by the old forge. For the modern day, however, the shop, quiet as to business on a Sunday morning, proved a more convenient setting.

The storekeeper was also a medium of local information from outside the immediate community. In the 1950's, when he possessed one of the few telephones in the area, and was in contact with casual customers or salesmen travelling the Shore, he was the person most likely to know of the details of an auto accident, a house fire, etc., 'up' or 'down' the Shore. As such he was frequently called upon to disclose what news he had to a customer who had heard scant details of such an accident on the radio, but not enough to satisfy curiosity.

The storekeeper too acted as a general dispenser of local information to the 'outside', as with the timing of social events. This was demonstrated in that he was frequently called upon to display signs in his shop advertising garden parties, fall fairs, etc.

After Confederation the role of the shopkeeper as an information broker between the community and the 'outside' transcended the petty gossip channels of the community. With the demise of the old dealers in the 1950's, there was no one, apart from the local priest, who was able to fill this position of community 'broker'. (cf. Szwed, 1966:168; Nemec, Ph.D. thesis, unpublished:123) At a time when a

myriad of government agencies and other outside influences were invading the communities, the priest alone was not sufficient to meet the burgeoning brokerage demands; hence, the storekeeper was to undertake a great deal of the burden entailed in this role. This was especially true once he had achieved a power base in a stable clientele and thereby demonstrated his prominence and permanence in the socio-economic scheme of the communities.

Shopkeeper as Political Broker

Traditionally politicians representing both Renews and Ferryland, with the exception of brief campaign periods, have been infrequent visitors to the district; consequently, they have relied heavily on certain people in the local communities to act as information brokers between them and their constituents. In the past these 'brokers' were usually prominent persons, i.e. the merchant and priest. They would inform the local member on subjects such as a change in the local political climate, or the need of some or another government service, which, if given, would enhance the member's status. In return these brokers enjoyed a considerable amount of prestige in the community; and possibly a little material reward, i.e. personal favours from the member.

Despite the years under Commission of Government, when such political patronage was frowned upon, with the return to open politics in 1949, the brokerage system experienced a marked recovery. With the decline in the financial status and prestige of the 'merchantocracy', plus the current disfavour of the provincial government with the anti-confederate position which the local clergy had taken in 1949, the stage was clear for the emergence of a new crop of political brokers.

In that by the mid-fifties the store was a highly visible and public outport institution, the politicians were not long in realizing its potential value as a propaganda machine. Much as the old political broker system had worked, for 'boosting' a particular candidate, if he were elected, one could expect personal favours in return. For example, a storekeeper received a license to sell beer by approaching the M.H.A.. He (the M.H.A.) would take care of the bureaucratic channels the shopkeeper should have gone through in applying to the Newfoundland Board of Liquor Control. A license to operate a tourist home could be issued even where there might have been some difficulty in the designated home meeting the necessary licensing requirements. In one instance the M.H.A. provided a storekeeper with a legal advisor to fight a bootlegging charge laid against him by the R.C.M.P..

Indirect benefits also accrued to the shopkeeper who 'boosted' the successful politician. When on visits to the district, the M.H.A. made a point of calling on the shopkeeper. These visits frequently took place at the shop. There the member publicly conversed with the shopkeeper about local problems, i.e. the fishery, etc.. In that the politician made certain any customers present knew he was a personal friend of the shopkeeper, he also conveyed to them the fact that the shopkeeper was 'in' with the member and was therefore a good ally to have.

This opinion of the shopkeeper was reinforced in that the shopkeeper was able to provide some services to customers via the politician. For example, when there were customers present in the shop at the time of a visit, the shopkeeper would normally be expected to mention their first names in conversation so that the politician could capitalize by following suit and conversing with them as though the customers were familiar to him. This was good public relations for the politician, but it also made him openly accessible to the customers who might want to speak to him on some matter or another.

In some instances customers with a problem with the

old age pension, widow's allowance, a small fisheries loan, etc., requested the shopkeeper to let him (the customer) know if he should hear that the politician was visiting the district. At the time of such visits these customers would gather at the shop to see if the M.H.A. would drop in. The shopkeeper would provide a backroom, or if the shop was busy, the use of his kitchen, where private conversations with the local member would take place.

Shopkeeper as Cultural Broker

Generally the shopkeepers were better educated or at least better informed than the bulk of the community. This was the result of either a formal education or a wide variety of experience in the 'outside' world. Because of this they were perceived as being more readily able to understand the meanings and implications of the variety of new forces, i.e. government regulations and services which invaded community life in the post-Confederation period. The shopkeepers were frequently called upon to interpret these forces and the direct effect they would have upon the community.

At the individual level the shopkeeper frequently acted as councillor to clients who had to deal with the

growing, impersonal bureaucracies of both the government and private enterprise outside the community. Clients would seek assistance in comprehending questions asked of them on various application forms, i.e. for old age pensions, unemployment insurance, etc.. The shopkeeper was frequently contacted by large commercial firms, i.e. mail order houses, loan companies, etc., who were in search of information about a certain customer's ability and reliability in paying debts. Usually the customer often sought the shopkeeper's assistance in dealing with 'outside' commercial establishments located at St. John's. Often the customer felt intimidated by having to deal directly with strangers in the city.[5] Though the shopkeeper was expected to make little, if any, cash profit on such 'special messages', these 'favours' did generate good will.

The shopkeeper also assisted the entrance of outsiders into the community. This was done in such diverse ways as finding workers for a contractor sent into the community to undertake a public works program, or simply by

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[5] For many 'outporters' St. John's men or 'townies' were disliked and distrusted. Locally they were perceived as being people who tended to 'know it all', an expression implying they really knew nothing. The friction between townies and baymen is still evident in the graffiti of public bathrooms in the city.

giving strangers directions to someone's house.

It should be mentioned that the operation of the shop as a commercial establishment worked as a mechanism in the storekeeper's actual cultural brokerage; for example, the shop provided cheap P.E.I. potatoes, baker's bread and other staples thereby discouraging local subsistence production and disrupting the general rhythm of work in the outport. As a consequence, new values, those of the more leisurely life style of urban North America, were purveyed.

Brokerage in the 1970's

As a response to increasing pressure via the media, education and improved communication, Ferryland and Renews moved rapidly towards integration with the 'outside' (the greater North American culture) thereby casting off cultural isolation. (cf. Redfield, 1963:23-37 for discussion of a similar process of cultural integration). With this development the need for the brokerage role of the shopkeeper has ebbed with each passing year. Presently a new generation of 'Canadianized' Newfoundlanders, frequently university-educated, has emerged as the outport elite, a rural bourgeoisie. Embedded in the life of the rural community, they are the local teachers, or the bureaucrats, tradesmen, secretaries, etc., who utilize the communities as dormitory

towns while working in St. John's. This rapidly expanding group comprises a new breed of cultural and political broker. In fact, they are in a sense emissaries of a new culture as they displace existing community values and institutions with those of the 'outside' world which they represent. On the storekeeper's side of the ledger the decline of his position as broker was the loss of a bonus commodity. It was no longer possible to exchange the service of his expertise in dealing with the world outside for the continued loyalty of his clientele. In the larger context of the changes influencing the role of shopkeeper, this was one development which effected the estrangement of shopkeeper and customer and the degeneration of the shop into its modern, socially-sterile function as simply a place of business.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION: THE SHOPKEEPER AS STRANGER

An Exposition of the Problem

The shopkeeper in Renews and Ferryland lives a life socially remote from the rest of the community. His social interaction with other community members is pretty much limited to that surrounding transactions with clients. In short he occupies a social position equivalent to that of stranger or outsider. For the most part present day local shopkeepers were originally fishermen themselves or the sons of fishermen. As such there is no reason to suspect that earlier in their lives they were not socially well integrated members of their community. The problem of concern here then is how the shopkeeper arrived at the social position of stranger and why.

The phenomenon of the shopkeeper, merchant or trader as stranger is certainly not peculiar to the Southern Avalon or to Newfoundland. It has been well documented in other studies involving small European rural communities. It is

with a brief review of some of these studies that this discussion will begin.

Wolf (1966) in his work on peasants, has argued that the economic interests of the shopkeeper are at variance with those of the peasant largely because the shopkeeper is an exploiter of the peasants' profits. Furthermore ....

> "these interests are not counter-balanced by more personal involvements. This social distance is reinforced by an absence of shared experience. Hence, where we find peasants involved in network markets, we also find that the merchant or storekeeper -- even when he resides in the village -- continues to be regarded as a stranger and outsider. He belongs to the peasants negative reference category." (Wolf, 1966:47)

Wolf's analysis explains the maintenance of social disparity between the shopkeeper and the community at large. As one Ferryland shopkeeper pointed out, he did not live the way the rest of the people did because his shop demanded as many as fourteen work hours a day seven days a week in order to operate successfully, there was little time left for socializing privately with friends or publicly at parish social events, e.g. bingo and card games. Then too he did not fish so he met none of the local fishermen, either on the 'beach' for a chat or in the course of extending reciprocal

assistance that is often associated with fishing activities.

Wolf, however, is concerned only with explaining why shopkeepers, who are outsiders or strangers to begin with, remain so, hence his observations fail to apply specifically to the issue of concern here; that is, how does a local member of the 'peasants' positive reference group' shift to the 'peasants' negative reference group'. To explain it simply in terms of the discontinuance of shared experience is not quite specific enough for the purpose intended here.

George Simmel, (1950:403) a sociologist also concerned with this phenomenon, noted: "Throughout the history of economics the stranger everywhere appears as the trader, or the trader as stranger." Furthermore, he observed that where the trader emerges from within a closed group, the process ....

> "embodies that synthesis of nearness and distance which constitutes the formal position of the stranger. For the fundamentally mobile persons comes in contact, at one time or another, with every individual, but is not organically connected, through established ties of kinship, locality and occupation, with any single one."

Simmel indicates then that to become a trader (shopkeeper) it is essential to undergo a social process (synthesis) whereby.

the trader (shopkeeper) frees himself from the ties and with it the constraints of previous obligations to individual members and indeed to the group at large. Simmel unfortunately deals only with theory and as such is vague in that he offers no examples of what the 'synthesis' in becoming a stranger involves. His contribution to this thesis then is largely restricted to his awareness of the problem.

Perhaps more concisely than either Wolf or Simmel, Frederic Barth (1963) drawing on a number of studies of fishing communities in the North Atlantic, including Newfoundland, outlines the problem and the approach needed to deal with it. He notes the existence of certain 'social costs' which can accrue to the entrepreneur:

> "(a) Certain technically effective acts are morally or legally condemned in the community, and the sanctions they call down on an actor obviate any advantages which their performances might otherwise provide. This type of cost can only be circumvented by secrecy.
>
> (b) Persons have commitments in specific social relations which hamper them in, or prevent them from pursuing effective strategies. This type of cost can only be avoided by not partaking in such relationships. The uncommitted position of the stranger may offer advantages in this respect, though ..... nonstrangers may also, through demographic accident or circumstances in their life history, come to occupy similarly isolated positions, while reciprocal

> obligations may in some circumstances be a strength rather than a liability for an entrepreneur." (Barth, 1963:8-9)

Certainly one set of circumstances whereby an entrepreneur may achieve the status of stranger is by undertaking these social costs, the outcome leaving him still with a successful operation. In this instance he would have demonstrated that neither community sanctions nor reciprocal bonds, both of which maintain the community as a socially integrated whole, are applicable to him; hence, he would in effect be as free as a stranger in the sense which Simmel suggests.

The rest of this chapter, hopefully, will show that this is true and to outline the various ways both the community and the shopkeeper act to bring it about.

The Shopkeeper in an Egalitarian Society

Renews and Ferryland, like many other Newfoundland communities, are egalitarian in nature. (See Firestone, 1967; Szwed, 1966; Brox, 1969). The principle upon which this ideology operates is the belief that all community members are equal or at least should be treated as such. In this regard should a community member in any outward way,

no matter how small, attempt to demonstrate he is above the 'common Jack', e.g. acknowledge the presence of a person of considered importance with whom he may have become acquainted (maybe a politician), while in the same social circumstance acting as if he did not know a certain member of his peer group, he could call down community sanctions upon himself. In this case the offender would be seen as 'acting like a big shot' or thinking he was the 'big fellow', 'better than the rest of us'. If this was seen as a new, but increasingly persistent development, or a change in the person's behaviour, certainly it would be carried on the community's gossip channels accompanied by an appropriate amount of ridicule. In some instances, where such behaviour change was held as being particularly unacceptable, carefully directed insults couched in humour could be directed at the transgressor. Ultimately he could be ostracized. (Nemec, forthcoming)

The following poem, found pinned up in a public place, well exemplifies one method of ridicule used in one of the study communities:

On the wide open spaces you may
find the four aces
Their men will keep house while
they go on their rounds.
They will trail a young courter,
from the woods to the water
To get the true facts of whats
going on.

Their names are familiar in
gossip and slander.
They are small in their minds
but not so in size.
If they could reach the reporters
With the news of the courters
I'm sure they would certainly win
the first prize.

There is Jess in his dresses, out-
weighs the Mighty Ersers[1]
Bell Janes comes next with two
hundred pounds
Then Winnie and Berthie, oh don't
they get dirty,
When their men object to them mak-
ing their rounds.

Bell Ryan is working too hard to
their liking
Bell John is too cute
While Bell Joe is a fool
Sure Ann she does nothing her house
it is rotten
And what do you think of Madonna
Spurrell?

Advice to you Aces, stay in your
places
Your children are growing in a
world of sin.
So keep them protected or they'll
get infected
And then you'll regret that you
didn't stop in.

Ye men of these aces stand firm in
your places
Hold on to your pantses before they
are gone
Throw parties where Josh is, then
wash up the dishes
And then you'll compete with your
partner John.

---

[1] A popular wrestler.

The main objective of the poem is clearly to put an end to the evening walks of four women whom the courters believed were spying on them. (It might be noted that to this end it was effective). However, there is a second message, a leveling mechanism aimed at John, a local shopkeeper and his wife, Winnie. It was at John's house the party was held for Josh, a visiting relative from St. John's. Josh was selling some product of kitchenware. Normally this would not have been upsetting to the community; however, Winnie apparently invited only a few select friends, amongst them were the other three 'Aces'. Locally it was felt that this was a deliberate attempt to set up class distinctions as these friends were noted for being 'social climbers'. This point is also indicated in the author's reference (Stanza 4) to the way which these four women presumably looked upon other women in the community.

The attitude governing and the motive behind such leveling mechanisms is well expressed by Szwed (1966:84) in his study of another Catholic community on the Newfoundland west coast:

> "This egalitarianism is not inspired by a noble humanism or even by a theologically based concept of finite and humble man. Instead, equality for parishioners is an enforced standard, as far as

> enforcement can be executed. The fear is that .... some will become "more equal than others", in short equality ... is not so much an ideology that elevates the lowest to the level of the highest, as it is a mechanism that attempts to reduce the highest to the level of the lowest. The common expression, "no one can get high and mighty here" expresses the point."

If a mere slight could disrupt the notion of equality, there is little doubt that the intention of upward social mobility associated with opening a shop was effective in evoking some leveling mechanisms, i.e. as with John in the poem. This was particularly true since concomitant with this ideology of equality was the idea of a 'static economy'. (Foster, 1961:124-28) Community resources were seen as being fixed; hence, if any one person in the community made a gain, this was considered to be at the expense of all the others. This perception of the local economic state served as a catalyst to enforce leveling mechanisms against those who would attempt to exploit extant community resources for personal gains. Certainly the opening of a shop, where the shopkeeper publicly attempted to exploit the population for his own ends, created one set of conditions which invoked the use of this catalyst. One shopkeeper was plainly made aware of this fact when she refused to make a donation to a local

parish benefit. The solicitor of the donation told her 'in no uncertain terms' that she 'above anyone else in the community should give something', since she 'made her living off the people'.

As Brox, another student of the Newfoundland outport, noted: "Entrepreneurs in egalitarian rural communities have a hard time everywhere, because they very often will go after goals conflicting with their neighbours." (Brox, 1964:89) The shopkeeper in Renews and Ferryland was no exception.

Leveling Mechanisms and their Application to the Shopkeeper

To deal effectively with the role of the shopkeeper in its relation to the local egalitarian setting, it is necessary to speak of at least three phases in the process of establishing a shop. In the initial phase where a shop is begun as a small operation, there may be no significant social pressures brought to bear on the shopkeeper at all. In fact, he or she may have been encouraged to open a shop by various people in the community. On the surface this would seem a contradiction of the egalitarian ethic; in reality the encouragement given is often a direct result of the community's attempt to restrict the growth of another shopkeeper by spreading the

shop trade. Other causes might be clearly pragmatic; the possibility of increased competition meaning lower prices and easier access to credit from a new supplier.

The second phase of the shop's growth is sparked by a change in public attitude from the general good will of the first phase. This change is usually brought about by several factors:

(A) The realization that the newcomer is no better than his predecessors with respect to prices or the liberal distribution of credit. As noted earlier, the beginning shopkeeper usually keeps his prices down and extends credit freely for a time in order to solicit custom. (see pp. 64)

(B) The new shopkeeper acquires material wealth which is well beyond the means of his earlier supporters. For this reason the purchasing of a new car, the building of a new home, or even the acquiring of something as small as a refrigerator may invoke sanctions in the form of a loss of trade or good will.

(C) The community becomes upset at the appearance of upward social mobility as represented by the shopkeeper's becoming increasingly friendly with the local elite. This is particularly costly in terms of good will where concomitantly the shopkeeper adopts an air of condescension in

dealing with the public. One good example of this concerns John, a university graduate, quite prominent in a professional capacity in his community, who decided to open a small business several years ago. The business was a success and led to the provision of several new helpers' jobs. After a year or so John married a local girl. The marriage was one of upward social and economic mobility for Sally. Sometime later Sally and a few acquaintances attended a local dance. While there she danced with one of John's helpers and on returning to her group she was asked the name of the fellow. Sally dismissed the question with a quip, "Oh, just one of my employees." That comment immediately cost John one customer. Furthermore, several months later it was still used against him by way of explaining why he, and particularly his wife, needed to be taken down a 'peg or two'.

It is implicit from these comments that this second phase is a very delicate one for the shopkeeper. This is especially true with respect to points B and C, which can even influence the community's perception of A, that is the prices charged and the services provided by a given shopkeeper.

As already indicated in the example given in point C, the shopkeeper who transgresses openly the notion of

equality can suffer an acute loss of trade. An increase of 'sticking', where credit is involved, is another common side effect. One Ferryland shopkeeper built a new house and bought a new truck in the one year during the late 1950's. The result was a near fatal decline in trade, which in his opinion, was a direct result of his demonstration of success. He was so convinced of this that for nine years he did not tear down his old home which stood only six feet in front of the new one, hiding it from public view.

The shopkeeper who appears to be 'getting ahead' is also open to direct theft. In most instances the thieves are community members; often regular clients. They do not regard the taking of goods from a successful shopkeeper, whose success is largely at their expense, to be actually stealing. In their view they are merely attempting to recover some of what he had taken from them and is enjoying as profit. They are 'putting one over' on the shopkeeper. In the case of youths, such thievery is often the subject of a little amusement at the shopkeeper's expense.

Of course, it would be completely erroneous to assume economic losses to be the only costs incurred by the shopkeeper who becomes 'more equal' than the rest. There are

definite social costs as well and to a large extent economic losses are really manifestations of these. There are several readily observable forms of social costs incurred by the demonstrably too successful shopkeeper: (a) For no apparent reason former acquaintances, among them close friends and clients, 'stop speaking' to him. (b) The shopkeeper's faults, mistakes, family background and present family life become prime topics of discussion on the community's gossip channels. (c) He and his family may find themselves excluded from the invitation lists for social events ranging from birthday parties to baby showers. Collectively, of course, these social slights mean the shopkeeper and his family are ostracized from the social life of the community.

When the shopkeeper is ostracized he has achieved the third phase in the process of becoming an established shopkeeper. He is an outsider or stranger. Not only is he then accepted by the community from that perspective, but he may often be assigned various other roles, i.e. chairman of the community council, roles which must be filled but which are unacceptable to community members generally, as such positions also upset the notion of equality.

One long-range effect of such ostracism has been the

present difficulty in recruiting family members to run their parents' shops. Because shopkeepers' children have a harder time growing up than other community children, i.e. they frequently are abused by their peers through name-calling and on occasion through physical attack, they have little social attachment to the community outside their immediate family. Furthermore, many dislike the stigma attached to shopkeeping, which they have lived with from childhood and wish to get away from; hence, as their parents usually can afford to finance their escape through university and trade schools, few ever remain to take over family stores. Besides earlier examples, there are five recorded instances since 1970 where shops have been closed or sold for this reason, and there are several more likely to suffer the same fate. Of course, with a general increase in the local standard of living, particularly in recent years, and the emergence of a steadily growing middle class, the socio-economic disparity between shopkeeper and community is not quite so pronounced. This may change the future recruitment pattern of extant shops, but that remains to be seen.

The Shopkeepers' Strategies in Countering the Constraints of Egalitarianism

A life time resident of the community, on setting up shop, is as sensitive to the local egalitarian ideology as

any other member of the community; hence, he is not ignorant of the potential consequences in doing so. It is not surprising then that shopkeepers have developed a set of strategies geared to offsetting the impact of their entrepreneurial behaviour on the community.

A major theme in this set of strategies is locally dubbed 'poor mouthing'. This is an attempt at playing down the amount of profits gleaned from shopkeeping. Almost invariably the shopkeeper complains of his overhead costs, losses from bad debts and the slowness of business. Partnered with this strategy is the shopkeeper's attempt to attract 'sympathy' support where possible, as when any disaster befalls him, e.g. an illness in the family.

In addition to this the shopkeeper often engages in a self-leveling role. (cf. Nemec, forthcoming) Here he 'acts the fool' for the public. Frequently this involves getting 'drunk with the boys' where he often furnishes the bulk of the liquor. However, in this matter the shopkeeper has to be careful not to make his 'drinking buddies' feel he is again acting 'the big shot' by paying for the 'booze'. This was the unfortunate case for one shopkeeper who persisted in bringing not just a bottle or two of liquor, but a whole case to the regular Saturday night parties. No one else at the parties could possibly afford such extravagance and many

felt belittled. The shopkeeper made no attempt to play down the event. This generated much personal dislike for the man and eventually the parties were discontinued.

The shopkeeper, whenever the opportunity presents itself, will openly support the local egalitarian ideology. This might be achieved by criticizing public displays of wealth by others, including shopkeepers. When one local shopkeeper had a special mass held for himself and his family, the first of its kind in recent memory, the local gossip channels fairly hummed with news of the pompous event. Its effect had been compounded by the fact that the local clergy had praised the man's unmatched piety and generosity at least where giving to the church was concerned. Many people felt such praise to be uncalled for in light of the efforts made by parishioners not so well off financially. They complained that since they lacked prominence they would never be worthy of such mention from the altar.

Another shopkeeper, a competitor of this 'church healer', sensing the chagrin of the community over the affair, used it to political advantage. He noted, tongue in cheek, to his customers that he didn't think there was much likelihood of anyone having a mass said for him. For

that matter, he had never made 'the social roster' of the community nor did he think he ever would. In this kind of situation the shopkeeper was clearly aligning his opinion with that of his clients. He was classing himself with the 'common Jack' while effectively improving his popularity at the expense of his socially insensitive competitor.

Secrecy is another counter strategy employed by the shopkeeper against the constraints of egalitarianism. The philosophy of "what they don't know won't hurt 'em" governs many of the shopkeeper's actions. One outcome of this outlook was observed on several occasions where, for example, new furniture and other expensive household items, i.e. a fridge or clothes dryer, were unloaded at the shopkeeper's request after dark. One explanation for this behaviour was "... so as not to make the neighbours jealous. If they thought you were too far ahead buying all this stuff, then they might turn against ya." When it was pointed out to this informant that neighbours would surely find out about his purchase anyway, his response was:

> "Yes, but that will be less of a shock to 'em if someone else tells 'em rather than they see it for themselves, 'cause then I'll only be supposed to be after getting

> a new dining room set. There'll be a little doubt for a while as there always is with gossip. By the time everyone knows for sure I have it, it'll be old news and even here that's no news at all. See boy, that's the way you have to work it around here.[2]

There is a side effect to this need for secrecy and it is prompted by the fact that the shopkeeper lives in a community where inter-house visitation occurs without even

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[2]This type of behaviour is no longer restricted to the shopkeeper, as a burgeoning middle class takes its place in the outport community. They too employ similar strategies. This is not surprising in post-Confederation Newfoundland where a situation has developed similar to that expressed by Andrew Pearse, (1971:77-78) a student of rural peasantry. He notes:

> "With the growing importance of the national institutions and the decline of the local ones, the local solidarity based on a tightly knit network of loyalties and obligations gives way to emancipation from local control, to the increasing isolation of the nuclear family within the neighbourhood, and at the same time, an increase in controls exercised directly over the community from the urban centres. The importance of the neighbourhood, as a community, declines. The characteristic unique status of the traditional rural person is replaced by the enjoyment of different levels of status in different sub-systems. There is a tendency towards differentiation and multiplication of social as well as economic roles. Action sequences which have been valued because they fulfilled the tradition are now valued as means to economic ends."

a knock to introduce the intruder.[3] The shopkeeper has had to set up barriers to this practice which have consequently contributed to his social isolation. Yet the need for such restrictions on access to a shopkeeper's house stem not solely from the necessity of guarding against public knowledge of his possessions. Frequently business transactions and the straightening up of accounts, i.e. with wholesalers and also clients, take place not in the shop but in the home of the shopkeeper, where to insure safety he might keep any large sums of money he has on hand. Such business demands privacy.

Traditionally the men often fished while owning shops; a situation not uncommon until quite recently and one which presents some problems with respect to egalitarianism. On the one hand this shopkeeper should be undergoing a process of exclusion from the social life of the community; on the other hand he is involved in the fishery, an activity that requires a high degree of co-operation from other fishermen at various times of the year, e.g. hauling up or launching boats. This paradox is generally resolved through the use of women, particularly wives, in handling the shop. As

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[3] This practice is gradually being discontinued as class divisions emerge in the communities -- a result of generally improved economic conditions. Pearse's comments (see footnote 2) suffice to explain here the process which is taking place.

noted earlier, (Ch. 4:36-39) women were (and still are) allowed to exhibit deviant behaviour without the same reprisals as would accrue to men in the same instance. This is particularly true where the women are 'outsiders' married into the community, which was frequently the case with respect to shopkeepers' wives. Furthermore, this dichotomy has made it possible for the husband to escape blame for his wife's deviant actions.

This arrangement has served the shopkeeper well for it has allowed him freedom from the responsibility of decisions and actions surrounding the operation of the shop. In fact, in some instances the husband alienates himself from his wife with respect to the affairs of the shop by publicly stating he has nothing to do with it and by criticizing his wife in certain instances for decisions she has made, e.g. with respect to refusing credit.

Even yet, where husbands and wives run stores as co-equals, the husband will leave much of the 'dirty work', e.g. demanding payment on accounts, cutting off credit, or even handling surly customers, to his wife. The women 'have the face for it' is the local explanation of this phenomenon; in other words, they feel no compunction when handling these unpleasant duties of shopkeeping.

Implicit in the various strategies the shopkeeper invokes to protect himself from the constraints of egalitarianism is the fact that this ideology applies only to public behaviour. It demands that while 'on stage', that is in public view, the shopkeeper, or indeed any other transgressors against the idea of equality for all, should at least attempt to maintain a front showing deference to that ideology either by attempting to cover up their actions through secrecy, or by reversing their effect, i.e. by drinking with the boys. In this sense the shopkeepers strategies are really attempts at what Goffman calls the "art of impression management". (Goffman, 1958:Ch.6)

The interesting thing about this 'act' on the part of the shopkeeper is that it really demands the support of the 'audience', in this case the others of the community. (cf. Goffman, Ibid:146-150) This is true, for example, where the shopkeeper is allowed to pretend by poor mouthing to his clients that he is making no more money than a fisherman, without fear of contradiction from the clients who perhaps know or feel the contrary to be true. But perhaps the most blatant example of this is where the dichotomy between husband and wife over the running of the shop is allowed to exist to facilitate the normal involvement of the husband in the reciprocal exchanges surrounding the fishery.

There are perhaps several reasons for this co-operative behaviour on the part of both the community and shopkeeper. Speaking pragmatically, shops have been useful to the community: they have offset the absolute control of the merchant, (cf. Ch. 4) and they have supplied goods which were otherwise unavailable locally. When the shopkeeper was not an outsider to begin with, then naturally the role of shopkeeper had to be filled from within the community or not at all. In this regard difficulties with respect to the local egalitarian ideology did emerge. In fact, it is not inconceivable that the constraints on local people acting as entrepreneurs could have restricted completely the emergence of small enterprises such as shops, as in similar communities in North Norway, (Barth, 1963) had this been the communities' wish. Evidently it was not so; the shopkeeper who 'act' properly is allowed to circumvent these constraints to a large extent.

In itself such reasoning would seem to negate what has already been said about the expulsion of the shopkeeper from the social life of the community. This is not true. What really has emerged is a process whereby the shopkeeper can move in the direction of social isolation gradually. In this way no great and sudden rifts erupt in the solidarity of the community. Of course, when the shopkeeper does

not accept these rules of behaviour, it can be a major factor in limiting the growth of the shop and can ultimately lead to the closing of the operation.

A second reason for the communities' acceptance of the shopkeeper's act or front of egalitarianism lies with the strong avoidance of open conflict practiced among community members. This is one aspect of outport life strongly tied to egalitarianism in the literature on Newfoundland. (Szwed, 1966:87; Chiaramonte, 1972:52; Firestone, 1967:123) The rationale behind such conflict avoidance may best be understood in relation to dyadic interaction on a one-to-one basis. If hard feeling were allowed to develop readily between various members of small communities, then it would prove extremely trying just from the point of view of having to find ways of avoiding those others with whom one is feuding. By the same token the supression of hostile feelings under a veneer of good will permits interaction which facilitates the development of reciprocal obligation networks. Such networks are another characteristic of the local communities.

In the realm of reciprocal networks the storekeeper is by no means excluded. Strong dyadic ties often develop between shopkeeper and client, as with core clients for example. (cf. pp. 84) It is often a deliberate part of

the client's strategy to avoid conflict with the shopkeeper, even where the latter's behaviour is provocative. In this way the client opens or maintains channels whereby he can solicit favours from the shopkeeper, e.g. the extension of credit, or even a meeting with the M.H.A..

This introduces the next topic of discussion, that is, how the shopkeeper handles or avoids entanglement with the various committments and obligations which may involve an economic cost and thereby threaten his success. In particular, concern will be directed towards how his actions in dealing with these problematic situations affect his ultimate 'estrangement'.

Techniques in Handling the Cost of Social Committments

The estrangement which befalls the successful shopkeeper is not solely a product of the local egalitarian ethic. In many instances the shopkeeper acts in a deliberate fashion to promote that estrangement: specifically, he refuses to become involved in or he withdraws from specific social relationships in order to avoid the cost of the committments they entail. (Barth, 1963:8)

The major problem for the local shopkeeper in this regard arises primarily from the many ties (both familial

and contractual) which he has at the time he opens his shop. Certainly there can be benefits from such affiliations. As noted earlier, for example, both friends and kin provide the shopkeeper with initial and even long-term support (in the form of their shop purchases). Undoubtedly such support is welcome and necessary for the successful establishment of his enterprise. Yet, as such favours are extended, they also provide the givers with the expectation of some reciprocation. This may be best understood in light of the fact that local reciprocation networks operate pretty much after the fashion described by Foster (1961:1187):

> "Any favor, whatever its form, is part of a quid pro quo pattern, the terms of which are recognized and accepted by the participants. The favor or act simultaneously repays a past debt, incurs a future obligation, and reaffirms the continuing validity of the contract binding partners."

The difficulty for the shopkeeper in this circumstance results when the favour he is expected to return involves a greater cost than that initially received. This is especially true when the cost is monetary and therefore threatens the future economic viability of the shop. This would be the case, for example, where a clients expects unlimited credit, which the shopkeeper knows the client will

have difficulty paying, or, where the client expects the shopkeeper to forego immediate payment on the debt owed him so that the client can meet another payment, say on a TV set or a washer.

When it is no longer tolerable, the shopkeeper's usual response to this kind of problem is to withdraw from the relationship. This being accomplished, he then attempts to set up what might be called 'conversion barriers'. (cf. Bohannon and Dalton, 1965; Barth, 1967; Brox, 1972) Such barriers are achieved when shopkeepers signal to clients that personal reciprocities are no longer operative. They may be enforced directly through the shopkeeper's reminding a client that he has not paid his original debt, should one remain. (In fact, some shopkeepers noted that they preferred a troublesome client to leave a small debt behind which could be used in this way.)

Another barrier erected by the shopkeeper is to ensure that he does not become obligated to any person who might attempt to exploit that obligation in an unfavourable fashion. To this end the shopkeeper avoids becoming involved in reciprocation by paying cash for any assistance given him that might be considered a favour and might place the shopkeeper 'under compliment' (local term) to the giver. The payment in cash signifies that the account is paid in full and discourages the formation of any reciprocal

contract, "since if all credits and debts somehow could be balanced off at a point in time, the contract would cease to exist." (Foster, 1961:1185)

Perhaps the most effective barrier the shopkeeper could erect to the entanglements of reciprocity lies in his avoidance of social interaction outside the setting of the shop. To this end he will frequently avoid informal social gatherings, both public and private, where his relationship to others is not so clearly defined as would be the case within the setting of the shop. There he is clearly the shopkeeper and any intruder is classified as a client. The difficulty with informal gatherings is that people will often approach the shopkeeper, seemingly on a personal basis, but really seeking an 'in' by striking up or renewing a relationship, thus making the shopkeeper more approachable as a dispenser of favours. Since the shopkeeper avoids these gatherings, he remains virtually unapproachable on any matter other than that of business.

Through these actions the shopkeeper contributes to his own estrangement and this is particularly true when such action has to be taken against his relations or kin. These would include collaterally, at least those relations as far removed as second cousin. Lineally, grandparents at one end of the scale and grandchildren at the other would be included.

Locally, the extended family centres on patrikin, i.e. brothers pooling their efforts where the fishery is concerned is still the basis of social and economic life on the Southern Avalon. This is evident in the composition of fishing crews and the practice of brothers building homes in close proximity to one another to form family-oriented neighbourhoods. The extended family is the core social unit from which all social ties extend outward:

> "It is within this group (kin or relations) that an individual centres and measures his important actions. The members of this group have first claim at holidays and life crises. He must defend his kindred to outsiders -- or at least to those whose kindred do not overlap with his own -- and it is to this group that he turns first for aid." (Szwed, 1966:61-62)

So strong are these ties that should a shopkeeper refuse assistance to one of his relations, especially where close relatives are concerned, it is probable he will lose or weaken his support from the others. The shopkeeper who isolates his relations in this fashion has, in fact, gone a long way towards isolating himself from the community.

Special Client

One interesting phenomenon associated with the social

isolation of the shopkeeper from the community is the development of the role of special clients. These clients serve as information brokers between the shopkeeper and the public. Their reward for filling this role is: (a) one of status in being one of the few local people allowed access to the shopkeeper's backstage -- that is his home and with it his closely guarded information about his private affairs --; and (b) a practical gain in the form of ready access to whatever resources are at the shopkeeper's disposal.

In return these clients keep the shopkeeper posted on: (1) the community's feelings towards him (the shopkeeper); (2) the activities and intentions of his competitors, which are known to the gossip channels of the community, but which would not otherwise come to his attention; and (3) most important of all, the activities of his clients. In this way the shopkeeper often comes to know of any client who might be spending cash elsewhere while attempting to secure a supply of credit from him (the shopkeeper). It is through the medium of the special client, as well, that the shopkeeper learns the names of those who are bad debtors, including the extent of their debts.

In many instances these special clients are intensely disliked by others in the community, since they have this

private business with the shopkeeper. Yet these clients are not themselves isolated but are an important unit in the local gossip channels, frequently funnelling in tid-bits of gossip about the shopkeeper which would otherwise go undisclosed. Usually the shopkeeper is aware of the special client's dubious loyalty, especially with respect to information which he is asked to keep secret. For this reason, the shopkeeper releases only what he wants the community to hear.

One irony in this relationship lies in the fact that when the community finds out that a special clients knows of a customer's business, it is the client and not the shopkeeper who is condemned for gossiping about it. The admonition of the shopkeeper is for nothing more than his lack of discretion in choosing his friends.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

It is possible to make several observations and conclusions as to the nature of shopkeeping in Renews and Ferryland. First, it is necessary to point out that while many commentators hold the view that the outport shop is a relatively modern phenomenon in Newfoundland, i.e. a product of the World War II-Confederation economic boom, these two study communities are exceptions. Here the shops existed from at least the close of the 19th. century. At that time and for most of the present century, these shops served to mitigate the monopolistic stranglehold which the merchant held over the local outport economy through the utilization of the 'credit system'.

In effect, this 'credit system' was the main precondition for the emergence of the shop in the 19th. century. Under this system fishermen were no longer guaranteed a reasonable subsistence level during years of poor fishing, as had been the case earlier with the 'truck system'. The deprivation generated in this way certainly left a need for some source of alternate supply. In the case of Renews and Ferryland, the shop was a partial

response to this need. At the shop a man could barter some of his catch for supplies, especially 'luxury' items such as tobacco, tea and biscuits, which otherwise might have been denied him, if he had to seek them from the merchant's store.

Certainly, since the merchant had a lien on any indebted man's fish, such transactions could not be carried on openly; hence, with the apparent consensus of the community, this type of trading was conducted in reasonable secrecy.

Another matter which presents itself for consideration is the question of cash: when and in what manner did it enter the communities. Many commentators have suggested that cash did not circulate freely in rural Newfoundland prior to World War II. (In fact, this is often given as the reason for the absence of shops, since they were financially incapable of marketing fish or becoming involved in credit transactions.) This observation is challenged on the evidence of several historical events, which were to have a positive effect on the growth of the shops. With the bank crash of 1894, which saw an end to indigenous banks and the introduction of Canadian banks, the cash system was introduced to parts of the Island other than the commercial capital of St. John's. This did not immediately affect the

study area despite its proximity to the capital; however, by the close of the second decade of the 20th. century, this was no longer true. The building of a branch railway between Trepassey and St. John's (1909) pumped considerable cash into the local area. Following this the demand for Newfoundland cod during World War I, when prices soared, also had its effect. This, plus the resultant growth of mercantile competition over the buying of local fish, saw money placed in the hands of the fisherman. When one questions the amount of cash in local circulation, the fact that the Bank of Nova Scotia saw fit to establish a branch office at Ferryland in 1918 speaks for itself.

The effect of this cash flow was crucial to the growth of the shops. Since fishermen were generally freed at last from their indebtedness and concomitant obligations to deal exclusively with a single merchant, they began to exercise some choice over where and what they purchased. The shops then could compete for a share of this new cash market. Of course, the improved and regularized communications with a growing number of St. John's wholesalers, provided by the railway, facilitated this trade. Furthermore, since many fishermen were at this time getting supplies directly from St. John's-based firms, the shops often served as emergency supply depots when these men ran short of supplies.

One notable characteristic of the shop's expansion in the first part of the century was its growing involvement in the extension of credit, albeit in small amounts. In itself, this practice speaks of the new economic strength and prominence of the local retail market which the shop was enjoying. Previously all transactions of any significance which involved credit were restricted to the merchant's operations.

The shopkeeper's purpose in undertaking the risks involved with credit was an attempt to capture a larger portion of the local retail market. He was aware that credit was essential to the consumer dependant on an income with irregular timing between pay periods. For example, in the fishery a man's payday depended on a number of variables, e.g. weather conditions for drying fish or the whim of the merchant who decided when he was ready to buy.

The shopkeeper was correct in his assumption that the extension of credit was fundamental to enlarging his clientele. Those who did so grew steadily despite the opposition of the merchants; however, it was not until after the depression of the 1930's, which struck a disastrous blow to the local shops, that it could be seen just how effective this strategy was.

World War II saw another upturn in Newfoundland's economic fortunes as fish catches and prices improved. In addition there was an abundance of work generated by military construction owing to the building of both Canadian and American military installations in Newfoundland. As was true of the World War I boom, this new wave of prosperity carried the shops to the fore as competitors over the local market. Their quick recovery from the depression years was in part due to the animosity which was directed towards the merchants or their lesser successors owing to the latters treatment of local fishermen during the thirties. In the main, however, it was the extension of credit less the merchant's service charge of 20% which accounted for the shops' renewed successes.

The credit relationship between shopkeeper and client was based on a sense of trust. To this end it was perhaps more highly personalized than that which traditionally existed between merchant and fisherman. This was fundamental to the shopkeeper who, unlike the merchant, had no access to a fisherman's income through the marketing of fish. He had to rely strictly on the personal commitment of his client to honour his debts. It is not surprising then that the shopkeepers, local men with strong community ties, relied heavily (especially in the initial stages of their

operation) on kin and friendship ties as a guide to selecting a loyal 'core' clientele.

Credit had been used earlier in the century to attract custom and therefore to some extent it operated as a 'starting mechanism' to initiate shopkeeper-client relationships; yet, there had been a great deal of caution on the part of the shopkeeper over the issuance of credit. With the new wave of prosperity in the World War II-Confederation period, and as inter-shop competition grew, the shopkeeper became less discriminating in his choice of credit customers.

There were two forces acting on the Newfoundland economy following World War II which helped avert the drastic drop in prosperity which had followed World War I: firstly, the maintenance and expansion of American bases and secondly, the union of Newfoundland with the Dominion of Canada in 1949. Instead of shrinking, the Newfoundland retail market burgeoned and the shops, reflecting the growing confidence of the local population in the indefinite continuance of prosperity, continued their policy of issuing credit. The large shops went so far as to 'fit out' for the fishery. As a result of this practice, plus the fair treatment of clients by the shopkeepers, the shop soon

gained dominance in the retail market. By the 1950's a few shops were even strong enough to challenge the merchant's position as sole resident fish buyer. Enterprising shopkeepers expanded and diversified their operations in various other directions, i.e. snack bars, juke boxes, gas stations, which were opening up as money in relatively large amounts continued to circulate in the study communities.

Rapid economic change affecting both Renews and Ferryland in the post-Confederation period greatly reduced the degree to which the local population was dependant on credit, and hence on a creditor. The result was a change in consumer attitude towards all creditors, including the shopkeeper. This, coupled with an increase in retail competition from a number of new shops all willing to extend credit, eventually upset the balance which had been struck between shopkeeper and client over credit transactions. The practice of 'sticking' or not paying one's debts increased at the shops. The result of this was a growing apprehension on the part of the shopkeeper towards extending credit.

By the close of the 1960's, though such credit was still available, (notably from shopkeepers who were starting out and trying to encourage trade) a new trend was developing. This was the trend towards the use by the shopkeeper

of St. John's-based finance companies for the extension of credit to the shopkeeper's clients -- a practice employed especially where large amounts of credit were involved. There was no personal commitment between shopkeeper and client, and no risk-taking involved for the shopkeeper in such transactions. In one sense this underlined the last phase in the demise of the old credit system.

Social variables played an important role in the shop's development. The shop often served as a place for public gatherings and entertainment in return for which the shopkeeper would expect more income in the sale of goods to the gathering. However, the most important profit for the provision of this service was the public good will. The most common institutionalized form of this service was the juke box.

In the post-Confederation period, as the shop developed into a social and supply centre, the role of the shopkeeper took on new facets. Owing to his position within the community, the shopkeeper became a node of communication; relaying gossip and other topical community news to his clients. The shopkeeper also played the roles of political and cultural broker. Politicians utilized him to make contact with their constituents and vice versa; and, since the

shopkeeper was frequently knowledgeable (relatively speaking) of the world outside the community, he often acted as mediator between local residents and the growing intrusion of 'outside', impersonal bureaucracies both commercial and governmental.

One of the most interesting aspects of the emergence of a shopkeeper from within the ranks of the outport citizenry was the process whereby the aspiring shopkeeper moved towards the position of 'stranger' or 'outsider'. In part, this process was generated by the prevailing egalitarian ideology which insisted that all men are equal or at least must be treated as such. Obviously, the shopkeeper in assuming control over resources and in aspiring to political power, was disrupting this ideology and causing negative social reaction from the community. When this reaction occurred sanctions were placed on the shopkeeper which saw life-long friends and even kinsmen turn their backs on him. He was in effect treated as a stranger.

While these social sanctions were certainly costly to the shopkeeper, they were not necessarily detrimental to his operation. In fact, in cases where the shopkeeper wished not to become entangled in credit transactions with certain community members, he attempted to create a social

barrier or distance between himself and these people. The shopkeeper often declined involvement in social events where he could be approached by people wishing to establish a 'friendship' with him which could be used later as a lever to extract credit. The maintenance of social distance allowed the shopkeeper to operate his business with objectivity and discretion. Since he had no ties with the community members, he could be trusted with information about personal and business affairs which a client did not want broadcasted on the community gossip channels.

Of course, the outport shop as described in this thesis has been a changing phenomenon. At no time has this process of change been greater than at present. Within the next decade, if present trends continue, the shop in both Renews and Ferryland will undoubtedly evolve into little more than the impersonal place of business characterized by the supermarket or department store of urban St. John's.

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APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SHOPS EXISTING IN THE STUDY COMMUNITIES FROM THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

RENEWS:

1. Mrs. Ambrose Quinn:	circa 1890 (or earlier) - 1920. The date of the opening of this shop is lost even to the oldest members of the community. She had a comparatively large store and handled groceries, dry goods and confectionery. She carried fishing gear and blueberries were exchanged for goods. This store was taken over by Mrs. Quinn's daughter-in-law, Mrs. Bridie Quinn, who operated it until about 1920.
2. Mrs. Joanna O'Leary:	circa 1890-1920. She sold mostly groceries and took 'shawl fish' from the women. When she died in 1904 the business was run for a number of years by her son, Arthur.
3. Miss Mary Anne Roche:	circa 1890-1920. She had a few groceries, sewing notions and confectioneries, (notably peppermint knobs) soft drinks, (lemon crystal mixed in a tumbler) and loose biscuits. Eggs were bartered for such items as brown sugar, and she bought flour barrels, then sold them to the Goodridges for use in packing fish.

4.	Mrs. Bridget Jackman:	circa 1900-1905. She operated a small huckster shop.
5.	Mrs. Patrick Dunne:	circa 1904-1923. This was a substantial shop which sold such luxuries as wallpaper and curtain material, as well as a regular line of groceries. Patrick Dunne also had the agency for Singer Sewing Machines and sold them on his premises.
6.	Mrs. Jim Fowler:	1904-1911. She had a tiny shop and carried mostly groceries. The enterprise closed following her untimely death.
7.	Mrs. Joseph Dunphy:	1912-1936. This shopkeeper had a relatively wide selection of groceries, confectionery and dry goods. She started out by selling homemade candy, home brewed beer and whort (blueberry) wine. Her goods were often ordered from St. John's and delivered by train. She was in the habit of issuing credit.
8.	Johnny and Duffy Noah:	1914-1917. These two brothers were part of an Assyrian family who came to Renews as peddlers and briefly operated a small dry goods store. It was not uncommon for peddlers to come into a community, set up their wares at the nearest available location and stay until the goods were sold. Apparently the Noah enterprise was an extension of this type of venture. After a few years they moved to St. John's.

9.	Mrs. Peter Murphy:	1920-1923. This shop was opened on the premises bought from the Noahs. It was a small huckster shop. Mrs. Murphy bought blueberries which were sent to St. John's by train.
10.	Mrs. Peter Lawlor:	1923-1933. She had a small assortment of groceries and notions.
11.	Mr. John Walsh:	1925-1931. Mr. Walsh started a shop at the railway station where he served as station agent. He offered a fairly extensive variety of goods including fishing gear and medicine, and was in the habit of giving credit. He also ordered goods from St. John's by train. When Mr. Walsh died in 1931 the store was moved to a new location and was operated briefly by his daughter, Mary.
12.	Mr. Ron Jackman:	1925-1967. This was a small enterprise which prospered and led to his eventual "fitting-out" for the fishery. Mr. Jackman carried an extensive variety of hardware and fishing supplies in addition to the traditional stocks of groceries and confectionery.
13.	Mrs. Elizabeth McCarthy:	circa 1925-1930. Thomas McCarthy, Mrs. McCarthy's husband, worked for Goodridge and used this shop as a source of extra money.
14.	Dan O'Neill:	1927-1929. He was a stranger to the community (a native of Baie de Verde) who moved in to finance a couple of trap crews and started the shop as a sideline. Both ventures ended in miserable failure.

15.	John Chidley:	1930's-1940's intermittently. Throughout the 1930's and less frequently in the 1940's John Chidley made several attempts to start a shop; that is, he bought a few dollars worth of groceries and stocked some makeshift shelves (not unlike many of his fellow entrepreneurs). As it happened each venture was doomed by the fact that John and the family literally 'ate up the profits'. Indeed, in a very short time they would consume the entire shop.
16.	Miss Annie McCarthy:	circa 1930-32. She was a young single girl who ran a small store at the crossroads of the community. She sold such items as biscuits and bottled drinks. After her brief venture she moved to the United States.
17.	Mr. William (Bill) Kane:	1932 ..... . This store has changed very little since its opening. It has kept its position as a meeting place for men and youths. Mr. Kane has a beer license. When he introduced a "juke box" in the 1950's he drew the teenagers who have ever since used it as a social centre. Its role is currently being replaced by the newly-opened local taverns. The Kane shop has a crowded assortment of everything from foodstuffs to overshoes.
18.	Mrs. May O'Toole:	1934-1938. Mrs. O'Toole was postmistress and concurrently ran a small shop. She had little success and dropped the business until the late forties when she tried once again. This effort too ended in failure.

19. Mr. William Berrigan: 1935 intermittently to 1952. He was a young man crippled with polio who started a small shop and also took in shoes and boots to be mended. The shop had an uneven history of openings and closings until it finally closed in 1952 when Mr. Berrigan went to work on the fish plant at Fermeuse.

20. Mrs. Nellie Squires: 1935-1973. This shop started as a tiny "front room" huckster. Eventually it was abandoned for larger premises as business increased. Mrs. Squires sold groceries and confectionery but also carried such items as curtain material and knitting yarn. The business expanded briefly in the 1950's to include a snack bar and a juke box. Both ventures were abandoned around 1960.

21. Mrs. James Berrigan: 1936-1940. She was Mrs. Joseph Dunphy's daughter, and indeed it was her mother's shop that Mrs. Berrigan took over in 1936. The enterprise was destined to failure as Mrs. Berrigan found it impossible to collect on debts owed her mother by clients who had dealt in credit. This too was the era of drinking in the shops, a practice which often resulted in rowdiness and incivility on the part of the clientele. This was yet another factor in the untimely closing of the Berrigan store.

22. Miss Margaret Foley: 1937-1941. This was a modest enterprise where such produce as berries and eggs were bartered for store goods.

23.	Mrs. Denis Walsh:	1938-1940. She was a neighbour of Miss Foley's who operated a similar type of shop.
24.	Mrs. Michael Guiney:	circa 1950-1961. This was a small grocery store.
25.	Mrs. Thomas Keating:	1950-1954. Another small grocery store.
26.	Mr. William Dinn:	1951-1975. Mr. Dinn started his business after working in the Goodridge Company office for a number of years. He had quite a sizeable store and, until recently, he was the only shop which stocked TVs, appliances, etc.. Mr. Dinn died in February, 1975 and his business was taken over by an outside wholesaler.
27.	Mrs. Hannah Keating:	1955-1965. This was a small grocery and confectionery store.
28.	Mr. Cornelius Pittman:	1955-1958. A shop selling mostly groceries and confectionery.
29.	Mrs. William Lawlor:	1960-1973. Another "front room" grocery store.
30.	Mr. Stan Brazil:	1960 ..... A sizeable grocery and confectionery store.
31.	Mrs. Mildred Murphy:	1961-1966. Besides groceries and confectionery items she also had a license to sell brewer's beer.
32.	Mr. Loyola Hearn:	1972 ..... Mr. Hearn opened the first superette in Renews. Recently this business expanded into a supermarket and building supplies store.

FERRYLAND:

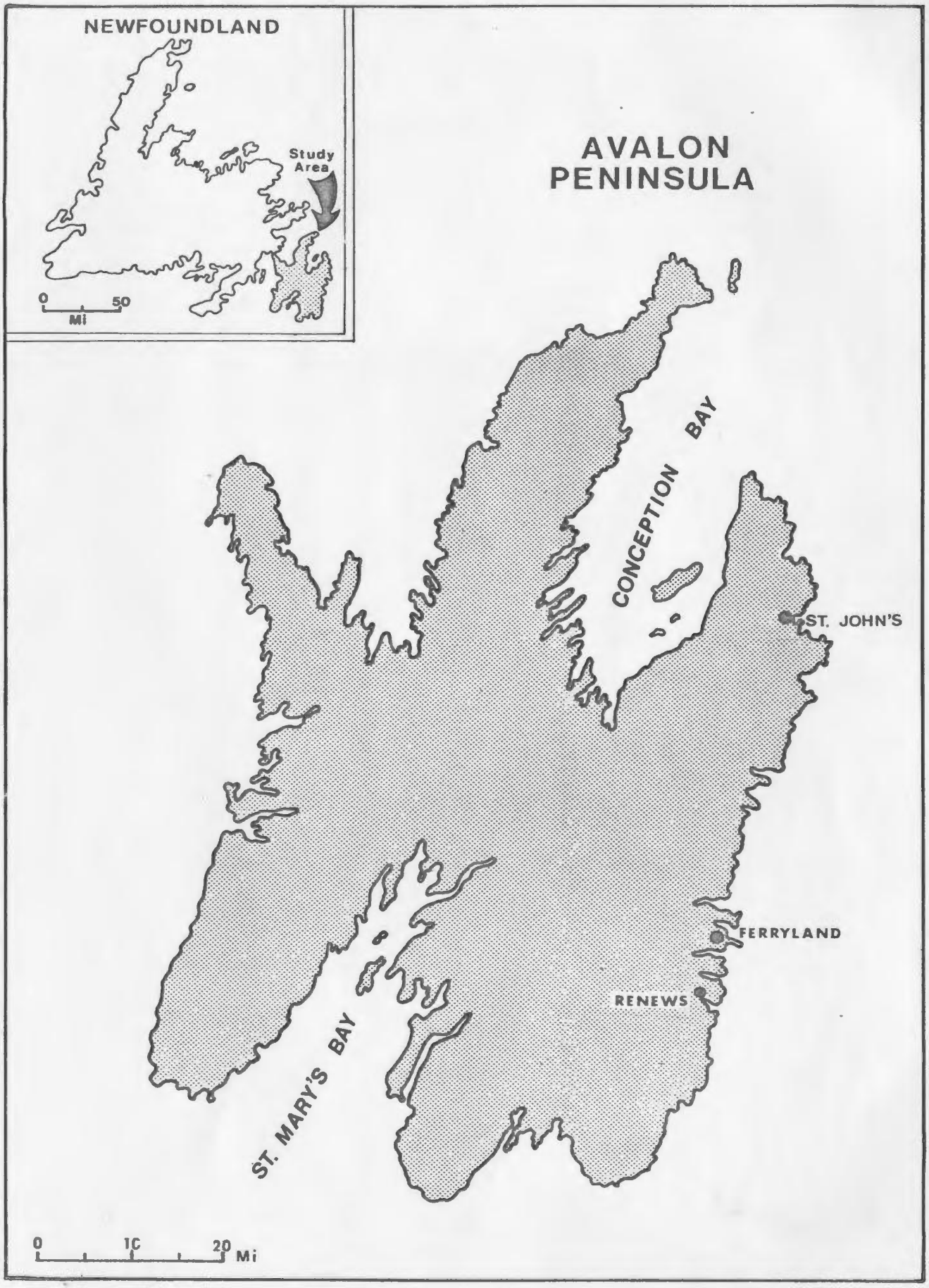
1.	James Devereaux:	1900-1930. This general store outfitted the north side of Ferryland. Mr. Devereaux was also a fish agent for the Tors Cove Trading Company.
2.	James Keough	1900-1920. A small grocery store.
3.	Mr. Thomas Morey:	1900-1929. He had a small general store and gave a conservative amount of short-term credit; he also handled "shawl fish".
4.	Mrs. Ann Kavanagh:	1912-1924. A small grocery store.
5.	Mrs. M.H. Sullivan:	1912-1930. A very small store. She also handled "shawl fish" and eggs in exchange for groceries.
6.	Mrs. M. Kinsella:	1914-1954. Another small grocery store which traded goods for "shawl fish" and eggs.
7.	Mrs. J. Keough:	1919-1929. A very small store.
8.	Mr. Howard Morey:	1922-1948. Mr. Morey had a general store and was also an outfitting agent for Munroe Company, St. John's. About this time fishermen were becoming more financially independant and preferred to deal directly with the large companies in St. John's; thus, by eliminating the agent, their outfits were cheaper.
9.	Mr. Gordon Johnstone:	1925-1932. This was a well-stocked store. Mr. Johnstone had bought out G.F. Goodridge for whom he had worked.

10.	Mr. Michael Devereaux	1930-1939. A small grocery store.
11.	Mrs. Margaret Tonner:	1930-1940. A general store.
12.	Mr. Michael White:	1930-1948. This grocery store closed in 1932. It reopened selling light beer and catering to amusement, but closed again after a few years. In 1947 it reopened with juke box entertainment, but was a failure and closed for good in 1948.
13.	Mr. J.J. Hynes:	1942-1950. Sold groceries and light beer.
14.	Mr. James Keough:	1946-1971. A general dealer licensed to sell beer. He opened a snack bar 1965-1971 and gas pumps 1960-1971.
15.	Mr. F. Johnstone:	1947-1949. A small grocery store.
16.	Mrs. Jane Ryan:	1930 ..... She started selling hop beer about 1930. In 1944 she expanded her business into a grocery store. It is still being operated by her son.
17.	Mrs. Lizzie Costello:	1954-1965. A small grocery store.
18.	Mr. Allan Walsh:	1954-1956. Another small grocery store.
19.	Mr. William Sweeney:	1955-1967. This was a small shop to start with but prospered into a general store.
20.	Mr. James Sweeney:	1956-1960. A small grocery store.
21.	Mrs. Elizabeth Clowe:	1958-1961. Another small grocery store.

22.	Mr. Gerald Hynes:	1957 intermittently to present. Initially he opened a grocery store which closed in 1959. He reopened in another location in 1972. He deals in wholesale and retail and also has a beer license.
23.	Mr. James (Junior) Clowe:	1959 ..... Opened a general store which is still in operation.
24.	Mr. J. Paul:	1960 ..... This general store is also still in operation.
25.	Mr. H. Paul:	1961-1968. A grocery store.
26.	Mr. V. O'Keefe:	1963-1966. He had a grocery store and beer license. The business opened and closed spasmodically for three years.
27.	Mr. Bernard Kavanagh:	1966 ..... This local wholesaler bought out the premises which had originally been built by the Tors Cove Trading Company. It remains today an extensively stocked general store.
28.	Mr. Patrick Moore:	1966-1968. A grocery store.
29.	Mr. Robert Walsh:	1967 ..... A grocery store which is still open.
30.	Mr. Aiden Moore:	1969-1972. A grocery store.
31.	Mr. Phonse Kavanagh:	1970-1974. A small grocery store.

APPENDIX B

A Map of the Avalon Peninsula designating the location of the two study communities.


NEWFOUNDLAND
Study Area
0
50
Mi
AVALON PENINSULA
CONCEPTION BAY
ST. JOHN'S
FERRYLAND
RENEWS
ST. MARY'S BAY
0
10
20 Mi