

# **“Pigs is my business”**

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Melvin Baker and Peter Neary

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## **“Pigs is my business”: Joe Smallwood on Himself, 1945**

MELVIN BAKER AND PETER NEARY

### INTRODUCTION

Following its establishment, in 1944, by an Act of the Commission of Government, the St. John's Housing Corporation began assembling land to carry out its extensive plans for the beautification and improvement of Newfoundland's capital.<sup>1</sup> The corporation had expropriation authority and one of the land-owners affected thereby was Joe Smallwood, who owned a farm on Kenmount Road, northwest of St. John's proper. Part of this farm was taken by the corporation for its long-term development purposes, whereupon Smallwood appealed the valuation put on the property to be thus transferred to the public body. On 13 June 1945 he made his case before the Board of Assessors assigned to hear such appeals. Smallwood was represented on this occasion by his future political ally, Leslie R. Curtis,<sup>2</sup> and the St. John's Housing Corporation by G.G. Tessier. Questions were put to him by both the lawyers and by board members J.A. Winter and F.W. Bradshaw. The transcript of the hearing is printed below, with minor editorial adjustments; the original is filed in Smallwood's papers at the Archives and Special Collections (COLL-285, 1.05.003), Memorial University Libraries, St. John's. The spirited exchange between the claimant and the lawyers and assessors offers insight not only into Smallwood's past and present but into the future he then imagined for himself. As such, the document is a valuable source for Smallwood biography.

Born in Gambo, Bonavista Bay, on 24 December 1900, Joseph Roberts Smallwood grew up in St. John's. In the 1920s he worked as a journalist, travelled

to Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, and was active in union affairs. In the 1932 general election he ran in Bonavista South for Sir Richard Squires's Liberal Party but was defeated. In the depths of the Great Depression of the 1930s he and his family lived at The Scrapes, Bonavista, while he organized an abortive fishermen's co-operative union. In 1937 he published *The Book of Newfoundland*, an ambitious compendium, in two volumes, of Newfoundland history and lore. The same year he began broadcasting a popular radio program, *The Barrelman*, over VONE, St. John's. Thanks to the *Barrelman* series, which he kept going until November 1943, when he again left St. John's, he had one of the best-known radio voices in Newfoundland. In 1941 he edited the weekly *The Express*, which lambasted the British-appointed Commission of Government but lasted for only a few issues.<sup>3</sup>

By this time he was also farming, having acquired the Kenmount Road property (which included a house, barn, small work building, and well house) from the Giannou family of St. John's. According to his own account, this happened in 1939, but the land transaction (with Frieda H. Giannou) was not formalized until 2 January 1943 and not registered until October 1945.<sup>4</sup> He paid \$3,250 for the farm. On 7 January 1942 he obtained a mortgage (registered two days later) of \$9,000<sup>5</sup> on the property from Leslie R. Curtis. The mortgage covered land, buildings, and all "farm equipment, Machinery, and animals," with the last mentioned being listed as follows (with editorial adjustments): "1 Slaughter House; 970 White Leghorn Pullets; 138 Young Pigs; 15 old Pigs; 1 Horse; 1 Pony; 11 Geese; 1 Tractor; 1 Plough; 1 Harrow; 1 Spike Harrow; 1 Long Cart; 1 Catamaran (horse); 1 Catamaran. (Pony); 1 Buggy; 1 Side Sleigh; 1 Horse harness; 1 Dodge car; 1 Dodge Pick-up; 1 Ford Van; 1 Sawmill (saw, Mandrel, Belt); 1 Cow; 1 Car trailer; 1 Wheelbarrow; 5 Pick-axes; 4 Hand Hoes; 3 Shovels; 4 Axes; 2 Buck-Saws; Quantity Poultry equipment; [and] 2 Electric brooders."<sup>6</sup> To get the farm going, Joe persuaded his younger brother Reg and his family to move there, eventually joining them with his own family. In his 1995 book *My Brother Joe*,<sup>7</sup> Reg Smallwood gives a vivid account of the Kenmount Road venture, which raised poultry and pigs and grew a variety of crops. Joey (as he came to be often called) likewise gives an account of his farming days in his 1973 memoir *I Chose Canada*.<sup>8</sup> To get the piggery started, animals were imported from Prince Edward Island, whence the Smallwood family had originally come to Newfoundland.

In late 1943 Joe put his newly acquired knowledge of pig farming to good use when he linked up with Group Captain D.F. Anderson, the commander of the Royal Air Force Transport Command unit at the Newfoundland Airport,

Gander, to run a piggery for the duration of the war at that strategic base, which was being administered at the time by the Royal Canadian Air Force. It was this opportunity that led him to abandon his popular radio program.<sup>9</sup> The Gander operation used food scraps from the base to help feed the pigs, which were raised to supply the airport's busy kitchens with pork products. The new piggery, which had a ready market for its products, flourished, and, after Joe had been instructed in curing techniques at Wellington Packers in Guelph, Ontario, featured a smokehouse. It was while thus gainfully employed that, on 1 December 1944, Smallwood was notified of the expropriation of part of his Kenmount Road farm. As mortgage holder, Curtis was also named in the official order, which was issued under the authority of the St. John's Housing Corporation (Lands) Act, 1944.<sup>10</sup>

"Pigs is my business," Smallwood told the Board of Assessors, but with the exit of the visiting forces from Gander after the war and the return of the airport to civilian control, this meant making a living out of the St. John's farm, a point he emphasized at the hearing. As events unfolded, though, his future lay not in pigs but politics. In December 1943 the United Kingdom government had announced that, following the end of the war in Europe, it would provide Newfoundlanders with machinery whereby they could decide their own constitutional future (the Commission of Government had been in office since February 1934).<sup>11</sup> In December 1945 the British announced that the first step in this process would be the election of a National Convention in Newfoundland to advise them on constitutional choices to be put before the people in a vote on their constitutional future. Arrangements for this body, to be elected on a territorial basis, were made in an Act dated 21 May 1946.<sup>12</sup> One of the provisions of this Act required local residence in order to represent a district.<sup>13</sup> This gave Smallwood, always on the lookout for opportunity, an opening he did not miss; he ran in Bonavista North, which included Gander, and won handily.

From the floor of the National Convention he became the leading advocate of Newfoundland's union with Canada, a cause that, following a fierce political battle, prevailed. Newfoundland became a province of Canada immediately before the expiration of 31 March 1949, and the next day Smallwood was sworn in as its first premier. He remained in office until 18 January 1972, presiding during that time over an economic and social transformation that inspired his 1968 biographer, Richard Gwyn, to call him an "unlikely revolutionary."<sup>14</sup> Though his attention was pulled in many directions as first minister, Smallwood, like Prime Minister Sir Robert Bond before him, always maintained

an interest in the agricultural potential of Newfoundland. When, in the late 1950s, he had an architect design a strikingly modernist house that was built on Roaches Line (inland from South River, Conception Bay), the surrounding property (known as Russwood Ranch) was already being farmed by his daughter Clara and son-in-law Edward James Russell.<sup>15</sup> In “Newfoundland House,” as his new residence was called, Smallwood (like Bond at “The Grange,” his now derelict estate at Whitbourne) was very much in his element. “If I were a rich man,” he told the 1945 hearing, “I would have a nice country house with a nice bit of land around it to walk about in.” On Roaches Line, time permitting, he realized this gentlemanly ambition. As for the Kenmount Road property, he held on to what remained after the 1944 expropriation and in 1966 sold it to Royal Trust for \$110,000.<sup>16</sup>

## DOCUMENT

Evidence taken before the Board of Assessors

At St. John's, June 13, 1945.

Claim No. 63

Property No. 77.

G.G. Tessier, Esq. representing the St. John's Housing Corporation.

L.R. Curtis, Esq., K.C. [representing the] Claimant.

(Mr. Curtis asks that Mr. Smallwood's statement of claim be accepted as evidence. Accepted)

JOSEPH R. SMALLWOOD (SWORN):

Examination in chief by Mr. Curtis.

Q. At the moment, Mr. Smallwood, where are you living?

A. I'm living in Gander.

Q. Where is your family living?

A. On the farm.

Q. When did you go to the Gander?

A. I went there in December of 1943. About a year and a half ago.

Q. What were you doing previously to that?

A. Farming; on my farm.

Q. Is that the farm on the Kenmount Road that the Housing Commission is taking?

A. Yes.

Q. When you went to Gander, Mr. Smallwood, did you neglect the farm?

A. No. I was farming last year to a limited extent. My wife and son are there, and my son operated a tractor and they cultivated some land — not on a commercial scale, but they kept the farm running.

Q. My question really was: Did you give up farming to go to the Gander?

A. No. Not permanently.

Q. What is your arrangement with the Gander? Is it a permanent one?

A. It is a partnership agreement with the R.A.F. I manage the piggery, provide the pigs, labour, sell the pigs, supervise the slaughtering and smoking of the hams and bacons and so forth. We divide the profit. The term depends on the duration of Gander as an airport. When the R.A.F. and R.C.A.F. forces move out of Gander, the piggery enterprise comes to an end.

Q. In other words, a short-term arrangement?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. And what were your plans after you left Gander?

A. To resume farming on the Kenmount Road, even more so than I had done. I had quit broadcasting, quit everything, and was going to devote myself just to farming.

Q. In other words, you were going back to the land?

A. Yes. Broadcasting hasn't a permanent future. That is why I bought this farm.

Q. Then, you are on sort of a leave of absence from the farm?

A. Yes. I thought it too good a thing to turn down.

Q. You went to Gander to accumulate capital?

A. Yes. To accumulate all the capital I could to expend it on my farm. I had already spent quite a bit on the farm.

Q. How many years had you been farming?

A. 3. But this was a broken down farm when I bought it. It had not been actually farmed for 8 or 10 years before I went there. And I had to build it up. I had to buy manure from Lesters,<sup>17</sup> from the Municipal Council, and wherever I

could get it. But for these three years I had really got it in good condition. Then, I did a lot of fencing, and built over 120 feet of poultry-house myself after I went in there. The poultry-house is over 120 feet long.

MR. WINTER. This is not being taken?

A. No.

MR. CURTIS. What part of your farm, Mr. Smallwood, is being taken?

A. About half of the cultivated land and the best of the cultivated land. Really, there is no farm left, now.

Q. When you say it is the best — how do you figure it is the best?

A. In this sense: The man who had it rented for about three years before I got it knew absolutely nothing about farming. When he ploughed up the land, he took all the sod off it — took all the topsoil off and carted it away. I have the heavy soil in there now. That is what I got. He stripped off all the good topsoil in his ignorance. He did not know what he was carting away.

Q. That is not what is being taken?

A. No. What is being taken was not ploughed by that man. It had been laying idle for 10 years. I ploughed it up, manured it and used it right away.

MR. BRADSHAW. Were you prevented from doing that work?

A. Doing what?

Q. What you just said there. Were you prevented from operating the farm as a going concern?

A. Oh, no. But that is what will happen when this land is taken.

Q. Won't you have sufficient land to go back to?

A. I have enough to grow my own vegetables.

Q. Will you be able to do commercial farming?

A. Certainly not.

MR. WINTER. What is the area being taken?

A. 2.6 acres. You see, Mr. Chairman, I was not operating my farm as the men around here do, grow potatoes, cabbage and so on. Mine was purely a livestock farm. I wanted to devote myself to poultry and pigs. I had no cattle — just a cow for my own use, a horse which we used working around the place, and a tractor. I had 1,000 White Leghorn hens. For poultry, you have to have pasturage

as well as grain. I also grew certain stuff for sale — and sold it — but primarily the arable land was to support the livestock, and the dwelling house and the barn and the poultry-house all formed a group there, all formed one large group of buildings, all of which was to be supported by this cleared land. Now, the cleared land is gone.

MR. WINTER. But I understood you to say that that cleared land had not been broken.

A. Not for 8 or 9 years preceding my taking it over. As soon as I took it over, I ploughed it up and fertilized it, and made it into my best land. This is the land you are taking. The rest of my land, the part that is left to me, was stripped of its topsoil by this party I was telling you about. He, in his ignorance, took all the good topsoil and carted it away, leaving only the subsoil. It will take years to build that up again. But that is not the part they are taking. The part they are taking is the best of the land.

Q. It is now in good condition?

A. It is in perfect condition after three years of my working at it. You will understand, Mr. Chairman, that a sodded field laying idle for a number of years may be in poor condition generally speaking, but if it is "lay land" it has absorbed nitrogen into it, and when you turn it over and add fertilizer to it, you have excellent ground to work with. In other words, you build it up, and that is what I have been doing for three years.

Q. When did you get your notice that this was being taken?

A. In December, I think. It was just before Christmas when I phoned you (Mr. Curtis) from Gander. It was delivered to me at Gander, I think it was in December.

MR. WINTER. It is submitted, apparently, that this land is arable land — the best class of land.

MR. CURTIS. There is not sufficient remaining arable land to operate a farm.

Witness. To support the buildings I have.

MR. WINTER. How many acres of arable land altogether were on your farm?

A. Possibly about 6 acres of cleared, arable, cultivated land.

Q. Of which 2.65 acres are being taken?

A. Yes. Almost half of my cultivated land, and by far the better half.

MR. CURTIS. Then, you have more arable land in the frontage than is being taken?



A. That's right. Right along the main road — along Kenmount Road. (Mr. Smallwood shows where his arable land is located on the plan. He also points out to the Board the location of his houses (2) and various farm buildings.)

Q. How many acres of land are there altogether on the farm?

A. I have 40 acres altogether. The cleared, cultivated land is about 6 acres. It may not be quite 6, but it is close to it. You know, I bought 100 truck loads of manure from Lesters to build up that ground since I went in there. 100 truck loads at \$5.00 a truck load is \$500 worth. We brought it in there in the winter and piled it on the snow.

MR. WINTER. What kind of business can you do on what is left?

A. If I were a rich man, I would have a nice country house with a nice bit of land around it to walk about in. I wouldn't have any use for the farm buildings. I have one of the best barns around here. It was from Giannou, the sweets man, I bought the farm from. He got it to grow cauliflower and things for his store. He intended to look after the farm himself and have his two sons look after the Water Street shop and the shop at Rawlins Cross. One of the sons went and joined the Navy, so he and his remaining son had to operate the shops. He built a splendid barn in there. It is a brand new barn not more than 5 years old. Then, the poultry house I have in there is new, too. I built it myself after I went in there. It is 120 feet long and takes 1,000 hens — White Leghorns. All these hens need a lot of pasture land to graze on — for you must put hens out to pasture. Then, this other house, this bungalow I have in there. We went to a lot of trouble in connection with that. My brother, who was working on the farm with me, lives there with his family, and we cut a path out to the road through the trees to give him his own entrance.

MR. TESSIER. Couldn't you clear a couple of more acres of land in there?

A. I could. There is no law against it.

Q. Mr. Martin of the Kenmount Lumber Company in there cleared a lot of land lately.

A. They have a lot of it cultivated that was cleared for the last 50 years. The Chinese — several Chinamen on Water Street had quite a lot of land cleared there back from the road. I don't think Martin cleared any. The cultivated land they have there now was cleared a long time ago.

Q. Mr. Martin in his evidence said he had cleared some — in his evidence before the Board here.

A. Well, now, maybe he did. I have been away for one and a half years.

Q. That is the point. You are in a better position than some of the other owners, who have had practically all their land taken from them. Altogether, you have had a little over 3½ acres taken from you out of your 40-acre farm, and only 2½ acres out of arable land of your 6 acres. What did you grow in these 2½ acres?

A. I grew mainly cauliflower, and I used to keep MacDonald's fruit stores supplied completely, also Bowrings and Caines on Duckworth Street East — all the good class of shops. I used to have it the earliest.

Q. That would not affect your livestock business?

A. Mainly this arable land is for pasturage for pigs and poultry.

Q. And surely the taking of these 2½ acres would not affect your barn to the extent of \$6,000 which you claim in your statement?

A. The barn is no good to me now.

Q. Did you grow anything else besides cauliflower?

A. Cauliflower, lettuce, carrots, beet, potatoes. One year I grew 200 barrels of turnips for which I got \$6 a barrel. But turnips grow best in land that is "lay land." You would be taking a risk to grow turnips the next year.

Q. Why is that?

A. You would probably have "bumbleweed."

Q. Could you give us some details of the amount of vegetables you grew?

A. I'm afraid I couldn't. I'd have to trust entirely to my memory, which isn't so good. You see, I never kept any records. But I'll always keep records in the future — I understand the value of doing that now. We keep complete records at the piggery at Gander. My wife could tell you about the vegetables though, I'm sure. She could tell you one year after the other. But, as I said, primarily that land was to support my livestock — pigs and poultry. My poultry feed costs me \$12 a day — the hens have got to have grain, they cannot do without it. Neither can they do without pasturage — they need green stuff as well. And the pigs need green stuff, too. I had great plans for my pig business. After I left Gander, I was going to go back to my farm and start the finest and most modern piggery in Newfoundland. I have visited 150 of the best in Ontario during the last 7 months — the best piggeries in Canada — and not one could compare with the one we have at Gander. I was going to operate my piggery on a wide scale, operating in conjunction with the piggery a smoke house and curing

my own hams and bacons in addition to producing my own pork. I was going to produce lard and other pork produce — a regular little home industry right on that farm. Now, I cannot do it. I can keep my horse and cow.

MR. TESSIER. What would it cost you to clear 2½ acres out of those 40 acres?

A. To take the trees off, stumps and rocks — I don't know anybody who can do it. The Government tried for 3 years to get equipment to do it.

Q. If you employed 2 or 3 men, how much would it cost?

A. Frankly, I have no idea. Then, when you had it cleared it would take 10 or 15 years to build it up into something. My whole point is this: I bought that farm to make a living — I will be out of Gander in December, and I had hoped to be able to make a living off that farm for the rest of my life.

Q. What is the value of the barn?

A. I had Mr. Cummings<sup>18</sup> value it, and he put down the replacement value at something over \$8,000. It is a splendid construction. He also puts down over \$1,000 depreciation — he says it will take that to put it into condition. I don't know where you can spend \$1,000 on that barn — unless he means it needs another coat of paint. That barn has got a concrete floor, electric light in a part of it, and running water. I really don't know how you could spend \$1,000 on it. The barn is new — only about 5 years old.

Q. What type of construction is it?

A. It is substantially built — solidly built. An earthquake could hardly knock it down. It's all heavy timber with cross pieces between. It's a very solid barn. And of modern design. It is not a flat roof — a modern farm roof — a Dutch roof. It has large doors, one on the second floor for taking in stuff on that floor.

Q. What did you pay for the farm?

A. I got the farm when it was a “drug on the market.” I got it for nothing.

Q. What price did you pay for it?

A. I got it for \$3,250. That included the big barn and the dwelling house. But I spent nearly \$2,000 on the house after I got it — put in water and sewerage and raised the roof and built 3 more rooms on it.

Q. Can you carry on your poultry business without that land?

A. I might carry on a poultry business, but I couldn't carry on my pig business the way I planned. The pig business was to be my main business. I have spent nearly 5 years on pigs — have been to Canada and entered the packing houses,

and studied curing of porks, hams and bacons. I was to have a small packing house and piggery — that was my plan.

Q. Hasn't it been the general practice to keep pigs in very small places? Several people appeared before this Board who kept pigs on very tiny places.

A. Yes, it is true that some people raise pigs that way with a fair amount of success. But pigs need pasture — must have it. And poultry must have it. It is as necessary as food and water and air to them. If you are to prevent disease. In fact, you can't keep pigs on the same pasture 2 years running. You have to rotate your pasturage. You have to set it out alternate years with rapeseed to cleanse it. I have learned a lot about pigs since taking over the job at Gander. We had 700 and 800 pigs there. I have got the equipment now to start a real piggery, and I had my place to do it on.

MR. WINTER. How did you arrive at the figure of \$6,000 for depreciation of the barn?

MR. CURTIS. That is a guess. The barn is no good to Mr. Smallwood now. It is roughly a suggestion. He has the same problem — much the same problem — as Mr. Macpherson.<sup>19</sup> It's the same type of claim.

Witness. The barn will be of no earthly use to me, when I cannot have my pigs there. I have had 200 pigs in that barn. The barn was for them to sleep in.

MR. TESSIER. What percentage of your arable land was used for growing things in? Would you say half?

A. No. About a third.

Q. Did the pigs have sufficient land to graze in, then?

A. Well, I didn't know as much about pigs as I do now. I know now just how much pasture a pig needs. However, I had more cleared land than I own. I had rented that piece next to me from Fahey.<sup>20</sup> I tried to buy it, but could not get it unless Mrs. Fahey went through some long, drawn out proceedings. The property is in her husband's name. He is not dead — he is out of the country, and Mrs. Fahey would have a lot of difficulty before she would be able to sell it.

Q. This land you rented from Fahey was arable land?

A. Yes. All his arable land.

Q. What did you pay him for that?

A. \$150. The position is that Mrs. Fahey's husband went away 15 years ago, and has not been heard of since. She had three sons. One died and one joined the

Home Defence — that son was hauling coal for Cashins, and the other son is home. I gave them \$150 for the land and also supplied them with their winter's vegetables and firewood.

MR. BRADSHAW. How much of Fahey's land did you rent? That little jib?

A. More than that little jib. They had about 4 acres of land that I used. (Mr. Smallwood points out on the plan the section of land he had rented from Fahey. He also indicates where he pastured his pigs and where he had erected a summer pig house, or a "colony house" which was a temporary shelter about 100 feet long by 10 feet deep by 6 feet high. That shelter was taken down.)

Q. How much do you think your vegetables were worth?

A. I wouldn't like to be specific about that. One year I got \$6.00 a barrel for turnips and I had 300 barrels of turnips.

Q. Did you give any of those turnips to your pigs?

A. Oh, yes, definitely. I sold 200 barrels — in addition to what I gave the pigs. With regard to cauliflower, MacDonald's bill was \$220 or \$230, Bowrings' bill would have been about \$80 or \$90 — Caines on Duckworth Street \$40 or \$50. Then, all kinds of people used to come to the farm. Crowds of people used to drive in and wanted to buy this and that, and went away with armfuls in their cars.<sup>21</sup> I used to take in \$1.00, \$1.50, 50¢ — I suppose it would run up to \$100 during the season. My place was sort of well known and we had a lot of visitors, and every one wanted to buy something or other.

Q. What do you think was your total income from vegetables?

A. I couldn't really say.

Q. It comes to \$1,455.

A. I took in more than that. I took in more than that.

Q. What are turnips worth a barrel now?

A. I don't know what they are worth now — that was three years ago.

Q. The current price, I think, Mr. Smallwood, is \$5.

A. I couldn't say. But I kept no account of my returns from the farm — although I would take in gross, in cash, from \$2,000 to \$2,500. That was not all profit.

MR. WINTER. What do you estimate your profit is?

A. I am afraid I cannot. That is nothing to do with livestock at all. My bill for seed would be about \$100 — for fertilizer, I imagine \$150 to \$200. For manure,

I would spend \$500. That is, of course, the first year. I did not spend quite as much the two following years. I had quite a bit of my own manure.

MR. BRADSHAW. Half of it was profit?

A. Yes. I would say that, or more.

MR. CURTIS. That is not counting the pigs?

A. No — apart from the pigs.

MR. WINTER. You are claiming \$3,000 for loss of profits?

A. Yes.

MR. CURTIS. He is claiming for loss of profits in the future because of being disturbed.

Witness. Do you think \$3,000 is too much? I think it is too little.

MR. WINTER. Could you tell us anything about your profit on your pigs?

A. Well, that is sort of a sad story. I could tell you about my profits for the last year and a half at Gander. I had planned to operate on the same principle exactly here.

MR. TESSIER. How long have you kept pigs out there?

A. Three years.

Q. On the Kenmount Road?

A. Yes. It's a very sad story. I went into pigs for the first time in my life — I had never kept one pig before then. But I was interested in the pig business, and I followed the best information available — Billy Joy, Dave Squires and all those who raised pigs in a big way, and I learned all that they knew about raising pigs. I lost a lot of pigs and they lost a lot of pigs that year.

MR. CURTIS. In other words, you lost your profit on pigs?

A. That was because I was a green hand. I know the pig business now.

MR. WINTER. Is it safe to say, generally, you did not make any profit on your pigs?

A. I wouldn't say that.

Q. Why did you go to the Gander?

A. Because I met up with the Commanding Officer at Gander, Group Captain Anderson. He came in to see me, and between us we cooked up a very fine

deal, certainly too good for me to turn down, and a wonderful chance to accumulate the capital I needed to put that place in first class condition. That is why I left. I am probably the only partner in the world with the R.A.F. It is a 50-50 partnership. I went out to make money for the purpose of spending it in this new industry.

Q. For the first couple of years you paid for your experiment?

A. Everyone lost without exception — rearing pigs. Got it in the neck the same year I did. The reason I went in there was, as I said, to make some money, and to get the right connections. Under our contract, the R.A.F. must be supplied with pork, but we made other contacts, and had enough pork to sell to Bowaters, the Royal Stores, Goodyear and House and others. Most people who are in the pig business raise pigs and sell the carcasses, and it is a profitable thing. We process the hogs after they are slaughtered, cure hams and bacons, and use every bit of the pig but the proverbial squeal — use the blood and bones, manufacture lard, save the hair and bristles.

Q. You think your job at Gander will be over soon?

A. It will be by Christmas.

Q. You intended to come back to St. John's and do the same thing?

A. Yes. And I have everything to do it with. I can't bring the building in from Gander, but I can bring everything else.

MR. WINTER. You could make some arrangement with the Corporation to rent back your property. It is doubtful whether they will be at the western extremity for years.

MR. CURTIS. You say that that barn will be of no further use to you when the Corporation takes your land?

A. With the reduced acreage it is no good to me — useless to me. In fact, I would go as far as to say that it would only be an expense to keep up.

Q. What did you use the barn for?

A. Pigs.

Q. Is it two stories?

A. Yes. I kept hens in the loft.

Q. You can still carry on your poultry business, can't you?

A. I can't make a living on poultry. Pigs is my business.

Q. Didn't you build a poultry-house?

A. Yes. 120 feet of poultry-house. You are supposed to have for White Leghorns 3½ sq. ft. of clear space per hen. 20 by 120 wouldn't give you enough room for 1,000 hens.

Q. When you speak of the business you did on your farm, you are thinking of the amount you did on 10 acres of land — 6 of your own and 4 you rented from Fahey. We are only dealing with 2½ acres now.

A. I had the land from Fahey mainly for hay — hay for the horse and cow.

Q. That claim for \$6,000 depreciation of the barn is purely an estimate?

MR. CURTIS. Yes, it is a guess. Mr. Smallwood was out of town and I had originally made a claim valuing the barn at \$3,000. Mr. Cummings made a detailed examination of it and put it down at \$8,160. That seemed rather high, and I myself suggested his cutting down the figure 12½% for depreciation.

Witness. I don't see how the barn has depreciated to the extent of \$1,020. It is a brand new barn. It may need another coat of paint, but it wouldn't take \$1,020 to paint that barn. If \$1,000 is taken off because you think \$8,160 is too high, that may be reasonable.

MR. WINTER. How does it compare with Macpherson's barns?

MR. CURTIS: I suppose, Mr. Chairman, it would represent most nearly the one on the Oxen Pond Road. The Macpherson barns are all fitted up with stalls, have water in for the cows and things like that.

Witness. The barn is a nice size barn — I had 200 pigs in it. I was able to run the water in — had an electric pump — and could water the pigs in the barn. There was electric light in it.

MR. BRADSHAW. How was it you couldn't make the pigs pay?

A. That year I lost the pigs, there was an epidemic — a kind of cholera. A lot of men lost their pigs — Dave Squires, Fagan, Billy Joy, Guzzwell, Gulliver. It was prevalent all fall and the following spring, and caught me with two lots. I went to the Government to do something about it and had a conference with Dr. Bishop, Tabor and Kent Carter.<sup>22</sup> I was representing all the pig raisers. We discussed the matter for about three hours. We demanded the Government bring up a highly expert veterinary from Ottawa.

MR. WINTER. All this was kept pretty quiet.

MR. CURTIS. Is there any other point you wish to discuss?



Witness. I don't think there is anything else.

MR. WINTER. On the point of frontage, where does that Mount Ken Lane lead?

A. It goes in to the church property — the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation owns a tremendous amount of land lying between Thorburn Road and the Kenmount Road. It is a public road. People use it. I have to fence my property on both sides, otherwise cattle will get in.

MR. WINTER to Mr. Tessier: Is that considered to be a public road?

A. Oh, yes.

MR. TESSIER. What percentage of your land do you use for your pigs?

A. The percentage of arable land — I would say 2/3rd's of it. I used the rest for produce and pasturage for 1,000 hens.

Q. You purchased this farm in 1941?

A. Earlier than that — this is 45 — 44 I was in Gander — went there in December of 43. Yes, I guess it was 1941.

Q. Prices were fairly high when you bought it?

A. No — the boom had not started. The thing at Fort Pepperrell<sup>23</sup> had not started, and everything was a drug in the market in the way of land. I couldn't believe my eyes when Giannou advertised it for sale in the *Telegram*. Unfortunately, I read it in the night, but I drove in the next morning and took a look at it. I looked at the barn and travelled all around the place. I thought there was some mistake. He sold it for nothing — but he was in no position to do anything else.<sup>24</sup> But since buying that place, I have spent quite a lot on it. I have a lot of money tied up in that place.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful to Jock Bates (Victoria, British Columbia), and Dale Russell Fitzpatrick (Roaches Line) for advice and assistance.

NOTES

- 1 The corporation was established by the St. John's Housing Corporation Act, 1944 of 20 July 1944. *Acts of the Honourable Commission of Government of Newfoundland 1944* (St. John's: King's Printer, 1944), No. 36, 132-41. The corporation's expropriation authority was provided for in the St. John's Housing Corporation (Lands) Act, 1944 of the same date. (Ibid., No. 37, 142-53).
- 2 Leslie Roy Curtis (1895-1980) was the law partner of Sir Richard Squires (1880-1940), with whom Smallwood was also closely associated. He established the law firm of Curtis and Dawe in 1939. He was Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Province of Newfoundland, 1949-66 and 1969-71, and President of the Executive Council, 1966-71. For his career, see Robert H. Cuff, Melvin Baker, and Robert D.W. Pitt, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1990), 75-76.
- 3 The paper was published by The Express Publishing Co. Ltd. of St. John's.
- 4 Frieda Hope Giannou (1898-1968) was born in New York ([ngb.chebucto.org/Cemetery/giannou-frieda-hope-mt-pleasant-prot-sjw.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Cemetery/giannou-frieda-hope-mt-pleasant-prot-sjw.shtml)). Her husband, Christos (1877-1962), was born in Niata, Greece ([ngb.chebucto.org/Cemetery/giannou-christos-g-mt-pleasant-prot-sjw.shtml](http://ngb.chebucto.org/Cemetery/giannou-christos-g-mt-pleasant-prot-sjw.shtml)). The sum of \$3,250 in 1943 dollars is equivalent to \$45,389 in 2013 dollars (calculated from [www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/](http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/related/inflation-calculator/) and rounded, here as elsewhere, to the nearest dollar).
- 5 Equivalent to \$125,693 in 2013 dollars.
- 6 Registry of Deeds, Service NL, 59 Elizabeth Ave., St. John's, vol. 165, 466-67.
- 7 Reg Smallwood, *My Brother Joe: Growing Up with the Honourable Joseph R. ("Joey") Smallwood* (published by author, 1995).
- 8 Joseph R. Smallwood, *I Chose Canada: The Memoirs of the Honourable Joseph R. "Joey" Smallwood* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1973).
- 9 *Evening Telegram*, 25 Nov. 1943.
- 10 For the expropriation notice, see Registry of Deeds, vol. 185, 3.
- 11 For this announcement and the events that followed, see Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988).
- 12 See National Convention Act, 1946 in *Acts of the Honourable Commission of Government of Newfoundland 1946* (St. John's: King's Printer, 1946), No. 16, 108-206.
- 13 The qualifications for candidacy in the National Convention election were specified in section 20 (119-20).
- 14 Richard Gwyn, *Smallwood: The Unlikely Revolutionary* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968).
- 15 For the architectural history of the Roaches Line house, see Robert Mellin, *Newfoundland Modern: Architecture in the Smallwood Years, 1949-1972* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011).
- 16 Registry of Deeds, vol. 834, 600-03. The equivalent figure in 2013 dollars is \$781,445.

- 17 The Lester farm is on Brookfield Road, St. John's. See Hilda Chaulk Murray, *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday: Agricultural Life in St. John's* (St. John's: ISER Books, 2002), 169.
- 18 William Cummings, contractor and builder.
- 19 Harold Macpherson. For this farming operation, see Murray, *Cows Don't Know It's Sunday*, 77-78.
- 20 Edward Fahey.
- 21 Dr. Ron Whelan of St. John's was one of them. He remembers shopping there as a boy with his father.
- 22 Dr. Alexander Bishop, who had studied veterinary medicine at the Ontario Veterinary College and the University of Toronto, was the government's chief health inspector. K.J. Carter was assistant secretary and finance officer in the Department of Natural Resources (he later became secretary of the department). J.E. Tabor was Director of Agriculture, Department of Rural Reconstruction.
- 23 The U.S. Army base established near Quidi Vidi Lake under the terms of the Anglo-American Leased Bases Agreement of 27 March 1941.
- 24 As noted in our introduction, the 2 January 1943 indenture in the land records of the province is between Frieda H. Giannou and Smallwood.