

Magistrates' Reports on the State of Fishing Stages in Newfoundland in 1936

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Introduction

On 16 February 1934 a British-appointed Commission of Government was inaugurated in Newfoundland after the legislature of the Dominion had agreed to the suspension of responsible government. The Commission of Government had three Newfoundland and three British members, all appointed by London, and was presided over by a British Governor. The Commission had full legislative and executive powers, but was subject to the supervisory control of the British government, the Governor-in-Commission being responsible to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs. The Commissioners saw their principal task as the delivery of efficient government, unfettered by the patronage practices that bedevilled previous Newfoundland administrations.¹

One of the goals of the Commission was the “rehabilitation” of the Newfoundland economy and society. Interviewed in Halifax on their way to St. John’s to assume office, British Commissioners Sir John Hope Simpson and Thomas Lodge declared that the rehabilitation of Newfoundland would depend on “prosperity” being brought “back first to the producer, for upon the condition of the producer depends the condition of the country. . . . It is no use to start at the top

and hope for prosperity to sift downwards.”² In March 1934, Lodge, the Commissioner for Public Utilities, told a St. John’s audience that the stark reality facing the country was that the salt fish industry, a mainstay of the economy, was incapable of generating enough wealth to support the population dependent on it. What was needed was economic diversification through the greater development of other natural resources; part of the population would have to be transferred to agricultural settlements.³ For his part, Hope Simpson, an experienced public administrator and the Commissioner for Natural Resources,⁴ set out to rehabilitate the fishing industry through legislation that would both raise the standard of the Newfoundland product and force fish exporters to work together for the common good. In 1936 the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, empowered to control the production and export of salt fish, was established, and St. John’s lawyer Raymond Gushue named as its first chairman.⁵ The new Board, it was hoped, could overcome the deep-rooted suspicion between fishermen and merchants and end the cutthroat competition among merchants in export markets. What the Commission wanted to change had been well explained in March 1929 in a letter Memorial College President John L. Paton had written to the Canadian marine biologist A.G. Huntsman: “. . . those engaged in the fish business of Newfoundland — merchant, planter and fisherman alike — are, in their conservatism, persisting in putting new wine into old bottles. With little (and indeed frequently with no) modification they are following the methods of drying, curing and marketing the fish that have been inherited as it were from past centuries.”⁶

On 28 November 1935, as its reform effort gathered momentum, the Commission appointed a public inquiry into the sea fisheries of Newfoundland and Labrador focusing on the financial arrangements between merchant and fisherman, the “methods of catching, curing, preparing, handling, marketing and exporting fish and fishery products,” and the methods of “culling, inspection and classification.” The inquiry was also to look into the prices fishermen received for their fish and how such prices were determined. Supreme Court Judge

James Kent⁷ was named to head the inquiry. His colleagues were: Herbert R. Brookes,⁸ a senior executive with major fish exporter A. Harvey & Co; Ernest Watson,⁹ an accountant; and James Lewis Little,¹⁰ a Bonavista schooner captain who had represented the Bonavista district from 1924 to 1928 in the House of Assembly.

As it went to work, the Kent inquiry benefited from another Commission of Government initiative: the reform of the magistracy to make it a more effective administrative arm of government. The purpose here was to make up for what Hope Simpson perceived to be the “absence of local government and leadership at the settlement level.”¹¹ Under the new system, Newfoundland was divided into seven administrative districts with each district placed under the control of a chief magistrate with some legal training. In effect, the magistrates were the ears and eyes of the Commission at the local level. Each chief magistrate was aided by several assistant magistrates and represented all the Commission’s six departments in Government’s interaction with the public at large.¹²

On 20 March 1936, by circular letter 102, Secretary for Justice Brian Dunfield¹³ instructed the magistrates to report on the state of fishing stages¹⁴ — used for curing fish — in their areas. His circular and the replies he received are printed below. The magistrates’ reports identified problems in the fishery at the local level and confidently recommended ameliorative action. Some magistrates advocated for a concerted advertising effort to encourage fishermen to maintain their facilities in a good, sanitary state. How the stages were constructed, how fishermen cleaned and prepared their fish, how fishermen kept (or did not keep) insects out of the stages, and how they maintained the stages once work was finished are described in detail in the reports sent to St. John’s. Many stages, the magistrates reported, needed physical repairs and improved sanitary arrangements.¹⁵

The findings of the magistrates informed the Report of the Kent Commission, whose 242-page report was released on 10 September 1937. With that report in hand, the Commission of Government, working through the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, systematically

addressed the many problems in the production of salt fish the new empowered magistrates had identified. What follows are the various magistrates' reports. They provide interesting insights into the state of and challenges faced by the fisheries during the 1930s when both the merchant-exporter and fisher had long resisted government regulation in the production, culling, and marketing of salt cod. The reports underscore the need for change in the salt fish industry that Paton had suggested in his 1929 letter.

Document

Circular Letter #102

The Salt Codfish Board¹⁶ desires to form some comparative idea of the sanitary conditions of the stages throughout the country in which fish is split and salted. They desire broadly to find out: whether there are any individual settlements or districts where higher standards are maintained in this direction than in other localities; and, if so, in what way the standard of maintenance is better.

After discussion of the matter with the Board, we find it difficult to lay down to you any standard by which you are to judge this matter, and broadly speaking we feel that all you can give us is an idea of whether any individuals or settlements in your own districts are better than others in this respect. You might help out with a comparison with conditions in any other part of the country of which you may happen to have experience.

We realize that you will find it very difficult to draw comparisons, since the probabilities are that the vast majority of stages in the country are almost uniformly unsatisfactory; but what we primarily want to find out for the Board is, in what districts or parts of districts, if any, as far as your knowledge goes, the best practices exist in this connection.

The ideal stage or premises for handling fish should be kept thoroughly clean, possibly disinfected from time to time (to kill bacteria or spores which cause decomposition, dun and other defects in fish), lime-washed throughout inside at the beginning of the season,

screened with wire or muslin against the entrance of flies and, generally, kept fresh and wholesome. All floors and tables and other places where fish is placed should be washed down at least once a day with clean water. Clean fresh-drawn water should be used for washing fish and dirty water thrown out at frequent intervals. Guts or refuse should not be allowed to accumulate about the premises so as to breed flies.

If you know of any individual premises or settlements where these ideal conditions exist, we shall be glad to have them pointed out by name. If not, regarding this as the standard, can you point out areas where there is anything to be found approaching this condition, and on the other hand areas where conditions are particularly bad?

When a report along this line has been received from all Magistrates, it will be possible to make a closer study of special areas.

Assuming that conditions in your district are everywhere unsatisfactory, how far would you think it practicable to improve the conditions this season, and how would you suggest that this be gone about?

Please reply on Miscellaneous Report forms.

Magistrates' Reports

1. Magistrate J.B. Wornell, dated Clarendville, 24 March 1936.¹⁷

Having been in business for twenty years at Greenspond, and doing business with the "Shore Fishermen", and handling many thousands of quintals of Shore caught cod fish, having from two hundred to four hundred accounts open with the fishermen, residing in the different communities, and some years buying "Two Thousand" "Three Thousand" and some years "Four Thousand" qntls according to the catch for the season, these amounts being purchased and collected from the men who caught and cured the cod fish. Some men having twenty, some thirty, some fifty, some one hundred qntls, up to two and three hundred quintals for a crew. Having visited the fish stages when the fish was salted, and having seen the conditions under which our fishermen have split the fish, and salted the fish, and the stores where the fish has been stored, when partly dry, and when dry, and ready for shipping to us. I have often with tears in my eyes, told our fishermen

from year to year what would happen if greater care was not exercised by them in preparing the fish as it was an article of food; I found that not five percent of our people ever realized it was an article of food. I have seen people splitting, curing, salting, washing and placing Green fish in one end of the stage, and a Pigs Pen in the other end of the stage. I have warned our fishermen, that all stages should be lime washed on the inside, but very few ever realized that this should be done to prevent infection.

I have purchased cod fish from fishermen under the talqual system,¹⁸ and paid the same price to the man whom I knew was not very tasty in his home, and the appearance of his premises was not all that could be desired, and the fish when it was made was not all that could be desired; all because he did not realize that the cod fish he was catching and curing was an article of food. Many of us knew these conditions could not continue. The catching, splitting, washing, curing and drying is the fishermen's job, and they should see to it. Yes every man should see to it that his fish, is as good as can be made with sun or salt. The exporting is for the exporter. That is his job, he should see to it that the best price is obtainable according to the market price for good fish.

In my jurisdiction, there are very few fishermen, i.e., "Shore Fishermen", but at a few of the settlements on the outside of the bays there are a few Labrador Fishermen. In order to have our fishermen have clean fish stages, and keep them clean I suggest that posters be placed in every community, keeping this before the mind's eye of the people, what is required from them in this direction, and that poster will be the means of educating our fishermen along the lines suggested by the Commission. Our fishermen will become awake to the fact that the time is come for them to keep their stages clean in order to have cod fish fit for human consumption. I am convinced within two years' we shall see a vast improvement in the quality of our fish.

The posters which I refer to will have as much effect as a travelling Agent would going from place to place, talking about clean stages and good fish. I further suggest that wherever possible a [police] Constable

or Ranger¹⁹ visit a few fish stages to let the people know in each community that the Constable is attending to the conditions of peoples' stages, and advising them what they should do; with the same earnestness as the Constable would have advising them to clean up their back yards. Conditions as expected by us within the next two years must be brought by co-operation of all; all working together for the common good of each community. Please pardon me for making references to my years in the general business and fish buying, but it certainly helped me acquire a thorough knowledge of the fish business.

*2. Magistrate Michael Sinnott, dated Placentia, 26 March 1936.*²⁰

In my district there is very little to choose from in the individual care and cure of salt codfish, with the exception of a few cases for the better, and a few others for the "worse," to which I shall refer later on. In no case do I recall having visited any stage where conditions were anywhere near ideal, in fact not within miles and miles of it. In no case did I find any stage lime washed on the inside, at least not recently. It is true all stages and tables, after splitting and dressing is finished, are washed down with water drawn from the harbour, and mostly mops are used to aid in this process. Almost without exception those stages are old and dilapidated. The floors are invariably made with "longers,"²¹ unfaced, to make washing down easier, and so under those conditions the exclusion of flies becomes almost impossible. It is a fact that birds could fly through most stages, not to mention flies, and to hope to exclude the latter would mean entirely new buildings, and differently constructed, which, with the present earnings of fishermen, is "hope deferred."

In three places visited last season, Patrick Wadman at Bar Haven, and Edwin Beck's and Walter Beck's at Sound Island, I found conditions pretty good. In the handling of dry fish the stores of those men were ideally clean and wholesome. Their stages, apart from being kept clean, were no better than the rest, lacking lime wash and fly exclusion. Those three firms buy fish in small quantities from the shore fishermen, which fish is handled directly under their own supervision. I

could not detect a bad smell, nor find a badly cured fish in any of those stores. Those stores are outstanding. There may be others similarly good that I had not visited. Those men are what we call good fish makers; they know how to dress and salt, when to wash, when to spread, and when to make up, and soon as possible to get the fish off the flakes and into their stores, from where it is taken out again, when weather warrants, and give further curing.

Washing fish: This is part of the curing process that requires very serious thought. During the splitting all fish heads, entrails, bones etc. are dropped through a “scuttle” right under the stage into the shallow water and allowed to remain and fester there. If fish be plentiful this place in a short while becomes a “stench hole”, and it is from this immediate vicinity (very immediate) the water is drawn with which to wash (!) the fish. Now, on a wild coast, such as the Cape Shore, this does not matter so awfully much, as the sea in a measure washes the offal away, yet even at that a lot of it remains under the stages, many of which are just beyond the edge of the water at high tide. But it is to the more or less enclosed harbours and coves that I would draw attention.

To particularize: A few years ago I visited the settlements of Red Island, and Paradise, during the fishing season, and when voyages were fairly good. I saw the water being drawn from under the stages for use in washing out the fish from salt bulk. Horrors. The whole harbour was in a state of pollution, while under the stage, from where the water was being drawn, it was simply awful. Incidentally a number of young boys were diving into and swimming in this water. Those boys were the only living things — if we except bacteria incalculable — in this water, for truly no fish could live there, not even a dogfish. Those two particular harbours are not improved by the rise and fall of the tide. There are somewhat similar places around the bay, but those two are the worst by odds as far as I know.

Flies, every house was teeming with them. Can they be kept out of the stages? Fly screens? Yes with new stages, new doors and fittings, and constant care. Can those people be induced to take their fish outside the harbours to wash? I do not know, fresh water is not available

in those harbours, nor is it in many harbours, and where it is found it is seldom or never used. Most fishermen do not look upon fresh water as suitable for this use or purpose.

There are many firms in this bay who keep their fishing premises in fine order, notably perhaps the two Wareham firms at Hr. Buffett, and another Wareham at Spencer's Cove, but fish is not usually split on those premises; most of it coming in either a dried or salt bulk state.

To improve conditions: In partially enclosed harbours I would suggest that it be made compulsory for fishermen to drop all offal into boats, and then take these boats outside the harbour and then dump the offal overboard. (Small quantities are used for fertilizer, but for our purpose this would be immaterial). In the absence of this the fish itself could be taken out at washing time, or water might be brought in, but I think the first would be the easier method. In the absence of screen or fly netting, the stages might be kept dark during the day time, thus inducing the flies to vacate the stage for the sunlight. Lime washing should be included in the order.

3. Magistrate Edward Russell, dated Springdale, 27 March 1936.²²

As it will be four months before I can obtain any additional first hand information on this subject, these remarks must of necessity be based on observations made last Fall. A more accurate report can be given later, but it will obviously be useless in its practical application in the coming fishing season. It will be noted also that these remarks are the result of general impressions rather than of any inspection made for a definite purpose.

I have been into a larger number of stages in this as well as other districts. Nowhere have I noticed the ideal conditions you describe. Screening against flies and disinfectants are practically unknown, and it is years since I have seen a stage washed with lime. Offal is invariably thrown or washed down through a hole in the flooring, and very often this hole is below the high water mark. This makes for very unsanitary conditions at low tide, but in many such cases it is very inconvenient to have the stage built further over the water.

We distinguish between dirty and clean stages mainly in the regard to the amount of washing with clean water they receive. I cannot quote instances by name at the moment, but there are in every place in this district men who are clean in this respect and others who are very negligent. In places like Long I[sland], and L[ittle]B[ay] Island, for example, the best fishermen go away in schooners, and those who fish from the shore do not give these places the reputations they deserve. It must also be noted that the bulk of the fish in this district is caught from schooners in Northern waters and it is only to be expected that such fish is generally handled cleaner than shore fish. There are two things which determine whether a man keeps his stage clean or not. (1) His interest in the work. (2) His general idea of the value of cleanliness. One man's stage is sometimes cleaner than his neighbour's residence.

There is a factor omitted in your circular that is of too great in importance to ignore — dogs. These animals are essential to the district in Winter, but the effect when they are allowed to frolic around fishing stages and flakes is nauseating and detrimental to the cause of better fish. Only the fear of being considered unnecessarily outspoken keeps me from giving details of things I have actually watched in disgust. Unfortunately the 1935 Dog Act will do nothing to remedy this, as by its terms all licensed dogs will be allowed to run in day time. This nuisance is most common at Triton, Leading Ticksles, New Bay, Round Hr., Tilt Cove and Shoe Cove, the last named place being now in La Scie District.

I should like to add also that some fish is in a fair way to become cullage before it ever reaches the fishing stage. Many fishing punts are filthy and never thoroughly cleaned out from one day to the next. Fishermen are often careless about keeping one fish protected properly from the sun by "gang boards," while they are catching the next. I can readily testify to the overnight filth in fishing punts because I have travelled in them as a passenger.

Fishermen in general must be taught two things. (1) To take greater interest in their work. (2) To have a better idea of the value of cleanliness in general. I should like to discuss briefly three agencies through which this may possibly be done.

The schools have missed most of their opportunities for doing this during the last generation or two, and it is likely that the "New Curriculum" will be very little more helpful to us than the "Old."²³ Not only is our education too theoretical and abstract, but the worse still, practical truths taught in schools are bound to be in an impractical way and children will learn words without appreciating the value of their meaning. Hundreds of outport children who never clean their teeth can obtain full marks on "the use of the tooth brush." At any rate, education in these matters through the schools will take years and will certainly be of no use for the coming season or two.

A system of inspection with regulations and legislation to enforce them would help as a last resource. However, I am convinced that conditions can be improved in a more satisfactory way. No such system, however strictly enforced, will affect the main issue at point — the fisherman's own attitude toward his work.

I respectfully submit that the solution of much of the problem rests in the hands of the merchants who buy the fish. For years (since the days of talqual) they have been meting out to the careless fisherman the natural punishment of his negligence. Unfortunately the mischief is done before the fish reaches the culling board. I submit, however, that the merchant can do a great deal before this stage in production, and beg to submit the following suggestions to the consideration of the Board.²⁴ I am convinced that a united campaign on the part of buyers, with some help from the Department of Natural Resources, will give results.

Several fish merchants have room on their premises to clean and cure a large quantity of fish. These can buy fish from the knife and have it made under their own supervision, with a capable foreman in charge. There are one or two old timers in each place well qualified to oversee the work. One or two places I know could be made ideal, with even running water for cleaning. Every merchant can quote a price for green fish to correspond with the market value of the cured product. Offer a price which would be attractive to the man who usually makes cullage. Turn away from your wharf an occasional catch brought in a dirty

punt. After all, we can never have uniformity in cure, while each curing factory (stage) is run by a man whose ideas of cleanliness etc. are different from every one's else. I admit that this is not practical in all cases as many buyers have no room on their premises for such work to be done.

Every merchant sees his dealers at [least] once a year (he sees the honest ones at least twice) but when a man comes for supplies, he, or some employee has an excellent chance to impress a few facts on the man. Let the merchant, for example, sell (or give if need be) to the fisherman a small supply of lime and some disinfectant, and tell him how and when to use it. Also a hint about the general cleanliness of his stage and the possibility of inspection. This hint need not be bluffing. Such inspection could be done, not by specially paid inspectors — I have a better suggestion below for the use of the money that would be spent on their salaries, but in most cases by the merchants themselves. Surely, since the merchant's reputation in the market for quality, as well as his business profits are alike at stake, he has a right to send one of his "shipped men" to inspect a dealer's stage. In cases where the dealer lives far from his supplier, there are Government agents in every district who could, on next visit, inspect the stage of a limited number of men whose names had been submitted by a supply merchant. The thing is so important that I believe the Department of Justice would be quite willing to allow a magistrate or policeman to spend a few extra hours in a place for this purpose. Careless fishermen can be brought to see that fish made in a dirty stage under dirty conditions cannot be No. 1 even if it does actually appear so under the culler's eye. In any case, as suggested above, why wait till the culling board?

I am risking ridicule on my third suggestion, but I wish to emphasize it more than the others because it is less obvious, and has never been attempted to any extent whatever. I submit, however, that it is well worth trying for a year or two. I do not mean in the usual sense of increasing sales. (That is a marketing problem with which this report cannot deal), but the advertising of an idea — the idea of cleanliness. It is deplorable that the only public encouragement to be clean is in connection with the boosting of some fancy soap or cosmetic, and the

only reference to the fly menace is in reference to some insecticide which the poor man cannot buy. The country contains thousands of posters boosting cigarettes, chocolates and hosts of things, which have not the combined value of choice cured codfish. I suggest a campaign of advertising, to sell to our people the idea of the necessity of cleanliness in making fish. For years to come, if not for all time, a large number of our men must make fish and good fish, or they will starve.

Years ago we used to flood the country with posters, pamphlets and slogans to win votes for our party. Why should we not try the same means to win earnest workers for our declining but still necessary fishing industry? Pamphlets would be almost useless and booklets entirely so, because the men we want to reach are not going to read these things (they do not realize the need). Far more useful for the purpose would be posters, single sheet circulars, and slogans — something to attract the fisherman's eye on his way to church, if not to his stage. Things that could be posted in public places and in shops and stores, displacing if need be those referring to lyes and liniments. Things that could be put on rubber stamps, so that post office officials in fishing villages might stamp on letters before distributing the mail. I have seen far less worthy propaganda stamped on the blotters of school children. Hundreds of fishermen, who do not know what bacteria are, can still remember, — “food will win the war — don't waste it.”

Ten simple rules could be drawn up and circulated (on single sheets). If need be, they could be printed on the covers of the scribblers which are to be sold to outpost stores. Such rules and all slogans etc. should be short, snappy and attractive. Boys will memorize them, maybe laugh at them, but some of it will be absorbed. Our problem is in dealing with that section of our community who do not often read editorials, but always were and still are susceptible to catchwords and phrases. This has been done in campaigns to protect our forests, but can be even more effective here, because we have only to enlist the fishermen themselves, and need take no account of outsiders. The protection of forests would be easier if all men were loggers. Posters etc. in this connection must be more varied in their wording than

forest propaganda, because our present problem has more angles.

I regret that it is impossible to give details regarding individual settlements or men at present. Stages will be closed for some months. However, after the re-opening of the fishing season such details will be easily obtained and will be forwarded in due course. Meanwhile, I submit the foregoing with all sincerity and respect as suggestions, which though they may not afford a solution to the problem, may well be worth a trial, as helps towards a solution.

4. Magistrate Albert J. Walsh, dated Grand Falls, 30 March 1936.²⁵

There is no information that I can give respecting the matters contained in the above circular, as there are no fishermen in my section. I shall, however, keep the matter in mind when I visit the sections of the assistant magistrates in this district.

5. Malcolm Hollett, dated Bell Island, 31 March 1936.²⁶

With reference to your Circular No. 102, I beg to say that on Bell Island there are no stages; in fact there are only two men who do any fishing and they are fishermen-farmers; and devote very little of their time to fishing.

I have however some idea of the stages of the shore fishermen on the Burin Peninsula, and whilst generally conditions are not of a very sanitary nature, in many cases some of the fishermen's stages approach more nearly to the ideal stage or premises as described in your circular. The worst stages are built as follows: On shores or props out over the water — the floor being constructed of round sticks or longuers [*sic*]. The stage, box shaped, about 8 ft. high and boarded up with rough board, having no shingles or clapboard. The roof is scarcely ever water-tight, and no part of the building is ever, as in your ideal stage, fly-tight. The longuers which form the floor do not fit, and being round, form crevices well suited to hold slub²⁷ and offal from the fish, all round the splitting table and the bulks of salt fish. These crevices are not easily cleaned out. Where the crevices are not plugged up with slub and dirt they permit free entrance for flies. All round the walls,

too, flies can enter and leave at will. I am not suggesting however that it is possible to build a practical stage which will be fly proof.

The fish is usually salted in these stages along by the wall in bulks about 3½ ft. wide, and it is inside by the wall along by the nape of the fish that the flies deposit their eggs, care not having been taken to fully cover with salt the napes. The better stages are about the same shape and height but, instead of being floored with longuers, they are planked with good board which is laid down probably one eighth to one quarter inches apart all round the splitting table, and anywhere the fish is to be handled. This does not allow of any crevices where the slub cannot be cleaned out by the application of plenty of water and the use of the rod-broom.

The sides of the stages are boarded and clapboarded and the roof is kept water tight with felt and tar. Instead of salting the fish in one long bulk along by the wall, the whole side of the stage is divided into several compartments or lockers and boarded up, and the fish is salted therein. When one of these lockers has been filled for eight or ten days, the fish in that particular locker can be washed out and spread on the flakes to dry, whereas in the long bulk system the bottom layers of fish may not get washed out for a month, or two, if the bulk is big and the weather bad, as is very often the case. This results in sour, pressed out fish. These small lockers too can be more easily protected from flies, and a small surface of the fish is exposed to the air during the curing process.

No light salted fish should remain in salt bulk more than a certain number of days, but I have often seen trap fish remain in bulk for two months, especially when fish has been plentiful and salted in long, huge bulks. This fish when eventually dried is rough and cheesy and very often becomes slimy if made during bad weather. In fact it has been so long in bulk it is very difficult to clean.

There are unfortunately very few stages on the south side of the Burin Peninsula which compare favourably with the type of stage described in your circular especially having regard to cleanliness, and I know of no individual case which I can mention which could be taken

as a model stage. The only cleaning given in ninety per cent of the stages after the fishery is over and the salt bulk has been removed is the dashing of a few buckets of polluted salt water drawn from underneath said stages. Formerly however people were more particular as to cleanliness.

I respectfully suggest that a thorough advertising to the fishermen of what is required of them early in the season with regard to cleanliness in handling, care in salting, washing and drying, coupled later with a rigid standard of culling, and as far as possible a standardization of prices for the various culls, would in a very short time work wonders in the production of a good article for the different markets. Your suggestion of a thorough cleansing of stages in the Spring with a moderate use of lime is an excellent one, and with the cooperation of the Constables in the various settlements this could be arranged for this season.

*6. Magistrate Beaton Abbott, dated Twillingate, 3 April 1936.*²⁸

I visited some of the stages at Durrell's Arm and found them in a fairly satisfactory condition. The floors are made of plank washed before and after splitting. The tables are washed and swabbed after splitting and all blood is removed. The fishermen are hook and line men and the fish caught is salted in puncheon tubs holding about 2 quintals each. Before salting holes are placed in the bottom of the tubs and lime-washed inside. The fish is salted in the tub and a canvas covering placed over the top to keep it free from bacterial contamination. After four or five days under salt the fish is removed and washed. The first washing removes all salt and any blood found on the napes, it is then washed in clean fresh-drawn water, brushes and cloths are used to remove any slime that maybe found on the back of the fish. It is then given the final washing and allowed to soak in the water for half an hour. Before spreading on flakes the fish is allowed to remain in the stage for an hour or longer in order that the water may drain from it. All fish offals are thrown into the sea and do not accumulate on the premises. The people of this settlement are noted for making good fish, and the handling of it previous to the drying contributes to making it an ideal article of food.

The fishing settlement of Crow Head, Twillingate District, has conditions far from ideal. The stage room is limited there and a number of crews are found splitting and salting fish in the one stage. The stages are constructed similar to that of other places but no felt on the roof, hence when it rains the water runs on the fish. The fish is salted in about 10 quintal bulks, and with so many occupying the one stage very often the doors are left open, admitting the flies. The flies attack the napes of the fish and cause maggots. There is a difference of opinion as to washing the fish from the knife. Some contend it makes the fish ragged looking, and when dried has a rough appearance. The fishermen wash their fish in two waters to remove all the salt and slime that may be found on it. A good deal of fish coming from this settlement has a yellow colour, some say it is due to the water (rain) falling on the fish while in bulk. The fish offal is thrown into the sea, but very often it is found on the shore in a state of decomposition.

Cobb's Arm is a fishing settlement with stages about 8 feet high built partly over the land and partly over the water. The roofs are covered with felt and the floors with rough plank. The fish is salted in small bulks about 5 feet long and 3 feet high. Before salting, the fish is washed in clean water and the blood removed from the napes. The fish is placed under salt and remains some four or five weeks before washing commences, in the meantime, the stages are kept dark and all doors and windows closed as much as possible to prevent flies entering. No offal is allowed to remain on the premises, and after each splitting the table and floors are washed down. The water used for washing the fish comes from the sea, and small lots are washed at a time, the washing is done with cloths and brushes. Three waters are used in the washing process and when completed the fish is removed and placed in the stage, at the same time a little salt is sprinkled on the fish which gives it a white colour when dried. I have inquired as to the quality of fish produced by the people of this place, and I am informed by fish buyers that the people are good fish-makers.

Herring Neck people are noted for making good fish. The stages are built over the water and are kept in a sanitary condition. The fish is

washed before it is split and after thus removing any blood that may be found on the napes. The bulks are boarded around so that flies are unable to enter. All the blood or waste that results from splitting is washed down with clean water, and a little lime sprinkled over the floor. The doors are closed, only when necessary are they opened. The fish remains under salt about one month, then it is taken and washed in three waters, brushes used in some cases to remove anything that would tend to make the fish slimy. After it is thoroughly washed it is laid away for a few hours, then spread on flakes about eight feet high and carpeted with green boughs. Judging from the quality of fish shipped here year after year the people can be classed as good fish-makers, and their success can be attributed to the way the article is handled during the curing period.

I understand that sanitary conditions of most stages in my District can be classed as fairly satisfactory. There has been a marked improvement within the last five years. Since the prohibition of the talqual system,²⁹ people have realized that fish is an article of food, and in order to get the best price a certain quality of fish has to be produced. That quality can be made by introducing proper facilities for washing fish and for the disposal of waste. I would suggest a Government inspection of fish premises, and if necessary some instruction given our people along sanitary lines. There should be a standard of requirements, and persons found not observing such should be punished.

*7. Magistrate Cyril J. Greene, dated St. Mary's, 7 April 1936.*³⁰

First of all I may state broadly that conditions are everywhere unsatisfactory. Of course I have been in this district during only one fishing season, but during the past Summer I have visited stages in various parts of the district. Few of them were fit storage place for food intended for human consumption. I do not know of one stage in the district which at all approaches the ideal as laid down in your Circular. I am sure that there is not one stage in which disinfectant is used. Possibly, an occasional one may be lime washed but I have not see[n] it. Nobody uses a screen on his stage to keep the flies away. No special

care is taken to keep splitting tables or draft barrows clean. The refuse is usually thrown into the sea. I did see one man at Regina, Colinet Island, packing moss along the napes of the fish in salt bulk, to keep the flies from blowing on them.

At Riverhead, the fishermen usually have good fish, but this is undoubtedly due to the fact that dory men there have small quantities of fish to handle and can therefore give more time to curing it.

At St. Vincent's conditions are particularly bad. This is mainly due to the fact that the fishing is done there by traps and that the fishermen have to handle a large quantity of fish during a comparatively short period. The fish is left in salt bulk for two months; it is not usually washed from the knife, but is salted without washing. The men do not have time when splitting to wash before salting. Very few use vats for washing their fish. They wash it in the water of Holyrood Pond. I may say that the only care that is taken of the fish in salt bulk, is that it is usually sheltered from the rain. Conditions might be improved during the coming season in so far as all stages should be lime washed inside before the fish is placed in them. The fish should be washed in vats and the stages kept as clean as possible. It would be very hard to effect a general improvement during one or even several seasons, by propaganda or merely moral suasion. Some element of compulsion will have to be introduced. If there is a relief supply given in this district during the coming season (and if there is not, ninety percent of the fishermen will not be at the fishery), the recipients might be asked to sign an agreement to abide by certain rules regarding the cure of their fish and the fishery officer could visit stages and see that those rules are carried out. Failing this, legislation might be enacted and strictly enforced regarding the curing of fish.

8. Magistrate Nehemiah Short, dated Fortune, Fortune Bay, 7 April 1936.³¹

I visited in all eight stages in this place, three of these were small buildings about 12 by 14 ft. and approximately 8 feet high, the others were slightly larger. I felt that the time was inopportune to see the true condition under which fish is split, slated and cured, for at this time of

the year there is no fishing done in this place, that is no inshore fishing, hence the stages were not in use for fishing purposes. Nearly all fishermen in this place use their stage in Winter and Spring as a store house where all sorts of things are kept. In all of the stages I visited, without exception, I found them littered with trawl gear, trawl tubs, dories, odds and ends used in the fishing industry. Two men were using their stages as carpenter shops and workhouses, hence chips and sawdust were in evidence on the floor. One person had a hay loft above, or on the top flat so that hay seed fell through the seams and mingled with the saw dust. All this of course did not add to the appearance of the stage at this time of the year. The stages used for workhouses were considerably larger than the rest and were unquestionably the cleanest and brightest. The work shop material is cleared out before the fishing season commences and the owners assured me that everything is cleaned up before the fishing starts.

The stages are built of rough lumber and there is usually a seam space between the boards varying from 1-8 to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch, it is not uncommon to find part of a board missing, thus leaving a larger opening where flies may enter. The stages are usually floored with plank or longers flattened. Underneath the splitting table is a hole, commonly called a trunk hole for drawing water and is also used for escape of waste. In all of the stages I noticed the accumulation of blood, gut and liver on the wall near the splitting table, this is caused by the splatterings from the table when heading and splitting fish. The fish is salted in what is known as pounds, these vary in size, are constructed with rough boards and are usually square or oblong in shape. I pointed out the necessity of keeping these pounds clean. In each window a quantity of dead flies occupied the shelf, I presume they were the accumulations of years. There were no evidence of lime having been used, and I can't say that the stages on the whole presented a healthy appearance, allowance must be made however that the stages are not in use at this time of the year and that a little cleaning later on before the fishing commences would make them fairly presentable.

(i) Dantzic Point, Fortune Bay April 7, 1936

A number of fishermen from Fortune fish in the vicinity of Dantzic Point, they do not have stages. The fish when brought to land is split from the dory, the table is brought to the water's edge and the fish is cleaned and split as it is taken from the dory, and then salted in boxes or bales or whatever receptacle can be procured, sometimes these boxes are covered with a piece of duck or other covering. The splitting of the fish by the seashore is not at all bad as a plentiful supply of clean water is always at hand, the salting of it in boxes or bales mostly in the open does not tend to make good fish.

(ii) Grand Bank, Fortune Bay April 8th, 1936

I have not been able to obtain the exact number of shore fishermen in this place, there are probably from 50 to 75 dories, which fish part of the year, for the most part they have very poor accommodation. I could only find four stages that could be termed satisfactory. The Stoodley Bros have two stages which are on the whole very good, although the surroundings are not so clean, this is not the fault however of the owners. The stages of Wilson Rose and John Hickman Matthews are also fair and kept clean. None of them are limed. The remainder of the stages are scarcely worthy of the name, small buildings and dirty. There are quite a number of shore fishermen who have no stage, they take the splitting table to the water and split the fish and then salt it in boxes or tubs or whatever they can get hold of. These are then left in the open until the fish can be washed. The whole curing process is very unsatisfactory.

(iii) Grand Beach, Fortune Bay April 9th, 1936

The fishing stages in this settlement are better situated than any I have yet seen, they are apart from the settlement, are built on a bar of sand and rock which is almost surrounded by the sea. The surroundings are cleaner than either Grand Bank or Fortune. The stages are usually small, say about 10 by 12 ft., built of rough lumber, they are also used for storehouses in the Winter time. They are kept a bit cleaner than the ordinary stage, the reason for this that they are only used for salting fish in. The fishermen head and split the fish by the water and clean it, they then take it along to the stage and salt it in box like

pounds. There is no accumulation of blood and gut and liver as all this is removed in the beach before the fish is taken to the stage. It is difficult to decide now, what are the exact conditions under which the fish is salted as the stages are a bit messy from the storage of gear. These people can with little difficulty keep their stages clean, as it is only a matter of scrubbing the pounds or boxes. Lime is conspicuous by its absence. I have not yet seen a stage limed.

(iv) Garnish, Fortune Bay April 9th, 1936

Most of the Garnish men are bank fishermen and there are very few stages. The conditions here are very similar to those at Grand Beach, the men head, clean and split the fish by the seashore, then they take it along to be salted in pounds or boxes in the small stages. The absence of fish offal around the stages make them appear cleaner than where the splitting and cleaning are done in the stages — none of the stages are limed.

(v) Bay L'Argent, Fortune Bay April 22nd, 1936

The fishing stages at Bay L'Argent, Jacque[s] Fontaine and St. Bernard's are very few in number, these three places send nearly all the able bodies men to the Bank fishery in the Grand Bank and Bell[e]-oram schooners, hence there is no necessity for fishing stages except as a repository for fishing gear and equipment. No stages are now in use because no fishing is now being done, therefore I cannot give an exact description of what the stages are like when the actual fishing is being done. In all cases there is room for a good deal of improvement, the stages are so uniform that I cannot point out any that will come up to the required standard, or any that could not be made better, brighter and cleaner by the application of a little more washing and scrubbing. Apparently the most of our fishermen are still under the impression that our fish is an article to be sold to some unknown customer and not one to be eaten.

(vi) St. Bernard's, Fortune Bay April 22nd, 1936

There is very little inshore fishing done here, hence there are only three so called stages in this place. I visited two of these, and found them in a bad condition, they were not in use at present, but it is easy

to see that they were never kept clean, blood, gut, liver and the accumulations of years were seen around the sides and on the flooring. The longered wharf, usually the approach to the stages, were in these cases filled with spots of blubber, rotten fish and here and there an old barrel filled with liver or blubber of last year. The stages were about 8 by 10 feet, boarded with rough board, used as a storehouse for everything in fishing equipment and allowed to become filthy.

(vii) Grand Bank, Fortune Bay April 8th, 1936

In these notes I purpose to describe some aspects of the conditions existing at Grand Bank with reference to the Grand Bank fishing industry, principally on the making and curing of fish.

Statistics: 21 schooners outfitted and sailed for the Spring fishery, from Grand Bank, they took a total of 211 dories and 486 men, 121 of these men are residents of Grand Bank, the remainder are from Fortune Bay.

Grand Bank possesses no natural harbour, the small harbour existing there is situated at the mouth of a small brook and has been created artificially by dredging and by the erection of concrete piers. The water in this harbour is shallow, it is more or less stagnant, it is contaminated and polluted by sewers, drains, offal and waste from the slaughter house, by a certain amount of human excreta dumped into the harbour daily and into the brook by the dwellers along its banks, it is common knowledge that in Summer time the stench is so great in certain sections that it pollutes the atmosphere also. There is also a floating population of around 500 persons continually going and coming from the fishery, there are also a number employed in the foreign going trade besides workers on the wharves and in the stores, human excreta from all these are daily dumped into the harbour of a small and shallow and to a large extent stagnant harbour.

Fish washing: In 1935 there were approximately 50,000 qtls of green fish brought in this harbour and washed. In civil weather some of this fish was washed on the beaches outside the harbour, I am unable to say what proportion. It is, I think, safe to say that the great majority was washed in the harbour, in waters polluted as described, it

is not far from criminal to export such fish for human consumption. I presume the same procedure has been going on for years and is continued this year. I admit, that to a large extent it cannot be helped, the pity is, that the Grand Bank fleet has to work under such conditions.

Method of fishing: The fish is usually washed in what is known as fish pounds, there are oblong boxes, about 8 ft. long 10 ft. wide and perhaps 2 ft. high, they are not watertight. They are placed by the side of the schooner, the fish is then taken from the schooner by means of forks or prongs and placed in these fish pounds, the men stand in these pounds and wash the fish with a mitt, some of them perhaps use brushes, some of the owners have made efforts to have brushes used not with much success. The fish is washed by the fisherman from the schooner, that is another evil, for in the rush to get the fish washed so that the schooner may get away again, I fear the fish suffers. In fact I visited the waterfront while the fish was being washed and saw at first hand what was being done. The fish when washed is then taken in dory to another section of the harbour and piled until the weather is suitable for spreading. That the fish is not washed clean is very evident, I personally turned up several fish from the piles and found in nearly every case liver still attached to the fish, also clots of blood around the napes. Much of the liver attached to the fish may be later removed by the women makers I have no knowledge if it is or not, certain it is, all the blood clots are not removed.

Fish making: The fish is then taken by the women workers and spread on the first suitable day on made beaches, there are no flakes at Grand Bank, this is not so bad in the Spring as the sun is not usually powerful to do much damage. In the heat of the Summer waterhorse³² fish spread on the beaches is subject to at least two damaging influences, viz., the danger of burning, and the presence of clouds of dust usually stirred up by the motor traffic, which eventually settle on the fish. The merchant owner takes the attitude that the annual cost and upkeep of flakes would be greater than the loss incurred by sunburnt fish. The washing, curing and making of the Grand Bank fish leaves much to be desired, the remedy is simple,

the low price of fish does not warrant any increase in the costs of production, curing and making.

*9. Report by Magistrate Clarence W. Powell, dated Baine Harbour, 15 April 1936.*³³

In that section of Placentia West situated in my district, by far most of the fish is caught by Western, Cape and Jack boats on which it is both split and salted at sea. In certain settlements, however, particularly Flat Islands, Oderin, Paradise, Merasheen and to some extent Baine Harbour, the fish is shore cured.

At Flat Islands Mr. Ralph Parsons owns by far the best stage. He splits his fish out on his wharf thus ensuring plenty of water for washing the fish before salting. The depth at which the offal is deposited is also too great for it to become exposed at low tide. The stage is clap-boarded on the scantling and painted. It is also sheathed up on the inside. It is not, however, limed. The roof is water-tight, but the floor being constructed out of chopped sticks, is not. There is no netting and the flies have, therefore, easy access. Mr. Parsons has his stage divided into pounds that hold about ten quintals of fish; he can thus salt each day's fish separately and wash it out previous to drying in the order in which it was salted. When these pounds are filled they are covered and this helps to keep the flies from the fish.

The other stages at Flat Islands are merely clapboarded on the scantling, the roof may or may not be watertight and the floors certainly are not. In the majority of cases the fish is split in the same stage in which it is to be salted and Flat Islands having a shallow harbour, the offal from the fish is exposed to the air directly under these stages, at low tide. The inevitable result is that these stages are continually full of flies. As to how often the splitting tables and floors are washed down, I can give no direct evidence because I have not been in the district during the fishing season.

At Baine Harbour, Mr. J.R. Rodway has the best stage. This stage is clap-boarded on the outside and sheathed up on the inside. The walls are also limed annually. The roof is water-tight but the floor as

in all other stages seen by me, is made out of chopped sticks, and therefore, is not water-tight. Mr. Rodway splits his fish in the same stage in which he salts it, usually salting two days fish together if the catch is not too large. The offal from this stage is deposited in deep water and is not exposed at low tide. There is no screening, however, and flies must be numerous. The other stages in the settlement are very similar to those at Flat Islands with the exception that the offal from them does not become exposed at low tide.

The two above mentioned stages are the only ones which I have noticed in which any special effort had been made toward cleanliness. The stages at the other settlements mentioned, viz, Oderlin, Paradise and Merasheen are uniformly unsatisfactory and are almost identical with those described in Flat Islands and Baine Harbour.

The fish on this section of the coast is salted in salt bulk. That is, salted in bulks of anywhere from ten to forty quintals sometimes more. These bulks are built up on the floors of the stage and as the pickle forms, it runs down through. I have had some experience in fish making at Carbonear, Conception Bay but there the fish is pickled. That is, the fish is salted in puncheons and the pickle is retained. These puncheons are covered and very few if any flies come in contact with the fish until it is placed on the flakes. It would not be necessary, therefore, for the stages in which these puncheons are stored to be so elaborate as those in which the fish is salt-bulked. I know of no case in Carbonear where the fish is split in the same stage in which it is salted.

There is one practice in connection with stages that I have consistently tried to discourage since coming to this district. (I have never known it to happen elsewhere but the probability is that it does) and that is the use of the stage as a latrine. I have, however, been able to appeal only to people's common sense, and while everybody to whom I have spoken agree with what I have said, yet I have no reason to believe that the practice has decreased to any appreciable extent.

The first question that will be asked of any person who advocates an alteration in the present style of stage is, "Where are we going to get the money to do this"? In order that the stages even approach a

sanitary condition it will be necessary for the fishermen in the vast majority of cases to construct new ones. With a large number of our fishermen on relief and considering the present price of fish, I do not think that they would undertake this at the present time just for the asking. In order to bring about the necessary improvements, I think that it will be necessary to resort to some form of compulsion. This may take the form of:

1. An inspection similar to the present inspection of lobster factories. If the stage measures up to a given standard, then the fisherman will be given a certificate which he will have to produce otherwise he will not be allowed to sell fish. Inspection to take place before the fishing season.
2. An inspection and if the stage measures up to a given standard, then a bonus of 5¢ per quintal will be paid.

10. Report by Magistrate Matthew E. Hawco, dated Holyrood, April 1936.³⁴

In accordance with instructions issued in Circular 102, I beg to report that I have recently visited several fishing stages situated in various settlements throughout my jurisdiction.

During my visits I have inspected at least fourteen or fifteen such stages, and whilst they were not then in actual use, yet they very clearly showed conditions as obtained when last in use. These stages on the whole were very flimsily erected and very poorly cared for in the way of sanitation. The flooring of most of these stages visited consisted of loosely placed and open-seamed flattened sticks of small dimension. Seemingly the reason for these open-seamed floors is to allow the weather, slub and grime to drain quickly and easily through the floor as it accumulates. This would be all right if the idea were to be studiously carried out, but very often instead of the slub and grime accumulation passing through these seams, as intended, it sticks to the timbers and eventually takes on the condition of filth and unsanitary accumulation.

At the time I visited these stages they were not in actual use, but some of them very clearly indicated the putrid condition of the stage when last used for fish curing, floors, tables, tubs and walls being in a

condition where one would not expect food stuff could be sanitarily prepared. Some of the stages I visited were spotlessly clean, although flimsily constructed and evidence of carefully handling of fish was apparent from instant observation. From observation it seems that well equipped fishermen, in most cases, keep their premises in better sanitary condition than the fisherman of scanty means and ill equipped outfit. The poorly kept and uncleanly kept stage is probably the reflection of the state of mind of the owner of the premises rather than an intentional disregard of sanitary conditions and of unclean fish curing, but regardless of the cause I am very sure that some fish is prepared for consumption without due regard of the fact that it is human food stuff.

During the fishing season in some places I have visited on occasions I have seen new fish in salt bulk several feet high with the whole front of the pile, showing the napes, in complete state of decay and both fly-eaten and odorous, and nothing being done by the fishermen to remedy the situation, even when the napes were distinctly putrid the fishermen claiming that this condition would be remedied by washing when the fish would be taken out of bulk. Occasionally I have seen the interior of fishing stages lime washed, floors closely planked with gutter holes board and spaced sufficiently to afford drainage, plank vats, instead of tub for fish washing, permanently placed in the stage and splitting and heading tables as clean as water could make them, but in my observations there were the exceptions rather than the rule in fishing stages.

I have actually seen fishermen washing fish out of salt bulk in tubs where the water would become as thick with slub and slime as porridge, before the fisherman would change water in the tub. I presume this is a condition and practice well known to the average Newfoundland fisherman which can easily be corroborated. I am of opinion that if fish making were under Government inspection in this country the slip shod methods of curing would soon cease, if though to do this the curing would have to be centralized under supervision. I am of opinion too that the pickled fish curing system is injurious to the trade and should be abandoned by the fishermen or be banned by the

Government as an offence. With regard to unclean fishing stages, which are not uncommon, some fishermen actually do not seem to understand that in preparing an article of food it should be done in a scrupulously clean manner and even though the stage is flimsily constructed it can be, with little effort, scrupulously clean.

11. Report by Magistrate Leonard Ash, dated Carbonear, 1 May 1936.³⁵

In the Magisterial District allotted to me the following places properly may be designated fishing settlements:

Harbour Grace Electoral District: Upper Island Cove, Bryant's Cove, Bishop's Cove, Carbonear

Bay De Verde (B.D.V.) Electoral District: Crocker's Cove, Freshwater, Perry's Cove, Spout Cove, Adam's Cove, Western Bay, Ochre Pit Cove, Northern Bay, Gull Island, Burnt Point, Job's Cove, Lower Island Cove, Caplin Cove, Old Perlican, Bay de Verde, Grates Cove

Trinity South Electoral District: Lead Cove, New Melbourne, Hants Harbour, Winterton, New Perlican, Heart's Content, Heart's Desire, Heart's Delight, Cavendish

I have purposely delayed making a report on the information desired in the hope of making a personal inspection of a stage or two in every place, but all stages are at present in the same condition, probably as they were left in at the close of last season. A correct view of the conditions could hardly be made until actual operations commenced. Looking at the fishing properties all through the various places all appear to be about on the same level. There is one notable exception, that of the Heart's Desire co-operative fish handling plant. Here we see a big stage built to plan cleanliness dominant, a place to carry offal for collection and a contrivance for a supply of running water.³⁶

It is in a class by itself and I have seen no other stage approaching it. One of the most congested centres for fishing is that of Bay de Verde. Stages and flakes are literally on top of each other. Many are built on nearly perpendicular cliffs for lack of room and one wonders how they were built much less how fish can be handled at all. In conversation with Mr. M.J. O'Neill of the settlement he gave it as his opinion that there are twice too many people operating in the space available. For the quantity of fish taken in B.D.V. settlement it would be a thing impossible for it to be treated properly in any of its processes. Winterton has the reputation of turning out a good average of quality fish. If that reputation is well founded I do not attribute it to any superiority of the fishermen of this place over other fishermen, but rather to the natural facilities afforded. They have plenty of room and are not congested in space as, say, B.D.V., and with consequent advantages from winds and sunshine. The natural surroundings and conditions over which fishermen have but limited control are factors involved in the cure of the product. A conscientious fisherman can be thwarted in his efforts to make a good article if he is unfortunately compelled through force of circumstances to operate under conditions and surroundings that he is unable to cope with. Old Perlican has wide spaces also and natural conditions conducive to help the cure of good fish. I suggested to fishermen with whom I held conversation the use of lime in the stage, but from what I could gather it is rarely or ever used for that purpose. I did not ask concerning the frequent use of water, the quick removal of offal and similar essentials, as I feared the question would be very embarrassing. To ascertain the facts one must see the work in operation.

I am unable to point definitely to individuals operating in any superior manner to that of their fellow fishermen. There are two men, however, in the Carbonear, B.D.V. Dist whose reputation for being good fishermen has spread outside their immediate neighborhood. Their names are Levi Moores and George Moores. Both are brothers and returned from the U.S.A. some 25 or 30 years ago with a little money with the intention of starting in shop keeping. They abandoned

that plan not long after they returned and went into the fishery. They reside midway between Black Head and Adam's Cove and in addition to fishing they cultivate large plots of land and keep cattle. They are more than average intelligent, first class citizens and rarely ever fail to procure a saving voyage of fish. In conversation with the younger brother Geo. on my recent visit, I suggested a look at their fishing premises but he could not make it convenient at that particular time. I appreciated that the premises was quite a distance and he told me that when they go out to the room in the morning they stay all day until evening or night.

I would suggest for an improvement in the fishery for the coming season that a printed set of rules stating the conditions that are desirable be sent to the supplying merchant, and to pass a copy of them to the man in charge of the stage with a request that the rules be posted in a conspicuous place so that all may see them. Others could get them through the Relieving Officer, Constable or the Magistrate. The rules preferably would take the form of an appeal rather than that of a peremptory order. I am thinking now only of rules respecting cleanliness. As for rules or regulations involving expenses such as the necessity for lime and disinfectants it will be difficult for fishermen under present circumstances to find the money for these essentials. The outlook of the people in general is gloomy and all the encouragement and inspiration that can be given in anything put forward for their welfare is strongly advisable.

*12. Report by Magistrate F. Gordon Bradley, dated Bonavista, 25 June 1936.*³⁷

I have read carefully Circular No. 102 from the Secretary of Justice with reference to the standards of sanitation obtaining in the fishing stages of our fishermen.

The subject is difficult to discuss with any degree of accuracy for several reasons —

1. Varying facilities for cleaning,
2. The number of stages in a given area,
3. Whether the stages are permanent or seasonal,

4. Though I have been in many stages in the last few months, I have never paid particular attention to the condition of any with a view to a report.

5. To the average person a fishing stage is in the nature of things a dirty place. We judge largely by odours, and even the cleanest stage may leave an impression of filth if there happens to be a barrel or two of rotting cod-oil about.

A general description of a fishing stage is perhaps not out of place though most people have some idea of its character. It consists ordinarily of a rough building having a frontage of from ten to fifteen feet, about six or seven feet high at the eaves, a saddle roof and in length may be anywhere from twelve to twenty-five feet. The roof covering is either (a) rinds, and sods or boughs, [or] (b) felt. The walls are either of clap-board or ordinary rough board, and the floor of round sticks about three inches in diameter. The furnishings consist of a splitting table, tubs for holding fish or pounds for salt bulking or both. There is a hole on the splitting table through which offal drops into the salt water.

Ordinarily the stages are built over the salt water but there are places (the section of Bonavista known as the Cape Shore for instance) where by reason of the abrupt nature of the shore it is impossible to build over water. Where a stage is so built it is usually four to five feet above sea level. In the section including the Amherst Coves, Newman's Cove, Birchy Cove, Bonavista, Villa Verte, Lancaster, Spillar's Cove, Cape L'Argent and Elliston stages are necessarily of seasonal construction as they have to be taken in each autumn because of the exposed character of their locations. Because of the difficulty in obtaining timber many of these are of a poor character, small in size and quite inadequate to keep out flies.

Stages should, where possible, be built over the water for at least three reasons; —

1. It tends to coolness,
2. Ease in washing both stage and fish,
3. Offal goes direct to the salt water where it is harmless unless washed up on the beach by the surf.

Obviously rinds and sods make the best roof. Sods are capital insulators and help keep the stage cool. Felt is very objectionable. It attracts the heat, thus raising the temperature of the stage. Fermentation is thereby set up with the result that the fish in pickle becomes "sour". Sour fish can never be made a number one article. It is definitely bad, and in my opinion, is unfit for human consumption. Why some men use felt as a covering is difficult to understand. They know its evil effects; yet they buy and use it instead of sods which can be had for nothing. The only explanation of the practice is that is due to thoughtless disregard for quality and sheer laziness.

The cleanest stage I can recollect seeing last summer was at Silver Hair Island in Bonavista Bay. I do not recollect the owner's name. This stage was clean enough for any food packing purpose at the time of my visit, and it contained salted fish at the time. It smelled sweet — the odour of properly handled fish is not unpleasant.

In the Bonavista section there are some dirty places. Properly located stage room is difficult to get. The town itself is filthy with dogs and this, I fear, reflects itself into many of the activities of the people, including the handling of fish. We have about eight hundred fishermen and this would be an excellent place to start a campaign for cleanliness. I have never observed any measures of disinfection practised with the exception of washing down with salt water, and the thoroughness of this operation depends upon the owner and not the locality. I have not seen much limewashing done. Puncture tubs used for the salting of fish are often washed with lime in the spring of the year.

Wire or muslin fly screens are not used; indeed they would be useless unless they completely covered the walls and floor of the stage as these are full of holes, particularly the floor which is made of round sticks. In my opinion the proper plan is not to bar the flies out of the stage, but rather to have conditions within of such a character that it will not be a breeding place or a feeding ground for them. All fish receptacles should of course have adequate covers. Continual washing down with salt water and a good mop should effect this. It has been suggested to me that small pumps with the intake hose in the salt

water and a jet nozzle on the delivery end would be valuable. It would — as long as someone worked the pump. I think that a good slashing with the drawbucket is just as effective. There is no reason on earth why the over-water stage should not be perfectly clean if the owner wishes it to be so. Much more labour will be required to keep an over-land stage clean.

*13. Report by Magistrate William R. Kent, dated St. George's.*³⁸

For purposes of this question it can be said that only three sections of my district should be considered when viewing this question, St. George's, Port au Port and Channel. The settlements from St. George's West to Channel are primarily farming, although some small cod fishing is done but more attention is paid to salmon than cod fishing in this territory. It would be best therefore for us to keep in mind the above mentioned sections.

At the present season of the year cod fishing is more or less at a standstill, although at Channel the fishermen are waiting for a sign of fish to go about their work. During the fishing season last year I had only an opportunity to study the fishery in my district in a general manner, and since as I have stated, cod fishing has not yet started, I am unable to make an investigation with the above subject in mind. However I have gathered some general information which I will present.

I would regard that in my district, as well as in others, there is vast room for improvement in cleanliness in the handling of fish. I would say that with a few exceptions the fish is handled as cleanly in my district as anywhere else in the Island. I do not think there is any precaution taken against the entry of flies into stages or where fish is being split. In most cases I think I might say that the stage and splitting table are washed down and cleaned up after the day[']s catch is split, also I have no doubt that clean water is used in washing the fish. Beyond this however I know of no extra precautions which are taken. From my investigation I would say that the place where fish is most carelessly handled in my district is Sandy Point, Bay St. George. They split sometimes in the open air and throw offal around and the only

cleaning done is to throw a bucket of water over the splitting table. At Sandy Point however very little fish is handled, possibly only three hundred quintals.

I would say that altogether in my district that much improvement could be made in the cleanliness of stages. However to my mind there is another point apart from the cleanliness of stages, which contributes to badly cured fish, and this is not washing fish sufficiently, blood and other matter are often left on the fish after it is washed and I would think that this itself provides a fertile field for the growth of bacteria. It comes down wholly and solely to a question of performing each stage of fish curing in a thorough and efficient manner. The popular idea however to my mind seems to be to get the fish split no matter how (careless of whether part of the skull bone or back bone is left or not) and to wash the fish in most cases only sufficiently to clean off the blood that is on the face of the fish as a result of the splitting, but without allowing time to clean clots of blood and other matter which might remain in crevices, and if it does no other harm prevents the fish from being turned out a clean looking product. Also attention should be paid as important factor to the kind of salt used in curing the fish.

On the whole however I would regard the handling of fish as unsatisfactory. Perhaps I am wrong in saying that the faulty handling of fish is due to carelessness always. I believe that in some cases the fish is handled badly because the necessity of handling it in a cleaner manner is not seen by the people themselves. They do not see the need of extra precautions themselves and I am of the belief that before the present evil in this connection is to be righted that people must be shown the necessity for improvement in this direction and the result of improved methods. They must see before their eyes the fish which has been cured under improved methods and so that they may be able to compare it with the fish handled with less care and the difference apparent. Then further, they must see that if the fish are handled in a careful manner and a clean method that the net result will be more money in their pockets. Regulations can be framed for the enforcement of ideal conditions in stages but the difficulty will be in the

enforcement of them. The bare framing of regulations and publishing them to the fishermen merely raises an argument with the fisherman and it will be a matter of extreme difficulty in having them obeyed and costly in enforcing obedience. Of course regulations are necessary and must be made, but above and beyond this the fish curer must be shown the wisdom behind the regulations before they can be really effective. This of course cannot be done until the regulations have been observed and obeyed by the fisherman and the results apparent to him. How can we get the fisherman to obey such regulations as may be framed in the initial stages and have his co-operation in carrying them out? The answer to my mind is that closer individual contact must be made between the Salt Codfish Board and the fisherman, if they are to work hand in hand and they must so work if efforts are to be effective. To the fisherman the Salt Codfish Board is merely a name. It must be shown the fisherman that it is designed and organized in his interest with his good at heart and for his industrial and financial benefit, that above all it is anxious to help him and that it needs him and his co-operation to further his own interests, he must believe that in helping the Board he is helping himself. In other words his good will must be obtained and after that everything is possible. I find that the average Newfoundlander cannot be driven but he can be led. He is human, and if approached in a sympathetic manner showing that his difficulties and his hardships are appreciated and that an earnest endeavour is being made to help him, he will not be slow to respond. He has from past experiences been and is suspicious of regulations and changes in the methods of prosecuting the fishery. If he is confronted with regulations and penalties for breach he becomes more unsympathetic. The confidence of the fisherman must be obtained, when this is done all else is easy. How is this to be done? I believe through a personal contact. The Board and its interest and desire of helping the fishermen must be "sold" to each individual. At present it is only a name. To revolutionize the fishery the country must be canvassed as it never has been yet canvassed for a General Election. The Board and its methods, aims, objects and hopes for the future must be told the fishermen face

to face by persons under the authority of the Board who understand the psychology of the fisherman and know how to speak with them, who can go amongst them as a friend and it will be his duty to gain their confidence for the Board. These men as I have stated cannot be driven but they can be led. I know from personal experience that they appreciate a genuine interest shown them. They at present have the feeling of being neglected and, I hate to say it, exploited. Whilst at Channel a few days ago I had an experience which showed me this more clearly. I had had interviews with a few fishermen relative to accounts I was collecting for the Fishery Commission.³⁹ These men to whom I was speaking apparently told others that I was interested in the affairs of the man in the fishing boat and within a short time I had men coming to tell me their views and their difficulties, at the same time expressing to me their appreciation of my paying attention to them, saying that it was the first time they had been spoken to in this way or that anybody had made a personal contact to enquire into their difficulties. I had done nothing, merely asking one or two to tell me their difficulties and their troubles as men prosecuting the fishery. It is the man in the fishing boat with whom we need to make contact; he believes he is forgotten and is inclined to abandon hope and we must revive hope in him. This contact must show the endeavour and desire to help him. Regulations can be made regarding cleanliness in stages, improvement of standards and other matters vital to the success of the fishery, but they will fail without the goodwill and co-operation of the fisherman. Men must be assigned capable of making these contacts and working along lines designated above. Not only will they find that with these methods they will be able to further the best efforts of the Board, he will be proud to do so and that in itself besides helping the Board will be a means of gaining his goodwill and co-operation. I cannot be convinced after the experience of 1914–1918 that the fishermen of Newfoundland will not co-operate in a national crisis. We must show them that this is as great a crisis in our national life as was the period of 1914–1918, and I do not believe they would be slow to respond. I believe that it would be far easier than anticipated. Much can

be done this season to improve conditions, but I can think of no better method of bringing about lasting changes than that I have outlined.

With regard to fish curing, I might say that also fish curing plants might be established to improve the cure. This might also serve as a means of instruction in the cure of fish.

I have digressed much from the object of this report and I can only reiterate that there are much needed improvements in the handling of our fish and I have outlined the above as a means of carrying out these improvements.

Whilst on the point, might I further digress to the point of marketing? I believe the first step in this is to make a definite study of the types or kind of fish each market or possible market would demand and having done this, to endeavour to make our fish up to the best of those standards. When this is done or to be done we have then the question of getting our fish in those markets. Again, in this matter I am a firm believer in the method of personal contact. Yearly large sums of money are paid as travelling expenses by the biggest business firms in this country (some of whom are fish dealers) to make personal contact throughout the country with their customers through their commercial travellers, in most cases to effect the sale of imported goods. Yet how many of the dealers in fish send travellers into other countries to endeavour to make contact with customers or find new markets for the sale of the fish produced by our own countrymen? I would suggest salesmen who can speak the language of the countries who might provide a possible market for our fish and that they be sent to those places for the purpose of making contacts for the sale of our fish. Even I would say to countries which as yet have bought none of our fish. Whilst there they should also be valuable in suggesting as might seem to them other methods of putting up our fish which would create a greater demand for it. They might make mistakes but in a year they would sell a quantity of fish. Of course for this it would be necessary to have had our product standardized so that in the event of customers buying from sample or description we would be sure that shipments corresponded therewith.

I regret that in the course of my Magisterial duties I have not the time to devote to this question that I would desire to give, but I am of the firm belief that it is on the co-operation and assistance of the fisherman we have to depend.

14. Report by Magistrate Andrew Vatcher, dated Corner Brook.⁴⁰

The Humber District, being for the most part a lumbering and manufacturing District, has very little in common with the other Districts of the country, from the standpoint of the catching and curing of cod fish. Any cod fishing that is being done by the men of this District is carried on for the most part on that section of the Labrador Coast from Camp Islands to Chateau. There are but few men who individually fish in the Bay of Islands and these on a very limited scale. In these cases there is monotonous uniformity about their small fishing plants. Stages, flakes and plants generally vary but little.

I have made inquiries of men acquainted with stage conditions on this section of the Labrador Coast and find that within the past few years some improvement has been made. The old stage with its roof and walls of rinds, sods and boughs and its floors of longers has gradually been replaced with a more secure erection of board construction. Its roof is made of half inch board and either lapped or felted, its walls are constructed in the same way; its floors, however, are still of the longer type, open and irregular. These stages are so constructed that cods' heads, sound bones and other refuse are shot directly to the water. Then with liberal application of water, the surroundings are usually kept thoroughly clean, with a gradual tendency to more careful thoroughness in this direction.

The men who fish in the Bay of Islands, however, other than those who fish on the Labrador from the Bay, operated on a very small scale. These, for the most part, whose daily catch would not average half a quintal, head, split and prepare their fish for salting, in the landwash or on the beach. They erect a splitting table on the sand and the refuse is deposited between high and low tide water mark and carried to the sea. Others, perhaps, have a little wharf or landing place on which they

split and head. The fish is there washed and taken to a small store and salted. These stores or pounds are usually kept clean and limed before using. The cod fishery was never taken seriously in the Bay of Islands. The industrial situation created in the district by the erection of the Paper Mills at Corner Brook has changed even that attitude, so that today very little attention is paid to this fishery.⁴¹

As to the use of disinfectants: Nothing of this sort is ever attempted beyond the liming of the stores where the fish is salted, in fact the ordinary fishermen would scarcely appreciate the meaning of the term or the significance or the reason for the use of such.

As to the fly situation and the screening of the stages with wire or muslin, under present methods of cure I think the suggestion unworkable. In fact, as far as my knowledge and observation go, the whole Fisherman's "Room" would have to be screened and even then the flies would still be uncontrollable. The great problem with most of the cleaner members of a fishing settlement is to keep the flies from the food on the kitchen table. I have visited many of these settlements from Cape Chidley to Red Bay or Blanc Sablon and I have noticed no difference in the fly situation. Where you have a fishing settlement you have flies in this country and Labrador. How is the situation handled in other countries? However, no serious attempt has ever been made even to suggest a remedy here. In fact the presence of flies has never been regarded seriously. Where fishing is carried on a large scale, the floors of the stages are all open work, liver casks for the rotting of liver are often placed out of doors by the side of the stage and fish offal often gathers on the sea shore. These are all more or less conducive to fly multiplication. Whilst in my judgment hope of a complete eradication of this nuisance is faint, a great deal might be done by education to abate the same. I have no immediate plans to suggest beyond this process of education.

There is no outstanding settlement in the district or premises in any settlement that can be pointed out as superior in any regard to its neighbour in the matter of handling or curing cod. Generally speaking there has been very little change in the method pursued from the days

of our forefathers. Fishing rooms, fishing methods change but little in a life time, simply because of the smug satisfaction derived from these old customs passed on to us and because of the fact that we can "get away with" what has suited our fathers. In fact I think that even the change noted in the construction of the stage is due to the fact that it is easier to build with half inch board than go the trouble that our fathers took in their day.

The troubles surrounding our fisheries industry, I fear, cannot all be laid at the door of the producer. The past talqual system of purchase, the unscientific method of marketing, the spirit of rivalry amongst shippers, the lack of co-operation between suppliers and supplied and the mistrust and distrust between all concerned must bear each its part. I have, therefore, no remedy capable of immediate application. My remedy would be one of education and growth, whose immediate result would be undiscernable [*sic*].

Might I digress to remark, some of our troubles are due to the fact that, whilst we are a fishing people, fishery matters occupied but a small part in our school thought and life. Our education system rather encouraged our youth to despise fishing as an avocation, and suggested to them that the chief concern was to get away from the "Fishing Punt." Today, if a poor boy gets on it is condescendingly remarked that "he did well, he was a Fisherman's son". What is needed is an educational program that will encourage boys to become good fishermen, skilled in all the arts surrounding the job and not simply to aspire to be good preachers, teachers, lawyers, doctors, etc. We hear much of Model Farms, Model Technical Schools, and why not a Model Fishing Settlement set up on the most modern fish curing lines with experts to train men to go out and show by practical demonstration how best to do their work. If our only hope is in the improvement of our curing methods, then we must receive instruction as to how. It cannot be hoped that as a class we can lift ourselves by our own bootstraps. Can anything be learned from the land of our competitors that might be imparted to our people.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

- 1 On the establishment of the Commission of Government, see Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929–1949* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988).
- 2 Quoted in the *Daily News*, 10 Feb. 1934.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 31 Mar. 1934. On Lodge’s views, see his *Dictatorship in Newfoundland* (London: Cassell and Company, 1939).
- 4 See Peter Neary, ed., *White Tie and Decorations: Sir John and Lady Hope Simpson in Newfoundland, 1934–1936* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).
- 5 Raymond Gushue (1900–1980). A graduate of the Dalhousie University Law School in 1925, he was called to the bar of Nova Scotia in 1925 and the bar of Newfoundland in 1926. He served as President of the Board of Trade in 1933 and 1934. In 1935 Gushue accepted an appointment as chairman of the Salt Codfish Board and of the Newfoundland Fisheries Board in 1936, serving until 1952. He was President of Memorial University of Newfoundland from 1952 to 1966.
- 6 Quoted in Melvin Baker and Shannon P. Ryan, “The Newfoundland Fishery Research Commission, 1930–1934,” in James E. Candow and Carol Corbin, eds., *How Deep Is the Ocean? Historical Essays on Canada’s Atlantic Fishery* (Sydney: University College of Cape Breton Press for the Louisbourg Institute, 1997), 165.
- 7 James Mary Kent (1872–1939), Supreme Court Justice, 1916–1939.
- 8 Herbert Robert Brookes (1881–1960), see *Observer’s Weekly*, 4 June 1960.
- 9 Ernest Robert Watson (1871–1945), see *Daily News*, 27 July 1945.
- 10 James Lewis Little (1871–1967). See Lewis C. Little, *Through My Grandfather’s Eyes* (Bonavista: XX Press, 2006).
- 11 Marilyn Tuck, “The Newfoundland Ranger Force, 1935–1950” (MA

- thesis, Memorial University, 1983), 48–53. See also Susan McCorquodale, “Public Administration in Newfoundland during the Period of the Commission of Government: A Question of Political Development” (Ph.D. thesis, Queen’s University, 1973), 319–29; Gerald Barnable, *Under the Clock: A Legal History of the “Ancient Capital”* (St. John’s: The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, S.S. Daisy Legal History Committee, 2002), 36–37.
- 12 *Daily News*, 21 June 1935; *Fishermen’s Advocate*, 5 July 1935. For one magistrate appointed under the new system, see Elizabeth Russell Miller, *The Life & Times of Ted Russell* (St. John’s: Jespersion Press, 1981), 62–85.
- 13 Brian Dunfield (1888–1958), Attorney General, 1932–34, Secretary for Justice, 1934–39, and Supreme Court Justice, 1939–60.
- 14 See Gerald L. Pocius, “The House That Poor-Jack Built: Architectural Stages in the Newfoundland Fishery,” in Larry McCann, ed., with Carrie MacMillan, *The Sea and Culture of Atlantic Canada* (Sackville, NB: Centre for Canadian Studies, Mount Allison University, 1992), 63–105.
- 15 The circular letter and reports are in the Rooms Provincial Archives (RPA), GN13/1/B, Box 165, file 14 and GN31/3/A, Box 9, file B9/19.
- 16 This board was created by statute in 1931 and was responsible for the salt codfish trade. The Newfoundland Fisheries Board was legally constituted in 1936 to regulate all fisheries. See *Daily News* and *Evening Telegram*, 25 Apr. 1936.
- 17 Job B. Wornell (1877–1950), manager, Fishermen’s Union Trading Company, 1913–32, magistrate, 1932–43. See Christopher Curran and Linda White, “The Law at Greenspond,” in Christopher Curran and Melvin Baker, eds., *The Face of Justice on Newfoundland’s Northeast Coast* (St. John’s: The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, S.S. Daisy Legal History Committee, 2012), 110–54.
- 18 Since the early 1900s, fish buyers, under the talqual system, took fish from fishermen without any regard to grade or size, that is, without a cull. On the problems in the fishery before 1919, see Melvin Baker, “Challenging the ‘Merchants’ Domain’: William Coaker and the Price of Fish, 1908–1919,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 29, 2 (Fall 2014): 189–226.

- 19 Formed in 1935, the Rangers were a rural police force, modelled on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. See Tuck, "The Newfoundland Ranger Force, 1935–1950"; Harold Horwood, *A History of the Newfoundland Ranger Force* (St. John's: Breakwater Books, 1986); Darrin McGrath, Robert Smith, Ches Parsons, and Norman Crane, *The Newfoundland Rangers* (St. John's: DRC Publishing, 2005).
- 20 Michael Sinnott (1871–1965), magistrate, 1924–39. See Barnable, *Under the Clock*, 37–8.
- 21 Longer: "also lunger, a long tapering pole, usually a conifer with bark left on, used in constructing roofs, floors, surfaces of stages and flakes." See G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 313.
- 22 Edward Russell (1904–1977). See Miller, *The Life & Times of Ted Russell*, 62–85.
- 23 On educational policy in this period, see Ralph Andrews, *Integration and Other Developments in Newfoundland Education, 1915–1949* (St. John's: Harry Cuff Publications, 1985), 203–21; Phillip McCann, "The Educational Policy of the Commission of Government," *Newfoundland Studies* 3, 2 (Fall 1987): 201–07.
- 24 Salt Codfish Board.
- 25 Albert J. Walsh (1900–1958), magistrate, 1935–40, Commissioner for Home Affairs and Education, 1944–47, Commissioner for Justice and Defence, 1947–49, Lieutenant-Governor, 1949, Chief Justice, 1949–58.
- 26 Malcolm Hollett (1891–1985), magistrate 1923–46, Senate of Canada 1961–71. His first appointment was at Burin. See RPA, GN13/1/B, Box 166, file 34, list of magistrates dated 11 Feb. 1936.
- 27 A slimy substance on the body of fish; blood, slime, liquid refuse from the process of splitting codfish. See Story, Kirwin, and Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 497.
- 28 Beaton J. Abbott (1903–1992), magistrate, 1935–56. See *Evening Telegram*, 9 Mar. 1992.
- 29 In 1926 the Newfoundland Board of Trade arranged an agreement among its members to abolish the talqual system of fish buying. However, not all exporters complied and the proposed system was

quickly abandoned. See *Evening Telegram*, 3 Aug. 1926. Writing to his Bonavista manager on 31 July 1926, exporter Dan Ryan noted that his fellow exporters seemed “very sincere in this movement for the benefit of the fishermen and the buyers.” Ryan was completely for the Culling Board with “fish culled instead of selling talqual as has been the case for the past 25 years. The talqual system is the curse of the Country and if continued in ten years hence there will be no merchantable fish but all inferior.” See Memorial University, Maritime History Archive, James Ryan Fonds, Box 13, file 1.43.176, Dan Ryan to John McCarthy, 31 July 1926. In 1935 the Salt Codfish Board drafted regulations to prohibit talqual buying. However, the 1935 regulations adopted by the Board were delayed being proclaimed until the Commission of Government had initiated a system of inspection and culling acceptable to both merchants and fishermen and carried out by trained inspectors.

- 30 Magistrate at St. Mary's, 1936–44. The 26-year-old Greene graduated from Dalhousie Law School in 1931 and was called to the bars of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland in 1932. See DO35/502, N1038/15, despatch No. 178, Anderson to Thomas, 4 Aug. 1935; Barnable, *Under the Clock*, 37.
- 31 Nehemiah Short (1897–1970), magistrate, 1924–45. See *Evening Telegram*, 26 Jan. 1970.
- 32 A bulky oblong stack of split and salted codfish piled in layers to drain after immersion in brine. See Story, Kirwin, and Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 602.
- 33 Clarence W. Powell (1913–1994), magistrate, 1935–44.
- 34 M. E. Hawco (1882–1962), magistrate at Holyrood, 1929–49.
- 35 Leonard Ash (1881–1944).
- 36 *Daily News*, 11 May 1935; *Observer's Weekly*, 25 July 1935. A co-operative society in this community began in 1935 under the leadership of Harold Mitchell, a St. John's native and Great War veteran. In the 1932 general election Mitchell won in Trinity South District (which included Heart's Desire), defeating sitting Prime Minister Richard Squires.
- 37 F. Gordon Bradley (1888–1966). See James K. Hiller, “Frederick Gordon Bradley, 1888–1966: A Political Biography” (manuscript prepared for the Historic Resources Division, Government of

- Newfoundland and Labrador, 1994), 54–55, and Hiller, “The Career of F. Gordon Bradley,” *Newfoundland Studies* 4, 2 (Fall 1988): 163–80.
- 38 William R. Kent (1905–1964). The 29-year-old Kent was called to the bar of Newfoundland on 4 Oct. 1935. See DO35/502, N1038/15, despatch No. 178, Anderson to Thomas, 4 Aug. 1935.
- 39 The Kent inquiry into Newfoundland fisheries.
- 40 Andrew Vatcher (1878–1945). See Christopher English, “Diary of a District Magistrate: Andrew Vatcher in Curling and Corner Brook 1937–1939,” in Christopher English, ed., *Barrels to Benches: The Foundations of English Law on Newfoundland’s West Coast* (St. John’s: The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, S.S. Daisy Legal History Committee, 2010), 91–101.
- 41 The Corner Brook pulp and paper mill opened in 1925. See James K. Hiller, “The Politics of Newsprint: The Newfoundland Pulp and Paper Industry, 1915–1939,” *Acadiensis* 19, 2 (Spring 1990): 3–39.