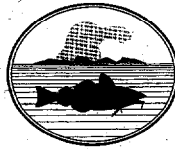


**The Report of the Partnership on  
Sustainable Coastal Communities  
and Marine Ecosystems in  
Newfoundland and Labrador**





**Newfoundland and Labrador Round Table  
on the Environment and the Economy**

Confederation Building, West Block  
PO Box 8700, St. John's, NF A1B 4J6  
Tel: (709) 729-0047 Fax: (709) 729-1930  
E-mail: [jhealey@env.gov.nf.ca](mailto:jhealey@env.gov.nf.ca)

National Round Table  
on the Environment  
and the Economy

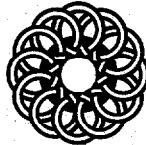


Table ronde nationale  
sur l'environnement  
et l'économie

1 Nicholas St., Suite 1500 Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, K1N 7B7 Tel: (613) 992-7189 Fax: (613) 992-7385  
E-mail: [nrttee@web.apc.org](mailto:nrttee@web.apc.org)

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National Round Table on the Environment  
and the Economy

# **The Report of the Partnership on Sustainable Coastal Communities and Marine Ecosystems in Newfoundland and Labrador**

**October 1995**

## Preface

The collapse of the cod fishery off the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador is a classic example of unsustainable development. The impacts and implications on an ecosystem, on an economy and on a way of life never seem to stop. In the fall of 1994, both the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NLRTEE) decided to collaborate on a project that would look at the fish crisis from the perspective of the sustainability of coastal communities and marine ecosystems in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The NRTEE intended this to be a case study, from the viewpoint of the affected communities, in which the crisis created by the current moratorium on northern cod could be analyzed and the prospects for future sustainability investigated. The NLRTEE shared these goals and also saw the potential of promoting the round table model for consensus decision-making as a method of planning for sustainability at the community level.

To this end, both Round Tables selected two of their members to create a small task force, augmented by three members from the fishing industry in the province. The effort was named a 'Partnership' to reflect its collaborative nature and to avoid any suggestion that this was a 'commission' or another government committee. One of the fishing industry representatives, Bernadette Dwyer from the Fogo Island Fishers Co-operative, agreed to chair the Partnership.

*The Report of the Partnership on Sustainable Coastal Communities and Marine Ecosystems in Newfoundland and Labrador* is the most tangible result of this process. It is the 'voice of the communities' and both Round Tables believe it is important that this 'voice' gets as wide an audience as possible, not only for what it says but as a contribution to the ongoing debates, deliberations and decisions surrounding these vital issues.

Stuart L. Smith, M.D., Chair  
*National Round Table on the Environment  
and the Economy*

Judith Rowell, Chair  
*Newfoundland and Labrador Round Table on the  
Environment and the Economy*

Partnership membership:

Wilfred Bartlett, *fisher*

Tom Best, *fisher*

Bernadette Dwyer, *Fogo Island Fishers Co-operative, (Chair)*

Diane Griffin, *former NRTEE Member and Executive Director of the P.E.I. Nature Trust*

Elizabeth May, *NRTEE Member and Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada*

Mary O'Brien, *NLRTEE Member and fish plant owner*

Martin von Mirbach, *NLRTEE Member and Sustainable Development Chair,  
Centre for Forest and Environmental Studies*

Scientific Advisor:

Professor Jon Lien, *Memorial University of Newfoundland*

Staff:

Dr. Steve Thompson, *former Senior Policy Advisor, NRTEE Secretariat*

Sean Kelly, *former Policy Analyst, NLRTEE Secretariat*

## **Dedication**

This report is dedicated to all those who so willingly attended our meetings and shared their thoughts with us.

# *“The fishery was more than a job. It was our life.”*

## **INTRODUCTION**

It is fair to say that this enterprise was a bit of an experiment for both round tables. The prospect of entering the fishery debate was viewed by some as problematic. Neither round table had ever before gone into small communities to explore public views on sustainability. We were all extremely conscious of the need to bring something new to the discussion, and not merely to repeat previous efforts.

Despite any such initial concerns, we have to report most emphatically that our process was seen as unique and valuable by people in the 13 communities we visited. We enlisted the services of the Extension Community Development Co-operative in St. John's to do logistics and advance work. Thanks to their efforts, we were able to identify and personally invite all key stakeholders in each community and indeed within a small radius of each meeting. The term stakeholders includes all with an interest in the survival of the community. Participation extended well beyond the fishing industry, although the fishery tended to dominate the discussion. At a typical meeting, we would have everyone from a local MHA or cabinet member to the RCMP, schoolteachers, fish-plant workers and fishers, women's committee representatives, local TAGS (The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy) counselors, clergy, gas station owners and members of town council. We generally held meetings with stakeholders in the afternoon, assembled around a "round table," or at least a rectangle of square tables, to allow more direct interaction. Every stakeholder had several opportunities to speak through go-arounds, as well as engaging in a lively discussion.

In each community, we organized discussion around the same agenda (included in the appendix). Through a series of questions, we explored what had made the community sustainable in the past, what made it unsustainable and what could make it sustainable again in the future. These questions were followed by discussion of peoples' hopes, fears and concerns. These sessions, although planned to

run for two to three hours, more often ran for four or more. In the evenings, we held public sessions often engaging some afternoon participants but in general attracting a different group. In the evening, we shared the preliminary conclusions from the stakeholder sessions and tested for whether these appeared accurate to the other members of the community. As well, we probed for anything we had missed in the afternoon.



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Our meetings began in February and wrapped up in early June. We faced just about all the travel obstacles one can imagine in coastal Newfoundland — we were iced in in Fogo, fogged in at St. Anthony, engulfed in blizzard whiteouts on the highways. We experienced warm hospitality everywhere we went and wish to extend thanks to all who did so much for us. We were privileged to experience magnificent scenery, towering icebergs and inquisitive caribou and moose. We started our February session with a cluster of meetings along the south coast of the province, the island of Ramea, St. George's, Burnt Islands and La Scie on the Baie Verte Peninsula. In March, we continued with meetings on Fogo Island, in St. John's and in Renew's and a meeting with the young people of Petty Harbour. In early May, we visited Cook's Harbour up at the Northern Peninsula, and then flew to coastal Labrador

with meetings in Forteau and Makkovik. In late May, we held meetings in Marystown and Bay de Verde. These communities were selected to represent geographic regions of the province, and different sectors of the fishing industry as well as communities not frequented by government consultations, and, of course, communities which were dependent on the fishery.

Following the full series of community meetings, we held a large wrap-up session in St. John's on Oceans Day, June 8. We invited community representatives from each of the places in which we had held sessions. At this session we tested some of our preliminary conclusions, attempting a

distillation of the most frequently heard recommendations from communities. We had not originally realized how powerful it would be for people facing the same crisis but relatively isolated from each other to be brought together to explore their options for the future. But, in our view, this became one of the most gratifying parts of the experience. From the point of view of grass-roots democracy and sustainability planning, we hope that the process started in each community through our meetings will continue and flourish.

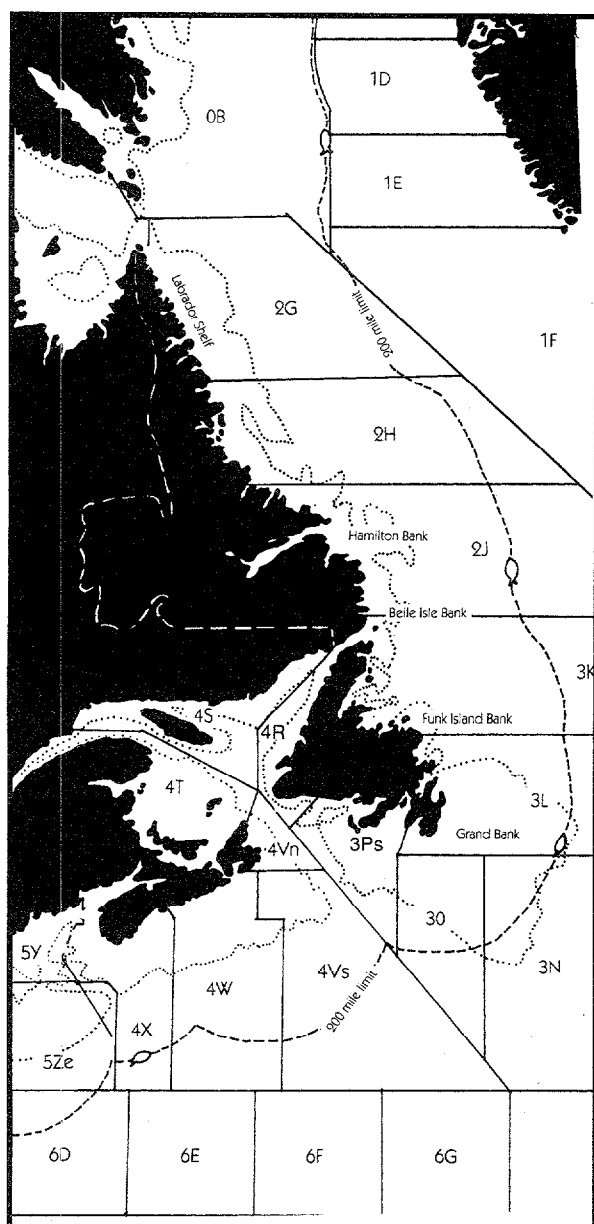
## WHAT MADE OUR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE IN THE PAST?

In this Partnership, established to examine the sustainability of coastal communities and marine ecosystems throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, we started the conversation in each community by asking the question, "What made your community sustainable in the past?"

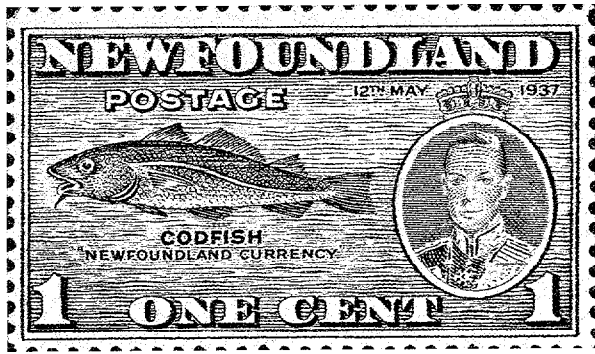
That question is totally caught up in the life of the ocean. Without exception, in every community visited by the Partnership, the first answer was "Fish!" Over and over, we were told, "The fishery was more than a job. It was our life." In that statement was the essence of the fishery as the defining force for generations of Newfoundlanders. It defined what they did for a living but, arguably more important, it defined their sense of identity, their culture, their pride in themselves as a distinct and hardworking people. It was the fishery that led their ancestors, some hundreds of years before, to cling to life on the rocky and inhospitable coast.

Many outside Newfoundland, and some people in the communities we visited, challenge the implicit assumption in the question "What made your community sustainable?" Many would assert that these communities were never sustainable. But when posing a question about the past we found that the discussion in communities moved back in time, before Confederation, before the predominance of social programs, before government dependency. It was to those early times that community residents most often returned in describing what had made them sustainable.

In assessing the term "sustainable", some benchmarks are needed. To our Partnership, "sustainable" is not synonymous with "lucrative" or "profitable" or "able to survive". We adopt the definition of the Brundtland Report (the



*Fishing banks off Newfoundland and Labrador*



World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) which defined sustainable development as that which meets the needs of the current generation without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

For the most part, the coastal communities, by the Brundtland definition, have been sustainable for 500 years.

In the beginning, or at least at the point of initial European contact, the waters off Newfoundland were unbelievably abundant. When John Cabot first sailed to Newfoundland in 1497 contemporary accounts reported such an enormous quantity of cod that the sheer mass of fish slowed the progress of European vessels. The entire marine ecosystem was rich in a way so fundamentally diminished to modern eyes that it merits some note.

The seabird colonies were such a feature of the Atlantic coastal ecosystem that early explorers knew they had approached land through the noisy and prodigious flocks of birds. Whales in profusion filled the seas, along with seals and many species of fish. It is important to remember that the ecosystem itself is more than cod. The ecosystem found by Europeans included humans no longer in residence, the Beothucks. It included a flightless bird, the great auk — exterminated for its eggs, its oil, its feathers, anything that could be derived from this extremely abundant and defenceless creature. There was an industry in the Magdalene Islands based on hunting walrus. The Basques ran a major whaling station, the largest in the world, at Red Bay in southern Labrador. The bowhead and right whales — were nearly exterminated, and are still extremely rare. Other whale species, such as humpbacks, fins and blues, were also seriously over-hunted, but in more recent times. But through the centuries, the cod fishery was sustainable. It was the cod fishery, along with

the harp seal harvest, that sustained hundreds of small communities.

The fishery that sustained Newfoundland and Labrador's small outpost communities was not merely based on one species, nor did it follow one seasonal fishing pattern. The commercial fishery itself was more than cod. Early fisheries focussed as well on salmon, herring and seals; later, the range of species caught broadened to include, among others, lobster, capelin, redfish, lumpfish, turbot, flounder, squid and shrimp. The types of fishery were determined by climate, ice conditions, availability of species and geography. There were ice-free coastal areas with a winter inshore fishery, as well as an extended offshore schooner fishery that pre-dated the modern-day offshore fishery. The south coast of the province, from Port aux Basques to Trepassey, was one such winter inshore fishery. It was an ice-free coast with a 50-week fishery, including the offshore schooner fishery. In other words, it offered nearly full employment, on a year-round basis.



From St. John's north and to the Labrador coast, the province's east coast communities had a more seasonal fishery. There, due to prevalent ice conditions, the pattern of life in the fishery was distinctly different. People were able to fish seasonally in the groundfishery. But just as the fishery was seasonal, so too were a myriad of other occupations, both for cash and subsistence, that kept the communities alive. A major traditional activity was the seal hunt: income was supplemented by a seasonal seal fishery in much of the province. As well, men would leave the community to work in the woods, some for months at a time.

The fishery on the western coast was roughly similar to that of the east coast. In recent years, they had redfish,



flounder, herring, halibut and shrimp, but for the most part they too were dependent on cod. They too were reliant on a host of other seasonal activities that supplemented incomes and larders during the non-fishing seasons.

Life was never easy in Newfoundland's outports. In the early days of settlement, even before there was a government, the merchant class ruled. Merchants held a monopoly over virtually every aspect of the local economy. They set the price for fish they bought from fishers in the community, they set the price for goods bought by the community, and they extended credit, allowing fishers to buy staple items on the promise of next season's fish. Women kept gardens which were an important part of their survival. Small-scale gardening was supplemented with raising livestock. The gardens themselves were dependent on the sea, as they were fertilized with seaweed, fish offal and capelin. An informal barter economy added to the community's survival with a great deal of work done by the women — spinning, knitting, butter-making, preparing of medicinal herbs, etc. The fishery itself involved the whole family, with men bringing in the cod, women working on the flakes, children cutting out cod tongues. Bartering of services, such as boat-building and other forms of skilled labour, involved a complicated set of craftsman-client relationships that added to the sustainability of the communities. There were few idle moments in traditional outport life.

Over the last 500 years there were a number of notable periods of severe deprivation, caused by a variety of factors including wars, depressions, the decline in markets and localized fluctuations in the availability of fish. Times were hard indeed.

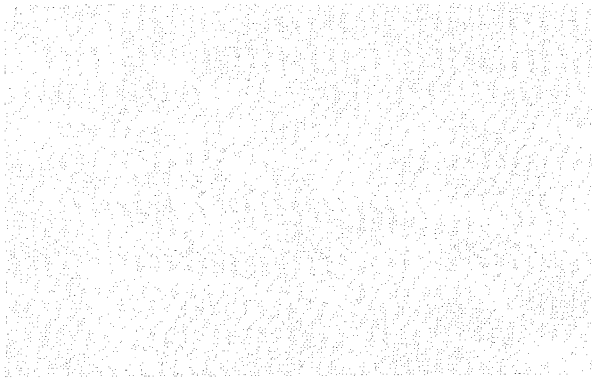
From the beginning, seasonality and natural variability in abundance of resources created severe problems. By the 20th century, pre-Confederation Newfoundland was already troubled by the seasonal nature of the fishery.

Even though the economy had been somewhat developed with mines, pulp mills and small-scale manufacturing, the Dominion of Newfoundland was by 1933 essentially bankrupt and a royal commission was established to study the situation. The economy was, however, increasingly diversified, with a thriving merchant marine as well as a few mines and pulp mills. As Newfoundland prepared to enter Confederation, Joey Smallwood (who became the first Premier of the Province of Newfoundland) wanted to change the subsistence lives of fishers and farmers. They were not "modern," in his view. The desire to end the "primitive" conditions of outport life led to the drastic solution of attempted forced resettlement. The industrial model was pursued. Economic diversification brought some additional economic opportunities to many parts of rural Newfoundland. However, the policy of industrialization was a futile attempt to graft Newfoundland onto an already dying industrial body. It was a romantic notion that ignored the realities of the market. Thus, many of these post-Confederation economic developments shut down or drastically reduced employment prior to the cod moratorium. So in some communities, after the answer that fish had made their community sustainable, came other answers: "We used to have a mine" and "We used to have jobs on the railway." Confederation did develop an infrastructure that was of paramount importance, including roads, bridges, schools, cottage hospitals, etc., in an attempt to remedy 400 years of neglect.

Throughout most of the history of Newfoundland and Labrador's small coastal communities, there was no social safety net. As Confederation brought in the old-age pension and other benefits after 1949, life did change. But the communities did not become dependent on social programs overnight. In the communities we visited, the beginnings of the dependency on social programs was linked with the decline of availability of fish in the region, as well as to the buildup of the fishery in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Whether romanticizing the past or accurately reflecting the change in values, many people attending our meetings expressed the belief that there had been a stronger community spirit in those bygone days before the relative prosperity of recent years. They recall greater co-operation. "The community we had in the past was tightly knit. Everyone helped each other. We had a great deal of bartering. And we've lost it in the name of prosperity. We started living according to want instead of need."

In discussing the past sustainability of coastal communities, there were certain watershed dates that were referred to again and again as benchmarks. 1949 — Confederation — was such a date, as was the resettlement program of the late 1960s. Then there was 1977 and the extension of the 200-mile Exclusive Economic Zone by Canada. We heard a range of dates as to when unemployment insurance really took hold and began to play a role in decisions about the fishery, ranging through the late 1970s and early 1980s. Then, of course, there was the moratorium announcement on July 2, 1992.



In identifying what had made the community sustainable, these twin issues of strong community values and an absence of government dependency ranked high in the comments of round-table participants.

Community residents also referred frequently to the fact that historically, fishing technology had been fairly limited in its ability to eradicate fish. Over and over, we heard that if we had stayed with a hook-and-line fishery, we would have a lucrative fishery today. The fishery was sustainable for so long because we lacked the technology to be totally destructive. When we acquired that technology, around 1950, we began the destruction of resources that has characterized fisheries throughout the world. In Burnt Islands, one resident recalled: “(In earlier times) we caught fish. We got into trouble when we started hunting fish.” He referred here to the relatively passive nature of the inshore cod fishery. The fishers waited for the cod to come inshore. They lacked the technology to chase the fish out to the offshore, to track them down in great concentrations in the spawning areas. Fish as we hunt them now have few places to hide.

But the fishery was changing rapidly. There was no one defining moment when the fishery, and the coastal com-

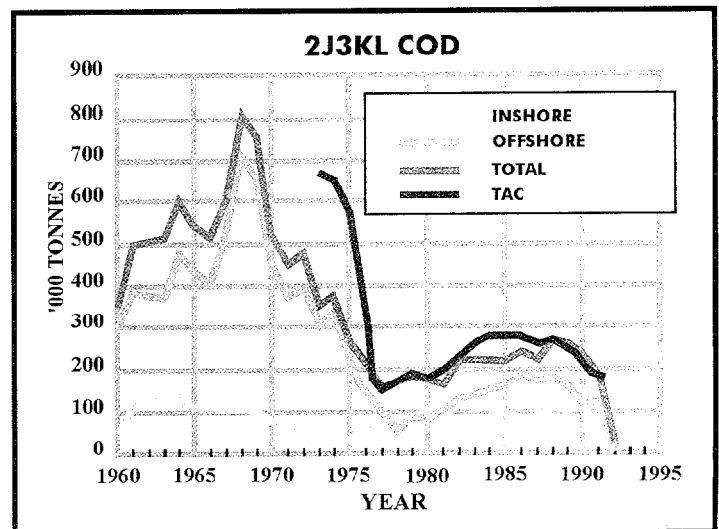
munities that depended upon it, ceased to be sustainable. But the scene changed drastically as was described when we moved into the next phase of our discussion by asking, “What made your community unsustainable?”

## WHAT MADE OUR COMMUNITIES UNSUSTAINABLE?

Just as every community answered the question of past sustainability with a resounding chorus of “Fish!”, so too did they ascribe their current perilous economic, social and cultural status to the collapse of the codfish stocks. Although the focus of our Partnership was to define opportunities for future sustainability, we also had a mandate to examine the current Newfoundland crisis as a case study of potential benefit to other fishing economies. But, more fundamentally, it was simply not possible to discuss future sustainability without a full debate about the causes of the collapse of the valuable resource upon which hundreds of fishing communities had depended for hundreds of years.

It should surprise no one that community meetings were dominated by the issues of the fishery and its demise. Over the past two decades these incredibly rich cod stocks have been brought to the brink of extinction. One of the world's greatest protein resources, once capable of sustaining annual landings of more than 250,000 to 350,000 metric tons (M/T), has been allowed to decline to virtual oblivion. This annihilation of the northern cod has been mirrored by only slightly less serious decreases in other groundfish species.

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Members of fishing-dependent communities are outraged that this could have happened in an era of modern fisheries management. We heard over and over again that the cries of warning from the small inshore fishing-dependent communities were ignored as the crisis worsened.

Moreover, we heard repeatedly that communities believe their views are still ignored by those in power. They believe that when a resource of such historic abundance becomes commercially extinct, it is important that the causes of such devastation be identified, discussed and never repeated.

## Historical overview

### (i) Inshore

Historical record indicates that fixed-gear landings of northern cod from the beginning of the 20th century until the introduction of the deep-sea dragger fleets in the late 1950s, sustained an annual harvest of 250,000 to 350,000 M/T.

This harvest was achieved within the constraints of the existing technology and the limits set by the labour associated with the preparation of salt fish. The annual harvest was always subject to some degree of fluctuation. These fluctuations were related to a variety of factors — such as the price collapse in the 1890s, the depression in the 1930s, the economic chaos of two World Wars.

Notwithstanding these fluctuations, historical record indicates that fixed-gear landings of cod could, without any decrease in abundance, apparently sustain fishing pressure to a magnitude of 350,000 M/T.

Up until the late 1950s or early 1960s, with the exception of a small schooner fleet out of Nova Scotia, the only Canadians fishing the stock were Newfoundland small-boat fishers pursuing their traditional way of life, i.e. the inshore. The northern cod stocks were also traditionally fished by Spain, Portugal and France. The introduction in the 1960s of deep-sea heavily powered-vessels, primarily of European origin, equipped with otter trawls (known as “draggers”) ended the inshore's abundant harvest. The offshore dragger fleet was capable of fishing in deeper water than had been previously accessible and of locating and exploiting — in hunting fashion — huge concentrations of cod wherever they assembled.

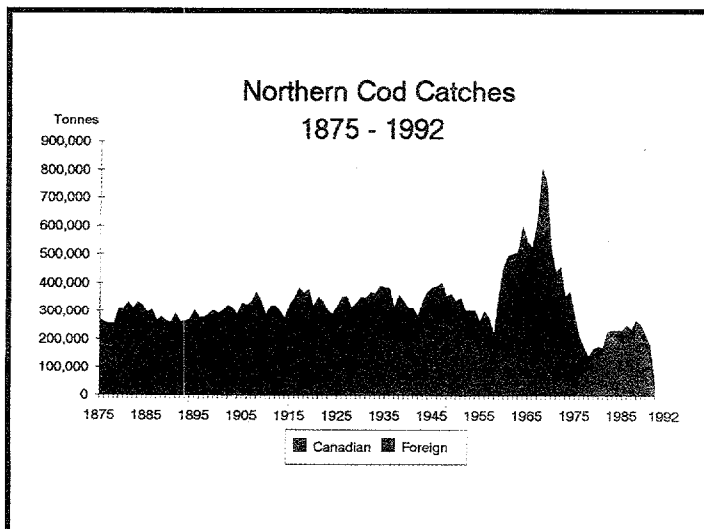
The invasion of foreign draggers in the early 1960s committed a massive assault upon the spawning aggregations. The peak catch was an astronomical 800,000 M/T in 1968, a one-time-only anomalous spike on the graph. These excessively high landings by foreign draggers led to drastic declines in Newfoundland's inshore fishery, reducing it to a mere fraction of its historically high sustainable catches.

Inshore seasons became shorter. The fishers responded with their own technological innovations, mainly the introduction of longliners, giving the inshore mobility of up to 50 miles from shore. Even with enormous increases in fishing effort, however, inshore landings suffered serious declines far deeper than anything previously recorded. Catches fell in 1974, for example, to 35,000 M/T.

### (ii) 200-mile limit

The crisis brought on by overfishing by foreign draggers led Canada to declare a 200-mile management zone in 1977. The 200-mile limit was viewed enthusiastically as an opportunity to rebuild the stocks and establish strategies aimed at ensuring long-term viability. As we heard in

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many communities, the post-1977 period was typified by a “Klondike mentality.” If the foreigners had caught 800,000 M/T, surely, under Canadian conservation measures, a catch of 400,000 M/T was reasonable. With improved technology, an annual catch of 400,000 M/T, significantly higher than historic catch levels, would be a bonanza for Newfoundland.

The scientific and management rationale for a 400,000 M/T per year catch was set forth in the Fisheries minister's “Policy for Canada's Commercial Fisheries,” released in 1976 in anticipation of the 200-mile limit. The policy was to serve as a guide for rebuilding the northern cod stock(s). Its stated objective was to “engender growth in the spawning biomass” capable of sustaining a harvest at historical levels. The management strategy of F0.1 was adopted to facilitate achieving the policy goal. Simply, the F0.1 target would permit an annual harvest of about 20% of the exploitable biomass.

The target spawning biomass of 1.5 million M/T was a goal to be achieved by 1982. This spawning biomass was the amount estimated necessary by the International Commission for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) to create a sustainable level of harvest. Based on its projections of the rate of rebuilding of northern cod, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) forecast a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 402,000 M/T by 1985.



These and other optimistic projections of rapid stock recovery created near-euphoria in the industry. The fishing-dependent communities were told that under a 200-mile limit there was going to be so much fish that the inshore would not be able to catch it all. In the expectation of landings at least comparable to those of the 1950s,

expansion of the Canadian offshore industry was mandated. Hundreds of millions of federal tax dollars of direct and indirect assistance were poured into offshore vessels, gear and plants.

In 1979, the Canadian offshore dragger fleet (based largely on the southwest coast of Newfoundland and in Nova Scotia) was deliberately introduced into the northern cod stock(s) for the first time. The federal government provided subsidies on fuel and fish and tried to ensure success through various devices. One such device was the introduction in 1982 of Enterprise Allocations (EA), which essentially gave the holder title to so much northern cod. This represented a shift from the notion of a common property resource to one of a private resource and resulted in the practice of “high-grading” — the retention of only the most valuable fish and the discarding of the rest.

Also, in the early 1980s, DFO licensed approximately 100 “inshore,” i.e. 45- to 65-foot, draggers. These vessels were from the Port au Choix area on the Northern Peninsula. They were licensed to drag for fish on Newfoundland's southwest coast.

As we heard in our community meetings, the post-1977 enthusiasm brought many people into the fishery. In 1987-88, there were roughly 10,000 people in the fishery. By the time of the moratorium announcement, that number had doubled — or, including those in fish plants, tripled. In a social context, there was a marked shift from the fishery being seen as the employer of last resort to something more technologically advanced, and something potentially profitable. The government gave out lucrative licences for species that were only fished over a very short season, such as squid and capelin. As well, government policy through the Fisheries Loan Board made it possible for just about anybody to buy a boat. Many fish plants were also being built with government help — what many in communities now recall cynically as a great way for Members of the House of Assembly to get re-elected.

This period also saw the widespread acceptance of a seasonal fishery coupled with unemployment insurance in the off-season. Government dependency increased as more people came into the fishery, more licences were distributed and more fish plants were built. Material expectations grew as people became accustomed to higher incomes and greater buying power. Rising expectations are, of course, not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador. North Americans in general now expect air

conditioning in summer and access to microwaved food and satellite communications. But as the fishery grew, incomes rose and dependency on government became part of the social fabric, with real costs to long-term sustainability.

In hindsight, it is easy to see that management strategies were themselves overly optimistic. The estimates of spawning biomass were only that — estimates. Yet an entire industry was rebuilt, “Canadianized,” and restructured on the basis of the estimate of a 400,000 M/T fishery by 1985. If there was one single failing in this period, it was in underestimating the damage that had been done to the entire ecosystem due to the foreign draggers in the pre-200-mile limit period. The irony was raised frequently in our community meetings that once having banished foreign overfishing from within our 200-mile limit, Canada set out to duplicate the foreign example of overfishing with damaging technology.

### **(iii) Drastic declines in inshore catches**

The stock may have managed to grow slowly from 1978 to 1982. The TAC increased from 135,000 M/T in 1978 to 266,000 M/T in 1984. Small improvements in catches under Canadian management reinforced the idea that a boom time had arrived. However, the inshore began to experience declining catches before the same problem began to occur in the offshore. From a peak in 1982, inshore catches dropped dramatically despite vastly increased effort in that sector. The decline was unique.



Even in the “worst” years, 1890 to 1924, the inshore never caught less than 180,000 M/T — three times the landings in 1987 — and rarely dropped below 225,000 M/T.

There had never been a failure in the inshore of the magnitude experienced in the 1980s, other than when the stock collapsed after foreign overfishing.

Compounding the problem, smaller cod were being caught. This indicator that the spawning stock was in serious trouble was ignored. Our Partnership visited a number of fish plants where we toured the idle equipment. There was abundant evidence of the way an industry adapted and continued to profit from a dying resource. A new filleting machine had been purchased, capable of processing smaller cod while simultaneously replacing eight to ten people in the fish plant. The industry also adapted to smaller fish by shipping out cod that had been merely headed and gutted for later drying in Denmark or Portugal.

Two clear warning indicators — the reduced size of the individual fish landed plus the overall drop in the inshore catch — were ignored. If they had been canaries in the coal mine, by analogy, the miners would have had to push aside the dead birds to get at the coal. As we heard over and over in small communities, inshore fishers were told by the government regulators that it was they who must be doing something wrong, as the offshore draggers were continuing to bring in large catches. The irony is that the very efficiency of the technology that was wiping out the cod stocks acted to mask the crisis. As sonar and radar and greater mobility allowed even the inshore to improve catches, the level of landed cod gave a false impression of the health of the resource as a whole.

### **(iv) Warnings of crisis**

Many fishers, plant workers and concerned citizens dependent on the inshore fishery raised the alarm about the drastic decline in inshore catches. We heard of their attempts to gain the ear of various government officials and of direct action in dumping equipment connected to the inshore dragger fleet into the harbour at Port aux Basques. There were sit-ins and protests during the period of the inshore catches, steep descent, while the offshore yield remained within the expected range. Moreover, as a young journalist recalled in one of our sessions, in every meeting she attended, fishers blamed the draggers for declining inshore catches and urged government to protect the stocks. Yet the references to draggers never seemed to make it to the evening news, or even to the minutes of the meeting. The failure of those within com-



munities who tried in vain to avert the crisis has had the undesirable effect of creating a sense of powerlessness. The view that “you can't fight city hall” was reinforced in spades by the way the views of inshore fishers were dismissed out of hand. Powerlessness contributes to unsustainability.

Community views on these matters are borne out by historical record. The Newfoundland Inshore Fishers Association (NIFA), founded in response to a growing frustration that no one spoke for the inshore and their concerns, went so far as to commission its own study. NIFA hired a group of independent biologists from Memorial University to conduct a technical audit of DFO's assessments. In December 1986, they filed the Keats Report concluding that DFO's methods and calculations were incorrect and were producing assessments that greatly overestimated the size of the stock. As a result, the report asserted, fishing mortality was largely underestimated and, in fact, the stock was being drastically overfished. But in 1987 and 1988, despite these warnings, DFO actually set a higher TAC.

Although it seems clear that the views of the inshore fishers were ignored on issues of setting quotas and allocations, it is not so clear that they were without any political effect. One analysis presented to us concluded that while the large corporations held sway over political decisions relating to the TAC, the political pressure from fishers was dealt with through improved social programs. In terms of long-term sustainability, this appears to have been a self-defeating strategy. Fewer weeks work required to qualify for unemployment insurance kept people in the fishery, quelling what would have been louder howls of protest about the declining cod stocks in the inshore. In every community we visited, many believed that complacency created by government social programs was a major contributor to the current state of unsustainability.

#### **(v) Acknowledgement of crisis**

It was not until 1989 that federal scientists realized that there were serious errors in the stock assessments. They acknowledged that because the stock was smaller than they thought, actual fishing mortality since 1979 was double the target level of F0.1. In other words, the stock was dramatically smaller than predicted, and certainly not sufficient to justify a TAC in 1988 of 266,000 M/T. The Canadian Atlantic Fisheries Scientific Advisory

Committee (CAFSAC) concluded in 1989 that the previous year's F0.1 level was actually 125,000 M/T and not 293,000 M/T. Federal government scientists on CAFSAC concluded that F0.1 must be revised down by an additional 20%, bringing their calculations of F0.1 to 100,000 M/T.

As many in communities recall with real emotion, the issue of setting the quota was more than a scientific matter. A decision to drastically reduce the quota was ultimately the Fisheries minister's to make. The political nature of decision making was seen by many as one of the proximate causes of the decline of the fishery. Where politicians had for the last decade used the fishery to get re-elected, they were not interested in conservation measures that would accomplish the reverse. While DFO calculated that the 1989 TAC should be 100,000 M/T, the minister set the TAC at 235,000 M/T.

By July 1992, the moratorium on the fishing of northern cod was declared. Many in communities we visited do not attribute the moratorium to a political decision. We heard repeatedly that the moratorium was not declared until Fisheries Products International's draggers came back empty. As one fisher said bitterly, “FPI declared the moratorium.”

If not for UI, we would not have lost our fish. The UI kept people satisfied and kept them from complaining as the stocks went down again. And then the government would use that against us. We'd tell them the fish were going down, and they'd say, “But everyone in your area qualified for UI....” The more we became dependent on government, the less our voice was heard.

*Fisher at Forleau community stakeholders' meeting, Labrador*

## COMMUNITY VIEWS ON THE CAUSES OF COMMERCIAL EXTINCTION OF NORTHERN COD

A number of things are remarkable about the views expressed in the 13 communities visited by our Partnership. For all the widely divergent views on many topics, the communities appeared unanimous on a number of points. Not once did anyone suggest that the collapse of the cod fishery was due to abnormal environmental conditions, such as cold water. Not once did anyone suggest the collapse was due to the actions of foreign fleets outside the 200-mile limit. Not once did anyone suggest that seals had eaten all the cod. Nor did anyone in com-

munities advance the theory that the cod stocks had merely gone somewhere else. In our individual capacities, Partnership members have heard all of the above theories advanced by the media, politicians and academics. While not denying that elements of some or all of the above may be factors in the troubled recovery of the stocks, we found it notable that such fashionable theories, including the often quoted "Too

many fishers chasing too few fish," do not resonate in the small communities most affected.

What was said in every community was that domestic overfishing destroyed the rich cod stocks. Many believed that we simply never gave the ecosystem adequate time to recover when Canada set the 200-mile limit. It was also expressed frequently that the technology outpaced the ecosystem's ability to recover from repeated assaults. The technology most often associated with the disaster in the offshore was that of dragging the ocean floor. Most people suspect that draggers damage bottom habitat and that this seriously impacts many species. In fact, in every community it was asserted that dragger technology must undergo

an environmental assessment before it should ever be used again. Many argued that draggers should simply be banned. Typical of those comments was the following from a fisher at our Burnt Islands meeting: "It is the dragger technology that is most responsible for the collapse of the cod stocks. It leads to catches beyond sustainable levels, it has huge by-catches, and encourages misreporting and misjudgment of stocks."

Repeatedly we were told that the process of dragging through spawning areas must have been damaging to the reproductive process of the species. Of course, fish are very "catchable" in such concentrated aggregations and this fact alone could encourage overfishing. Interestingly, the most recent assessment of the environmental impact of various gear types from the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council concluded that "the impact of the gear being towed through a spawning aggregation is not yet known" (FRCC94.TD.4, December 1994).

But despite the strong views on dragger technology, other types of gear and technologies were not held blameless. Many at the community meetings recalled the abuses of the past. The common practices of misreporting and of discarding large quantities of fish dead over the side were often cited as examples of the guilt and shared responsibility of nearly all fishers, regardless of whether they used fixed or mobile gear. Depending on the community, certain other gear types were discussed, including the controversial gill nets and Japanese cod traps. Though controversial, it was noted that these inshore gear types were not as susceptible to misreporting because all landings had to be reported for DFO purposes.

As well, certain species experienced pronounced localized over-exploitation. For example, in St. George's, Canadian purse seiners sold herring "over the side," directly to Russian factory freezer vessels without ever coming on shore, in exchange for part of the Russian allocation. The herring fishery was virtually wiped out in this fashion.

Flounder, haddock, American plaice, sole, turbot, redfish and many other species were mentioned as having been, or currently being, severely overfished. In particular, many communities expressed a concern that there should be no capelin fishery, as capelin is at the base of the food chain. As one fisher in Forteau put it, "We're destroying the cod's food source. How in hell can you raise a herd of cattle with a little handful of grass?"

Certain attitudes and ethics were also associated with the collapse of the fishery. A denial of personal responsibility was cited often, encapsulated in the attitude, "Don't blame me, I had a quota and I caught it." Personal and collective greed were often mentioned, as was apathy about the declining fish stocks, which was usually coupled with the insidious effect of massive government dependency.

The erosion of community spirit was also seen as part of the path to unsustainability. One community member in Renew's said: "The community we had in the past was tightly knit. We all helped each other out.... But we lost that spirit in the name of prosperity. We've been living according to want instead of to need. It was encouraged by government and it's nearly destroyed us."

Those community members who do donate their time to help their community find themselves in a state of "volunteer burnout," as the same people are expected to do more for a community that appears willing to do less for itself. The issue of volunteer burnout was raised repeatedly as an aspect of current unsustainability.

Another concern was that the loss of people from communities now contributed to making them unsustainable. Every family moved to Toronto or Calgary was marked with the grim certainty that their departure made it that much harder for the community to survive. The concern is widespread that the communities will die slowly, and the loss of people is like an open wound.

## Conclusion

The answer to the question "What made your community unsustainable?" did concentrate on what caused the collapse of the fishery, as if the two questions were the same. But in answering the question of what made the community unsustainable people went beyond the fishery. Frequently people raised concerns about an erosion of values, increased government dependency and a pervasive sense of powerlessness. These more subtle changes may ultimately play a critical role in whether or not individual communities will survive.

The next section of our report is dedicated to reporting on the hopes, fears and concerns of remote, fishing-dependent communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

## HOPES, FEARS AND CONCERNS

In our meetings a variety of issues were raised that are relevant to a community's vision of its sustainability. In addition to views on past, present or future sustainability, many people expressed their hopes, fears and concerns about the future. In this section, we will review some of the themes that arose repeatedly. These viewpoints must be carefully respected if any plans for the future are to have a reasonable hope of being adopted by the communities most affected.

As a preliminary point, we should report the nearly universally expressed concern that our Partnership would be "just another task force,"

without any tangible positive changes resulting from it.

Moreover, the view was frequently expressed that whenever people had participated in a task force or public hearing process, the report did not seem to reflect their concerns.

Given an understandable level of cynicism in these small communities, we were pleased that so many gave our effort the benefit of the doubt and troubled themselves to attend meetings. When challenged on why anyone should expect the round table Partnership to be different from previous efforts, our response was that

we were committed to reporting what we heard in communities as fairly and completely as possible. We also encouraged people to use our sessions, at which a broad spectrum of people from the community gathered, as a springboard for positive action that

could be initiated in the community, without waiting for decisions by remote powers. In general, the people we talked to understood the limitations on what we could promise. The informal tone we maintained at the meetings helped to overcome the tension that arises when a slate of "outsiders" visits a small community.

If we had a piece of land and run a tractor over it 365 days a year, you just see how much would grow on it. But you can't see the damage being done on the ocean floor.

*Fisher, Makkovik, Labrador*

"Overfishing is the overwhelming, indeed the only, cause of fishery collapse."

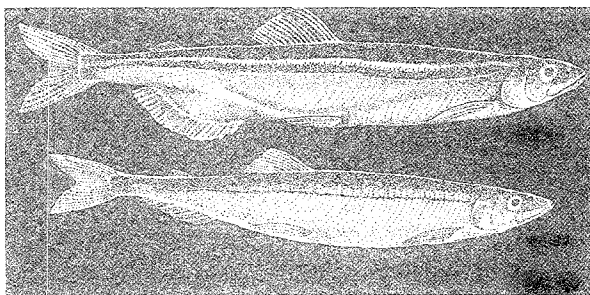
*Fisheries scientist Dr. Ram Myers, Partnership meeting, St. John's*

The predominant hope and fear always circled around the same issue: the return of the fishery. It is clear that the vast majority of people in coastal communities hope desperately that the fishery will return. It is equally clear that most fear that recovery is not possible; "There's nothing left to spawn" was a widely held view. It was fascinating to hear people in the course of a single statement vacillate from a certainty that the fishery will never recover to the hope that it must.

## 1. HAVE WE LEARNED FROM PAST MISTAKES?

Has fisheries management changed sufficiently to ensure that there will never be a repetition of the fisheries collapse?

Although we did not formally pose this question in our community visits, we certainly heard strong views on the subject. Over and over again people made it clear that they had little confidence in DFO, and no reason to believe that fisheries management is likely to improve, now or in the future. As far as the present is concerned, at every meeting people expressed the fear that many other commercial species are going the way of the cod. One participant referred to it as "a domino effect." Another said that species seemed to go "from underutilized to gone." Capelin, lumpfish, redfish, turbot, crab, shrimp and lobster were all cited as cases in which the mistakes of the past are being repeated. In the case of shellfish, the allega-



CAPELIN

tion was made that in switching from fish to invertebrates, we've simply changed victims without altering our methods in any meaningful way. Other people, however, said that crab and lobster are being managed in a sustainable fashion. (On the topic of crab the discussion centred for the most part on the unfairness of allocations rather than on sustainability considerations.)

Opinion was less optimistic when it came to the fish species; indeed, we encountered no one who believed that the lump roe fishery is sustainable. Many stark fears were expressed about the current and future status of the capelin stocks. The turbot fishery was universally viewed as in serious trouble.

As for the future, we often heard about people's queasy dread that the cod fishery will be reopened too early due to political pressure and that the stocks will never be allowed to rebuild to a truly healthy state. This fear is all the stronger because communities have not been able to participate in any public dialogue about the fishery of the future, should there be one; as a result they see no reason to believe that anything other than past pressures — political and corporate — will influence decision making. The fear is that we will limp along indefinitely with no more than a pale semblance of the fisheries, resulting in intense bickering, desperate pleading and backroom deal-making to carve up the meagre pie. For some, this scenario is the worst of all possible worlds, dividing communities further and driving the fishery into permanent collapse.

The fear that government has not learned from past mistakes was not confined to concerns about fisheries management. There was a widespread perception that the same errors are being repeated in other resource sectors, especially forestry. Some of the symptoms common to both fisheries and forestry management include: high harvesting levels beyond what would appear to be sustainable, increasing reliance on intensive technology without due consideration of the environmental and social impacts, transformation of a "common property resource" to one managed primarily for large industrial concerns, lack of value-added processing, and increased use of mechanized harvesting and processing methods that favour efficiency over employment.

The fear that individuals have not learned from past mistakes was also voiced in several communities. We were told that, tragically, there are people today who would willingly go out and catch the last fish. We also heard concerns about the prevalence of poaching in some communities. People's tolerance of poaching and cavalier disregard for the conservation impacts — whether it be their own actions or those of their neighbours — was attributed to the widespread attitude that the salmon are "government" fish, and that conservation and enforcement is "someone else's" responsibility.

Other signals were more mixed. For instance, we often heard people express hopes for benefits from so-called underutilized species, such as sea urchins or kelp. The emphasis, however, was almost invariably on the short-term gains to be realized; there was relatively little discussion of conservation considerations for species that do not have a long tradition of use in this province. The conclusion seems to be that these non-traditional species are perceived to have a role to play in helping communities “get over the hump” until the traditional fisheries can be reinstated, but it is not anticipated they will ever play the same role in the community that the fisheries played. The non-traditional fisheries are simply seen as a much-needed form of economic diversification, no different from aquaculture, tourism or manufacturing. They apparently have only a minor role to play in helping to sustain a traditional livelihood and way of life.

In the meetings that took place toward the end of our visits, after the resolution of the dispute between Canada and Spain over turbot stocks, there was universal approval of the forceful action Canada had taken. For some, this was reason to think that Canada had turned a corner with respect to fisheries conservation. Others, however, expressed the view that the measures taken by Canada were too little, too late; and some went so far as to say that it was a meaningless gesture, one that is hypocritical in the light of Canada’s continuing support for a turbot fishery, and our record in managing the cod stocks. As one participant said, “That wasn’t the first liner to go in a net, and they weren’t Spanish nets either.”

## 2. THE FATE OF RURAL NEWFOUNDLAND COASTAL COMMUNITIES

Although the people we heard from were concerned about the survival of their own communities, they were also very interested in the broader topic of the survival of small rural Newfoundland communities in general. There was a widespread perception that small communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador face a major crisis, one that threatens to end an entire way of life.

The blame for this state of affairs was laid squarely on government — both federal and provincial — and on what is perceived as a systematic undermining (either by ignorance or by design) of the values essential to rural Newfoundland. Government, we were told, simply refuses

to recognize the importance of the fisheries as the mainstay of an entire way of life.

The tourism industry and attempts by communities to promote tourism in their regions provided evidence of ignorance and incompetence. A representative from Ramea provided an example of government ignorance when he related discovering to his astonishment that a senior official in the provincial Department of Tourism and Culture was unaware that the Burgeo Road is now fully paved. As for incompetence, we were told that tourism brochures promoting the Bay de Verde Peninsula were shipped to the tourist chalet in Whitbourne and spent the entire summer in a box, never having been unpacked or put on display. These blunders seem to indicate that the province’s tourism strategy is focussed primarily on a few “big-name” attractions, without much consideration of the wealth of tourism potential that exists in all corners of the province. At the very least it is a symptom of the “overpass syndrome”: residents of St. John’s are accused of indifference to and ignorance of the lives and well-being of those “unfortunate souls” who happen to live in other regions of the province.

While some attributed such an attitude to the ignorance and incompetence of government officials, others had a more sinister interpretation. There is a widespread belief in a hidden agenda. People fear that government has made decisions with the aim of getting rid of the inshore



fishing industry and ultimately the communities that depend upon it. They fear that the lack of support for small communities across the province is evidence of a deliberate attempt by both the federal and provincial governments to undermine the social and economic foundations of rural Newfoundland. What we are witnessing,



they told us, is simply the outward manifestation of resettlement under another name. A specific example was provided by a person from Petty Harbour, who maintained that DFO's refusal to enforce gear-type regulations amounted to a deliberate attempt to foster disputes and undermine community solidarity. More generally, the systematic dropping of people from the TAGS program and the attack on seasonal employees through the UI program are seen as just a few examples of deliberate efforts to divide and destroy communities. The down-loading of responsibilities from the provincial to the municipal level was also frequently cited as part of the hidden agenda to shut down more remote communities.

Much was said about "the system." Some people expressed the view that politicians are controlled by lobby groups and big corporations. At our St. John's meeting, an industry representative from one of the largest corporations put forward the view that the fishery of the future should be concentrated on a small core of full time fishers, earning a minimum of \$30,000 annually. This viewpoint was distinctly at odds with what we heard throughout the small communities. Yet, because it was a large corporation's vision of the future, many felt that "the fix was in," decisions had been made and the fishery of the future designed to meet industry expectations. For the most part, residents of small communities view themselves as little people who don't have a say.

On the other hand, there was also dissatisfaction with the lobbying clout of organizations representing fishers. It appears that government prefers to deal with only one organization representing fishers. There is a widespread feeling among union members and others within communities that fishers are excluded from decision-making, as the union is seen as their only voice.

### 3. THE ATLANTIC GROUND FISH STRATEGY (TAGS)

The communities we visited were chosen on the basis of the severe impact of the Atlantic fisheries collapse on them. It was no surprise, therefore, to find that TAGS and its support program for displaced fisheries workers was an enormously important issue in all the communities we visited. There were three particular concerns that we heard with respect to TAGS.

#### (i) TAGS: charity or restitution?

There was considerable concern that TAGS payments might be viewed by taxpayers in central and western Canada as a form of charity, a gesture of kindly benevolence for which Atlantic Canadians should be grateful. We heard the widespread fear expressed that Canadians may not fully understand that TAGS is an attempt to cushion the impacts of a situation caused, first and foremost, by mismanagement by the federal government, and that the primary liability for the massive expense rests with the managers. TAGS, then, is and must be understood as a program of restitution and compensation.

#### (ii) TAGS complacency

The financial aid provided to displaced fisheries workers is a vital support for thousands of individuals and their families. Nevertheless, we heard it said over and over again that, whatever the intentions of the program, TAGS has the unfortunate effect of fostering complacency among many people. We often heard that many people are simply in denial; as long as they can cash their TAGS cheque, they do not fully acknowledge the magnitude of the crisis facing them. Even more worrying is their alleged certainty that when TAGS compensation runs out there will be some other program to replace it. They are deluded, we were told, by the stubborn conviction that there will be a "TAGS 2" or some other program to tide them over until they can go back to fishing. Therefore they see little need to make any major commitments towards planning for their futures.

A slightly different form of complacency was also identified, which could be called TAGS and "the sedative effect". The TAGS program has tended to pre-empt discussion about what caused the collapse in the first place, diverting people from fully acknowledging the magnitude of the catastrophe. Fear of losing TAGS is an effective deterrent to public displays of outrage over the loss of the fishery — and to demands that those responsible must be held to account. "We were given a cushion," one person told us, "and we haven't had the opportunity to mourn a death."

It should be noted that we did not see a great deal of first-hand evidence of the "TAGS complacency" syndrome. Rather, the people who attended our meetings expressed their conviction that this complacency runs rampant

through their communities. The point was strongly raised in most of the communities we visited, even to the point of saying that TAGS is currently the major disincentive to effective planning and action for long-term community sustainability.

### **(iii) TAGS causing divisiveness within communities**

We heard two ways in which TAGS is putting a strain on communities by undermining their traditional co-operative spirit. The first way is through a perceived inequity between those who receive TAGS compensation and those who do not. There were several ways in which injustices raised concern for people: some were disqualified from TAGS for what appeared to be arbitrary and shifting criteria or through happenstance; some pointed out the unfairness of situations in which family members could pool TAGS payments to provide a family income that was out of proportion to their earnings in the fishery and to community norms; and some working people expressed resentment at the fact that TAGS recipients were afforded tremendous leisure and recreational time without feeling any obligation to use that time to contribute to the community or to their own futures.

There was another, more insidious way that TAGS was alleged to be contributing to community divisiveness. We were told that people "on TAGS" are less likely to give full voice to their bitterness or to organize amongst themselves. This means that when people come "off TAGS" and find themselves in desperate straits, they are less likely to be actively and vocally supported by people who are still benefiting from the program. In communities where people had been involved in a variety of fishing activities, and where people's TAGS eligibility periods covered a broad range, we heard that TAGS is dividing communities by undermining the possibility of people finding common cause in their plight. People whose TAGS eligibility is currently expiring will not be strongly supported by those still on TAGS, and when they "come off" TAGS in 1996 or 1997 they will in turn get little support from those who are "good" until 1998 or 1999.

Several people outlined the view that TAGS is a Machiavellian form of social control; that TAGS serves to "buy" the complacency of potential activists, and that by staggering the eligibility periods the program is designed to ensure that in these communities there will never be

the critical mass of outraged individuals willing to join together and take decisive action. The intent of the program, we were told, is to whittle away by degrees the spirit of Newfoundland's fishing-based communities, leaving the residents more pliable and resigned to placidly accepting whatever fate is decided on their behalf by remote decision-makers.

## **4. COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Our first community visits took place very shortly after the public release of "Community Matters", the major report of the federal-provincial Task Force on Community Economic Development. This report had been eagerly anticipated after the extensive series of public meetings the Task Force undertook in the early summer of 1994. In every community that we visited, leaders from the communities had read and reflected upon the report and were eager to discuss its implications for their community. Attention was, of course, focussed on the proposal to form economic zones in the province, and especially on the makeup of the zonal boards that will administer the economic-development funding for each zone. We found ourselves in the interesting position of observing community reaction as the report first came out and in the months when initial organization of boards was taking place.

The Task Force on Community Economic Development was established in order to address the future directions of local economic development in the province. Its mandate was to make recommendations regarding a more efficient and effective approach to regional development in each of the province's proposed economic zones. The 12-member Task Force recommended that the 18 zones (subsequently increased to 19) establish regional economic development boards to co-ordinate all social and economic initiatives relating to regional economic development in the zone, and that existing federal and provincial business support agencies should work with the zonal boards to harmonize their support.

People had a diversity of views about the changes taking place. Before outlining several concerns that were expressed about the process, it must be emphasized that the overall context in which these concerns were expressed was one of interest and support for the principles espoused in the report. People take the report very

seriously indeed, and want to be involved in the process. If there is a broad generalization that can be made about the views we heard about the report, it is this: people were very enthusiastic about the Task Force's work when we spoke to them shortly after release of the report; later on, as community leaders started to get involved in the political process of forming provisional zone boards, we heard some doubts and concerns, mostly from people who recognized how fractious regional politics can be.

Some people expressed the view that the federal and provincial governments are not sincere in their efforts to provide opportunities for regional and local organizations to have a more meaningful role in the economic development of their communities or regions. Although the report uses all the right rhetoric about community involvement, it is still promoting basically a paternalistic, top-down approach to community economic development. This was, however, not a widely held viewpoint.

One substantive concern we heard was that with so much emphasis on regional planning it is the small communities that will lose out in the process. A zonal board, it was reasoned, will in most cases be dominated by representatives from the larger communities in the zone. These boards, it is feared, will become intensely politicized in their decision making, with individual board members struggling to maximize the economic benefits to their own communities. In the negotiations to reach decisions, the smaller communities that are not represented at the table will be ruthlessly excluded from the economic opportunities that the boards set in place.

We heard several opinions that painted a rather sinister picture of the move to establish zonal boards. In a nutshell, the view is this: after mismanaging our resources, squandering the economic opportunities that once provided livelihoods to people in every community in the province, and leaving rural Newfoundland in the most dire straits it has ever seen, the centralized governments are now off-loading the responsibility for managing the resulting mess to local volunteers! Government, it is felt, is simply unwilling to make some of the brutally tough decisions that must be made, and is dodging its responsibility by creating another layer of government to bear the brunt of the abuse, scorn and outrage that is sure to come. The decisions that people in St. John's and Ottawa are unwilling to make are those that will directly result in the deaths of communities — decisions such as which fish

plants will never reopen and which small communities will have the last door closed on their hopes of economic renewal. Wherever we went people acknowledged that these tough decisions will have to be made sooner or later.

The bitter view of the Task Force on Community Economic Development, then, is that politicians and senior bureaucrats have cynically and calculatingly conspired to use the zonal boards to distance themselves from decisions that are politically suicidal. The zonal board members — volunteers all — are being set up as scapegoats to take a big fall. The result, some predicted, will be chaos: mass resignations of boards, increasing bitterness and divisiveness within and between communities, and the besmirching of the reputations and good will earned over the years by the best and brightest community leaders.

## 5. YOUTH: THE LOST GENERATION

Some of the most immediate and moving fears expressed by people who attended our meetings had to do with their concerns about the children, teenagers and young adults of the community, and the troubles they face. One woman referred to a "lost" generation of youth, and when we probed a bit to find out what she meant we learned that the term had two distinct meanings. In the first case, we heard about the dismay at seeing increasing numbers of young people leaving their communities, searching out opportunities elsewhere. Although young people have always left rural Newfoundland communities to obtain higher education, to take advantage of employment opportunities or simply to expand their horizons, they always had the option to return and be welcomed back by family and by a community structure that they "belong to." These days, we heard, it's a different story. When a young woman or man leaves the community, it is, everyone assumes, a final break with the community. There will be nothing, people fear, to attract these people back home.

The other type of loss has to do with the teenagers and young adults who do remain, or who have not yet left. This is the generation of young people on the threshold of their own independence, ready to embark on a life path of their own, who now find that they have few options to choose from. Many older people were both outraged and ashamed that this is the only meagre, bitter fruit they can

offer to their own children. As one elderly man at our La Scie public meeting quite movingly expressed, “I’d die a lot happier if I could do something for the children, the younger people. I got a grandson out working away. I’d love to bring him home to work here. I want to see him make a man of himself. But I’m so worried about all the young people driven off the island.”

In the “lost” aimlessness of the young people in the school yards, outside the convenience stores and at the inactive wharves, people saw the grim reflection of our collective failure to keep future horizons open. People were deeply concerned about increases in vandalism, problems that would appear minor in central Canada. In fact, an RCMP officer who attended the Renews meeting explained that the main reason he had come was to talk about his grave concern since a recent act of property destruction at the local school. Many in communities were troubled by the life lessons young children are learning from having their parents idle, receiving a cheque every two weeks, with the weight of care of financial uncertainty hanging over them. One young schoolteacher at the Bay de Verde meeting told of her shock that attendance in her elementary class dropped off every second Wednesday. She thought other teachers were testing her naiveté when they explained upon receiving TAGS cheques whole families headed for the shopping mall in the nearest large centre, taking the children out of school to do so. In fact, this was exactly why classes shrank every second Wednesday and every one expected it.

On the other hand, we heard from many people that the only good thing about the moratorium is that young people were staying in school to graduate from high school. We heard of the lure in earlier years of dropping out of high school and landing a job in one of the more lucrative fisheries where one could immediately earn more than one’s high-school teacher. Young people themselves, however, frequently complained that people on TAGS were taking “their” places in universities and colleges. Although this was disputed by people in educational institutions, many young people still believe that they are competing against TAGS recipients, who are guaranteed a seat in courses. Given the scope of the crisis from a social, cultural and economic point of view, it surprised members of our Partnership to realize that no counselling specific to the crisis was being provided in the school system.

It should be pointed out that the youths we talked to were in general not quite as despairing of their futures as were the older adults. The youths who came to our meetings may not have been broadly representative of their generation, but they manifested an earnest desire to find answers to the major questions facing them, as well as the intelligence, passion and commitment to overcome despair and apathy.

Particularly impressive was the youth group in Petty Harbour who had formed their own Youth Round Table in order to be fully involved in the community round-table effort. They drove home many valid points, notably that the moratorium’s social and economic blow to young people has not been recognized. They pointed out that in the past, even as pre-teens, they could earn their own pocket money cutting out cod tongues. They have lost that economic opportunity and also the seasonal work that filled their summer hours. Finding alternative employment to save money for university was a major concern, as was finding a seat at university. Given the choice, all the young people we met said they would prefer to remain in their own communities. Asked to guess if that would be possible, most thought not.

## 6. SPECIAL HARDSHIPS

We found many parallel situations in the challenges facing the various communities. All of the communities we visited faced a wide range of common problems — decaying and inadequate infrastructure, volunteer burnout, concerns about out-migration, etc. We were asked, however, to call attention to some particular localized challenges.

The communities in coastal Labrador face some mammoth difficulties no longer facing most Island communities. They are reliant on an expensive transportation lifeline in order to meet their basic needs — a service that in these times of severe budget restraints can never be taken for granted. Ferry service itself serves the community only seven months of the year, leaving people dependent on even more expensive air transport for much of the year. Any additional planning for sustainability, therefore, must be on top of this already considerable outlay of community energies and resources. Although the two “island-off-an-island” communities we visited in Newfoundland (Ramea and Fogo) have similar concerns, it is probably fair to say that the concerns of coastal Labrador communities are more acute and receive less attention.

Another type of special hardship was common to every community: the obstacles faced by women. The concern was raised that “women’s issues” are not taken seriously in the province. For instance, the vast majority of public discussion of fisheries issues is focussed on the harvesting sector with much less discussion of processing. This amounts to “double discrimination”: firstly, by de-emphasizing the importance of what has traditionally been understood to be “women’s work”; and secondly, by rendering the many women who do work in the harvesting sector as practically invisible.

## 7. NEGATIVITY BREEDS DESPAIR

The discussions that took place tended — with some notable exceptions — to be concerned with rather bleak subjects. While people had a broad range of outlooks — from anger and bitterness to enthusiasm and optimism — our conversations always hovered around the grim subject of the death of communities. For the most part, the people we talked to acknowledged this possibility as a matter-of-fact, and moved on from there. However, the concern was raised that there is a danger of spiralling into a vortex of negativity. All of the “doom and gloom” around the challenges facing Newfoundland and Labrador communities struggling to become sustainable is dangerous, since gloom breeds on itself, and despair can become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

At the same time, it is not possible to simply tune out the bleak news. One person likened the community’s situation to that of someone struggling to survive in a snowstorm: “If we fall asleep, we’ll die.”

## WHAT WILL MAKE OUR COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE IN THE FUTURE?

The overwhelming sentiment from communities was that if they are to have a future, government must start listening. Over and over we heard that future sustainability depended on greater empowerment of people at the community level. It was generally acknowledged that not all communities would survive. But it was a strongly held view that those communities whose residents made a conscious decision not to allow their town to die would be far more likely to survive.

Nearly all of the views we heard fell within a general theme of belief in a sustainable future based on greater personal and community self-reliance coupled with increased control over their resources and the decisions that affect their lives.

Future sustainability will also depend on approaches that maximize the benefit to local communities, not those that merely serve to inflate economic indicators lacking any sustainability context. This point was raised in concerns about the false news spread through economic indicators that had underestimated the value of the fishery. The pre-moratorium statistic that the fishery represented only 5.5% of GDP (1984 figure) was mentioned a number of times. In real terms, that figure is wholly misleading; the inference from it was that Newfoundland had never relied very much on the fishery, and should just shake off the dust from a dead fishery and move on. What is not reflected in that statistic is that the fishery was extremely labour-intensive, that 30,000 people were left unemployed in the wake of the moratorium, with many times that number suffering economic impacts, that billions of dollars in income supplements were required from the federal purse, and that hundreds of small communities — their lifeblood, culture, history and future — were caught up in the fate of ocean life.

Similarly, it was expressed with disdain that some politicians were now talking about a “successful” fishery during the moratorium. Indeed, the actual value of the fishery in 1995 will exceed its pre-moratorium value, but that is because of what is widely regarded as a fluke in market conditions for one species. The Japanese are now willing to pay premium prices for crab due to the collapse of superior quality Alaskan crab. The Alaskan crab is expected to recover, at which point the current bonanza in the Newfoundland crab fishery will likely be in jeopardy.



Further more, despite the high dollar value of the crab fishery, it has almost no impact on most local communities. It is an issue of real concern that crab for Japan is shipped out with virtually no local processing. It is also a source of bitterness that a handful of fishers and processors with crab licences are making astronomical profits while the majority of their neighbours sit idle. People made the same point about Hibernia, where huge wages go to a few people but the benefits are not seen by the province as a whole.

The future of communities depends on development that is labour-intensive and environmentally appropriate with benefits retained close to the community.

### Dealing with the past

During our visits to rural communities it became clear that the crisis created by the collapse of the fishery has not been dealt with either by communities, the province or, indeed, the nation. In fact, not only has there not been a formal public forum to deal with the fisheries collapse and its aftermath, but there appears to have been a pronounced effort to shut down any such discussion. Three years into the moratorium, people still have not been consulted as to why they think the fishery collapsed and under what criteria it should be allowed to reopen, nor has government explained to them why it believes the resource was so mismanaged. There was discussion, with a great deal of humour, about the "consultations" government has instituted. They were viewed as inadequate to the task for a number of reasons. First, because a wide range of stakeholders was not included. Second, having invited only fishers, they were then further segregated. We heard of a recent meeting on gear types where cod trap fishers met in one room, having no contact with dragger crews in another. Not surprisingly, each group concluded that their own technology was fine. There was no attempt to bring these fishers into the same room or to achieve any consensus. Nor were they allowed to discuss what had caused the collapse of the fishery.

Various theories are floated in the media within the general themes that "everyone's to blame" and "we'll probably never know." These are viewed as unacceptable cop-outs, or worse. In fact, many community residents and fishers believe it is perfectly possible to determine what happened and to use this information to avoid repeating our mistakes. The refusal to look at what caused the col-

lapse is like salt in the wounds of those who first raised the alarm that the cod was in trouble. They feel confident that an inquiry would at long last validate their concerns. But just as they were ignored in the past, they feel powerless and ignored in the wake of the disaster.

People are frustrated with being told "this is not the time to lay blame," as though demanding public accountability for the collapse of the fishery were in bad taste. Deprived of any opportunity to discuss and debate the crisis, one Fogo Island participant likened the experience to losing a family member at sea. In the case of a death when the body is not found, the family cannot deal with the tragedy: "When you don't find the body, you always hope, you don't grieve. You always half expect him to open the door and walk back in, safe and sound."

"What's happening to the crab doesn't make any sense. They're putting the crab out in sections, creating less employment. But according to politicians, everything's great. The only statistics

### Planning for the future

#### THE FISHERY

Just as the questions "What made your community sustainable in the past?" and "What made it unsustainable?" were answered "Fish!," so too was the question "What could make your community sustainable in the future?" answered with hopes for the fishery. It was nearly universally argued that without some level of restored fishing activity, these communities will not have a future.

they look at are the dollar signs." *Fisher speaking at Forteau public meeting*

"The last cod taken out of the Atlantic will register positive to the GDP." *Fisher, Petty Harbour*

But no one in our meetings held the hope of the fishery returning to pre-moratorium levels of employment. Nor do people believe the fishery should be managed as it was in the past. Echoing the conclusions of the Honourable John Fraser's report on the status of the West Coast salmon, many in communities expressed the view that the fishery had been managed too close to the edge. The warning signals were not heeded. They urged that in any future fishery there be more communication between sci-

entists and fishers. Over and over, we heard that for the fishery to be sustainably managed there should be much greater community involvement, including calls for actual community management of their adjacent fishery. Concern was also expressed that if communities succeed in gaining greater control over resource decisions, they will require the authority and resources to implement their local management decisions.

Many within the communities feel that no one speaks for them — not their union or their government. To allow meaningful participation (e.g., co-management, coastal zone management, round tables, etc.), more co-operation among decision makers was recommended. The need to break down the barriers that have existed in fisheries management was frequently identified (for example, between the different levels of government and their jurisdictions; between the different government departments that deal with various aspects of the fishery and the community; and within the community, the involvement of all stakeholders).

The call for involvement of fishers also extended to comments about those whose advice is heeded in issues surrounding the fishery. It is felt that the same “experts” responsible for the destruction of the resource are still making decisions about the fishery of the future.

People believe that a process must be established to provide all fishers the opportunity to have input into planning for the fishery of the future — in regulatory, adjustment and management issues. The community must be given an opportunity for meaningful involvement. In order for there to be successful integration of scientific and traditional knowledge, a level of trust needs to be developed. Many stressed the need for a stock assessment model that takes into account not only scientific information, but also the traditional ecological knowledge of fishers; for stock assessment surveys conducted in inshore waters as well as offshore; and for an assessment of gear technologies to determine the most suitable harvesting methods for a sustainable fishery. This assessment should be conducted in consultation with fishers, who should be involved in any experiments involving the modification of fishing gear and/or testing programs.

There were many very specific suggestions relating to the fishery and future sustainability. Those reported below had a high degree of community support, and some form the basis of recommendations that the Partnership

believes would constitute priority areas for government action:

### **Canadian overfishing**

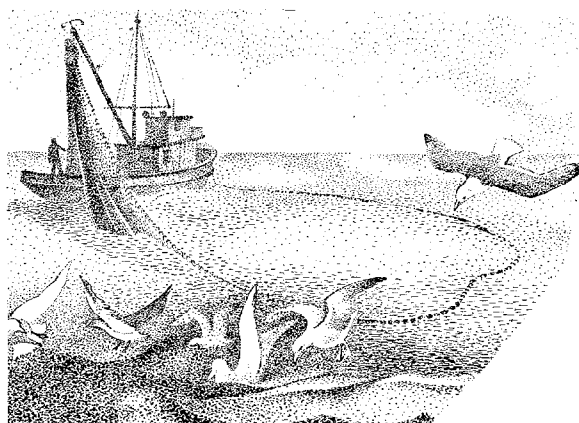
There is a need to address the issue of overfishing by Canadians. Foreign overfishing has dominated the discussion, diverting attention from overfishing taking place within Canadian waters. Placing a higher priority on action to curb domestic overfishing would also strengthen Canada’s hand in international diplomacy to reduce foreign overfishing. Canada is still seen by many fishing nations as hypocritical on the issue of foreign over-exploitation of marine resources.

### **Overfishing of particular species**

As noted earlier, there was widespread concern that many species are being over-exploited. However, three in particular were raised so often that they merit special attention in planning the fishery of the future.

### **Capelin**

In every community visited we heard concerns about the capelin fishery. The concerns fell into three categories. First, that it is an inherently unsustainable fishery due to the critical role played by capelin in the food chain. Second, that it is an unacceptably wasteful fishery because the major market is for capelin roe in Japan, requiring any male capelin caught to be discarded, dead. (A similar concern was raised about the fishery for lumpfish roe.) Third, even those who believe that the capelin fishery can be managed sustainably do not believe that the stock is strong enough to withstand the current approved level of harvest.



In Renew's we were told that hundreds of people, even those dependent on capelin, had signed petitions urging that there be no capelin quotas. In Petty Harbour, we learned that the Co-op fish plant had decided in 1993 to remain closed for the year rather than accept capelin for processing. The following year, 1994, they were told that if they did not open to process capelin, they ran the risk of losing their processing licence. Against their better judgement, as they believe the stocks to be endangered, they opened. But after 48 hours, the fishery was shut down as none of the capelin landed were large enough to be legally processed. In fact in that year, out of a total quota of 47,000 M/T, only 1,700 M/T were legally landed throughout Newfoundland's waters due to the small size of the fish caught.

Many feel the resource is in trouble. Over the last few years the capelin have been smaller, spawning is later, off-shore behaviour of the stock appears to have changed and, in many areas, capelin are far fewer in number. But still there is a capelin fishery in 1995. Capelin is a key component of the food chain for more than the cod. As an Inuit fisher pointed out to us in Makkovik, the capelin is the base of the diet of everything up to and including whales. Inuit observers are wondering if smaller whale size is due to the scarcity of capelin. Certainly, the dropping number of seabirds is likely related to declining capelin stocks on which the birds depend for their primary food source. In a major seabird colony at Witless Bay, for example, the black-legged kittiwake population plummeted by 90% last year. Herring gulls are declining, and ocean-going shearwaters appear to be absent in some areas.

The vast majority of people attending our meetings felt that the cod fishery will never recover without healthy capelin stocks. The role of capelin in supporting the whole ecosystem was mentioned less frequently but is certainly a cause for concern.

### Shrimp

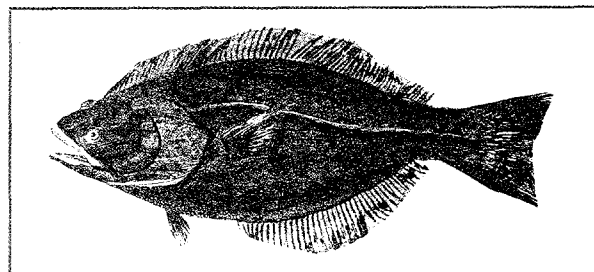
From the observations of many fishers, in northern waters shrimp is just as important a part of the food chain as capelin is in southern waters. The current shrimp fishery has a value of approximately \$300 million/year, without any processing in Newfoundland. Many in communities believe that shrimp is the most destructive fishery that has ever taken place in the ocean. Recent worldwide studies confirm that dubious position. Due to the small mesh size

required to catch tiny shrimp, the rates of by-catch are huge. It is estimated that every time a shrimp is sold in a restaurant, up to 10 times that quantity of other fish have been killed and thrown into the ocean dead. Even where the Nordmore gate (designed to allow the escape of small fish) is used, the rates of by-catch may be unacceptably large. Many were particularly concerned about the rate of by-catch in baby cod, turbot and halibut. In fact, scientific data on the extent and type of by-catch in Newfoundland and Labrador waters is lacking. Additionally, there appears to be inconsistent enforcement of by-catch regulations.

With the cod showing limited signs of recovery, people in fishing communities want to know that everything possible is being done to give the cod a chance to recover. But between overfishing the cod's major food sources and allowing cod in the by-catch of other commercial species, not to mention predation by seals, they do not believe this to be the case.

### Turbot

The concern for turbot stocks is straightforward: most people believe that it will soon be in a state of commercial extinction. As noted earlier, there was widespread pride and enthusiasm for minister Tobin's actions in seizing the Estai. However, even in the same breath as people expressed their support for the seizure, they also expressed scepticism about the strength of Canada's new-found conservation ethic. Juvenile turbot is caught by both foreign and domestic fleets. Most believe there should have been no negotiated quota with the Spanish. Moreover, they do not believe there should have been any domestic turbot fishery either.



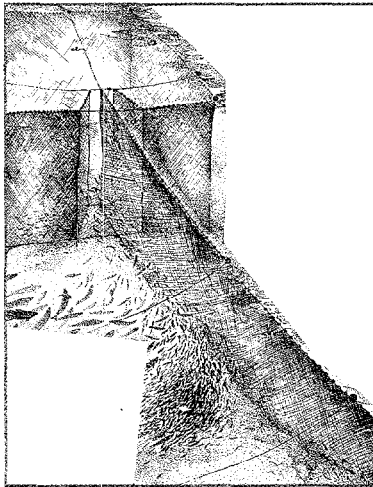
TURBOT

## Technology

In discussing what would make their communities sustainable again, the subject of appropriate use of technology was universally raised. There was widespread agreement about the two ends of the spectrum: virtually everyone who spoke out in meetings believed that the traditional hook-and-line fishery was totally sustainable while producing the highest quality catch. At the other end of the spectrum, nearly everyone believed that draggers played the primary role in the destruction of the fishery. In between, there were strong views about other technologies, without the same degree of unanimity.

Modern draggers have achieved nearly mythological dimensions in the public psyche. Their sheer size (they are able to lower nets large enough to scoop up twenty 747s,

nets held open with ton and a half steel doors) and the ability to zero in on vast schools of fish with high-tech sonar and radar, scraping along the ocean floor, suggests that they have dwarfed the marine ecosystem and even a resource as seemingly inexhaustible as the northern cod. Many people feel that dragger technology should be banned. Others feel that it should at least be sus-



COD TRAP

pending until there is a proper environmental assessment to determine the impact on the fishery resource and the ocean bottom.

As well, there was concern expressed about gillnets, particularly those made of non-biodegradable monofilaments. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, 280,000 such nets were introduced to the Newfoundland fishery thanks to a 50% federal subsidy. Gillnets sit along the ocean floor like a fence. With mechanized equipment, as many as 400 gillnets can be set from the same boat. They have the advantage of being able to conform to the contours of any ocean floor and therefore enable fishing in areas inappropriate for cod traps or draggers. Many were worried that “ghost nets” could still be fishing during the moratorium.

On the other hand, many fishers argued that gillnets, when used properly, are highly selective with very little by-catch. They have been used for thousands of years, and as long as fishers are careful to ensure that none of their nets are left to become “ghost nets,” they are a perfectly appropriate technology. Suffice it to say that views on gillnets are a long way from the unanimity of community views on draggers.

People also expressed concern about Japanese cod traps being too large and creating unsustainable fishing. A cod trap is essentially a room with four walls and a floor made of netting. It is typically set in inshore waters of up to 36 metres deep, kept upright with floats and held down with weights set along the bottom. The Japanese variation added a roof and a porch and was more complex in design. Prior to 1991, it was possible to achieve daily catches of up to 10 M/T in one cod trap.

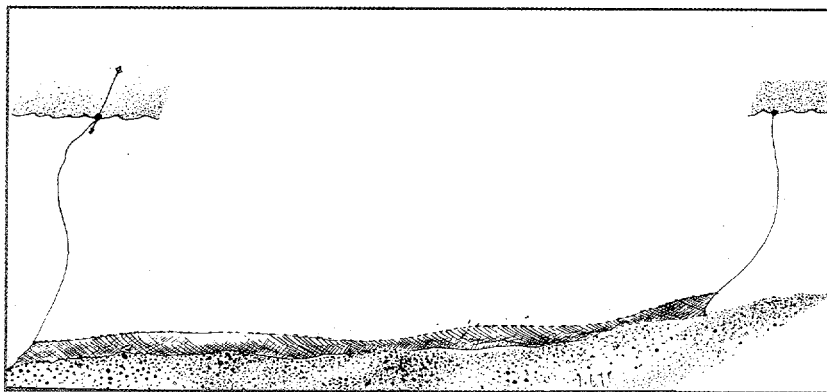
## Foreign overfishing

We heard in some communities, although not everywhere, that Canada should have control of the continental shelf and of foreign fishing that would impact on this area. Clearly, there was a great deal of concern about the Nose and Tail of the Grand Banks.

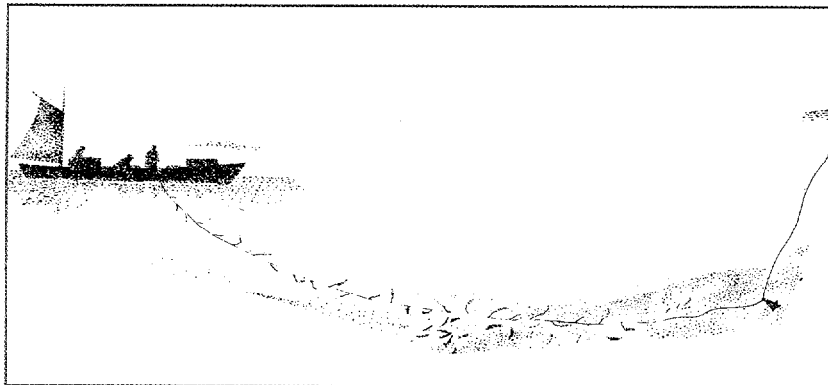
A related concern was that combatting foreign overfishing has been traditionally compromised by Canadian civil servants preoccupied with other-than-conservation agendas. The view was expressed that Canada's interests in stopping overfishing lose out when other markets and trade concerns are linked. This was often identified as the reason Canada gave any further turbot quota to the Spanish.

## Conservation-based fishery

Virtually everyone in small communities expressed the view that if there is to be a fishery in the future, it must be conservation-based. The primary goal of resource management should be conservation of the resource. This was described as erring on the side of caution. The interests of industry, community and other stakeholders should never override conservation concerns. Some people involved in the fishing industry, particularly from the processing side, argued that there should be a change in the way the fisheries have traditionally been pursued. Rather than focussing on sheer quantity, as the Newfoundland cod



GILLNET



T R A W L

fishery had in the past, it should be more quality-conscious, implementing harvesting and processing practices that stress the importance of quality and better utilization of raw material, rather than volume alone.

Many also argued that single-species management was a failure. They urged that fisheries management should have some sense of the interactions between environmental conditions, of predator-prey relationships — in essence ecosystem management. More accurately, many believe that we cannot “manage” an ecosystem but, that we can and should manage human interventions into natural systems to minimize the damage we do.

### Licensing Decisions on Harvesting and Processing

We frequently heard that people would like government to tell them whether the fish plant in their community will be allowed to reopen or not. They acknowledge that these are difficult and politically unpopular decisions. But as long as there is no decision, people will cling to the

hope that the plant in their community will reopen, and they will not explore other options.

On the other hand, we heard from many, primarily owners of fish plants, that government should intervene as little as possible. The decision as to which plant reopens and survives should be made by the marketplace. Many argued persuasively that the number of fish plants did not play a role in the collapse of the fishery, as the pressure on the ecosystem was from harvesting, not processing. Fish plant owners felt government should license them in the future to process more than one species. They argued that if the community could manage its resources through rights of adjacency, then it only made sense that a local fish plant should be able to process a multiplicity of locally caught species.

There was also a great deal of concern about the fairness of the resource’s distribution among harvesters. This was particularly acute as it related to the lucrative invertebrate fisheries. As noted above, the price is through the roof now, but only a very few can benefit from the supplemental crab fishery. In general, in all fisheries, measures need to be taken for fair sharing of resources.

### Conservation and stewardship education

We often heard that somehow society has to recognize human inability to control greed. People in communities wondered if we, as a society, are capable of controlling our obsession with short-term profits — to stop hunting fish with a technology that allows us to catch the last fish. It was suggested we might need to abandon the wild fishery and instead get into farming or sea ranching. Many more people believe that with good stewardship practices and fishing with passive gear, a sustainable fishery could be maintained. Many urged that to accomplish this there needs to be a strong effort at conservation education, from the youngest children to active fishers.



## Seals

Not surprisingly, the topic of the increasing seal population was raised nearly everywhere. Many felt that the seal issue was being used as a scapegoat by major industries and politicians. It is notable that no one in small communities put forward the view that the seals had caused the collapse of the cod stocks. On the other hand, now that the cod is hanging on the brink of extinction, many believe that factors that would not ordinarily be a cause of concern, such as seal predation, might push the cod over the edge.

In the past, seals were seen as an abundant resource. The seal fishery was a significant part of the province's history, contributing to the sustainability of communities. Many in communities believe it is time to take on international public opinion in order to create markets for seal products. We heard from one woman in La Scie who had received training at government expense in tanning processes. She opened a business making high-quality seal-fur clothing and headed to a fur-trade show in Montreal with high hopes. She related that other furriers admired her product but explained that no one would buy seal fur due to anti-seal-hunt public opinion. She had to abandon the entire enterprise for lack of markets.

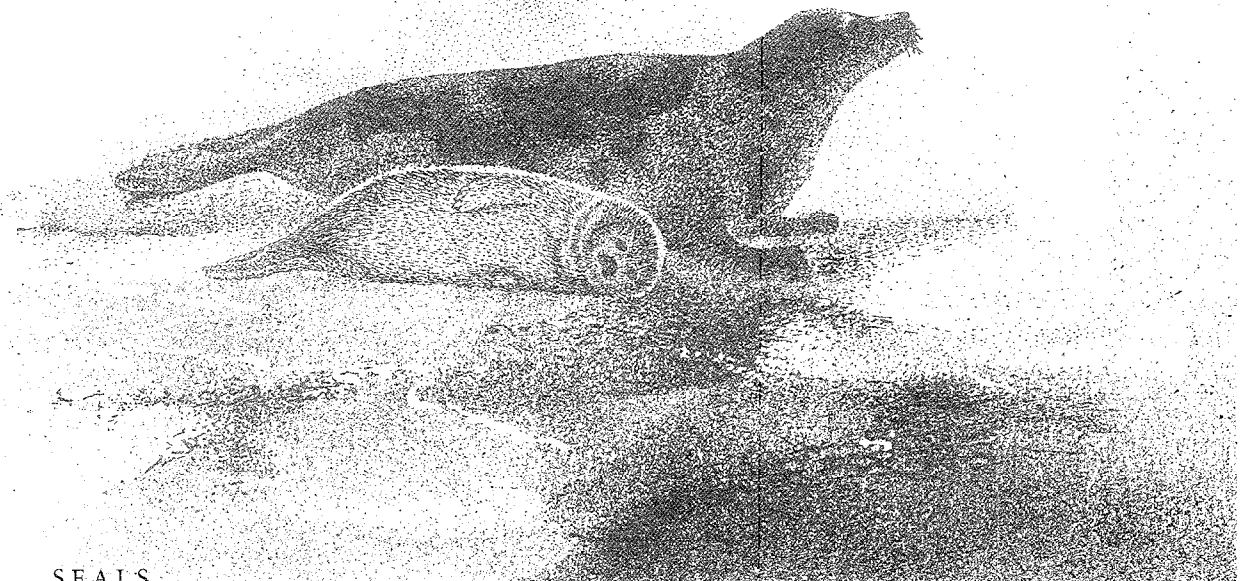
Many people feel that seals represent an economic opportunity but they fear the negative image internationally can never be overcome to allow the development of a market for seal products. However, many were encouraged by the provincial government's efforts in research and development in this area.

## Fishery infrastructure

The infrastructure for a small-scale fishery is already decaying. In order to keep options open for future fishery-related employment, many urged that wharves and other elements of the infrastructure should be maintained. Moreover, some felt that well-maintained wharves could also attract tourist potential in cruise ships and ecotourism activities such as whale watching.

## Enforcement

DFO and the province need to work with communities on enforcement. At our community meetings, it was stressed that everyone needs to be involved. Community leaders have to participate and assist in fostering a change in social attitudes. Government officials have to do their share by being consistent and aggressive in enforcing regulations. At the wrap-up Oceans Day session, there was strong support from community representatives for the plight of the Petty Harbour Fishers Co-op in the face of DFO refusal to enforce their own regulations. The evening before Oceans Day there had been a divisive and nearly violent community meeting. Government inaction on this particular local issue appeared to many to be symptomatic of an agenda more concerned with eroding a strong community voice than with conservation and law enforcement.



SEALS

## SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY — LIFE BEYOND THE FISHERY

Our discussions in communities ranged far beyond the fishery, although the fishery was never far from centre stage. However, as previous sections suggest, the question of future sustainability brought us away from the fishery to issues of values and ethics, economic diversification, education, training and community empowerment.

Regardless of the topic, there was a constant refrain that communities must be involved in the design and delivery of programs. We cannot overemphasize the extent to which community members and leaders believe that government is totally insensitive to their needs, disdainful of their opinions and blind to community values. The single overriding message from every community was that our Partnership should bring this point home: "GOVERNMENT MUST LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE!"

There should be more input from the community into the type of training provided. Some communities were very disturbed to learn that decisions of such importance were again being made outside the communities. The communities' opinions on ways to diversify are being ignored. Further, the training is being identified, designed and delivered by people far removed from and with minimal knowledge of the communities involved.

The following sections attempt to highlight common themes, many of which form the basis for community recommendations.

### Education and Training

In our meetings, many different aspects of education and training were raised. We heard recommendations that civil servants needed to be educated about the reality of the fishery, that children needed to be educated about the traditional culture of their province, and that TAGS recipients should be allowed to reallocate their education funds to their children. There were many complaints about inappropriate training, primarily vocational. There was widespread cynicism about the new industry that has sprung up of training institutions, all run on TAGS money. Fundamentally, there was recognition that the culture needed to change to value education as an end in itself, not merely as a ticket to a particular job.

There was virtual unanimity on the point that, of all the programs offered, adult basic education had real value, providing the basics for future sustainability. Many wished that adult basic education were more readily available, and that there were more people interested in taking advantage of the opportunity where it does exist. Every opportunity should be given for individuals to upgrade their educational levels. We heard that there is currently a stigma to these programs. Community educators urged that they should be designed/adapted with community input in order to make them acceptable and to attempt to remove any stigma.

We heard repeatedly that vocational training should be more focussed on local needs and opportunities and linked to potential employment. There is no point in training 100 hairdressers if there is no market. We also heard from many people that TAGS-trained workers were competing with others in overcrowded fields, such as nursing assistants, carpenters and electricians.

Many aspects of education and training merit reference as they emerged frequently in our sessions:

**Education for capacity building** — determine what capacity building is required to permit meaningful involvement of the community and provide it. In particular, the communities wished to support leadership training;

"We used to keep a garden and have a few goats. We worked harder, but we had food on our table and clothes on our backs..."

"I used to milk three cows in the morning before going to school.

If we are going to stay in Newfoundland, I think we'll have to get back to work.... Have a few cows and a few hens and take care of ourselves..."

*Views from the Burnt Islands public meeting*

### Conflict-resolution education

— The level of division within the community has grown considerably since the introduction of Northern Cod Adjustment Recovery Program (NCARP) and TAGS. This was expressed in most of, if not all, the communities we visited. Many feel it has occurred because of the design of the programs. Conflict-resolution courses should be included in any

training courses offered. Consideration should be given to making these courses available to the community at large in order to have a positive impact;

**Counselling** — Counselling should be provided in areas where there is a need, i.e. family counselling, marriage counselling, counselling for youth, addictions, depression, etc. Support groups should be encouraged;

**Integrating fishery awareness in education system** — The regular school system, primary, elementary, secondary and post-secondary, should integrate the issues surrounding the history of the fishing industry and the current crisis — management, fishing, processing, conservation — into their regular school curriculum. Young people need to know their history;

**Conservation education** — We should look towards the future fishery and expose people to the concepts of sustainable development and to the ideas of conservation, better utilization, value-added production, quality, marketing, etc;

**More strategic use of TAGS funds** — Many felt that TAGS has been a gold mine for many training institutions and that the quality of some of the courses offered leaves a lot to be desired;

**Identify the responsibility of the intellectual communities** — Memorial University of Newfoundland used to be much more involved in community development issues than it is now. It has shown little leadership in the present crisis. Education professionals should use their talents, abilities and experience to be more directly involved in the real issues facing communities — through actual community service as well as through ensuring that the research they do is grounded in the practical needs of communities, and is focussed on Newfoundland's resource base.

## ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION

All the communities we visited felt there was the need to diversify in the areas of tourism, seals, aquaculture, agriculture, secondary processing, underutilized species, local crafts, heritage carpentry and local food products, such as jams and preserves. Some communities, such as Ramea and Forteau had gone through impressive local exercises to identify their strengths and plan for the future. But many felt that government was less than fully supportive.

If government is serious about diversification, they should start putting money into R&D, marketing, etc. Concern was frequently expressed about government red tape operating as a barrier to new enterprises.

Policies should be designed for more practical application, with input from the community. Many examples were given of policies designed either in St. John's or Ottawa that did not make sense at the community level when implemented. More input from the community is required if government policies are to work.

Throughout our community visits we noted a tension between those who could see a future based on dozens of small-scale enterprises and those who focussed on any single idea and dismissed it as inadequate to replace what has been lost. Those who dismissed diversification ideas were most often those who appeared to feel threatened by anything put forward as an alternative to the fishery. Only when it was agreed that no one new economic venture could replace the fishery was there consensus.

Beyond new economic opportunities, diversification discussions also focussed on the need to become self-reliant, through reviving some sustainable practices of the past. In essence, many felt they had to learn to make do with less. Many mentioned the need to "go back to the future" through returning to small-scale vegetable gardening and livestock and milk production. On the other hand, no one felt they could go all the way back to the way it used to be. We are living in a different environment today in which we are more dependent on the cash economy and technological innovations than we were 20 or 30 years ago.

Certain economic diversification opportunities were raised everywhere, and common themes emerged as reported below in a sectoral fashion.

### Tourism

Many believe that their community could benefit from increased tourism, although it was acknowledged that it could never replace the fishery. Expectations about tourism were quite realistic. It was recognized that not every community can rely on tourism. Some feel they have natural advantages upon which they should be able to capitalize, but are currently thwarted. For example, communities near Port aux Basques believe there should be ways to keep some of the tourists driving off the ferry in their area. People near facilities operated by Parks

Canada believe they should be able to attract visitors to the area to facilities beyond the park or historic site — such as local craft shops, restaurants or B and Bs. Many are frustrated by the apparent intransigence of Parks Canada in the Lanse aux Meadows area in working with the community to develop the tourism opportunities. Others see potential in their area from more ecological protected areas. Proposed ecological sites were mentioned specifically in Burnt Islands and in Bay de Verde, where people hope that declaring Baccalieu Island an ecological reserve will enhance ecotourism.

The state of the province's transportation system was often mentioned as a disincentive to tourism. Certainly, our experience as a Partnership travelling to beautiful areas over excruciatingly bad roads made us believers. The high price of taking a car to the province by ferry, the poor state of roads once you arrive, and the erratic ferry service to areas such as Fogo, Ramea and Labrador were seen as obstacles to tourism development. On the other hand, people complained of money spent on roads no one needs and few people want, such as the St. John's Outer Ring Road, at the same time that roads to more remote areas are a sea of potholes.

### **Aquaculture**

Many people in communities expressed frustration that three years into the moratorium, the feasibility of aquaculture is still such a matter of speculation. They believe that government should take more initiative in carrying out meaningful aquaculture efforts in the province. Many also complained that aquaculture efforts are being controlled by only a select few. Others wondered why, given the state of the crisis, there was not more experimental work in allowing people to maintain cod in homemade ponds over winter, feeding them and enhancing their growth. We heard from one woman who was successfully doing this on her own.

### **Small business**

The thrust of most diversification discussions was that it was not one big thing that would save a community. Rather it would be many small efforts, largely individual entrepreneurs establishing small businesses. There were many barriers, though, to starting a business, all reflecting, it was felt, government's lack of confidence in local

people and their skills. It seemed that government was more interested in attracting people from away with tax breaks, than investing in their own people.

Frequently mentioned barriers to developing everything from homemade jams and handcrafts to whale-watch cruises were the difficulty in accessing capital and the extent of red tape and government regulation.

"UI killed half of our people;

TAGS is killing the other half."

*Comment from Forteau public meeting*

## **READJUSTING INCOME SUPPORT TO ENHANCE SUSTAINABILITY**

Those attending our sessions tended to be well informed and keenly aware that budget constraints at all levels of government threaten future income support and unemployment schemes. On the other hand, some argued that given the role of the federal government as sole managers of the fishery, there should be compensation as a matter of equity.

In any event, as long as programs such as the Atlantic Groundfish Strategy (TAGS) are available, many in communities believe those financial resources could be more effectively deployed to enhance long-term sustainability.

The current design of programs is felt to interfere with real adjustment and diversification. We often heard that paying people to stay home at levels exceeding what others in the community receive for working creates a disincentive to change. At present, many people on TAGS are fearful that if they accept training courses in areas outside the fishery, they will not be entitled to return to the fishery should it recover. Government should provide assurances that trainees on TAGS will not be prejudiced. Government has continuously changed the rules and criteria in the TAGS program, creating an aura of mistrust and uncertainty among TAGS recipients. There needs to be an understanding by government officials that in most cases individuals are not making decisions just for themselves, but for their families. Therefore, they have to consider the impact on them. Many of the programs provided do not take this into consideration and serve as a deterrent. For example, the living away from home allowance creates undue hardships in family situations by providing

an allowance for the trainee but nothing, for instance, to allow a mother to bring children with her.

Some people expressed the view that the only compulsory training under the TAGS program should be for those who are TAGS-eligible and under 25 years old. Many TAGS recipients felt they were too old to train. Even if they successfully completed their training they would not be able to compete with young people in the job market. Many of these people have children who are just going to post-secondary institutions. If they had the choice, they would much rather have the educational dollars spent on their children.

Many in communities also argued that TAGS funding should be given to a community, not merely to individuals. This was a minority view, but it did reflect the widely held view that community co-operation will be the foundation of any future sustainability. The divisiveness engendered by TAGS, as discussed earlier in this report, is a major obstacle to community solidarity.

## CONCLUSION

Despite the enormous changes wrought in the lives of coastal communities as a result of the moratorium, there remains a strong will to survive — not in Toronto, nor even in St. John's but in the communities in which people were born, where they own homes and have a sense of themselves, their culture and values. Fundamentally, people in Newfoundland and Labrador believe in the future, even though, by turns, they are disheartened and despairing.

As noted, there are many aspects to what can be done to advance sustainability. As a Partnership, we have built this report on the views of communities, whose recommendations follow.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMUNITIES

Our Partnership had a rare opportunity to hear the views of hundreds of residents of small coastal communities. From these we distilled actions that we believe communities want to see undertaken by key stakeholders, including government. We tested out these conclusions with participants at the Oceans Day wrap-up session in St. John's, and had some additional actions put forward. On behalf of those communities that we heard, we offer the following recommendations.

### **PATHWAY TO FUTURE SUSTAINABILITY**

## FISHERY-RELATED PROPOSALS

Actions relating to the fishery are made with the aim of creating conditions to allow the restoration, and subsequent sustainable harvest, of an ecosystem with an abundance of marine life.

### **1. Application of the precautionary principle**

The precautionary principle, accepted at the Earth Summit at Rio, is that the absence of absolute scientific proof should not be used as an excuse for inaction. This closely parallels the following observation from the "Independent Review of the State of the northern cod Stock," chaired by Dr. Leslie Harris and released more than two years before the Earth Summit (February 1990):

*"This is not to say that in the absence of comprehensive knowledge the world must stand still. It does mean that when our knowledge is deficient we should proceed with extreme caution, and if error is inevitable, we should at least attempt to ensure that our errors are on the right side of the ledger" (p. 45).*

When applied to the fishery, then, the precautionary principle would dictate that when estimates of spawning biomass are based on limited, distorted and/or flawed data and unproven models, evidence of significant and/or anomalous ecosystem warnings should be heeded, and action taken to ensure that the stocks are protected. As was also found in the task force report headed by Ambassador John Fraser in the case of the missing BC

salmon, fisheries management should be based on caution. The resource should not be managed up to the limits of what we believe is there. This recommendation is not new — the Harris review panel also urged in its report, "Prudence dictates that the lowest estimate of stock size be used to provide advice." The Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC) has recommended to the minister of Fisheries and Oceans that fish stocks be managed on a conservative and cautious basis.

It is long since time that this principle be put into effect.

THEREFORE, communities would want the precautionary principle to be applied at the highest order, and it should not be compromised for any other short-term interest.

### **2. Issues of immediate concern where the precautionary principle is urgently needed**

#### **Species playing a critical role in the food chain**

##### **a) Capelin**

People in communities nearly unanimously held the view that there shall be no commercial capelin fishery. As an aboriginal community member pointed out in northern Labrador, the capelin is the base of the food chain for cod and other fish, as well as seabirds (puffins and kittiwakes) — all the way to whale species, such as humpbacks and fins. Some argued that the ban on capelin should be put into effect on the basis of the many changes that have been observed in the stock and conflicting assessment indicators; others believe that it is doubtful there should ever be a commercial capelin fishery because of by-catch of small groundfish in fixed gear, and waste due to dumping by the mobile fleet.

As members of the Partnership, we are persuaded that the capelin fishery is not sustainable on two ground: first, that capelin is the base of the food chain and healthy capelin stocks are a necessary prerequisite to a restored cod fishery; second, because average size has been small, offshore behaviour appears abnormal and there is an unusual abundance of younger spawners. All of these are worrisome signs in a critical stock.

THEREFORE, we believe that DFO owes these fishing communities, and, indeed, the people of Canada, a full



explanation for continuing quotas for any commercial capelin. We call on DFO to provide its data and rationale for any quotas for capelin to an appropriate public forum. In the interim, based on the precautionary principle, communities would want a moratorium on the capelin fishery.

#### **b) Shrimp**

Communities were also concerned about the shrimp fishery. It was raised particularly in communities close to shrimp ecosystems found in northern waters. Despite recent technological innovations, the by-catch rate is still believed to be unacceptably high and there is serious concern about DFO enforcement of regulations limiting it. DFO does not have good estimates of the extent of by-catch at present.

Shrimp, like capelin, are a critical part of the food chain, supporting the cod in northern waters. They must be protected as part of the plan to rebuild fish stocks on which communities depend.

THEREFORE, communities would want the shrimp fishery subjected to an urgent review to assess whether, bearing in mind the precautionary principle, it should continue.

#### **Species subject to intensive overfishing**

##### **c) Turbot**

As reported throughout this document, there is a strong belief that the turbot is badly depleted. People are outraged that the foreign catch of turbot continues even though TACS and allocations were caught earlier, and, further, argue that there should be no domestic commercial turbot harvest.

THEREFORE, we believe that the DFO should provide its data and rationale for any quotas for turbot to an appropriate public forum. In the interim, based on the precautionary principle, the communities would want an end to the turbot fishery, at least until there is a plan to rebuild stocks to historical levels.

##### **d) Other**

DFO is managing species by species. We believe that fisheries management should shift from a single-species

approach to an ecosystem approach. The change is similar to that recommended by the Clayoquot Sound scientific panel in the context of ancient temperate rain forests, wherein the panel urged that logging decisions be made not with an eye to which trees should be harvested, but rather to the state of the ecosystem after logging. Decisions should, in other words, focus on what is needed to sustain the health of the ecosystem. Ability to manage on a multispecies, ecosystem basis is presently limited. All the greater the need for using the precautionary approach and cautious management.

THEREFORE, the communities would want to see DFO immediately establish a clear plan to move toward an ecosystem approach in science and management. Further, DFO should reassess quotas for species where evidence of sustainability is lacking (for example, redfish, sea urchins and lumpfish).

and further,

management should have an emphasis on nurturing, restoring and sustaining ecosystem health — i.e., manage for what remains rather than what is taken. The goal should be to rebuild, protect and preserve a critical marine ecosystem, not merely to maximize short-term profit on a species-by-species basis.

No harvest should be done of any species without full analysis. Some formerly “underutilized” species, such as turbot, are going from “underutilized” to collapse without a management plan put in place. With the collapse of the northern cod stocks and others, every other species is being targeted.

The concept of underutilized is dangerous and false.

##### **e) Seals**

To the observant eye it is obvious that the marine life along our coastlines and in our ecosystem is completely out of balance. There is an overwhelming view in coastal communities that this imbalance is due to human interference through careless exploitation of our marine resources for commercial gain. In this resulting situation, many believe humans should further intervene to correct the ecosystem imbalance. In many communities we heard that governments must be encouraged to implement responsible strategies for the harvesting of marine species, not only for their commercial value but to contribute to restoration of ecosystem balance.

In recognizing and accepting that such imbalance currently exists, we must take a hard look at the consequences of allowing the population of prey species, such as harp seals, to increase while at the same time witnessing the decimation through commercial fisheries of a number of critical species at the base of the food chain (capelin, shrimp, herring, etc.).

THEREFORE, governments in Partnership with industry, communities and the environmental movement must immediately enter into a process to develop consensus on the current crisis in the seal population. Among topics to be reviewed would be the potential for a marketing, harvesting and management strategy.

### **3. Environmental Assessment**

The Biodiversity Convention (signed and ratified by Canada) commits Canada to an environmental assessment of any activity that impacts on biodiversity. The new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act establishes procedures for full assessments, including the cumulative environmental effects of any activity, as well as its social, economic and cultural impacts.

THEREFORE, an environmental assessment should be conducted of all gear technology, and this evaluation should be done before the fishery reopens. The environmental assessment should be conducted by the federal government within the terms of the new Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, in order to ensure that social and cultural impacts of the technologies are taken into account.

Due to the overwhelming concern about the impacts of dragger technology, pending completion of the environmental assessment, there should be a ban on the use of dragger technology. Moreover, Canada should urge caution on the international scene in the use of draggers around the world and their potential role in the current state of overfishing in the world's major fisheries reported by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization.

### **4. Public inquiry**

The issue of the need to deal with the past before being able to plan for the future was raised universally in our meetings. We have come to agree that there must be accountability for the state of the resource. Such an

inquiry would serve a number of purposes. From the standpoint of fishery-dependent communities it is a necessary precondition to effective planning for the future. More fundamentally, it should establish with the greatest certainty possible what mistakes were made so that they can be avoided in any future Newfoundland and Labrador fishery as well as in other parts of Canada and the world.

THEREFORE, communities want a public inquiry, or Royal Commission, to investigate the causes of the annihilation of the northern cod stocks. Affected communities must be given an opportunity to contribute to this process.

Should the governments, federal and provincial, not undertake this action, we invite the government to accept conclusions in this report — that the collapse was brought about through domestic overfishing, a lack of caution in setting quotas, a politicized process, an extremely efficient and destructive technology (draggers), and a bias in decision making that favoured large corporations and the offshore over the concerns of the inshore and more traditional gear types.

### **5. Public involvement in setting terms for a reopened fishery**

There is tremendous anxiety in small communities that we won't learn from the mistakes of the past. Fishing-dependent communities are worried that, just as the fishery was over-harvested in the critical period after the extension of the 200-mile limit following over-exploitation by foreign draggers in the late 1960s to 1970s, politics and large corporations will dictate reopening the fishery too quickly.

THEREFORE, clear minimum criteria for reopening the fishery should be established in a public, transparent and de-politicized fashion.

### **6. Community involvement**

One of the central tenets of sustainable development that emerged from the Brundtland Report was that local communities should have greater access to and control over decisions affecting their resources. It recommended that small communities should have a "decisive say" over their resources. Over and over again, we heard the same point from small outport communities. Moreover, a strong

community voice should help de-politicize the decisions made about resources.

THEREFORE, local communities must be involved in all decisions that affect them, especially in decisions related to natural-resource management. Aspects of meaningful community involvement include the following: innovative new arrangements to facilitate involvement, co-management of resources, and the incorporation of traditional ecological knowledge into policy decisions. As has already been noted, community involvement should be subject to conservation considerations.

## **7. Rights of adjacency**

Historically, communities had certain rights based on their proximity to marine resources. The Harris review panel noted, "In the Newfoundland context it would seem altogether appropriate that first preference for access should in all cases go to the communities contiguous to the resource, whose survival is historically dependent on it."

THEREFORE, in fishery allocation decisions, the principle of adjacency should be honoured and first preference to resources go to those communities with a historical claim.

## **8. Marine protected areas**

It was argued that, as a contribution to the conservation-based fishery, marine protected areas have a vital role to play. As a Partnership, we agree. Marine protected areas may be large areas with smaller "no-harvest" zones within them, or they may be smaller areas that are restricted to certain gear types or closed during spawning season, closed permanently, or managed in other specialized ways. As part of Canada's Endangered Spaces program, these sites would conserve representative examples of marine life.

Marine protected areas are not, then, simply exclusion zones. They create potential for seeding of fish stocks outside the protected area. People attending our meetings believe that community control is an essential part of restrictions on gear types or areas in order to create marine protected areas. Coastal management regimes then would utilize marine protected areas as a part of their conservation-based management regime.

Marine protected areas should be achieved by a number of mechanisms such as National Marine Conservation Areas (Parks Canada), National Wildlife Areas (Canadian Wildlife Service), the proposed Oceans Act (DFO) or through provincial legislative mechanisms such as the Wilderness Areas and Ecological Reserves Act.

THEREFORE, the government of Canada and the government of Newfoundland and Labrador should move forward in the development of a full range of mechanisms for marine protected areas (including through the Oceans Act) and their timely implementation. Further, they should honour their commitments to the Endangered Spaces program in terms of establishing a system of marine protected areas.

## **9. Enforcement**

Despite the desperate state of the fishery, we heard many instances of non-enforcement of regulations. Any serious commitment to a conservation-based fishery will flounder and fail with poor enforcement. Enforcement is critical.

THEREFORE, fisheries regulations must be stringently and consistently enforced to avoid high-grading, misreporting, fishing with illegal gear types and catching prohibited species.

## **10. Research**

Many found fault with fisheries research as practised in the past. There is a sense that it focussed too narrowly on counting fish, as though they were inventory on a shelf, and too little on the myriad factors that make an ecosystem a vital, organic and changing thing. There is a neglect of fishers' information and an absence of serious efforts to use this to supplement scientific research. Fishers and scientists, and their respective knowledge, exist as solitudes.

THEREFORE, the necessary scientific resources should be applied to develop an understanding of the marine ecosystem and manage the fisheries from this perspective. Furthermore, Partnerships should be established and supported between federal and provincial governments and fishers to develop appropriate databases for integrating scientific and traditional knowledge.

## **11. Licensing**

There is a great deal of concern, indeed bitterness, over the alleged unfairness of allocations to the existing fishery, both in terms of harvesting and processing. Fair allocations are necessary to achieve conservation goals and sustainable communities.

THEREFORE, a process should be initiated to ensure more fair and equitable licensing decisions for both harvesting and processing with the goal of equitable sharing of the resource, including such measures as multispecies licences.

## **BEYOND THE FISHERY**

### **12. Principles of Sustainable Development**

As was noted in our community meetings, traditional economic indicators, such as GDP, do not reflect the sustainability of a community or the health and vitality of a province.

THEREFORE, the following should be accepted as the overarching principle for development of sustainable communities:

Sustainable development should focus on approaches that are labour-intensive, environmentally appropriate and with benefits retained close to the community.

### **13. Mechanisms for dealing with a crisis**

There was widespread concern that three years into the moratorium, the emotional trauma being experienced in communities has not been dealt with. We were surprised to find that so little was available in counselling services for local communities. Other than vocational advice, there has been little done to assist families in crisis, women or youth.

THEREFORE, counselling should be provided in areas where there is a need, i.e. family counselling, marriage counselling, counselling for youth, addictions, depression, etc. Support groups should also be encouraged. Adequate counselling should be made available to address the social problems brought about through the upheavals in the lives of residents of fishery-dependent communities.

## **14. Encouraging entrepreneurs**

In the course of our visits through 13 communities we met many people with energy, enthusiasm and a dream. Unfortunately, the obstacles to establishing a new business venture often seemed insurmountable.

THEREFORE, a mechanism should be put in place to assist in overcoming obstacles, particularly "red tape," to establishing new business ventures.

### **15. Resources to community development**

Although communities are clearly caught in the double bind of a collapsed resource base at the same time as governments tighten belts and curtail social programs, there are some resources that have been made available to communities in light of the crisis. We believe that these resources could be more effectively deployed with community input.

THEREFORE, government should direct funding, and redirect TAGS funding, to assist communities in developing and implementing sustainability. With full community involvement and in Partnership with the federal Department of Human Resources, those within the community with the drive and vision to work to develop sustainable options should be financially compensated. There should be community involvement in the design of programs such as TAGS.

### **16. Planning**

There was widespread consensus that the community that plans for its future is more likely to have one. Some communities have benefitted from the exercise of identifying their strengths and planning new enterprises based on them.

THEREFORE, community profiles should be developed, where they are not available, for the purpose of providing communities with a basis for sound planning. Members of the community should be encouraged to put their differences aside and participate in community planning. Mechanisms should be put in place to facilitate the participation of all stakeholders in the community on such issues as economic development, management of local resources, etc. Time is of the essence.

## 17. Education

Based on extensive discussions of education in our meetings, it is clear that issues related to education and training are priorities for small communities. In general, we recommend all of the suggestions found on this subject in the body of our report to government for their consideration. A number were raised repeatedly and merit reference here.

THEREFORE:

- a) both levels of government should develop and implement a training program for civil servants aimed at raising awareness and understanding of conservation, sustainable development and environment-economy integration;
- b) adult basic education should be made a priority for ongoing funding to create universal access and to improve educational standards overall across the province.

## 18. Youth

Everywhere we went we heard concerns about youth and their future. Less often, we heard from youth directly. Although we did make an effort to invite youth, clearly we could and should have done more to give youth a space in our process. In any event, we are persuaded that the needs of youth and the impact on youth of the moratorium have been essentially ignored.

THEREFORE,

- a) programs should be developed and implemented, whether as workshops and/or round tables, to foster dialogue among youth about community sustainability. Programs should be designed by youth or in close consultation with youth;
- b) youth should be involved and well represented in all multistakeholder discussions on community planning;
- c) counselling should be available for youth, dealing not just with their career prospects but with the psychological impacts of the current crisis.

## 19. National parks

As noted in our report, a number of communities expressed frustration over accessing economic opportunities that should be open to them through increased

tourism to areas managed by Parks Canada, in particular those run as national historic sites.

THEREFORE, National parks and historic sites in Newfoundland and Labrador (including new and existing sites) should recognize the need to help in the current crisis and be encouraged to co-operate with local and indigenous peoples to ensure local economic benefits consistent with national park objectives.

## 20. Forests

In communities across the province the concern was expressed that forest management is showing some of the same warning signs that were ignored in the fisheries crisis: overcapitalization, centralization around large-scale interests, harvesting too close to (or beyond) maximum sustainable levels without sufficient safety margins, and especially the undue politicization of the setting of quotas.

The Newfoundland Forest Service is currently in the process of refining its revised, once every five years wood-supply analysis. There is public concern that the figures coming out of this analysis will be distorted by political pressure and industry lobbying.

DFO has recognized the harm that can be done by having quota recommendations developed in a closed process and has attempted to deal with this problem by establishing the Fisheries Resource Conservation Council (FRCC). We suggest that the same process be followed by the Newfoundland Forest Service, with an independent, public, multistakeholder body established in order to assess the wood-supply analysis, review the assumptions that were used to generate the figures, determine the appropriate Annual Allowable Cut levels and make recommendations with respect to the equitable allocation of harvesting permits on unalienated Crown land.

We did hear concerns that a multistakeholder group does not de-politicize the process, but simply attempts (not always successfully) to balance the different interests at play. An alternative process (and one that may be particularly appropriate in the case of the wood-supply analysis) is to submit the draft figures and all supporting documentation to an independent third-party reviewing agency, one that is perceived as neutral and credible by industry, environmental organizations and community interests. The results of the review must, of course, be fully available to the public, the industry and non-governmental organi-

zations at the same time as it is submitted to government, with no agency having privileged access.

THEREFORE, the provincial government should refer the Newfoundland Forest Service's forthcoming wood-supply analysis to a rigorous, independent and public peer-review process.

## **21. Transportation infrastructure**

While it is clear that the province has fiscal constraints that limit the funds available for improving the transportation infrastructure, it is equally clear that improving roads and ferry access to much of the province is an urgent priority, especially if the government wishes to pursue its tourism potential. (Given the uniformly superb advertisements for the province from the provincial tourism department, we can only conclude that the province is serious about attracting tourists.) Meanwhile, there are funds being spent on roads which we have heard are not wanted or needed.

THEREFORE, government should in its transportation decisions place a priority on providing an adequate transportation infrastructure for remote communities within Newfoundland as well as Labrador.

## **COMMUNITY ACTION**

Although action by government is critical if communities are to become sustainable once more in coastal Newfoundland and Labrador, communities are not powerless. Nor should they feel that they have to sit back and see what government does with these recommendations. Of course, we hope that this report will be useful to communities. We hope that it will validate the concerns they raised to our Partnership, and that they will press for changes in government policy as a result.

But we also believe there are steps communities can take immediately to improve their chances of achieving sus-

tainability. The overriding goal should be to develop a sense of community spirit, to recapture the values people recall from the time when communities were more self-reliant, to overcome local rivalries and bitterness in order to work toward a common goal — survival.

THEREFORE, we offer the following suggestions based on what many in communities expressed to us.

### **1. Create community round tables**

Communities should not wait for people to do it for them. Local efforts, even small and unfunded, can do much valuable work. Get together with other communities, roll up your sleeves and go to work.

### **2. Foster local stewardship**

Communities should take increased responsibility to ensure that local stewardship practices are encouraged. They can work to encourage a local ethic discouraging poaching and other environmentally wasteful practices. Furthermore, in some cases it may be possible for communities to explore unilateral conservation measures, such as collectively refusing to fish unsustainable quotas, restricting gear or establishing protected areas.

### **3. Education**

Communities should develop and implement strategies to make people more comfortable about adult basic education (such as the use of community cable channels, peer counselling and role models, etc).

### **4. Youth**

One specific suggestion that should be implemented as soon as possible is to encourage a dialogue between fishers and youth, to educate youth about traditional knowledge, conservation ethics and community values.

## Closing

We offer the above as an attempt at synthesizing hundreds of comments into specifics upon which key players in this crisis can take action. These specifics are what we believe the communities want to see. Although they are not the “recommendations” of any particular group of communities, we have drawn heavily on the voices from within small coastal communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. In spite of the discouraging circumstances in their lives, people were extremely generous in sharing with us their knowledge, concerns, hopes and fears.

Through this report, we hope we have succeeded in giving voice to their views. We urge both levels of government to seriously consider these proposals and to fully integrate planning and policy with people across the province. Ultimately, sustainability is about democracy. An aware and alert citizenry engaged in the process of governance, coupled with a responsive and caring government, both elected and civil service, are the cornerstones for Newfoundland and Labrador’s future.

