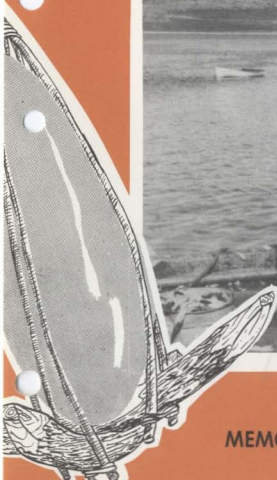
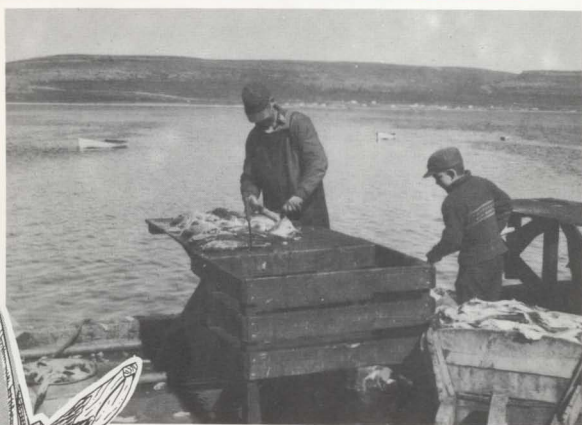


D E C K S  
A W A S H

A FISHERIES EXTENSION PROGRAMME



MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE

Programme #5

February, 1965

Labrador

In July of 1964 the producer of "Decks Awash" visited the costal fishing communities of Southern Labrador to get a first hand look at the fishing activities carried on there. Most people engaged in or associated with the fisheries were (at the beginning of the 1964 fishing season) optimistic about the outcome of the Labrador fishery for that season. Unfortunately, the outcome was not as expected. All along the Southern Labrador coast the trap fishery was almost a complete failure. Neither "floaters" nor "stationers" succeeded in getting much more than token catches. The fall fishery showed some improvement in certain areas but in others fishermen ended the season with extremely poor returns.

Improved Shore Facilities

The communities of Lance au Clair, Forteau, and Pinware now have community stages in which to handle their fishery production. In 1951 storms destroyed many of the individual fishing stages in

these communities and the fishermen grouped together to build themselves large community stages and wharves. Most of the material for these facilities were supplied by the provincial government but all the necessary labour was contributed by the fishermen themselves. Fishermen in these communities are very happy with these facilities and make full use of them.

At West St. Modeste the Fishery Development Authority of the Provincial Department of Fisheries has constructed a bunkhouse for the benefit of fishermen who move from the Flowers Cove area to fish in the late summer and early autumn. This facility is divided into a cookhouse, and twenty compartments equipped with spring cots to sleep four men each. Previously these fishermen lived in tents and other make-shift living accommodation during their fishing trips to Labrador. In addition to the bunkhouse the Federal Department of Fisheries has built a large community stage and wharf at West St. Modeste which is used by the people belonging to the community as well as by fishermen from the

Newfoundland side of the Straits of Belle Isle.

During the fall of 1964 work began on the construction of community stages at Lance au Loup and Capstan Island. Fishermen living in these communities are anxious to have these stages because they live on exposed sections of the coast and often lose their individual stages during the fall and winter as the result of storms and ice damage.

Longlining at Lance au Diable

Most of the fishermen living in communities on Southern Labrador still use small boats for both the trap and trawl fisheries. This, of course, limits the distance they can go from shore to look for fish. In 1964, while the fish did not come to shore in the trap berth areas, there were large concentrations of them in what might be called "near-offshore" waters. Draggers operating in the straits of Belle Isle during July reported that fish were plentiful and that they were taking good catches. This was also reported to be the case as far north as Hamilton Inlet.

Proof that larger boats can give fishermen a better chance to make a living if used properly was provided in 1964 by a fishing family from Lance au Diable, a small fishing community located on the Labrador side of the straits of Belle Isle.

This family took delivery of a longliner at Marystown in April of 1964, sailed it along the Southwest coast and up the Northwest coast as far as Port au Choix. They began fishing at Port au Choir and caught and sold \$1,200.00 worth of halibut at Allen's Ltd. at Corner Brook. Later they moved to the Greenly Island fishing grounds and caught 750 quintals of fish which they landed at Lance au Diable, processed it to a semi-dry state and sold it for \$16.25 per quintal. Following this they moved to the St. Anthony area and caught and sold \$6,000.00 worth of fish to the fresh fish plant at St. Anthony. Their gross income for the season was \$19,058.50. They expressed the belief that had they been more familiar with the larger boat and the more modern longlining methods they would have done considerably better.

In March of this year they plan to commence winter fishing operations at Port aux Basque and will continue operating until next Fall. The early start and more experience in handling the boat and gear should, they feel, result in a gross income of over twenty-five thousand dollars in 1965.

The production of this crew in comparison to the production of their neighbours, who continued to fish in the small boats during the season, is astonishing. The small boat fishermen ended the season with catches varying from thirty quintals to fifty quintals per crew.

#### Salmon & Fresh Fish Operations

During the summer of 1964 Fishery Products Limited operated a floating factory ship at Dumpling on the Labrador Coast. This ship was equipped to process codfish and had large cold storage facilities for freezing and holding salmon. The trap fishery was so poor in the area that a very limited production of codfish was handled.

There was, however, one bright spot in the Labrador fishery in 1964, namely, salmon production. Salmon landings were above previous years and well over a quarter of a million pounds were frozen and shipped from Fishery Products, Ltd. operations at Dumpling. The total salmon production for Labrador amounted to 750,000 lbs.

Guests

Our guest on the first half of our Labrador programme was Mr. Walter Butler, a fisheries officer of the Department of Fisheries of Canada. Mr. Butler is responsible for the supervision of protection work on Labrador salmon rivers during the summer months and also collects statistics on the commercial fisheries for the area from Lence au Clair to Hamilton Inlet. Two boats are operated in Labrador by the Canada Department of Fisheries each summer. They are the 'Eastern Explorer' and the 'Garia Bay'. The former operates on the section of coast south of Hamilton Inlet while the latter operates on the Northern section as far North as Nain.

Biological Research and its contribution to our knowledge of  
codfish populations and their movements on the Labrador and  
Newfoundland fishing grounds.

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The Fisheries Research Board of Canada, a government agency set up to conduct scientific research in all aspects of Canadian fisheries, has biological stations situated in various parts of the country. One of these is situated at St. John's under the direction of Dr. Wilfred Templeman, who has been active in fishery research for many years. Under his direction this branch of the Fisheries Research Board has been carrying out surveys of fishing grounds both in Newfoundland and along the Labrador Coast for several years. This has resulted in the discovery of new fishing grounds and the making available of more information on fish populations and movements.

As the result of tagging operations carried on during the past few years it is now fairly well established that codfish migrate from deep sea areas to inshore areas. In fact it is now believed that our East coast cod population stretches from the Hamilton Banks off the Labrador coast south as far as the Avalon Peninsula. Fish



tagged on the Hamilton Banks have been caught as far south as the Funk Islands and fish tagged in the Funk area have been caught in Labrador, both on the Hamilton Banks and in Labrador inshore waters. This certainly indicates that offshore draggers and inshore boats are competing for the same fish populations. It does not, however, rule out the possibilities that there may be some small permanent inshore populations. It does indicate that our main fish resources, in the form of codfish at any rate, are available to other countries with their highly developed catching methods for long periods of the year. This can't help but effect the quantity of fish available to inshore fishermen.

Mr. Arthur May, a biologist from the Research Board appeared on this programme and outlined some of the information gained as the result of these research activities. This may be summarized as follows:

- (a) As offshore fishing pressures have increased, inshore production per man has shown a decrease over the past ten years. The actual amount of fish taken has increased because of an increase

in the number of fishermen but there is a definite trend towards a lower catch per man in inshore waters.

- (b) Offshore foreign draggers have access to our main codfish resources for nine months of the year while inshore fishermen have access to them for approximately three months.
- (c) In 1963 foreign fishing craft took 240,000 tons of fish from the southern Labrador area, chiefly from the Hamilton Banks. During the same period Newfoundland's production amounted to a mere 20,000 tons from the Labrador area.
- (d) Fish begin to move inshore in April or May depending on water temperatures. It is believed that they rise from deep water and come inshore more or less on the surface. This is when fishermen refer to them as being afloat. Whether or not they come right in to trap berth areas depends on prevailing water temperatures. About the middle of August they begin to move offshore along the bottom, remaining in depths of from 150 to 200 fathoms during the winter months.

- (e) Codfish spawn in offshore waters and are four to six years of age before they are large enough to be fished commercially.
- (f) Older and larger fish are not inclined to migrate as readily as the young fish.
- (g) If offshore fishing pressures are maintained or increased it is likely that inshore fishermen will find that they are getting a much smaller "run" of fish.

From this it can logically be concluded that in order to get our fair share of our codfish resources we are going to have to expand our operations in offshore areas and intensify our efforts in inshore and near-inshore waters. This is going to require larger boats and an intensive use of every type of gear which will take fish. In the years to come greater use of other species of fish to be found in inshore waters will perhaps compensate for a reduced supply of cod. Turbot, flounder, squid and caplin will undoubtedly increase in importance as a source of income for inshore fishermen.