

the coming season, so that they knew what they were going to get before they went fishing at all. And they were very thankful to the Commission of Government for that, a wonderful government that would tell them ahead of time what price they were going to get, up to a year ago you say. I would like someone who knows to tell us how true that is. Was it the Commission of Government? This needs to be known. Mr. Job may take it very lightly, but it is far from being a joke....

**Mr. Job** I think it largely happened by the help of our friend Mr. Brown. He was greatly interested in it at that time, and he was able to get the trade together, and it was easy enough in those days when the demand exceeded the supply; but when you are doubtful whether the supply will exceed the demand you can't fix it. I don't think you could. You ask whether the Commission of Government should get the credit for it — not any more than the trade and Mr. Brown and the Newfoundland Fisheries Board.

**Mr. Smallwood** What about the Combined Food Board,<sup>1</sup> did they set the price?

**Mr. Job** You mean our board?

**Mr. Smallwood** No, abroad.

**Mr. Job** Oh yes, they had something to do with it. When you could sell ahead it was easy to arrange with the fisherman and say, "We think the price should be so and so." It was an international association. The United States, Canada, Great Britain. I don't know if France was in it or not.

**Mr. Chairman** UNRRA?<sup>2</sup>

**Mr. Job** It may have been a subsidiary of that, I am not sure. Anyhow it was with a view of making full distribution of our codfish where it was most needed. It was a very easy thing to come to an arrangement then as to what would be a fair price to pay the fishermen; we knew what we were going to get, but now we don't.

**Mr. Smallwood** How did we know?

**Mr. Job** Because the contract was made to take the allocation at a certain price.

**Mr. Smallwood** I am grateful to Mr. Job, and maybe he would not mind my pursuing the matter a little further. Is this what happened? When the war broke out the United States, Great Britain,

Canada, Newfoundland and some other countries formed themselves into a Combined Food Board to regulate all the food there might be, wheat, fish, vegetables, meat, etc., so that they could portion out all the food so that no one country got more than its share.... This board would say to the Newfoundland Fisheries Board and the Canadian and American fish merchants, "In 1942 we want so many thousand tons of fish. Newfoundland how much can you produce? How much can Canada produce? How much USA?" They portioned it out, and fixed the price early in the season, and the Fisheries Board would be told what price the fish exporters would be allowed for their portion, and then when the exporters knew beforehand, early in the year, maybe January or February, what the price would be that they would get for the coming year, they could call their suppliers in and say to them, "The price of fish in 1942 will be such and such, and 1943, 1944 and 1945, etc." Is that what happened?

**Mr. Job** Yes, that is what happened.

**Mr. Smallwood** If that is what happened, we have all been making a mistake in saying, "Thank God for the Commission of Government."

**Mr. Job** I think they received credit where they should not have.

**Mr. Smallwood** I want to know if the Commission of Government fixed the price; if they did, we will give them credit for it.

**Mr. Job** You can give them credit for supporting the board that did it — our Newfoundland Fisheries Board.

**Mr. Smallwood** Did the Fisheries Board or the Combined Foods Board fix it?

**Mr. Job** Our Fisheries Board had a say in it — Mr. Gushue was the chairman. The Combined Food Board had all the negotiations?

**Mr. Newell** I think our friend from Bonavista Centre has lost a lot of his perspicacity. I thought we understood the difference between our market today and in the old days when it was every man for himself; he sold his fish where he could, when he could, for what he could. Under the new system the fish, as I understand it, is sold by the Salt Codfish Exporters Association by contracts. If that is to be continued in future, it is easy to see

<sup>1</sup>The United States and Britain formed the Combined Food Board in June 1942 to coordinate the utilisation of food resources. It remained in effect until 1946. For further information see Peter Neary, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949* (Kingston and Montreal, 1988), p. 184.

<sup>2</sup>United Nations Relief Rehabilitation Association.