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Report of Voyage on "Fairtry I" to Newfoundland Banks  
30th November, 1960 - 11th January, 1961

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- Objects:
- (1) To investigate conditions for sampling the catch of "Fairtry I" and establish the best method by which routine sampling can be carried out.
  - (2) To carry out routine length sampling.
  - (3) To study (a) catching rate and (b) quantities of fish discarded.
  - (4) To obtain details of gear and handling methods.

NARRATIVE

"Fairtry I" sailed from Immingham at 0800 hours on Wednesday, 30th November and after compass adjusting, left the Humber for the Newfoundland Bank area. High winds and heavy seas were encountered during the whole crossing. Warps were stretched and tightened and the trawl was shot at 0825 hours on the 14th December at position 47°00'N 47°00'W (northeast corner of the Grand Bank), ICNAF Division 3L. Fishing was moderate and rather inconsistent in this position. Catches ranged from 40 to 200 baskets, giving an average of under 50 baskets per hour, consisting of about 60 percent medium sprag and codlings, the remainder being Skate (*Raja erinacea*), Dabs (*Hippoglossoides platessoides*) and small *Sebastes marinus*. Fishing continued on this ground until the 16th December, but the unsatisfactory results necessitated a change of position to the Great Grand du Nord grounds, a distance of about 150 miles.

Fishing started around noon on the 17th December, but results were disappointing and large stones were causing damage to the gear, in spite of various adjustments to stone-trap chains, etc. Catches on this ground were generally between 30 and 50 baskets per haul, except for two hauls during the dusk/darkness period on Sunday, 18th December, which yielded 140 and 110 baskets, respectively, mainly of Cod with a few Halibut, Skate and Catfish. With little improvement showing, a passage was made to the grounds off the Labrador coast in the Belle Isle area (ICNAF Subarea 2). Fishing here was also poor and bad weather curtailed operations. Echo-sounding was carried out and the trawl was shot at various positions but with little success.

On 24th December a few hauls were made once more on the Grand du Nord grounds but again with only moderate results - quantities of Skate and Catfish making up the bulk of the catches. One haul worthy of mention consisted of 130 baskets of Catfish with barely a basket of any other species.

An exhaustive echo-sounding search was carried out and various grounds down the eastern edge of the Grand Bank as far south as the tail of the Bank were fished with little success, until a concentration of Cod was located in the East Gully: approximate position 45°07'N, 54°25'W

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(ICNAF Division 3P). On the first day fishing on this ground averaged 100 baskets per hour.

Fishing continued to be profitable in this area and on the evening of the 8th January "Fairtry III" commenced fishing, and on the following day "Fairtry II" also commenced operations in the vicinity. The trawler, "Ross Hunter", which was to act as 'slave' for "Fairtry II" was delayed owing to heavy weather and on arrival in the Newfoundland area was forced to dodge at Cape Race.

As it appeared that fishing would continue in this area for some time and sufficient sampling had been done, arrangements were made to transfer me to the Newfoundland trawler, "Red Diamond III" at noon on the 11th January, 1961 - docking at Fortune after a rough passage, at 3 a.m. on the 12th January. The journey to Gander Airport was completed by road and rail at 2200 hours on the 12th January. No flight was available until TCA flight 852, which left Gander at 11:15 p.m. (Newfoundland ST) on the 14th January, arriving at Prestwick at 0700 hours on the 15th January (GMT).

### CATCH HANDLING AND SAMPLING METHODS

#### Factory equipment

The factory, which is 95 feet long and occupies the full beam of the vessel (44 feet), is equipped with four filleting units (one "Baader 99" machine for handling medium fish (60 to 100 cm), in the centre of the factory deck, and three "Baader 38" machines for small fish (30 to 60 cm) - two on the starboard side, one on the port side); one rotary washer ("Baader 666") which serves the port side "38", and five freezing units. The last comprise three "Birdseye" freezers (capacity 13½ cwts), one "Jackstone" freezer (capacity 15 cwts) and one Fairfreezer (capacity 30 cwts), the latter being used mainly for bulk freezing, and blast freezing larger fish, i.e. Halibut, etc.

#### Handling of catch

The catch is dropped through trap doors on the fish deck down to pounds at the after-end of the factory-deck, where, after livers have been removed, the fish are sorted in categories to the appropriate pick-up trough serving the various machines.

#### Medium fish (60 to 100 cm)

These fish go forward from the main trough to the heading machine feeding the "Baader 99". They are filleted, trimmed (and, if it is required, skinned), and pass on to the weighing tables, fitted with gim-balled scales; there they are made up into packs of desired size and placed on trays ready for freezing.

#### Small fish (30 to 60 cm)

These go from a 'pick-up' trough by chute and conveyor belt to one or other of the starboard '38' machines, or, alternatively, through the rotary washer to the port machine and so on to the weighing machines as in the case of medium fish.

#### Large fish

Large fish outside the acceptance range of the machines are hand-filleted on tables along either side of the factory deck.

#### Livers

Livers are collected in kits and carried by chute to the liver-boiling plant placed aft of and below the factory deck.

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### Sampling

Small Cod ('38' machine): This category is easily sampled while the stream of fish is directed to the machines on the starboard side of the factory at a point where the fish leave the pick-up trough and either pass to the machine nearest to the trough, or fall to the conveyor belt feeding the forward machine. On the port side there is a problem, caused mainly by the height of the rotary washer, and the position of the main fish-meal conveyor belt which runs athwartships. This could be overcome by rigging some sort of platform, but would only be practical in calm weather. The method recommended would be either to use the starboard position, or to fill kits after the selection had been made and measure into rotary washer should the fish be going to the port side unit.

Medium Cod: These fish can be sampled direct from the pick-up trough into kits and then passed to the heading machine. This is the only method which appears practical, as there is no room opposite the heading machine operator.

Large Cod: Large Cod can be readily sampled at the hand-filleting tables along the port side of the factory, as they are normally left until the bulk of the machine filleting has been completed.

Halibut: Halibut can be measured prior to heading and blast freezing.

### Discards

The selectivity of the cod-end was such that the number of cod below the "Baader 38's" acceptance range was so small (probably less than 2 percent) that these could be disregarded.

All offal, heads and unwanted species, i.e. Mock Halibut, Dabs, small Sebastes, etc., were conveyed by conveyor belt to the fish-meal plant below the factory.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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