



ICNAF Meet. Doc. 52/14

LOCATION OF FUTURE OFFICE

REPORT BY THE ACTING CHAIRMAN AND ACTING VICE CHAIRMAN

1) In accordance with the Commission's decision at last year's meeting, the Acting Vice Chairman (Mr. Sargent, U.S.A.) and I visited St. John's, Newfoundland and Halifax, Nova Scotia to make recommendations to the Commission as to which of these two places was most suitable as the future headquarters of the Commission.

2) At St. John's we had many conferences with all concerned, namely the Premier, the Minister and Deputy Minister of Fisheries, other members of the Cabinet and the Chief Justice who is President of the Regents of the University. We made a number of inspections and viewed a number of alternative sets of rooms, one in the House of Assembly. The accommodation that most appealed to us was in a modern building overlooking the harbour where there was a suite of 5 rooms with, on the ground floor, a hall suitable for the holding of the Annual Meeting. These rooms were offered us rent free and fully equipped (additional equipment if required to be provided free), and it was proposed in the University buildings about to be built to include suitable rooms as the permanent headquarters of the Commission. When these latter are available, it was agreed that the question of rent should be considered. The Provincial Government also promised to provide at their own expense a scientific library to be at the disposal of the Commission, and to provide or build houses for the staff of the Commission.

3) At Halifax where the invitation emanated from the University of Dalhousie supported by the City authorities, we had the advantage of meeting heads of the University, the Mayor of Halifax, the Minister of Trade of the Provincial Government and various members of the fishing industry. We were shown a suitable set of rooms, 3 in number, in one of the University buildings on the Campus, lately occupied by the Faculty of Law. It was not necessary for us to see any alternative accommodation which the Provincial Government were prepared to provide, as what we saw was in our view perfectly suitable, especially as adjacent to the accommodation were two halls suitable for holding the Annual Meeting. These rooms were also offered us free of rent for a period of three or four years, but we should be expected to provide our own equipment and furniture, although the necessary redecoration would be done at the expense of the University.

4) So far as accommodation is concerned, no problem exists, and although that at St. John's may seem more attractive than at Halifax, this is the least important factor, but the Commission must not sell itself to the highest bidder as it were. It should stand on its own feet.

5) The case presented at St. John's was intended to indicate the existence of a completely united desire on the part of all the interests, from the Premier downwards, to have the headquarters there, and so create a close and abiding liaison between the University, the Industry and the Commission, at what is an international fishing port, near the fishing grounds and regularly frequented by large numbers of fishing vessels from different countries and other vessels connected with fishing. We doubt, however, whether the Commission should attach any importance to their headquarters being at a fishing port at all.

6) Halifax is a large town, getting on for twice the size of St. John's, is growing, and is on the mainland. It is for that reason of greater and quicker accessibility. If it has not a biological station as at St. John's, it has a Technical Research Station of established reputation, and is the headquarters of the Canadian National Research Council.

7) It may, of course, be argued that at Halifax the headquarters might constitute a very small pebble on a large beach, whereas at St. John's it might be an important unit, continually fostered by the Provincial Government. We doubt, however, if this is a serious consideration.

8) The difficulty of our task is magnified by other considerations which may vitally affect the future of the Commission. There is an idea current that St. John's is a place of indifferent climate and bad approach (in spite of the existence at Ganda, 120 miles from St. John's, of one of the largest aerodromes, with radiations all over the world).

9) We do not believe that there is much to choose between the climate of St. John's and Halifax, but impressions of the kind mentioned take a long time to die, and have a disturbing effect on the attitude of the Commission's staff, both existing and potential. If this is so, we are faced with a serious problem (especially as a new Secretary is being looked for). Although the two most likely candidates for the Secretaryship are well aware from the advertisement that the headquarters will probably be situated at Halifax or St. John's, the selection of St. John's may well lead to their withdrawal from the field.

10) As regard accessibility, clearly Halifax is vastly superior, while it cannot be overlooked that St. John's is subject to serious fogs and might be quite inaccessible if an Annual Meeting were held much earlier than on the present occasion.

11) The fact recorded in the two preceding paragraphs cannot be ignored or even lightly brushed aside, but we regret that we are unable to arrive at complete unanimity in the matter. We both feel that the St. John's offer has overwhelming points in its favour.

12) The Acting Vice Chairman is disposed to recommend its acceptance, while the Chairman, although anxious to do no injustice to St. John's feels that it would be safer for the Commission to select Halifax.

13) We both venture, however, to remind the Commission that the Harvard offer (registered at the first meeting) is understood capable of being reopened. The Commission may wish, therefore, to consider a return to this proposal, even if it meant a new advertisement for the Secretaryship.

14) In conclusion we wish to add that we took occasion to discuss the whole of this problem informally with the Finance and Administration Committee, but no vote was taken. The responsibility for the recommendations on this thorny question rests with us and with us alone. The decision is with the Commission, and we should both welcome a full discussion.

A.T.A. Dobson
Acting Chairman

F.W. Sargent
Acting Vice Chairman

3 July 1952

