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Well ... enough! Could I deny that my work was controversial? Ridiculous! And, really, was there anything wrong with being controversial? My colleagues at SFU have been willing to give me a prize for it! And then I heard from our Vice-President Jack Blaney that as far back as the 1960s I already had a reputation for controversy among his then colleagues at UBC, be it fortunately in a complimentary context. So, now I have decided to come out of the closet, so to say, and become a self-confessed controversialist. If I'm going to be tagged as one, I might as well try to enjoy it.

After I was informed that I had won the Sterling Prize, I was told that this placed upon me the obligation to deliver a public lecture. (St3r 1(,) 1() 1(l) 1(o) 1(s)ng Por c

provinces, ever since it joined Canada. The Newfoundland rate is usually close to twice the national average. In recent times it has risen, hitting an average of 16-21 percent since 1982. It is important to note that, statistically speaking, unemployment counts only people who are not working, but who are looking for work. In this connection, it should be observed that Newfoundland also has an extraordinarily low labour force participation rate, suggesting a large number of so-called discouraged workers, who are considered to be outside the labour force and are not counted as unemployed because they don't bother to look for work where they know there are no jobs available. If Newfoundland had a 'normal' labour force participation rate, more like the national average, the unemployment rate would be recorded at a much higher level; somewhere in the range of 30-35 percent in many years.

Pointing to the province's chronically high levels of unemployment, noting its lack of realistic prospects for additional jobs, and anticipating even worse times to come, I advocated higher rates of mobility assistance to Newfoundlanders willing to move to suitable jobs in

of a massive stock collapse, along with the most severe crisis in government finance that the country had faced. It seems that the crisis of the early 1990s, at last, has been one too many. There is now wide recognition that the Newfoundland fishery, if and when restored, must be limited and rationalized to remain viable.

The conventional wisdom on labour mobility now is also collapsing. Today the need for more Newfoundlanders to seek jobs elsewhere is widely acknowledged. But the search for such jobs has become much more difficult, what with national unemployment rates at around ten percent. Twenty to twenty-five years ago, when I was urging it, it would have been much easier. But at that time helping people who wanted to move to better job opportunities elsewhere was condemned as a Nazi scheme.

From my position, I now have the satisfaction of seeing my research vindicated and my credibility restored ... and of being amused by the hyperbole with which national magazines now identify me as a brilliant prognosticator. Frankly, while I warned about trouble to come, I did not foresee the extent of Newfoundland's fish-stock collapse, for which insight implicitly I appear to have been given credit. Nor could anyone else have anticipated the extent of this disaster, which for its severity apparently is related--at least in part--to unforeseen and unforeseeable ecological changes that are as yet incompletely understood. Of course, I take no pleasure in being proven right at the expense of the fishers of Newfoundland, who are the prime victims of the collective reliance on a conventional wisdom that has long outlived its usefulness.

I would like to emphasize, also, that I don't deserve much of the praise for originality and exceptional insight that has now come my way in respect of my Newfoundland research. Most competent economists, I expect would agree completely or substantially with my conclusions. However, given the heat I have had to endure, I am of the impression that most are glad that it was I who made the case, and not they. It is clear, by the way, that the conventional wisdoms that needed to be overthrown in the Newfoundland case did not originate with economists. They were of political and social origin.

This is not at all to say that I consider economists free of the errors of conventional wisdom. On the contrary, in my experience the economics profession has been quite adept in the creation of conventional wisdoms. Not infrequently these are established on the basis of naïve but appealing models, with dubious relevance to the real world, which makes them a fitting target for challenge. The example I mentioned before, of the individual transferable quota management system, I consider falls within

this category.

Some other aspects of my work to which I have referred, may also be seen in terms of a challenge to conventional wisdom. The constant refrain in business circles complaining about ruinous levels of taxation, even in most prosperous times, deserved to be challenged. The parlous state of government finances in this country may owe much to wasteful subsidies, such as those to the Newfoundland fisheries, but successful pleas for tax concessions by business and the wealthy have also contributed substantially to the size of our debt.

Conventional wisdoms, as I see them, follow a natural life-cycle. Their formulation, contestation, decay and eventual collapse mark a path in our understanding of a changing world. The sharp challenge by disputatious research in the process of assessing the declining validity of a conventional wisdom, is an expression of controversy particularly pertinent to the social sciences. It demonstrates the important contribution that controversy may make to a more timely comprehension of the adjustments society must undertake in response to the changing circumstances of the real world.

The Hazards of Fisheries Research I surmise that research in the fisheries field, especially in its social science aspects, is particularly prone to controversy, which may explain in part why my research so often has created a stir. The fishing industry, in Canada at least, has drawn attention far in excess of what it is entitled to in respect of its contribution to the national economy. Its problems are highly politicized and highly contentious -- which makes good copy!

Much of the contentiousness in the fishing industry stems from the unusual circumstance that most fish stocks are in the nature of fugitive common-use resources. Because of their migratory propensities and overlapping habitats it is most often not feasible to subject them to localized private control or ownership. Generally, the fish resource is in the nature of a pool, from which competing fishers draw their catches in a competitive race for the fish.

It is worth considering for a moment what this impl

destruction of the stocks. It explains why almost invariably government has to step in to regulate access to the fishery in one way or another. It provides an insight, as well, as to the reasons for the frequent crises that beset the fishery and the desperate concerns so frequently demonstrated by operators in this problem-plagued industry. They face enormous insecurities in their access to a resource that no one in particular owns and that everyone is prepared to plunder when the opportunity arises. If, as a researcher, you stick your nose into this hornets' nest, you may expect to get stung.

Most academic economists who have contributed to fisheries research have chosen to work primarily from their desks with theoretical models and paper data. This affords them a measure of protection from a direct and contentious involvement with the industry at the fishing-ground level. But if, as in my case, you are much involved in applied policy research and giving direct management advice on specific fisheries, you may well feel that it is necessary to experience the fishery at the ground level--or better said, in this case, at the water level. Certainly, I have always considered it important to undertake field trips to familiarize myself with fisheries on which I am expected to give advice. I have often found that contact with fishers at the operational level, and letting them know that I once worked for a season as a deckhand in the commercial fishery, enhanced the credibility of my advice substantially.

Despite the heat and strife that I do encounter in my fisheries work, I have found my involvements extremely interesting, broadening, stimulating and rewarding. They have taken me to many corners of the world for consultation, lecturing and conference work and have offered me a great variety of experiences. I have been able to observe seal hunting on the ice of the Canadian Arctic, sardine fishing in Bali Strait, prawn trawling in South Australia and beach seining in Sri Lanka; with igloo building, exotic temple visits, and elephant rides thrown in as side diversions. My work has allowed me to share lunch at the table of the King and Queen of Norway and a meal of raw tuna sitting cross-

Vietnam and unwittingly going for a swim with deadly sea wasps in North Queensland. My wife and I once left Manila just one day before an attempted coup in which the rebels shot up the floor where we had our room in a downtown hotel. On another occasion, when I was travelling the ice-infested Labrador Coast with some colleagues in a decrepit small boat, our engine conked out and I had visions of drifting helplessly across the Atlantic to Ireland. We got the engine going again with a spray-can of ether, but the next day the packing suddenly gave way around the propeller shaft. We managed to beach the boat before she sank.

Once I was almost marooned with two companions on the seasonally uninhabited islands of the Abrolhos in the eastern Indian Ocean, which were a base for the lobster fishery at a different time of the year. We had come in on a seaplane with a leaky float and couldn't take off until we found an abandoned pump on one of the islands. On another occasion, while on a tuna boat fishing in the middle of the Bismarck Sea, I developed an abscessed tooth and calculated it would take me three days to reach the nearest dentist in Port Moresby. But the pain subsided, off and on -- and fortunately more off than on.

I remember the time, too, while preparing to leave on a consulting trip to Darwin, that I heard on the radio that the town had been blown away by a cyclone, with many casualties. The local fishing fleet was destroyed, but I was asked to come out as soon as possible to help with advice for rehabilitation of the fishery. A special permit was waiting for me to allow me to enter the disaster area, where the havoc to me appeared comparable to that of German cities I had visited at the end of World War II, which had been devastated by thousand-bomber raids.

Let me tell you of one of my experiences in a little more detail, because many of you, I trust, will have seen the Australian movie *Crocodile Dundee* and will be able to visualize and appreciate the situation in which I found myself. I was asked to give advice on the development of a barramundi fishery in Australia's Northern Territory. The barramundi is a giant perch that migrates up the rivers of the flood-plain of the Northern Territory at the end of the wet season, when the terrain is still very soggy.

I had asked for a safari, by way of a familiarization tour of the area, and had brought my eldest son with me, having promised to take each of my children on one of my field trips. Fisheries staff took us into the flood-plain area, where there are no roads. We traveled in two four-wheel drive vehicles with winches to pull each other through streams and across muddy areas. My son, who is a car-buff and loves experience with terrain vehicles, enjoyed the difficult trip enormously. He was out there with the

other men laying winch cables, up to their knees in mud, while I remained

The Newfoundland File I suppose the toughest part of my job as a fisheries economist has been the one for which I am being rewarded with the Sterling Prize. It has involved doing policy-sensitive research on controversial issues, without fear or favour. It has meant, in the face of fierce criticism, sticking to one's conclusions that have been logically arrived at after careful investigation. And it has meant submitting the results to scrutiny by the public, including sensation-seeking media and poorly-informed interest groups with volatile tempers. Of course, if you are involved in policy research you have to be prepared for some heat -- it comes with the territory, as they say.

While I knew all of this, I must confess to being ill-prepared for the amount of abuse hurled at me after publication of my Newfoundland research in 1972. It is, to say the least, disconcerting for an academic, earnestly analyzing a difficult economic problem in a professionally responsible manner, in an effort to come up with helpful suggestions in the public interest, to find himself likened to a Nazi, slandered as a villain, and ridiculed as a fool. For public comment on the work of a mere academic, the attacks aimed at me were unprecedented and obviously excessive. A media acquaintance of mine, observing the copy of a front-page attack on me in the Newfoundland press said he had never before seen such large type for a headline.

Some of the newspaper accounts were sheer fabrication, like the one suggesting I had been the architect of Newfoundland's resettlement scheme. In fact, Premier Joey Smallwood had started the program in 1954 when I was still working on a degree and had never set foot in Newfoundland.

One of the meanest assaults on my character came from a pair of Memorial University professors who composed a Newfoundland folk-song in my dishonour. It called for my assassination and promised free passage through the pearly gates of heaven for my executioner. The Ode to Parzival Copes admittedly was written with skilful humour, which however was lost on me as its intended victim. And it didn't help much that my friends would inquire solicitously whether it was safe for me to enter Newfoundland. One pointed out that my exotic name was excellently suited for a role as a bogeyman. Can you hear the Newfoundlander admonishing his child at bedtime: Now be good my son, or Parzival Copes will come and get you and stuff you into a boxcar that will take you up to Toronto.

Conclusion Well, has my involvement with controversy been worthwhile? I like to think so. I suspect that my controversial research has made a

