

# President Coaker's Log of His Trip to the Ice Floe last Spring in s.s. *Nascopie*

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[See table of contents](#)

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**President Coaker's Log of His Trip to the Ice Floe last  
Spring in s.s. *Nascopie***

**March 13th.** — Grand March morning. Left St. John's at 8 a.m. being the fourth ship to pass the Narrows.<sup>1</sup> Passed Baccalieu Island<sup>2</sup> at 10:30 a.m., being first ship. Ice gradually becoming closer and heavier. Made good progress. All steel ships in sight at night fall. *Adventure*<sup>3</sup> last, about 10 miles from us. All foremost ships — *Stephano*,<sup>4</sup> *Bellaventure*,<sup>5</sup> *Florizel*<sup>6</sup>, *Beothic*<sup>7</sup> and ourselves together. Steamed half speed, as many large pieces of ice amongst the floe; considered too dangerous to proceed. Spent night about 30 miles off Cape Freels. *Stephano* and *Nascopie* led whole day. Both splendid ships for forcing through close packed panned ice. Crew preparing gaffs<sup>8</sup> and hauling ropes.

Passed several foxy bedlamers<sup>9</sup> seals on ice. Very quiet. Saw smoke two wooden steamers in afternoon, both well in on the land and must find ice close packed.

## ICE HEAVY

**March 14th.** — Ships began to move at daylight. Ice heavy and close; here and there streaks of water which two ships availed of. *Stephano* leading, with us very close after, most of the day. The *Nascopie* forged ahead two or three times and took the lead. At mid-day heaving ice was loose at Fogo. Ships headed for the land, and all the steel ships with the *Newfoundland*<sup>10</sup> congregated about 10 miles off Fogo, all laying side by side. We took snap shot of the view.

Seeing no chance of getting North inside all resolved to force through Eastern. The *Bloodhound*<sup>11</sup> was left at Shoal Bay<sup>12</sup> where she probably laid up hoping the ice would pass out and leave clear water on the inside. The *Sagona*<sup>13</sup> and *Eagle*<sup>14</sup> were at Baccalieu Island, but the whole of Green Bay was a solid field of ice; not even a crack. The *Newfoundland* followed the steel ships as near as possible, but soon got far behind.

About 4:00 p.m. laid out of sight, we passed through quite a few hoods, as we also did earlier in the day before making in for the land. The body of hoods would now probably be about 40 miles N.E. of Fogo Islands. Some of the hoods had not pupped, although many families were passed. The hoods commenced to pup this year about the 12th and the pupping would extend to about the 17th.

We passed one white coat about 8 a.m., about 40 miles W.E. of Cape Fogo. The little chap was quite lively and we knocked him into the water in forcing through. He soon managed to mount the ice.

At night-fall all the steel ships were in two groups. One group about five miles Eastern of us, consisting of the *Florizel*, *Bonaventure*<sup>15</sup> and *Adventure*; the other group consisted of *Stephano*, *Newfoundland*, *Beothic* and *Bellaventure*. The four

ships laying within the radius of one hundred yards; the *Stephano* about thirty feet from us.

The appearance was more like a town than the Arctic Atlantic, as all the ships were brilliantly lighted.

The ice very heavy and when the ships stopped it was impossible to proceed another foot. All decided to await developments that would likely present themselves at day-light.

## OFF AGAIN AT DAYBREAK

**March 15th (Sunday).** — Our fleet started at day break. *Florizel*, *Bonaventure* and *Adventure* away to S.E., about ten miles; *Newfoundland* about eight miles distant nearer to the land. Apparently *Newfoundland* intends hold on for hoods — a wise decision as it ought not to be hard to make up 20,000 hoods, old and young, especially in view of having guns to kill the old dogs.<sup>16</sup> We passed through ice containing several families in the early part of the day.

The *Stephano* leading our fleet, following leads of water, which carrier[d] us to all parts of the compass. Wind W.S.W., strong, which caused the leads of water. *Florizel* and her associates apparently jammed; we passed out of sight at about 2 p.m. At night fall supposed to be thirty miles East of Groais Island.<sup>17</sup> The ocean one solid mass, not a drop of water visible. The four ships in our fleet. Again berthed together, almost side by side for another night.

Word from Fogo assures us that inside ships still unable to get North. Not a wave of sea, the ocean one solid mass of ice. Impossible to make headway by butting; can only follow leads and cracks if such occur occasionally.

## CREW ENJOY THEMSELVES

Crew happy enjoyed their fresh beef and figgy pudding<sup>18</sup> for dinner, fish and brewse for breakfast, was excellent. For tea they had soft bread and canned beef. Men in hold singing hymns all day. Some held free and easy Methodist service after tea, which went off as though they were in a church building. The order was perfect.

Captain thinks we are about thirty miles from seals. Too bad other three ships should have been nipped and thereby delayed. *Beothic* lost blade of propellor.

**March 16th.** — The four ships in our company started together. Ice close, and a solid field. A few lakes of water which ships tried to follow. Did not make much progress. At night fall about twenty miles East of Groais Island.

The four ships spent the night close together, the *Beothic* being a very close neighbour. The *Stephano* was leading most of the day. Some of the ships gave con-

siderable trouble owing to keeping too close to the sterns of the leading ships, which made insufficient space for backing when hard knots are encountered.

Some of the ships barely escaped being damaged today owing to this incessant practice which is anything but desirable or satisfactory.

Reports state ships inside still jammed, and the balance of the steel fleet with the *Sagona* about ten miles North of Fogo. A splendid day.

**March 17th.** — The four ships started early but found ice rafting and very tight. It took all day up to 3 p.m. to get clear of a sheet across which lay a lake of water. The *Bellaventure* got across our bow.

## BOTHERED EACH OTHER

The four ships were working almost within a space of two hundred feet side by side. We had to go astern to allow the *Stephano* to come astern and by so doing our ship got nipped in a rafter. The other ships escaped the rafter but the three of them also became immovable. It took us until 6 p.m. to get clear of the position we were forced into owing to the *Bellaventure* getting in our way.

The other three ships went on West about eight or ten miles. We followed and at 8 p.m. when we had to “burn down,” in a lake of water and await tomorrow morning’s developments.

The day was an ideal one. Not cold, but clear, and very moderate. This is our fifth night at sea, and each night has found the ships “burnt down” and others of our fleet in close proximity. We took a couple of good photos when the ships were jammed today as the crews were mostly engaged in attempting to do what was possible to set them free.

Our crew worked well and, but for blowing up the ice to the windward of the ship it would have been impossible to proceed.

Our ship is out of trim being too much by the stern and all on board who sailed in her last spring say she is not near as good in heavy ice as she was then.

Complaints reached me last night from the *Beothic*, *Stephano* and *Bellaventure* about food.

The *Stephano* did not supply brewse as by law provided. Neither did the *Bellaventure*, and in addition the *Bellaventure* did not supply fresh beef on Sunday. The same complaint is made of the *Beothic*.

I marconied the owners and trust their action will remove all grounds for future complaint; if not, owners and masters are responsible for the breaches of the law and may be sued before the courts.

The crew of the *Nascopie* are quite satisfied with the food which is fully up to the requirements of the new sealing law.

## DID GOOD WORK

**March 18th.** — The *Stephano*, *Beothic* and *Bellaventure* were a few miles ahead in the morning but the *Nascopie* was not asleep. Soon Groais Island appeared out of the fog which prevailed. We sighted the three afore named ships and all raced for Cape Bauld<sup>19</sup> in open water along the French Shore. Captain Barbour decided to cut off South of Belle Isle as the ice appeared heavy. Soon the hulls of other ships in our fleet appeared heading South having gone as far as Cape Bauld and receiving information.

We were now seven or eight miles ahead; leading to the East. The other ships had more difficulty in getting through. At 3 p.m. we ran into the patch of white coats when about ten miles South of Belle Isle. The patch seemed to run North and South and the young seals looked large. It was our first sight of the white coats and everybody on board was intensely excited.

## ALL STOOD READY

The men all stood by, with gaffs and hauling ropes ready to jump. We passed through this streak of seals which no doubt came South West of Belle Isle.

On and on the *Nascopie* went to the East. The other ships apparently were steaming about South East and were about seven or eight miles further South than the *Nascopie*.

About 5 p.m. we ran into quite a patch and the ship was stopped and all hands ordered on the ice for a tow of seals, all returned by dark, some with a few, with two and most with three.

The slaughter had begun and in about an hour five hundred young seals were on board. I weighed quite a number and they averaged fifty-four pounds. One weighed seventy-five pounds. They were indeed a prime lot of seals.

## IMPRESSIVE SOUNDS

The crying of a herd of white coats is something not easily to be forgotten. It resembles the cry of a thousand sea gulls when disturbed. It is a pitiable cry and it seems hard to slaughter those innocents. They are so purely white in appearance and so harmless. Just a tap on the nose with a gaff ends their life instantaneously. They are so round and fat.

They realize their danger. The old race about the ice in all directions tossing their heads erect, splurging into their blowing holes, then with a splurge they throw themselves once again on the ice and rush towards their crying babies. Some of

them stand by their young and lose their lives in protecting their babes who are consistently crying to their mothers.

## KNOW ITS OWN

Each mother seal knows the cry of its young just as well as a human mother would. Very few dog harps are taken for they always make off and escape into the blowing holes or in rents in the ice.

We found this whelping ice all broken up owing to having come in contact with Belle Island.

There was not a wag<sup>20</sup> of sea.

We took the first seals about twenty miles S.E. of Belle Island.

The *Stephano* and *Beothic* struck the patch about seven miles South of us. Learning we had struck the seals although the seals were not plentiful, they steamed towards us and when we "burned down" we were not more than two miles from the *Stephano* and *Beothic*.

## STEAMED EAST

**March 19th.** — All were moving at 4:30 a.m. At five the ships steamed out further Eastern and placed the different watches on the ice; one watch mixed with men from the *Stephano* and the *Stephano*'s flags were mixed with the *Nascopie*'s at one section.

The men cleaned up the seals where they had been placed. The ship kept picking up the seals and replacing the men. This continued all day. My chum — C. Bryant — and myself went on the ice, with the men after dinner and although the seals were not plentiful and were cleaned up within two hours, Bryant killed, sculpted and piled fourteen, and I had nine for myself. It was an experience to kill those little innocents pleading so pityfully for their lives, and the sculpting of them was even more sad-den. I should say they contain fully sixteen pints of blood.

I examined some hundreds of them during the day and the result of my investigations showed that about twenty-five per cent only were female. They had subsisted from birth entirely upon their mother's milk and their stomachs contained a large quantity of milk. I examined scores of the stomachs of the mother seals and found all without a particle of food and many of the stomachs contained large numbers of small worms. Many of the udders of the mother seals contained no milk. They appeared to be drying up the milk supply. I doubt whether any of the prime full grown white coats would be nursed another three days by the mothers.

I should think that those seals would be full-grown about the 20th and would not gain much in weight after that date. The younger seals, of course, would proba-

bly continue to suck for another week. But seals — such as seven-eighths of those taken by us — would certainly not grow much this season.

## TWENTY DAYS OLD

They were probably pupped about March 1st and are about twenty days old. If they weighed fifteen pounds at birth some of them increased in weight eighty-five pounds in twenty days — that is carcass and pelt. The pelts averaged fifty-five pounds to-day, some went seventy-five, several sixty-eight.

I only weighed one at forty pounds. The carcasses weigh about twenty-five pounds for a pelt weighing sixty. The blood another ten pounds, which brings some up to a gross weight of ninety-five to one hundred pounds.

The pelt of the mother seal will average about one hundred pounds — so while a young harp at fifty-six pounds is worth \$2.25.

The mother weighing seventy pounds is worth but \$3.00 to the sealers. During the afternoon it closed in foggy and looked as if it might snow. The men working in our section numbering sixty, all gathered at one place.

## NO SHIP IN SIGHT

There was no sign of the steamer. The *Bellaventure* was not far distant and was picking up her men which were well scattered. Some of the older men thought we might not be picked up before 9 or 10 p.m. A punt was left by the steamer as a mark to find the spot if it was late before we could be reached. Some men housed in the punt which had been placed on her gunnall and which provided shelter from the wind. A fire was made from flag poles, seal pelts and carcasses.

Some of the men played a game called cat, which consisted of striking a seal flipper with a gaff and then running to the next post if not struck with the flipper by the bowler.

Others began telling of their many years' experience at the ice floe. Others who had survived the storm that had taken the lives of forty-eight of the *Greenland's*<sup>21</sup> crew told of their terrible experience in that blizzard.

One — James Harris, of Harbour Grace — sang one of those old fashioned witty songs which compelled the singer to dance at the finish of each verse. Skipper Jim's exhibition brought down the house at the close and a hearty cheer was given him when he had finished. Although about twenty-five miles S.E. of Belle Isle — away out on the bosom of the mighty Atlantic Ocean's ice floe — and with little hope of seeing our ship before eight or nine that evening and with the expectation of a snow storm, yet the men's hearts were full of life and enthusiasm. A smile might be seen

on the countenances of each. Their faces were painted with blood which squirted from the beating arteries of the day's victims.

## SPLENDID FELLOWS

A better company of men would be hard to find. Each of them this trying day had proved to be a man in a man's place — for a man must be a man when slaughtering white coats. He works as he never before worked unless he has been fortunate enough to have been in the white coats before.

Just at dark our ship appeared and soon she was alongside of our pan,<sup>22</sup> and a rush was made for the side sticks and ladders which presented a sight impossible to comprehend unless viewing it on the spot.

How I wish it was light enough to secure a snap shot. The whole side of the ship was covered with black objects with faces all looking upwards, each pushing his gaff before him and an occasional back carrying a "cat white coat" slung across the shoulder. We had gone on the ice without any food as we had expected to be on board of the ship an hour after we left her. I was delighted with my first experience with the white coats and was well repaid for the inconveniences we had endured.

We did not make a good day's work for the seals were too scarce and scattered but when all we panned is on board we won't be far short of eight thousand seals.

The *Adventure* came in sight just before dark, — five thousand three hundred on board.

## IDEAL DAY

**March 20th.** — With the exception of a snow droze<sup>23</sup> about 9 a.m., the day was another ideal sealers' day. Ship started at 5 a.m. to place the men on the ice, but found seals very scarce. Put out some men. Started picking up pans. *Bonaventure* and *Eagle* came into the patch during the past night. During the evening the *Sagona* also steamed in from the N.W.

*The Bloodhound*, *Florizel* and *Fogota*<sup>24</sup> are also in the patch inside. The *Stephano*, *Beothic* and *Bellaventure* are in sight picking up pans. Too far off to know what they are doing except by wireless which at this juncture is anything but reliable. Belle Isle reports that sixty miles of seals passed along during the month. There must be a large patch of seals to the South West.

The ice is broken up owing to being forced on Belle Isle. That makes it hard for panning and has scattered the number of seals somewhat. Fully ten per cent of the young seals have escaped as a few here and there on a pan are not worth stopping to take.



Weighed several pelts today. They average fifty-five pounds; some weighed seventy-three, one only fifty. The pelts are in the prime condition. Weighed carcasses which average twenty-five pounds for young.

## SPLENDID SIGHT

Did not go on ice today; no good chance. Splendid sight to see fore deck piled with five thousand seals. All in this patch were cut up. Expect to finish taking on board tonight and be off to the S.E. in search of another patch without delay.

We will have about twelve thousand out of this patch which do not exceed fifty thousand, the *Stephano*, *Beothic* and *Bellaventure* have probably taken ten thousand each; the other ships about eight thousand.

The Captain is a very cool man. Absolutely proof against excitement. Very little shouting. The old sealer, Skipper Peter Gaulton, is without doubt a sealing expert. What he doesn't know about seals and their habits and the handling of a ship in the seals and out very few can teach him.

The Captain's son Pearcey is second in command and is a chip from the old block in every respect. He says little but takes in the whole situation at a glance.

The crew are delighted. Every man carries a smile, and there is nothing but good said about the food.

## JEWEL OF A COOK

The cook — Samuel Tiller — is indeed a jewel so far as his duties go, and the cook's duties are performed like clock work. Sammy is constantly on the alert, and his assistants are all performing their parts creditably.

The Doctor has developed into an expert winch manipulator and all the men say he is the only Doctor gentleman they ever sailed with.

If any one attempt to take over the work of driving the winch he is received with a head shake which is good as saying: "No thank you, I am boss of this machine."

**March 21st.** — Wind N.W. by N., strong, with snow most of the day. Frosty and very unpleasant. See no distance. Took about five hundred seals in small patches. Working out to S.E. Ice heavy. Passed *Bonaventure* and *Bloodhound*. Ships on inside taking on board panned seals. Our ship endeavouring to get away to S.E. as a large patch of seals still remain untouched and that patch must be in the South East.

## SLIGHT ACCIDENT

Mosie Waterman met with slight accident yesterday, one of the hatch planks fell and struck his toe, apparently breaking it, but Mosie's tongue is still as lively as ever. He will be about in a day or two if he will remain still and not use his foot.

**March 22nd.** — *Bonaventure* reports man dead — Henry Pridham, of Petty Harbor, having died from injuries sustained by falling though the after hatch on the night of the 20<sup>th</sup> and died early this morning. The *Bonaventure* has no doctor. Our doctor went on board at noon today. The *Bonaventure* having come up to us, *Bonaventure* and *Nascopie* in company all day. Did not steam much. At night seven ships in sight.

Men had divine service on board three times today, with much singing of hymns. Rosary also said by R.C. friends. Being Sunday the cooks had extra work to prepare the Sunday food for the crew. All expressed themselves as being well satisfied with the food on Mondays as well as Sundays. The cooks work night and day with sweat rolling off them. To cook the food now provided by law the cooks must keep constantly to work. Only once so far this voyage have the cooks done any other work. When all the men are on the ice and the cooks are willing to handle seals, one or two may be spared for an hour or two, but once have I seen a cook handling seals.

## TRUE TO SPIRIT

The captain is true to the spirit of the law in reference to cooks; he abstained from ordering them to handle seals, and what was done was the voluntary act of a subordinate cook with the consent of the chief. The sealers on the *Nascopie* absolutely refused to allow the cooks to handle seals. I hope this matter of taking the cooks from their proper duties to handle seals, is now about fixed. I don't think the men on any ship will in future be willing to have the cooking neglected in order to allow two or three cooks to handle seals. It will not be tolerated in future, and what will be lost by keeping the cooks at their own work will not amount to much.

## FAITHFULLY PERFORMED

Captain Barbour has faithfully performed his part in carrying out the sealing regulations. The owners have done their part, for the food was placed on board of this ship. The chief cook has done his part nobly. The greatest responsibility rests upon the chief cook, for he can make things go right if he feels so inclined. The assistant cooks have all done their parts well. The steward has also done his part well.

It will be difficult to have all the crews treated alike, unless, there is one man placed on each ship by law, whose duty it will be to see that the regulations are observed, and to make immediate complaint where there is any negligence and failing improvement immediately after a complaint is lodged with the captain, notice should at once be given on a suit for breach of the regulations. After two or three years such an official could be dispensed with, as the men would by then recognize their full rights and what the regulations called for, and would see them enforced.

## TWELVE MEN ASTRAY

*Beothic* had 12 men astray on the ice until 11 p.m. When found they had prepared an ice house made from clumpers,<sup>25</sup> and were enjoying a fire of seal carcasses and pelts. A larger number of the *Beothic*'s crew who were astray boarded the *Stephano* earlier in the evening.

**March 23rd.** — Crew out at 2 a.m. pelting seals. Ice very tight and heavy: about the highest experienced since leaving St. John's. Our position is about thirty miles South East of Belle Isle. The *Bellaventure* and *Bonaventure* in company, while the *Florizel* and *Fogota* lay about 5 miles to the N.W. The *Beothic* and a larger steamer supposed to be the *Stephano* lay about 10 miles East of us. Bay clear and no wind. Impossible to search for seals as ice too tight and heavy. So far as we can judge about 90,000 seals taken to date. All of these were taken between Belle Isle and Groais Island. Took about 900 seals today. Slight swell on which in latter part of the day permitted the ships to get around.

## BEST FOR VOYAGE

Seals taken today best for the voyage. Weighed several that tipped the scales at 70 pounds. Average 60 or five pounds better than two days ago. Young taking to the water, coats becoming spotted. Mothers left the young, they will now decrease in weight. Very few old seals now seen on the ice or in the water. *Stephano* panned a few today to east of us. *Stephano* had four men astray during the early part of the night.

We have today passed through much of the whelping ice from which the first seals were taken. The whelping ice has drifted about 50 miles during the last eight days — or about six miles in 24 hours.

## DISPUTE AS TO QUANTITY

A dispute arose in the fore regarding the quantity of seals brought in since 1900 by Captains George Barbour and Ab. Kean.<sup>26</sup> Dr. Bunting<sup>27</sup> sought Chafe's *Sealing Guide*<sup>28</sup> which proved that during the last 13 years — 1900 to 1913 — Captain George Barbour brought in 3142 seals more than Captain Kean. The figures being:

Barbour .....	365,994
Kean .....	362,852

This settled the dispute and a pound of F.P.U. tobacco<sup>29</sup> changed hands.

Another dispute arose as to how many springs have passed since Capt. W. Barbour brought in two loads the one spring in the *Diana*,<sup>30</sup> and what amount the men made. Reference was again made to Chafe's *Guide*, when it was shown that Capt. Wm. Barbour made his notable trips 23 springs ago, and his men shared \$182.30.

Mosie Waterman, of Fair Island, in this case won the forfeit. It turned out that Mosie was a stowaway on the *Diana* that spring and behaved so well that the crew gave him a full share. Consequently it surprised none to find that Mosie remembered the year so well.

ALMOST A JINK<sup>31</sup>

In going over Chafe's book to confirm the doctor's figures, I noticed that Capt. Ab. Kean almost made a jink of it in 1905, when his voyage numbered 4,553, and his men made the small bill of \$13.97. Capt. Geo. Barbour's worse year during the period referred to, was 1904, when he brought in 12,874, his men sharing \$34.86. The value of seals brought in by Capt. George Barbour in 14 springs, exceed by \$15,000 the value of seals brought in by Capt. Ab. Kean during the same period.

**March 24th.** — Thick most of the day. Took about 300 seals. Ship moving all day, but found no new patch. Most of the steamers in our vicinity. Reports received from them show that we have so far done as well as most of them.

## FINE LOT OF SKINS

*Adventure* has picked up a fine lot of seals this week, probably done the best work of the fleet since Monday. We cut through 21 miles of ice surrounding the ice from

which the seals secured were taken. We burnt down for the night near the *Stephano*. We have about 13,000 stowed to date. Our ship calls 21 seals 20 in counting, the reason advanced for so doing is, to be sure not to hail for more than is on board. The system of counting is very reliable.

All the seals taken during the day are placed on deck. When the work on ice for the day is over, the watches in turn stow the seals below. They are thrown into a shute<sup>32</sup> which direct them below, and each seal is counted one by one. Every man crying out the number in rotation. Each 21 seals are tallied by the master watch on a board. The tally is made by cutting a notch on the edge of the board. Each notch means 20 seals.

The landsmen in future in reckoning the seals reported as on board will add 5 per cent if he wishes to find out, the exact number on board the *Nascopie*.

Weighed several seal pelts, averaged 60 lbs. Weighed one round whitecoat,<sup>33</sup> weight 85 lbs, found carcass 25 lbs, blood about 8 lbs.

**March 25th.** — Fine day. Nine steamers in sight all day. Took about 1,000 during the day. Steamed to S. East and again to West. Must have covered 100 miles during the day in search of a new patch. Report from the two fleets, front and gulf, received. Glad to find Gulf ships did so well.

## GRAMOPHONE CONCERT

Had gramophone concert in ball room for crew between 8 and 9 p.m., which helped the leisure hour to pass pleasantly. Skipper James Harris, of Harbour Grace, elected mocking of the common sealers. His duty is to govern the crew and to enforce sealers' sea laws. The king is aided by a judge, sheriff, and two constables. Each offender is reported to the court by the king and the court, hears all cases and where necessary submits the case to a jury. The prisoner and king is represented by a lawyer. The two lawyers selected being Chief Engineer Ledingham and Dr. Bunting. The writer being selected for judge.

**March 26th.** — Splendid day. Fine, warm and clear. Steamed into a small patch of seals about 8:a.m. The *Beothic* in company. Many of the seals dipping. A number able to handle themselves in the water very well. Ice open. In small pans. Very difficult to get about on ice. *Beothic* cut us off about noon and by so doing took quite a number of seals from our men. Spoke to several of *Beothic*'s men. They hail for 22,000, with seven pans out. Reported with two blades of propellor broken. *Beothic* has been in the seals from the start.

We took 2500 seals today, and have about 17,000 seals on board. Had men on the ice until after darkness set in. The day was the best in point of weather experienced since leaving port. The sun's rays warm as the day was calm throughout.

**March 27th.** — Came across few seals pelted by landmen, weight of pelts 30 lbs. Found a knife and piece of unravelled rope on pan, also an old harp seal. The ice must have cut Cape Bauld shore. We are now 60 miles N.N.E. of Funk Island. Weather thick which has caused young seals to take to the water. Very little will be done in capturing them, except we get fine sunny days.

### SPOKE *FOGOTA*

Took about 800 seals today. Spoke to *Fogota* at night fall. She reports for 2,000. *Beothic*, *Eagle*, *Bonaventure* in our vicinity. James Davis, of Wesleyville, dislocated arm by a tumble over pinnacle. Doctor soon set it, as the accident happened near the ship. The poor chap lost one half of dislocated arm some four years ago caused by the explosion of a gun. Our position now about 50 miles N.E. of Funk Island. Passed a few of the *Beothic's* missing pans, which were subsequently picked up by the *Beothic*.

*Fogota* spent the night alongside of us. Some of her crew complained loudly about the grub<sup>34</sup> supplied and non-compliance with the sealing law.

They reported shortage in sugar, beans, potatoes. No fresh beef or brewse had been supplied as per regulations. One of the favoured few on her swallowed all the whisky he could get on board of our ship, and begged all the tobacco obtainable. He has a long winded tongue and before reaching his own ship was privileged to a "ducking" in the briny icy waters. We wished them good luck and much success with the old<sup>35</sup> later on.

**March 28th.** — Took an S.E. course at daybreak, accompanied by the *Adventure*, and steamed South of the Funks in search of a new patch, but saw nothing in the shape of seals. Ice much scattered and broken. Weather thick, wind blowing a gale from the N.W. Took no seals. *Adventure* kept close to us all day and both ships burnt down at nightfall within hailing distance of each other.

*Adventure's* crew bitterly complained concerning negligence of chief cook in not providing meals according to the sealing laws. Fresh beef was served once, having been boiled instead of roasted. Brewse only served twice to date. No breakfast being cooked on Sunday, as all cooks but one lay in bunk until 7:30 a.m. and the chief cook loudly proclaimed that he would cook breakfast for no one. He must be noted and prevented from sailing again as a cook.

### COOKS OBJECT

*Adventure's* men say Capt. Kean anxious to have meals served according to rules, but cooks refuse to do so. It will be necessary to amend sealing law and provide for

the placing of an official on board of each ship to see that regulations are observed and in case of default to institute action against cooks, master and owner. Cooks will also have to be paid a bonus by the owners in addition to a share of the voyage, as their duties continually demand all their time and they work 18 hours every day. They probably put in three times as much time on duty as any of the men in the underdeck. A bonus of \$20 should be paid to each assistant cook and baker, and \$30 to the chief cook, then the chief cook will be in a position to demand the close attention of the assistants, which they don't feel like doing under the present circumstances.

## MUST BE ALIKE

Every ship must supply meals alike and all sealers must be accorded similar food, and until such conditions are accomplished, there must be no "let up" on behalf of the F.P.U. and toilers of the deep.

The experience afforded me as a result of this voyage to the icefields, will, I trust, result beneficially for those who tread the frozen pans.

Captain George Barbour has continually interested himself in the matter of the food of his crew since leaving port, and makes it his duty to visit the cooks' quarters regularly and consult with the chief cook in order to see that the regulations are respected and observed on board the *Nascopie*.

## STEAMED ALL DAY

**March 29th.** — Ship steaming all day. No seals. *Adventure* and *Beothic* in company. Held sacred gramophone concert in hold for crew. Methodist service held in afternoon and night by Ariel Burt, of Old Perlican, who has led service at the seal fishery under Captain Barbour's command for eight years. I attended evening service. Splendid order prevailed throughout the ship during service. Their singing was excellent. The strong voices of 100 men singing some of the grand old hymns was something to be long remembered.

The only black spot I noticed was the action of one Henry Lockyer, of Bay de Verde, who outraged the feelings of all who attended the service by chewing tobacco. The indecency of such an action did not seem to disturb him, as he afterwards gloated over the incident when it was brought to his notice by one of those who attended.

## AWAY IN THE NORTH

The ship steamed over a large distance during the day and apparently Captain Barbour decided there was no seals South as he headed for the North in the afternoon.

The *Beothic* reports for 25,000 and hopes to reach St. John's by Wednesday.

**March 30th.** — Took about 200 seals. In company with *Beothic*, *Eagle*, *Sagona* and *Fogota*. Fine day, but seals very scarce. Ice tight with a considerable swell. Court held on board at 8 p.m., Mosie Waterman being the first to answer to a charge. He was ably defended by Dr. Bunting. The sentence of the court being that the left side of his moustache should be shaved by Constables Lidstone and Norris. His counsel pleaded for suspended sentence which was granted.

The next case being against N. Green. The charge was not proven but a minor offence being sustained, the sentence of the court was that he had to be taken to his bunk; his left boot and sock removed, his toes painted with molasses and the sock and boot replaced, which sentence was carried out by Constables Lidstone and Norris.

## PRISONER ACQUITTED

The third case being a charge against W. Humphries, for manslaughter, which was not proven. The complainant being charged by the court with false arrest, was sentenced to have his left boot filled with water. The whole ship's company attended. Splendid order prevailed. Smoking was suspended and heads uncovered. N. Green and S. White were ably defended by G. Carter and Eli Mercer.

Another custom being sharing empty barrels, 100 applicants being made for one barrel. These barrels are filled with seal carcasses. The cook decided today to dispose of the barrel by ticket, and the ceremony of drawing was very interesting. 36 was the successful number, which fell to A. Hapgood, of Port Blandford, who was immensely pleased with his good luck.

## SCATTERED SEALS

**March 31st.** — East from Fogo about 30 miles early in the day. *Sagona*, *Eagle* and *Beothic* in company. Steaming through ice; a few scattered seals about. Ice poor for getting around on. Took a young hood seal alive on board. Have also two screachers alive on board. The hood seal is the most interesting of the three. The hood is about two days old. It has a beautiful skin. The hood seal sheds its white furry coat before



pupping. A screacher is a harp seal whose mother perished after birth to the pup. It is consequently very small and devoid of fat matter. It is not killed by the sealers as it is valueless in their estimation. About ten in a thousand are screachers.

## EAGERLY WANTED

Then there is the cat harp. This seal is eagerly sought by the sealer, as it is the seal that is dressed and known as the white coat. A cat white coat is so called because it was still-born. The fur of the still-born will not pull, i.e., the fur will remain in its natural state. A white coat born alive will shed its white coat.

The proportion of still-born harps (cats) would average about ten in a thousand. Out of 18,000 young pelts on board there is about 50 cat skins, but all the cats were not brought on board, as in the morning men often pass by cats as it would be using up energy to carry a cat slung across the shoulders all day. The custom is to sling the cat across the shoulder and when once done it remains until the ship is reached. Consequently, some men refuse to take a cat skin in the morning, unless they feel sure they will be picked by their ship within an hour or two, for a cat slung across a sealer's back interferes somewhat with the free movement of his arms in pelting seals.

## VALUABLE PELTS

Each cat skin is worth at least one dollar, as there is a demand for them in a dressed form. The smaller the cat the more it is worth as a curiosity.

The early morning was clear at 10 a.m., indications of weather observable. At noon looked as if we would have snow storm, weather mild. At 1 p.m. snow thick, lost sight of men on ice near ship; snow cleared a little and all men taken on board. Captain kept men close to ship all morning. Snowing and blowing bitterly all evening.

At nightfall the wind was blowing a gale from the N. with snow. Real wintery night. Our men all on board at 4 p.m. when weather came on. Considerable swell all day. A stowaway on board ill with mumps and is confined to hospital.

## BLOWING GALE

**April 1st.** — Blowing a gale from the North during early part of the day veering to N.W. in the evening, with very little abatement in the wind. Ice very tight. Ship made but little progress. Freezing hard. A real February Day. Took two or three hood seals. *Eagle* and *Adventure* sighted about 4 p.m. about five miles off.

Held a gramophone concert in the officers' quarters after tea. Uncle Darius Hall sang a song entitled "The Bold Hero," Levi Green sang "Come all ye jolly ice hunters," and David Rodgers sang "On the Banks of the Clyde." Each song was well received. That sung by Levi Green was composed by a sealer on board the *Leopard*,<sup>36</sup> the spring Captain Bob Fowlow secured so many white coats. Mosie Waterman told one of his remarkable "big fib" stories. The concert ended at 10 p.m.

In the fore hold "Greenspond" held a ball and danced to the music of an accordion, loaned by a fireman, until it was time to turn in. Ship supposed to be about 40 miles South East of the Funks. The ice must have drifted two miles an hour. The Marconi reports the *Stephano* about 20 miles distant.

## STORMY WINTRY DAY

This is a stormy wintry day, but the boys of the *Nascopie* only knew of the storm when appearing on deck. All was contentment and enjoyment under decks. Such is life on a steel ice hunter on a wintry day, blowing a hurricane, on the bosom of the mighty angry Atlantic.

**April 2nd.** – Fine day; wind West, met the *Diana* at 9 a.m. Several of *Diana's* men on board. Reports very bad cooking on board whole spring, and quite a lot of dissatisfaction. No brewse, no fresh beef and no canned beef. Bread only twice each week, and uneatable, being sour. Flour very bad, can't make good bread from it. No duff on April 1, being duff day. The chief cook is named Hr. Abbott. He should never be allowed to sail in a sealing steamer as cook. More care must be exercised in selecting chief cooks for the crews. Captains will have to be hailed before the courts if they do not see that the cooks supply food as provided by law. The regulations can be carried out easily, as proved on board the *Nascopie*, where the food supplied exceeded what is provided by the new law.

## EASY TO COOK

One of the easiest meals to cook is the brewse. It takes three quarters of a bag of bread on board of the *Nascopie* for a meal of brewse. Our cook has a boiler with a double bottom and brewse is cooked as easily as a woman cooks it at home.

The men on board the *Diana* are furious over the treatment accorded them, and judging by the statements made to me, Capt. Barbour will have to answer before the courts for breaches of the sealing law in reference to the supply of food.

At 10 a.m. our operator picked up a message from *Florizel* enroute to St. John's, reporting *Newfoundland* disaster, which was followed by other reports confirming the same. The news caused tremendous excitement and sympathy on board.

The ship was headed at full pressure for the area where our captain supposed *Newfoundland* to be. The *Adventure* reported to us intimating that they could see *Newfoundland* with flag half-mast. The ice was as tight as it could be forced together and of a very heavy nature, being chiefly Arctic ice. The ship kept butting continuously. At 4 p.m. the *Adventure* was four miles distant from us, the *Beothic* about six, the *Florizel* about eight, and the *Stephano* and *Newfoundland* about seven. The *Bellaventure* about six. The *Stephano* was nearest to the *Newfoundland*.

If 1000 men were on the ice dying we could offer no aid. The mighty powers of Nature had brought about conditions that the most powerful ship could not force.

All day our crew waited silently for news by the wireless. Men huddled together and talked in whispers about the awful calamity that had overtaken the poor chaps belonging to the *Newfoundland*. Some of our crew were fathers, with sons amongst the number sailing in the *Newfoundland*. Some had brothers on board.

## ANXIOUS TIME

I passed the morning in the top cabin anxious to hear the latest news by wireless. In the evening I spent most of the time with the men. The one prominent feature that I noted was the universal cry of captain, officers and men to do away with panning seals, as that system is responsible for most of the risks to life now experienced.

Captain Barbour told me that there would not have been a *Greenland* disaster had there been no practice of panning seals. The practice must be annihilated. I had a minor experience of this the other evening. I with about 60 men spent an anxious hour or two owing to our ship having gone out of sight to pick up pans and men, with thick weather soon after set in, but fortunately for us it was a mist instead of snow.

The incident brought home to me the amount of risk to life incurred by the present method of sealing.

## WAITING PARTICULARS

We must await full particulars ere we decide who or what is responsible for this last and greatest disaster known in the history of the seal fishery.

Our ship kept butting without ceasing. The captain spent the whole day and night on the bridge, but alas poor progress was made. Our doctor was especially anxious to reach the *Bellaventure* as he may be of some use in alleviating the sufferings of those who had been rescued.

The ship steamed all night, ice conditions remaining unchanged. Progress about two miles during the night. Continually butting at highest pressure.

**April 3rd.** — Ice continued tightly packed. About 1 p.m. a little swell rolled in and opened the ice a little. The ships were given some freedom, and about 4 p.m. the weather cleared, disclosing the *Florizel*, *Newfoundland* and *Stephano* within a mile of us, while the *Beothic* and *Bellaventure* were a little further distant. The *Adventure* and *Bonaventure* were about five miles distant.

Sixty-nine bodies had been recovered and placed on board of the *Bellaventure*. Nothing further could be done. The *Bellaventure* soon started for home and got away a few miles owing to the slack in the floe. The *Newfoundland* did not appear to make any attempt to follow.

The *Beothic* being homeward bound of course endeavoured to follow the *Bellaventure*. Those on board here who had relatives on the *Newfoundland*, are frantic with grief. All are grief stricken and don't want to handle any more seals this spring.

## ANXIOUS INQUIRIES

Several came weeping anxious to learn of the fate of loved ones who sailed in the *Newfoundland*. We spoke to no ship after we reached the scene of the disaster. All we saw was carcasses of seals and numerous gulls. Strange some of the ships did not attempt to communicate verbally. What we know of the awful calamity is but little, although on the spot.

The men are asking hundreds of questions which can't be answered. What caused the men to be out is the universal question which I fear won't be answered until evidence before a court of enquiry reveal the facts.

Our men were out until about 1 p.m. on that fatal day, but no careful observant master would have allowed his men to scatter far from the ship on that day. Our men were picking up scattered seals, but none of them went far from the ship. When the first dwye<sup>37</sup> of snow came on we had several men on the ice about half a mile from the ship. We lost sight of them while the dwye was on. It soon cleared again and they came on board.

## UNCERTAIN WEATHER

Another dwye came on and lasted for, say, 15 minutes and again cleared up. This was followed by more snow which did not slacken for the evening and night. The day was one that threatened weather, although not over cold. The temperature fell lower and lower. Not much snow, fell. The drift was sharp, cutting like a knife.

My opinion is that most of the men survived the first night (Tuesday). The first night's exposure coupled with the total absence of a warm stimulant left the men

exhausted, and Wednesday's high wind, drift and bitter frost, was too much for human beings to overcome, and seeing no hope of rescue owing to the tight nature of the heavy Arctic floe, many laid down to die long before Wednesday's fearful night passed.

On Wednesday evening about 4 p.m. the sky cleared and had the other ships been notified of the disaster relief crews could have searched the floe before night fall, although it was bitterly cold and a close drift swept over the floe.

## ALL WAS COMFORT

On board the *Nascopie* all was comfort and contentment, and no one thought of any poor chap being astray on the broad ocean on such a night.

We steamed until nightfall and once more burned down. This is another stormy night. Snowing with a stiff breeze. Our ship's company is silent; few gather in groups and in whispers discuss what they know about the disaster.

**April 4th.** — Day fine and clear. Wind off shore. Ice very tight. Just as bad as yesterday. Ice opened a little at 2 p.m. *Newfoundland* and *Adventure* close by. *Florizel* and *Stephano* few miles distant picking up pans. No seals. Men anxious to get the list of dead belonging to *Newfoundland*, but in vain. Crews of ships grief stricken and every sealer expected owners of steel ships would order them in, accompanying the *Bellaventure* as a mark of respect for the dead, but all waited in vain. It is not 77 dead bodies of sealers sacrificed for greed they are interested in, but seals, which apparently are of more interest to them.

## MESSAGE AND ANSWER

Seeing no proper action taken, I, on behalf of men marconied the following message:

Job, St. John's.

"Crews fleet grief stricken. Prospects nil. Suggest owners recall steel fleet accompany *Bellaventure* St. John's respect dead."

This message was sent as soon as the operator obtained a chance this morning. The *Beothic* is reported as having arrived at noon.

At 4 p.m. the following message was received in reply to the one mentioned above.

“Coaker, *Nascopie*.

“Via Cape Race.

“Decision as to prospects getting more seals must be left entirely to captains. Please don’t interfere. JOB.”

Such a ridiculous reply show exactly what knowledge owners ashore have of the feelings of the sealers on the ocean, and how easily it is for them to deceive themselves as to what transpire on board the ships at sea.

### IMPROFITABLE WORK

Any one on the spot know[s] what the prospects are when a ship like the *Nascopie* takes 250 seals in a week and April 4th is reached: when every harp pupped has taken to the water. But the object of the appeal, which was to have the 69 sealer bodies escorted to port in a national manner, compatible [sic] with the respect which the whole fleet consider was due to the memory of the 77 men who died in an endeavor to secure wealth to maintain their country, and whose lives were sacrificed to greed for gold.

Heartlessness in the extreme is the action of the owners of the steel ships in expecting men to mourn the loss of 77 comrades by scouring the seas in quest of more seals, while their loved ones were being outwardly mourned by strangers in port only 40 miles away, and to make the disrespect more pronounced, the *Beothic* should fly away at high pressure in order to secure the honor of being first ship to port, leaving the *Bellaventure* to creep along as she may with her 69 dead forms of human freight and 46 souls just rescued from the jaws of death.

### REGRETTABLE

The fame-seeking anxiety of the captain of the *Beothic*<sup>38</sup> and the indifference of her owners for the feelings of the toiling masses of the Colony, whose sons and brothers had died as heroes upon the Arctic icefloes in pursuance of their calling is to be greatly regretted, for the *Beothic* at least should have been ordered to closely accompany the *Bellaventure* to St. John’s, and thus pay some reasonable respect to the many dead who through no fault of theirs had been called upon to sacrifice their lives upon the frozen floe, after enduring the most excruciating torture.

But even this small token of respect was denied our almost assassinated countrymen. They were only toilers was the innermost thought of the slave owners; let us take it quietly and the whole thing will blow over in a few days.

To the insulting reply above quoted was sent the following:

"Job, St. John's.

"Taken 250 past week. Exceedingly obliged advice tendered. COAKER."

## LACK OF THOUGHT

Who ever penned the Job reply must have done so without consideration, for only an irresponsible could have imagined that I would interfere in any way to influence the captain or the crew under the circumstances.

I hear on all sides the desire of the crew to see the faces of the dead heroes and their hope that the owners would respect the dead by ordering the ships to port in funeral order as a national mark of respect for their dead comrades.

Eight bodies of the 77 deaths as a result of the disaster, not recovered.

The *Diana* came in sight at 6 p.m. and we steamed towards her in order to give her a supply of coal which we succeeded in accomplishing. Had conversation with several of the *Diana's* crew. They knew nothing of the disaster until they came alongside. Some of the men report a slight improvement in the food on board since we spoke to her on Thursday. The *Diana* finished coaling at night.

## SAW SAGONA

**April 5th.** — Steamed 25 miles South in the early morning. Burnt down 50 miles East of Cape St. Francis. *Sagona* passed us in the afternoon; did not speak to her. Silent day on board.

Held memorial service at 7 p.m. consisting of Litany, Hymns and the Burial Service. Addresses by Wesley Howell, Skipper Peter Gaulton, Wm. Hounsell and myself, after which several prayed. It was a joint service by Churchmen and Methodists, and was exceedingly impressive. All the crew attended. It occupied nearly three hours. The Litany and Hymns seemed very appropriate. The Burial Service was splendidly read by Fred Tulk, of Newtown; Wesley Howell, of Cat Harbor, reading the lesson. Many an eye was wet, with tears. Skipper Peter Gaulton spoke very feelingly of his experience at the time of the *Greenland* disaster, he being one of the crew on that voyage. Probably 50 of our present crew were on board of the *Greenland* that spring.

## MEMORIAL SERVICE

Those present at the memorial service will long remember it. Those heartless lovers of gold ashore so indifferent to the feelings of the toilers respecting the *Newfoundland* disaster, should learn a thing or two from the manner in which the *Nascopie* respected the memory of their dead comrades tonight. Very few of the *Nascopie's* crew will waste much time considering how much respect the ship owners at St. John's have for those who risk their lives from year to year in order to maintain their country, their homes and maintain in luxury those who reap the cream of the seal fishery.

**April 6th.** — Fine day, wind moderate. Steamed all day towards the inside water, but found ice packed and made no progress. Took 11 seals. Saw *Stephano*, *Florizel*, *Newfoundland*. *Adventure* reports the loss of two and a half blades of her propellor. Had ticket lottery for 3 empty pork barrels. Winner Skipper Darius Hall, Hr. Keefe and George Ivany. Winners had to boil a gallon of molasses into "bullseyes."<sup>39</sup> They started at 9 p.m. and did not finish until 4 a.m. next morning. They well earned their barrels.

## UNEASINESS

No word of the *Southern Cross* all day; is causing much uneasiness on board, but the general opinion is that she is safe although driven to sea.

Every one is asking why a ship costing \$250 a day is kept out to take 11 seals, probably worth \$15; but of course the wiseacres ashore know best concerning such matters. Burnt down at 8 p.m. in heavy ice. Snowing a part of the night with strong North wind.

**April 7th.** — Wind North, strong. Did not steam much in the forenoon. Men busy consuming "bullseyes." A report current concerning trouble amongst *Eagle's* crew in reference to taking coal from the *Florizel*. Not surprised in view of the feeling pervading the whole fleet since the disaster of April 1st. A hard feeling existed on board the *Diana* when we were coaling her on Saturday. She has a few tough chaps on board and it would not surprise me to learn later that the captain had lots of trouble with some of the men.

Several of the *Diana's* crew left her on Saturday and are on board of the *Nascopie*. One man with an injured arm, named Gardner, was also sent on board of our ship for medical treatment. We also have a stowaway named Noftall, belonging to the *Diana*. Took 21 seals today. Cape St. Francis and Cape Spear quite visible to the naked eye from the deck, Signal Hill from the barrel. We are south of Cape Spear. *Sagona* in sight all the evening.



Still no word of the *Southern Cross* reported. Not a word received from the shore concerning the victims of the *Newfoundland* disaster. It was no trouble to know how many seals the Gulf ships had taken, but there was money in seals, when ships were loaded, which is of far more importance than the death and burial of 69 sealers.

Reported owners refused our captains' permissions to give up the useless and costly quest for 20 seals per day, which strikes all as very singular, for few can understand why \$300 is spent to secure \$10 worth of seals; but like many other puzzlers, it will not be solved by the simple minded toiler. I fancy I have a fair idea for the reasons for such inexplicable proceedings.

The night was beautifully clear and the moon shone in all its glory. The ocean was spotlessly white and a sight worth seeing. The *Sagona's* lights about one mile distant broke the isolation and monotony of spending night after night either without a ship in sight, or if in sight invisible through a heavy mist or snow or storm.

**April 8th.** — Splendid day. *Sagona* came alongside. Had not heard of the *Newfoundland* disaster or the disappearance of the *Southern Cross*. Some of the *Sagona's* crew reported food conditions to be extremely unsatisfactory. Bread unfit for food. No fresh beef, no brewse. Beans three times for the trip. No potatoes or turnips. Nothing for the pot. Even some cabin supplies short for some time.

North from 20 miles East of Cape Spear to about 25 miles East of Bonavista and returned.

The cook took a list of men approving of food supplied this voyage and all willingly gave their names. The only complaint possible being a shortage in the supply of fresh beef, which must be the result of an overlook. The cooks on the whole are well qualified for the work and would make good chiefs if any ship required such an officer.

## GOOD OFFICER

The chief cook, Samuel Tiller, who is known as the commodore, is indeed an attentive and efficient official and where he is in charge satisfaction must result.

The master watches are Kenneth Barbour, Ef. Barbour, sons of the late Capt. Wm. Barbour; Darius Hall and Walter Barbour, efficient and intelligent as are also the assistant master watches, Thos. Parsons and Martin Curtis. The bridgemen are C. Barbour, John Collins, Alfred Gaulton and J. Gushue. The quarter masters are Charles Tuff, Levi Green, David Rodgers and James Davis. The wheelmen Edgar Parsons, William Green, Sam. Edward and Edward Perry. F. Newbury is the boatswain and Sm. Joliffe is his able mate. Thos. Perry is Carpenter. The captain's son, Pearce, is second in command and barrelman;<sup>40</sup> Skipper Peter Gaulton second barrelman.

## EXCELLENT CREW

There never was a crew more efficient or able than the crew of the *Nascopie*. Almost every sealer on board being a picked man.

The assistant cooks are Chas. Mullett, George Hayter, Robt. Fermage, Saml. Rodgers, Fred Tulk, baker, cabin cook, Martin Tulk; William Grills, chief steward; captain's steward, Eli Hall; the mess room steward, Robt. Emerson.

The engineers are J. Ledingham, John Black, Chesley Bond and John Curran.

From my observations closely taken, I am of the opinion that every captain closely watches the movements and actions of Captain Abraham [Abram] Kean. I don't believe any captain is content when he is not in a position to know or judge what Capt. Abram is doing. I state this not because I have any kindly feelings towards Capt. Abram, but I wish to give all concerned in this narrative their proper due.

## PUSHING MAN

Capt. Wm. Winsor is a pushing young man and will, if he lives, become one of the foremost and most successful of our sealing masters. He has plenty of push and his judgement of seals is sound. His one fault being a careless disregard of his men when taking seals and his devil-daring in cutting off other crews. He came close to cutting down a pan of ice containing some of our crew while pelting seals. Some of them had to leave off pelting and run.

Captain George Barbour is a very steady commander always cool and collected, and very careful over his men. They all respect him.

**April 9th.** — Wind S.W., dull. About 20 miles from land. Took 26 beaters. Preparing for port. Decks washed. Ropes and gaffs given up. Captain, doctor, chief engineer, operator, Bryant and myself lunched with Commodore Tiller in the cooks' quarters.

All seemed pleased to know ship heading for port. Officer gave a live seal a swim in a dory which they apparently much appreciated. We have one young hood and two small harp seals.

## NOT CREDITABLE

The food supplied to the wooden ships is far from creditable to the owners, who of course will endeavor to escape the consequences of their negligence by asserting that the sealing law was not passed when the wooden ships sailed.

Such a defence will but reflect upon that useless blocking ornament of the Legislature — the Upper House — who kept the bill in slings for two weeks and succeeded in making it anything but a workable act by the senseless and stupid amendments, most of which emanated from men whose only claim to a seat in that chamber consisted of their ability to personally abuse almost every decent man that took a part in public life for the last 30 years.

## RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

The sealers in the wooden ships can thank the few swollen heads of the House of Lords for the conditions prevailing on the ships today. What is still worse is that these ships belong — except in the case of the *Fogota* and *Sagona* — to owners who three years ago signed an agreement binding themselves to put into operation most of the regulations which the Bill contained when it passed the House of Assembly.

Was Crosbie<sup>41</sup> right when he charged them in the House with having signed an agreement they did not intend to fulfil — it really looks as if they regard their honor as Morris does \$380,000 a mere flea bite?

Conditions on board of the *Newfoundland*, *Fogota*, *Sagona*, *Eagle*, *Diana*, *Bloodhound*, *Ranger*,<sup>42</sup> *Adventure* and *Bellaventure* are far from what the law now require, and in some cases an outrage upon the common sense of the crews and a severe reflection upon the owners of such ships. Nothing like satisfaction is now afforded except on one or two ships.

There will be a stronger and far more better fight waged against those conditions during the next twelve months than has yet been experienced for the simple reason that we have now discovered that some of the owners have deliberately attempted to codd and fool the people by pretending to do what they had solemnly agreed to do three years ago, and which binds their honor as business men and respectable citizens. Nothing can excuse the conditions existing on the *Diana*, *Eagle*, *Fogota* and *Sagona* — nothing but pure bluff. Almost every amendment made by the Legislative Council in the Coaker Sealing Bill has crippled the Bill, and will have to be rescinded.

The interests of a few sealing captains is not the interest of 4,000 sealers. The interest of three or four ship owners is not what will best preserve the interest of the Colony and the amendment of the so-called Upper House had no object but to serve the interests of the owners and captains.

## ONLY JUST BEGUN

The work of protecting the interests of the people has just begun, and those who have used their well bought seats in the Legislative Council to block and nullify legislation

on behalf of the Toilers will find that in future the Toilers will not be as reasonable and conciliatory as they have been.

The supporters of the Government in the House did the knifing in both cases the past session of the Legislature, and Sir Edward Morris is blamed by many for having supported in the House what he could not oppose without bringing upon his head the contempt of the people; but although supporting them in the House he did very little to aid their passage through the Upper House.

Why Mr. Goodridge,<sup>43</sup> one of Morris's recent appointments to the Legislative Council, actually moved to have the Sealing Bill shelved and submitted to the Select Committee which was considering some fishery matters. That should be an eye-opener to the Toilers. The double dealing of those political highway men will in future be exposed, because the Toilers now possess their own papers, and are consequently in a position to fight their enemies.

## WILL NOT SUPPORT THEM

Not a single Union vote will be cast for a candidate that is not pledged to the abolition of the Legislative Council, and for this decision the Honourables of the Upper House can blame none but themselves. Sir Edward Morris has brought that Chamber into contempt by the manner in which he has stuffed it, and by using it as a blocking instrument to guillotine the decisions of the electorate, for the appointment of two political undesirables like Sidney Blandford<sup>44</sup> and R.A. Squires,<sup>45</sup> who were ousted from their seats in the People's House by majorities of 1900 and 1000 respectively, is about as hard a blow that any man could strike at the constitution of the Colony.

That two men could be found shamefaced enough to accept positions as Executive members and heads of departments, after being ignominiously turned down by their constituents, is something reasonable men cannot comprehend. That it stinks in the nostrils of the whole electorate is beyond doubt. That it was the only course that could be adopted to keep a minority government<sup>46</sup> whose death warrant had been long since issued, in power in defiance of the electorate and the constitution no one now disputes.

## SHOULD BE IMPEACHED

Governor Davidson<sup>47</sup> should be impeached for allowing such an outrage to be perpetrated in a free country. His actions has called down upon his head the contempt of all right thinking people and few will now deny that Morris has no better friend or supporter in the Colony than the Governor.

Never again will Union members of the House of Assembly call upon him or pay him their respects. He allowed Morris to scorn the Legislature while it was in session the past winter in keeping those two positions vacant, in spite of the strong protest of the Opposition, and as soon as the House closed he allowed this constitution destroyer and outrager to place two monkey-like political poltroons in the Legislative Council, and then accepted those two political moralists as his advisers and ministers of the Crown, while he knew right well that had the people a say respecting the two positions — as they undoubtedly had — that they would not secure enough votes to save their nomination fees.

Governor Davidson is just as guilty of tearing up the constitution and outraging the decisions of the electorate as Sir Edward Morris is, and consequently the Toilers have lost confidence in him.

## HIS BROKEN PROMISE

He promised the delegates of the Supreme Council Convention of the F.P.U. last December when they called upon him to present resolutions passed at the Convention, that he would do what was right. If doing what was right means his acceptance of two defeated candidates as Ministers of the Crown and his advisers as Members of the Executive Council as soon as the House of Assembly closed, and could not show up the outrage, we pity the country over which he rules as a Governor according to his ideas of right.

Is it any wonder we ask that the hand of God is now, resting so heavily upon our native land. Where is the righteousness that exalts a nation? Where is the moral integrity of public men? How far have they travelled the path of faithful duty?

Our country has fallen very low indeed. Our watchdogs in defence of Right have nearly all disappeared. Wrong-doing and political degeneracy must bring its own punishment, not only upon the guilty, but alas, upon the innocent as well.

The voyage is ended. It occupied four weeks wanting one day. I enjoyed it very much and value highly the experiences and observations of the trip, some of which I shall always remember with pleasure. I advise all who can to take this trip. It is impossible to know what the seal hunt is like unless one sees it for oneself. Such ships as the *Stephano* and *Florizel* should offer trips to a limited number of passengers at a reasonable cost, say \$50, when I believe many would avail of the opportunity to see things as they are.

## EVERYTHING INTERESTING

To the beginner everything is interesting from the time port is left until the young seals are cut up. I was treated with kindness and respect throughout by officers and

men, and I avail of this opportunity to thank Captain Barbour for his unfailing courtesy and consideration while on board. I also thank the officers and crew for the many acts of kindness shown me.

The stewards were obliging and courteous. My mess mates were Dr. Bunting, Chief Engineer Ledingham, Second Engineer Black, Mate Keough and the third and fourth engineer in turn. Many a ten minutes chat we had over the mess table. Dr. Bunting is an intelligent and genial companion and all on board respected him. I have seldom met an equal more reasonable in discussion and moderate in his opinions.

Chief Ledingham and Second Black are both intelligent and genial chaps and it was a pleasure to converse with them.

Very foggy approaching the land. Made in below Sugar Loaf. Arrived about 8 p.m. Dr. Campbell<sup>48</sup> gave the ship a clean bill of health and kindly offered me a passage ashore in the Customs boat. The first thing I did was to read Monday's *Daily Mail*, which contained such a splendid account of the disaster, and the *Evening Telegram* of Thursday, which contained the evidence of several witnesses regarding the disaster.

All that sailed in the *Nascopie* returned in good health. The voyage was ended and many thankful hearts exclaimed "Thank God" for our safe return and sound health.

This diary was begun with the intention of publishing it in the *Advocate* Xmas Number, accompanied with illustrations. That idea I will forego in view of the awful disaster which overtook the *Newfoundland's* crew. I therefore publish it now for the information of the Sons of Toil, in order to show the conditions as they existed, which in a major degree has a bearing upon the calamity that has come upon our country.

These notes will be reproduced in the Xmas Number of the *Advocate* accompanied with some very interesting cuts, illustrating the incidents referred to herein, as I have taken some fifty photos during the trip.

## MEANS SERVED OUT

The men's cook reports having served out to the crew the following meals during the voyage: Beans served 14 mornings, brewse and watered fish with pork dressing 13 mornings, soft bread every second morning, 12 hot dinners served consisting of beef, pork, potatoes, plain and plum pudding, and on Sunday fresh beef or canned roast beef in addition; pea soup with potatoes, turnip, onions and dumplings served for dinner eight days; seal and other soups served for dinner seven days — thus a dinner was cooked every day. On Sunday canned beef and apple jam was served for tea in addition to sweet bread and tea, and the tea on Sundays was sugar and milked. Potatoes, turnips and meat were given out to the crew when required, which the men cooked themselves for supper. Three pounds of soft bread being found insuffi-

cient, the amount was increased to five pounds per man per week. Warm soup was served to the men when coming off the ice, and if any of the sealers fell in they were served with a grog when they reached the ship. I fear a few of them when near the ship occasionally managed to get somewhat wet in order to qualify for a grog, but the steward soon caught on.

Capt. Randell, of the *Bellaventure*, pushed through well, and kept close to the larger ships during the whole voyage. Especially was he persistent in forcing along enroute to the seals and entered the patch in company with the other three foremost ships — *Nascopie*, *Stephano* and *Beothic*.

From reports made by sealers, the conditions and food on board of the *Erik*<sup>49</sup>, *Ranger* and *Bloodhound* could not be much worse. The owners must be blamed, for the men speak in the highest terms of Capt. Jesse Winsor<sup>50</sup> and Kenneth Knee,<sup>51</sup> who have done their best for the men. The facilities were not provided and No. 2 flour was supplied for bread, and no cook could make good bread from bad flour and no cooking facilities.

Captains Joe Kean,<sup>52</sup> John Parsons<sup>53</sup> and Randell,<sup>54</sup> are well spoken of by their crews, and we believe they did all by their power to live up to the sealing laws.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>The entrance to St. John's harbour.

<sup>2</sup>A small island off the headland of the Bay de Verde Peninsula in Conception Bay.

<sup>3</sup>The *Adventure* was built in Scotland in 1905 for Harvey & Co. The ship was 825.94 net tons and 213 nhp.

<sup>4</sup>The *S.S. Stephano* was a steel vessel owned by Bowring Brothers of St. John's and had made its first trip to the ice in 1912. It was the largest and most powerful of the steel vessels and was 2144 net tons and had a 577-nhp engine. Details on the various ships are from Ryan's *Seals and Sealers*.

<sup>5</sup>Another Harvey & Co steel vessel, it first went to the ice in 1909. It was 466.98 net tons and 356 nhp.

<sup>6</sup>Built in 1909 and 1980.22 net tons and a 440 nhp, the *Florizel* first went to the ice in 1909 and was operated by Bowring Brothers for the freight and passenger trade between St. John's, Halifax and New York. In 1918 it went aground off Cappahayden, Newfoundland with 94 people losing their lives.

<sup>7</sup>Built in 1908 for Job Brothers, the 3055 gross ton steel vessel *Beothic* made its first trip to the ice the following year with George Barbour as its captain.

<sup>8</sup>A stout pole, 5-8 feet long with an iron hook and spike fastened to one end, used to assist a sealer on the ice and to kill seals. See G.M. Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A. Widdowson, eds., *Dictionary of Newfoundland English* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press 1982), p. 207.

<sup>9</sup>An immature seal, especially a harp seal, approaching breeding age. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 37.

<sup>10</sup>Built in 1872, the *Newfoundland* was the largest of the local wooden sealing vessels and in 1914 was owned by the St. John's firm Harvey & Co.

<sup>11</sup>A 313.93 net ton, 96 nhp wooden vessel owned by Baine Johnston & Co. of St. John's.

<sup>12</sup>A small community located on the north east side of Fogo Island, between Fogo and Barr'd Island.

<sup>13</sup>The 420.4 net ton, 98-nhp steel steamer was built in 1912 for Crosbie & Co. and used in the coastal mail service on a contractual basis with the government.

<sup>14</sup>A 457.77 net ton, 82 nhp wooden vessel owned by Bowring Brothers of St. John's.

<sup>15</sup>The *Bonaventure* was 461.04 net tons, 350 nhp, was owned by Harvey & Co. and made its first trip to the ice in 1909.

<sup>16</sup>Hunter's term for male animal, especially seal, used with second specifying element such as dog harp. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 144.

<sup>17</sup>A small community located on the north east coast of the St. Barbe peninsula, about halfway between Canada and Hare Bays.

<sup>18</sup>A boiled pudding containing raisins. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 174.

<sup>19</sup>Most northerly point of the Island of Newfoundland.

<sup>20</sup>According to the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, wag means "slight motion or undulation of the water."

<sup>21</sup>The *Greenland* was a 259.11 net ton, 75 nhp wooden vessel owned in 1898 by Baine Johnston & Co. of St. John's. In March 1898 the vessel lost 48 crew members who had been placed on the ice to hunt and perished when the *Greenland* was unable to pick them up because of weather conditions.

<sup>22</sup>A pan is where sealers piled a quantity of seal pelts on the ice with a marker. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 368.

<sup>23</sup>This term is not in the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*. It probably means a snow flurry.

<sup>24</sup>Crosbie & Co. owned the *Fogota* built in 1910 for use on the coastal mail service between St. John's and Fogo on a contractual basis with the government.

<sup>25</sup>A clumper is a small ice-berg or floating pan of ice. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 101.

<sup>26</sup>Abram Kean was regarded as the "Commodore of the Fleet" who had commanded vessels at the ice since 1889 and who in 1934 would be highly acclaimed for bringing in his millionth seal. See his autobiography *Old and Young Ahead!* (St. John's: Flanker Press 2000, reprint of 1935 edition, edited by Shannon Ryan). His son was Westbury Kean (1886-1974), the sealing captain and coastal boat captain best remembered for his command of the *Newfoundland* in 1914.

<sup>27</sup>There is no reference to a Dr. Bunting practising in Newfoundland in Nigel Rusted's compilation of doctors and surgeons in *Medicine in Newfoundland c. 1497 to the early 20th century* (St. John's: Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland 1994).

<sup>28</sup>This refers to Levi Chafe's 1905 publication *Report of the Newfoundland Seal Fishery from 1863 (the first year of the Steamers) to 1905*, a statistical compilation of information on the local seal fishery which, after 1906 were published in annual reports. See Ryan, ed., *Chafe's Sealing Book*, p. 12.



<sup>29</sup>The Fishermen's Union Trading Company sold imported tobacco under its own brand name.

<sup>30</sup>The *Diana* was built in 1870 and was 290.64 net tons and had a 70 nhp engine. In 1914 it was owned by Job Brothers.

<sup>31</sup>A failure, especially in the catch of fish or seals. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 278.

<sup>32</sup>A chute. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 479.

<sup>33</sup>A young harp seal, with white fur soon shed, hunted for its blubber. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 610.

<sup>34</sup>Food carried into the woods, fishing or at the seal hunt. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 229.

<sup>35</sup>Older seals.

<sup>36</sup>The 217.28 net ton, 60 nhp wooden vessel *Leopard* was constructed in 1873 and prosecuted the seal fishery for 33 consecutive years before going aground near Ferryland in 1907 and sank.

<sup>37</sup>A brief shower or storm. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 161.

<sup>38</sup>The captain was William Winsor, a resident of Wesleyville who had been a member of the House of Assembly for the three-member Bonavista District from 1908 to 1913. In the 1913 general election he and two other members lost the district to a ticket of three Union candidates headed by Coaker.

<sup>39</sup>Hard candy made from boiled molasses. Personal communication with Dr. Aidan Maloney, November 12, 2010.

<sup>40</sup>A crewman sent to the crow's nest to look out for seals. See *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, p. 26.

<sup>41</sup>John Chalker Crosbie (1876-1932), businessman and politician.

<sup>42</sup>Bowring Brothers in 1914 owned the 353.62 net ton, 70 nhp wooden vessel built in 1871.

<sup>43</sup>Augustus Frederick Goodridge (1839-1920) was a politician who represented Ferryland in the House of Assembly from 1880-1885 and Twillingate from 1885-1889 and 1893-1897. He operated the fish export company of Alan Goodridge and Sons at Renew's. He briefly served as prime minister of Newfoundland in 1894 and was a member of the Legislative Council from 1913-1920.

<sup>44</sup>Sidney Blandford (1868-1929) was a lawyer who represented Bonavista from 1904-1913 and was a member of the Legislative Council from 1913-1917.

<sup>45</sup>Richard Anderson Squires (1880-1940) was prime minister of Newfoundland from 1919-1923 and 1928-1932.

<sup>46</sup>Coaker based this view on the fact that the Liberal-Union alliance received a majority of votes in the election.

<sup>47</sup>Walter Edward Davidson (1859-1923) was governor of Newfoundland from 1913-1918.

<sup>48</sup>Alexander Campbell (1876-1940) was the medical port quarantine officer for St. John's and represented St. John's West in the House of Assembly from 1928-1932. He was also a member of the Legislative Council from 1920-1923 and was a close political confidant of Prime Minister Squires in the 1920s.

<sup>49</sup>The 461.62 net ton, 80-nhp wooden vessel was owned by James Baird Ltd. of St. John's.

<sup>50</sup>Jesse Winsor (1874-1933) was a sealing captain who operated a fishery supply business at Wesleyville.

<sup>51</sup>Job Knee (1852-1924). Poole's Island native was a sealing captain and coastal boat captain for the Reid Newfoundland Company.

<sup>52</sup>Joseph Kean.

<sup>53</sup>John Parsons. Bay Roberts native was a sealing captain who operated a wholesale-retail business in Bay Roberts.

<sup>54</sup>John Randell, a Labrador fishery schooner captain from Port Rexton. He was the father of Captain Jack Randall well-known for the rum running *I'm Alone* incident of the late 1920s. See Captain Jack Randall, *I'm Alone* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company 1930).