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**"Insiders and Outsiders"**

**A Social History of Fishing in the Chatham  
Islands circa 1910 to 1975 Focussing on the Crayfish  
Boom**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in History at Massey  
University

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents Allen and Vivienne Nielsen and my children Thomas and Stephanie. In memory of the “mothers” in my Chatham Islands family; sisters Solvejg and Ester (Denmark), and my grandparents Cyril and Frances Curties (née Carrell), Lyttelton.

## ABSTRACT

This thesis argues that the crayfish boom on the Chatham Islands (which occurred between 1966 and 1969) cannot be studied in isolation in order to understand its effects upon the islanders. Rather, it must be placed in the wider context of relations between the Chatham Islands and New Zealand. To this end, it analyses the social history of fishing from 1910 to 1975, identifying a number of themes in the development of the Chathams fishing industry that resurfaced in the crayfish boom. Two recurring complaints were that the government repeatedly ignored requests to improve the Islands infrastructure and implement conservation measures. It suggests that the fishermen shared many of the characteristics of a “tight working class” group (as opposed to an upper class capitalist group) and that this may have influenced the perceptions of government officials towards the islanders, particularly during World War Two. Class issues and perceptions of continuing neglect are put forward as underlying factors in the ongoing tensions between ‘insiders’ (those who lived on the island) and ‘outsiders’ (those who came from outside the island, particularly fishermen and government officials). These tensions were particularly evident in disputes about employing Italian fishermen in the 1950s and clashes between locals and ‘outsider’ fishermen during the crayfish boom. The thesis demonstrates that the crayfish boom raised serious issues including: repeated (yet unheeded) calls for conservation measures, pollution caused by eviscerating crayfish at sea, and the social issues arising from inadequate infrastructure, piracy, violence and marine safety. It demonstrates that failed conservation measures coincided with conservation debates in the 1972 New Zealand election, the same year in which the long-awaited Economic Survey of the Chathams was conducted. The change of government that year led to hopes that the social and environmental issues raised during the crayfish boom would finally be addressed. Although some progress was made, it is argued that many issues remained unresolved. At a wider level, the thesis investigates the relationship between the Chatham Islanders and the government of New Zealand. It demonstrates that, despite government actions, islanders’ perceptions of themselves as being geographically, economically and politically marginalised endured.

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## GLOSSARY<sup>1</sup>

Berry (in berry): females berrying attached eggs.

Body: see carapace

Body meat: meat from the carapace, from the claws and from the legs.

Bonanza: literally a large output. A term used in this thesis to describe the developing phase of the utilisation of a rock lobster fishery, for example, the South Western bonanza of 1951 to 1958 and the Chathams bonanza of 1966 to 1969.

Carapace: the rigid shell containing the head and body.

Catch or Nominal Catch: The live weight equivalent of the landings.

Landings: The weight of fish and fish products brought ashore, for example, the actual weight of the quantities landed.

Common crayfish (*Jasus edwardsii*) or red rock lobster - The Rock Lobster Regulations 1969 marked the official recognition of the name change of crayfish to rock lobster, made because it was recognised in international commerce under the name rock lobster.

C.P.B: Catch per boat.

CRA 6: The Chatham Islands commercial rock lobster fishery.

Crustacean: A class of aquatic arthropods, including shrimps, prawns, crayfish, lobsters, crabs, which in general have the head fused with the thorax, possess legs that are divided into two branches, and two pairs of antennae.

Crayfish Tail: That part of the crayfish that remains after the head and carapace, including the internal organs and appendages, attached to the carapace, has been removed.

Depletion: Reduction of the fullness of a resource.

Dressed Fish: The state in which the fish has been headed and gutted, pectoral fins removed and the tail removed.

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<sup>1</sup> The sources for this glossary include: the glossary in the Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-1971, I. 14.  
*Glossary of aquaculture*, URL retrieved 22 May 2009, from <http://www.fao.org/fi/glossary/aquaculture/>  
 Clement and Associates Limited, *The Atlas of Area Codes and TACCS*, 2008/2009, URL retrieved 22 May 2009, from <http://www.fishinfo.co.nz/clement/gms/main.html>

Ecology: The study of organisms in relation to their environment.

Evisceration: The body is cut across having some still attached to the tail and able to be measured.

Exploitation: In the fishery context, exploitation means the taking or putting to human use of fishery organisms.

Fishery: A human enterprise designed to exploit a fishery resource for food, profit, or pleasure.

Hard Shell: a crayfish is in the hard shell when the hardened shell fully moults.

FoB means Free on Board which includes the product and all other costs incurred in getting the product to the port/airport, but does not include any costs after it leaves the port/airport (such as transport, insurance, and so forth).

Green fish: Fish that is fresh and has not been processed.

Green crayfish: pack horse *Jasus verreaux*, or rock lobster.

Green weight: the weight of fish prior to any processing or removal of any part of the fish.

Gutted: The state in which only the internal organs of the body cavity have been removed, whether or not the gills have been removed.

Mainland: all of New Zealand, excluding the Chathams.

Moult: shedding or casting of the old shell.

New shell: the stage immediately following the soft shell stage which has followed the moult.

NZFCF: New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen

NZFIB: New Zealand Fishing Industry Board. In 1964 a Fishing Industry Board was established to develop the New Zealand fishing industry.

*NIWA* is the trading name of the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research Limited.

Pot: the trap, cage or basket in which crayfish were normally caught. It may have been beehive shaped, made from supplejack, cane, or wire, or square or rectangular, made of welded mild steel mesh, plain or galvanised, or of a mild steel or timber frame covered with wire netting.

Primary industry: The term in general usage that refers to industries based on exploitation of natural living resources, for example, agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Primary sector: In respect of the fishing industry, this is the catching sector: the secondary sector is the processing operations, and the tertiary sector, distributing, marketing and provision of services.

Quota Management System (QMS) was introduced in 1986 to manage and conserve New Zealand's major commercial fisheries. The QMS is based on limiting the total commercial catches from each fish stock while allowing quota owners to buy, sell and lease their quota or catching rights, and to choose the method and the time of the year they harvest their catches within these limits.

Scrubbing: removing unhatched eggs from females.

Soft shell: a rock lobster is in the soft shell stage immediately after it has shed its old shell and before the new one had hardens.

South-western (fishery): the rock lobster bearing coastlines of south Westland, Stewart Island, and the majority of Southland within which waters tailing at sea was permitted and from which the catch was landed principally at Bluff and Stewart Island, and also Dunedin, Greymouth, Westport and Milford Sound.

Whereas, tailing at sea was illegal in the Chatham Islands fishery.

Tail: the flexible but shell-enclosed appendage to the body. The tail was the principal item of commerce in the crayfish boom.

Tailing: Separating the tail from the body.

Total Allowable Catch (TAC) is set for each fish stock managed under the QMS.

Wet Fish: all the ordinary fish caught by all methods of fishing, but excluding whitebait, shellfish, crustacean and sundries.



## ABBREVIATIONS

*AJHR* *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives*

CRA 6 The Chatham Islands commercial rock lobster fishery

*DNZB* *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*

EEZ Economic Exclusion Zone

MP Member of Parliament

*NIWA* National Institute of Water and Atmospheric  
Research Limited

*NZJH* *New Zealand Journal of History*

*NZPD* *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)*

WTU Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

## INTRODUCTION

This MA thesis examines fishing in the Chatham Islands from 1910 to 1975, focusing on the effects of the crayfish boom between 1966 and 1969.<sup>2</sup> Although general studies of commercial fishing in New Zealand have been done, there have been no local studies on fishing and the environment in the Chathams, within this time frame.<sup>3</sup> As one of New Zealand's off shore islands, the Chathams offers a regional study of a completely different nature to mainland New Zealand, dependent primarily on fishing and farming for its economic and social well-being. Because the Chathams fishing community has not received a lot of coverage in the past, my intention is to shed light on the importance of Chathams fisheries to New Zealand.

This thesis also investigates whether overexploitation of fisheries occurred there in the past: an important issue in light of present debates on the conservation of marine resources for the future. Hence, fishing was particularly important in sustaining a viable economy and better socio-economic conditions for the Chatham Islands people. The main questions with which this thesis is concerned are. What was the relationship between the Chathams fishermen and the New Zealand government between 1910 and 1975? Did cod fishing sustain an adequate livelihood? What was the relationship between fishing and land rights? Did the government heed the views of the local people and impose fishing restrictions? Did the introduction of outsiders as labour raise tensions between islanders and outsiders? Second, what were the socio-economic effects of the crayfish boom upon the Chatham Islands? How did the renewal of tension between islanders and outsiders differ from previous resentment? How was the

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<sup>2</sup> The Chatham Islands is the name given by Pakeha to these Islands, Rekohu by Moriori, Wharekauri by Ngati Mutunga. These include: Chatham, Pitt, South East and Mangere, and the smaller islands of Little Mangere, the Sisters, Star Keys, the Pyramid and the Forty Fours.

<sup>3</sup> David Johnson, completed by Jenny Haworth, *Hooked: the Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2004. See Rhys Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, Canberra: Roebuck, 1982 for a history of sealing and whaling in the Chatham Islands during the nineteenth century, See also Rhys Richards, 'American Whaling on the Chathams Grounds: viewed from an Antipodean perspective', *Nantucket Historical Association*, Nantucket: Massachusetts, 1971.

overexploitation of crayfish linked to wider environmental concerns within New Zealand? How was the crayfish boom used as a morality tale for the conservation movement? How effective were the Marine Department's safety regulations? What were the government's proposals for economic development in the Chathams leading up to the 1972 general election?

### Background - Historical and Personal Context

The Chatham Islands are geographically isolated from New Zealand situated in the Pacific Ocean, about 800 kilometres east of New Zealand, at latitudes forty-four degrees south. It has a unique oceanic environment being close to a Subtropical Convergence of ocean currents subject to both tropical and subantarctic influences.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, both an abundance and diversity of marine life prevail.<sup>5</sup> Also, the Chathams lies in the path of the Roaring Forties; a belt of continuing gales, making the weather conditions very unpredictable.<sup>6</sup> Although these factors give Chatham Islanders a strong sense of distinctiveness, they have felt on the periphery of New Zealand, ignored when it came to having their requests heard.

The issue of isolation, resurfaced in a *New Zealand Herald* article in May 2008, whereby the Chatham Islands Enterprise Trust Chief Executive, Ian MacFarlane, told NewstalkZB that, 'the island's mainstays of farming and fishing were becoming uneconomical because of fuel and transportation costs'.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the population had slumped to 600, a loss of over 100 in the last 18 months, because of the cost of bringing in food and the spiralling food costs. This thesis will demonstrate that such concerns are by no means new, the Chathams have

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<sup>4</sup> W. Skrzynski, 'Freshwater Fishes of the Chatham Islands', *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, 1: 2 (June 1967), p. 89. See also, E.W. Dawson, 'Oceanography and Marine Zoology of the New Zealand Subantarctic', *Proceedings of the New Zealand Ecology Society*, 12 (1965), pp. 44-57.

<sup>5</sup> Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Michael King and Robin Morrison, *A Land Apart: The Chatham Islands of New Zealand*, Auckland: Random House, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> 'Spiralling costs force Chathams residents out', URL retrieved 5 May 2008, from <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/section/1/story>.

always struggled: there has been no comparable “boom” before the present struggle.

I have an interest in the Chatham Islands because my family roots are there, originating from the settler families: Murphys, Boons, Renwicks, and the Nielsens. Since I am a descendant of these families and my father, Allen Nielsen, was born on the Chathams, I have an insider position, but because I am Pakeha, female and non-indigenous, I also have an outsider position. Although I was not born there, I have heard stories about the Chathams and its people since childhood. Consequently, I recognise their distinct culture and the importance of whakapapa and oral tradition from one generation to the next. The islanders of my father's generation spoke about superstitions, ghosts and tapu areas, as part of their upbringing. I am also aware of the sensitivities that may be involved in the writing of this thesis, especially indigenous histories of Moriori and Maori. Moreover, my living on mainland New Zealand influences my approach to writing this thesis, an outsider approach yet insider, through my father and his family. While, because of my background I am sympathetic towards the Chatham Islanders, and have a personal connection with the subject, I will be seeking to provide a scholarly and balanced analysis of the “crayfish boom”.

For this research, an understanding of historical methodology regarding “insider” and “outsider” perspectives is important. According to Doug Munro, an “insider” does not have to be an indigenous person, because the time a researcher spends doing archival research justifies the right for him/her to comment from those records (acquiring the poetics of another culture); therefore, knowledge of that culture in order that the indigenous past can be obtained.<sup>8</sup> However, Munro's views could be seen as orientalist. In brief, Edward Said argued in his controversial book *Orientalism* that the very act of writing about the Orient (in this case indigenous cultures) reinforced the power of Western scholars, acquiring intellectual knowledge such as language, geography and customs of indigenous peoples: an important part of colonial rule. In postcolonial analysis, the construction of the “other” produces authority through

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<sup>8</sup> Doug Munro, ‘Who ‘Owns’ Pacific History? Reflections on the Insider/Outsider Dichotomy’, *Journal of Pacific History*, 29: 2 (1994), p. 235.

collectivising discourses as opposed to the “not other” of the colonising West.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Munro argues that: ‘the terms “insider” and “outsider” far from representing discrete categories are convoluted and often permeable. There is not single “insider” perspective and no single “outsider” perspective’.<sup>10</sup>

For one anthropologist, analysis of both points of view are useful in research leading to an understanding of culture-specific biases that affect both insiders and outsiders.<sup>11</sup> In research methodology, Linda Tuhiwai Smith maintains: ‘Insider research has to be as ethical and respectful, as reflexive and critical, as outsider research’.<sup>12</sup> Thus, the researcher, whether indigenous or non-indigenous, whether “insider” or “outsider”, needs to consider the different roles and relationships, status and position to that of the informant.<sup>13</sup> By historicizing the time and place, I seek to enter the everyday world of the Chatham Islands people: a representation of the past, in order to capture a sense of the “truths”, perceived by both the “outsider” and “insider”. I also acknowledge the importance of “elders” to the community, inclusive of Moriori, Maori, and Pakeha.

Thus, I am a member of the “old families” of the Chatham Islands, and my Whakapapa originates from the Murphy family. Denis Murphy (1825-1915) was the first policeman on the Chatham Islands.<sup>14</sup> Both Murphy and Robert Rayner were guards over the Hauhau prisoners who came to the Chathams in 1866.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism*, New York: Vintage Books, 1978.

<sup>10</sup> Munro, p. 236.

<sup>11</sup> Melani Anae, ‘Inside Out: Methodological Issues on Being a ‘Native’ Researcher’, *Pacific Health Dialog*, 5: 2, (September 1998), p. 276.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1999, p. 139.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Hill’s multi-volume history of policing in New Zealand refers to Robert Rayner but not to Denis Murphy. See Richard Hill, *The Colonial Frontier Tamed: New Zealand Policing in Transition, 1867-1886, The History of Policing in New Zealand*, vol. 2, Wellington: Government Printer Books, 1989, pp. 279,352.

<sup>15</sup> Denis Murphy who served in the 70<sup>th</sup> regiment (no. 1911) arrived at Auckland, New Zealand, on the *Louisa* from India on the 14 May 1861. He fought in the Maori Wars from 1863-1865 and departed from Napier in 1866 as a voluntary guard, under Lieutenant Corporal Hemmington over the Hauhau prisoners (Te

Discovered in Rayner's diary is a reference to: 'Murphy who got the police billet came home drunk' on 22 June 1867.<sup>16</sup> On 14 December 1867 Rayner wrote that Murphy was discharged from the Police, and Rayner was offered the police billet, because Private Denis Murphy had been discharged from the military guard for "bad conduct".<sup>17</sup> Murphy then remained on the Island and received a military pension. He married Mary Jane Boon (e) in 1870 and they had eleven children. Mary (1844-1902) arrived on 16 January 1867, at Wellington, on the *Southern Cross* from England.<sup>18</sup> She went on to join her brother Ambrose Boon, alias William White, in the Chatham Islands, (Boon having arrived there in 1865). Denis and Mary's daughter, Annie Murphy, married John Renwick who first went to Pitt Island as a shepherd, an expert on Merino sheep. He later managed the Owenga estate from 1903 to 1929. (Renweek [sic] Renwick's Reef is named after John Renwick). Annie and John's daughter, Flora Renwick, married Theodor Fredrik Nielsen, who left Fano, Denmark, as a young sailor on the *Maerdor*. Later he navigated fishing vessels to the Chathams and settled circa 1914 to become a successful fisherman. As lessee of Rangatira (South-East) Island from 1936, then owner of Mangere and Little Mangere Islands, he ran sheep. The Crown took over South East Island for the Black Robin project in 1953.<sup>19</sup> Flora and Ted had ten children with descendants living in the Chatham

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Kooti), in the Chatham Islands until 1868. Residing in the Chathams for the rest of his life, Denis worked as a mail carrier, a farm hand, and sewed his children's clothes. Mary Murphy also worked as a housekeeper. See Treasury Imperial Pensions, Chelsea Pension, 1866-1891, Archives New Zealand; Forbes Eadie Troopships Engaged in the Maori Wars, 1840-1865, National Library New Zealand; Robert A. Falla, 1901-1979, Chatham Islands Papers, 1856-1879, f MS-Papers-6160, WTU; Papers relating to Military Service in the New Zealand Wars, 1860-1870, Denis Murphy Collection, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch, ARC1989-60; Denis Murphy Pictorial Collection, 19XX-2, Canterbury Museum, Christchurch.

<sup>16</sup> Diary of Robert William Rayner, 23 August 1866 to 31 December 1868, MSX-3694, WTU.

<sup>17</sup> *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR)* 1868, A-15 E. No. 42, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup> *Wellington Independent*, 17 January 1867, p. 4.

<http://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>.

<sup>19</sup> In 1949 the lease of South East Island (Rangatira) was transferred to Ted Nielsen's son, Philip Nielsen, until the Crown purchased it in 1953. It was gazetted as a reserve in February 1954 with an agreement for Philip Nielsen to continue its lease until 1957. See David Butler and Don Merton, *The Black Robin: Saving the World's Most Endangered Bird*, Auckland: Oxford University



Islands today and New Zealand. There are also Maori and Moriori connections through marriage, for example, Elsie Nielsen married Sunday Hough, and Dolly Jacobs married Philip Nielsen: two influential families. Most family members supplemented farming with fishing. John Nielsen (son of Flora and Ted) moved from farming to crayfishing, when the Crown purchased Mangere Island from him in 1966, for reforestation and a bird sanctuary.<sup>20</sup>

Fishing is important to New Zealand's economy but not essential. The focus of this study is not so much on the fishing industry itself, but the ways in which fishing shaped the identity of the Chatham Islanders as the means by which many earned their living, and as the main avenue of contact between the Chathams and the "mainland". Historically, the cod fishing industry established in 1910, and the crayfish boom, were significant developments in the Chatham Islands. After the crayfish bust in 1975, a new phase began with a shift from inshore to international deep-sea fishing, which prevails today. The Chathams fishery was seen to be one of the richest in the country after the declaration of the 200-mile (322-kilometre) Economic Exclusion Zone (EEZ), in 1978.<sup>21</sup> This declaration sought to protect the valuable inshore fishery resource from overexploitation by foreign fleets. Throughout the 1970s, with the Japanese and Russians sharing their knowledge about deep-sea fishing (orange roughy, hoki, hake and dories), the economic value to New Zealand as a major export industry was realised.<sup>22</sup> The Chatham Rise is the richest of all New Zealand's fishing grounds.

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Press, 1992, pp. 16-18. See also Fiona Holmes, *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984*, Christchurch: Raven Press, 1985, pp. 60, 96-100. South-East Island was the first flora and fauna reserve, and bird sanctuary, in the Chatham Islands area, particularly for the Black Robin. Fortunately, it had no land mammals and had retained its original population of Shore Plover, Chatham Island Petrel and insular sub-species of Antarctic Snipe. See also *Dominion Post*, 26 April 2008. In April 2008 forty-three nationally endangered Chatham petrel chicks were transferred from South East Island to artificial burrows within the predator free Sweetwater Conservation Covenant in the main Chatham Island. Once common the species is critically endangered with only about 150 breeding pairs left. See also *Chathams County Newsletter*, December 1972/January 1973, pp. 5-8, WTU.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with John Nielsen, 28 April 2009.

<sup>21</sup> King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, Haworth, pp. 483-84.

### Historiography

The state of historiography concerning fishing in the Chatham Islands is grouped into five categories. First: I discuss the general historical literature on the Chatham Islands. Second: local histories and how they apply to the Chatham Islands. Third: the general histories of fishing in New Zealand and the Chathams. Fourth: personal histories of the Chathams, and finally, the academic works written about the Chathams. I then examine primary sources.

Some general histories of the Chatham Islands have been written. Perhaps the best known is Michael King's *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, which provided an invaluable overview of the Chathams, but did not discuss fishing in depth. However, he did discuss Moriori fishing and the effect of European contact with the arrival of sealers and whalers.<sup>23</sup> In Michael King and Robin Morrison's, *A Land Apart: The Chatham Islands of New Zealand*, King addressed briefly the social-economic impact of the commercial fishing industry. According to King: 'the crayfish boom from the late-1960s until the early 1970s turned out to be the most disruptive, frenetic, and dangerous period in the Chatham Islands' history. It was lucrative too, but ultimately not for the Islanders. In this respect, it was a repeat of the experience of the sealing and whaling eras'.<sup>24</sup> King's claim is useful and will be tested throughout this thesis. He also asserted the Chathams reaped little monetary benefits and suffered from the social cost of the perceived invasion, such as the trebling of the male population in three years.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, King conceded that fishing provided a good economic income for some islanders (but not for all Maori or Moriori), and farmers continued to raise sheep, despite the cost of shipping animals and equipment to and from the Chathams.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Michael King, *Moriori: A People Rediscovered*, Auckland: Viking, 1989.

<sup>24</sup> King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p.109. This book presented a short social history of the Chathams people, Moriori, Maori and Pakeha alike. While the photographs taken by Robin Morrison of the landscape and people, provided an insight into life in the Chathams both past and present, some islanders' have claimed that some illustrated photos within are labelled incorrectly.

<sup>25</sup> King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p.110.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p.7. The Chatham Islands are only briefly mentioned in national histories, a justification for this thesis. See Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, Auckland: Penguin, 2003; James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A*



Fiona Holmes's *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984* canvassed chronologically the history of the Chatham Islands and its people, and mentioned the different fishing eras. For example, not only did the station at Owenga play an important part in the sealing and whaling eras, but also the smaller islands of South East Island, Mangere Island, Little Mangere, the Castle, the Sisters, the Forty-Fours, Star Keys and the Pyramid.<sup>27</sup> Holmes highlighted how the crayfish boom was a significant industry in the Chathams.

David Schiel's *The Chatham Islands Heritage and Conservation*, published in association with the Department of Conservation, reiterated the recurring theme of overfishing and exploitation of fish resources in both the sealing and whaling eras and the crayfish boom.<sup>28</sup> According to marine biologist and ecologist, Schiel, the history of the Chatham Islands is essentially a maritime history, arguing that while fishing would remain a mainstay of the Chathams economy, all fisheries must be renewable and sustainable. Hence: 'Chatham Islands are partially protected by their oceanic environment and isolation, but they do offer one more opportunity to get things right'.<sup>29</sup>

These works are what academics call "local histories" and have the perceived strengths and weakness of that genre. The strength of this type of history is that it offers a popular rural social history (a more humane study) about communities than a colonial/national history.<sup>30</sup> One benefit of such histories is that they are often informed by long-standing family connections, which provide a

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*History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Allen Lane: Penguin Press, 2001, and Geoffrey W. Rice, (ed.) *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992.

<sup>27</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Chatham Islands Rekohu 1791-1984*, Christchurch: Raven Press, 1985, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> David Schiel, *The Chatham Islands Heritage and Conservation*, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press in association with the Department of Conservation, 1996, p. 62. See David Cemmick and Dick Veitch, *Black Robin Country: The Chatham Islands and its Wildlife*, Christchurch: Hodder and Stoughton, 1985. The New Zealand Wildlife Service (Department of Internal Affairs) sought to conserve the wildlife on South East Island and Mangere Islands from the 1960s.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>30</sup> W. J. Gardner, *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History*, Christchurch: University of Canterbury, 1999, p. v.

background of social continuity, as well as the best private source material.<sup>31</sup> One weakness of these works can be the paucity of research material available, and an over-reliance on oral history based on memory. Accordingly, local history is often about genealogy, anecdote and legend within communities, rather than scholarly analysis.<sup>32</sup>

Canterbury historian, W. J. Gardner's *Where They Lived: Studies in Local, Regional and Social History* is pertinent here. Gardner's approach to historical research is "history alongside" influenced by "history from below". Gardner argued that the aim of social history is to get alongside people in order to gain understanding of where and how people lived their lives in the past, in local and regional communities, within New Zealand.<sup>33</sup> This includes the women and men who have remained anonymous in history (the successes and the failures): an approach that is sympathetic and non-judgemental.<sup>34</sup> One example is King's work *Moriori Rediscovered* that provided an insight into the social and cultural history of Moriori, resulting in resurgence in Moriori identity. His work discussed how community and place (particularity) were inextricably linked to social relationships. Gardner contended that community conjures up close relationships between families and that relationship depended on the women.<sup>35</sup> David Holmes *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*<sup>36</sup> demonstrated the importance of family connections, while Helen Telford's MA thesis "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories' demonstrated the importance of women to the community.<sup>37</sup>

For Gardner: 'Ties of marriage, voluntary groups, exchange of labour and resources and other bonding agencies helped to build up mutual trust, and hence

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 49-55.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. v-vi.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>36</sup> David Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands: Reminiscences by David Holmes*, Christchurch: Shoal Press, 1993.

<sup>37</sup> Helen Ruth Telford, "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories', MA Thesis, Anthropology Department, University of Auckland, 1978.

the necessary social cement'.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, the negative aspect of human behaviour in the form of private quarrels, jealousies, grudges, exclusiveness and intolerance, arises from living in the same locality.<sup>39</sup> Here, Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson's *The People of the Chathams* exemplifies Gardner's reservations about local histories, especially history based on anecdotes ("parish pump chronicles"), rather than academic history based on facts.<sup>40</sup> Gardner also wrote that community was an indication of social cohesion, but it must co-exist with forces of social division, "class" and "race", principally. Written during the crayfish boom, Gerald Arbuckle's *The Chatham Islands in Perspective* highlighted the reasons for social divisions and unity over time.<sup>41</sup> Although Gardner is a "consensus" historian, that is, one open to opinion and agreement, he does not ignore "conflict", looking to "community" as a major force in New Zealand's past and future.<sup>42</sup> In this genre the local historian seeks to engage with either private or semi-private individuals, rather than public figures, found in national or provincial history.<sup>43</sup> Overall, the advantage of local history is that it sheds light on socio-economic groups or individuals within the community.

Third, within the historical genre of general histories of fishing in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, there have been a number of books written. Robert McNab's *The Old Whaling Days* was a pioneer work that sketched the early history of whaling in Southern New Zealand, including the Chatham Islands between 1830 and 1840.<sup>44</sup> Rhys Richard's work *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands* provided a comprehensive study of fishing during the

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<sup>38</sup> Gardner, p. 82.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>40</sup> Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams: True Tales of the Islanders' Early Days*, Martinborough: G.W.J. Publications, 1994. See Gardner, p. 51.

<sup>41</sup> Gerald A. Arbuckle, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective: A Socio-Economic View*, Wellington: Hicks Smith and Sons, 1971. Father Arbuckle, SM, MA, PhD, graduated in social anthropology from Christ College, Cambridge University, and from the University of St. Thomas, Rome. He then specialised in economic anthropology with particular reference to problems of development in the South Pacific.

<sup>42</sup> Gardner, p. 50.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>44</sup> Robert McNab, *The Old Whaling Days, A History of Southern New Zealand from 1830 to 1840*, Christchurch: Whitcombe and Tombs, 1913.

nineteenth century, filling in the historical gap of knowledge, since McNab's work. Richards revealed that overfishing occurred in the exploitive sealing and whaling eras, issues that would resonate in the crayfish boom. This provides further justification for the period under study. Moreover, the sealers and whalers disrupted the socio-economic and religious systems.<sup>45</sup>

Aspects of fishing in the Chatham Islands are discussed in Dr Louis Thiercelin's *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a Whaling Ship's Doctor*, an eyewitness account of indigenous people of the Chatham Islands: a primary source of Pacific social history from the late 1830s to the mid-1860s.<sup>46</sup> Thiercelin claimed uniformity between Chatham and Maori customs.<sup>47</sup> Joan Druett's *Petticoat Whalers*, based on journals, letters and reminiscences, told of American women (but not indigenous women) who accompanied their husband-skippers on whaling ships from 1820 to 1920 to the Chatham Islands.<sup>48</sup> Rhys Richard's *Frederick Hunt of Pitt Island* recalls the life of pioneer settlers, Frederick and Mary Hunt, of Rangiauria (Pitt Island) from October 1842. It also records the whaling ships that called there for rest and provisions.<sup>49</sup> These works, however, are not in the time frame of this thesis.

David Johnson's, Jenny Haworth, *Hooked: The Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*, a more recent history of fishing, refers briefly to the Chathams,

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<sup>45</sup> Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>46</sup> Louis Thiercelin (translated and edited by Christiane Mortelier) *Travels in Oceania: Memoirs of a Whaling Ship's Doctor, 1866*, Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 1995, p. 11.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122. See Sheila Natusch, *Hell and High Water: A German Occupation of the Chatham Islands 1843-1910*, Christchurch: Pegasus, 1977. This work examined the German mission to the Chatham Islands in 1842.

<sup>48</sup> Joan Druett, *Petticoat Whalers: Whaling Wives at Sea, 1820-1920*, Auckland: Collins Publishers, 1991.

<sup>49</sup> Frederick Hunt, (1866), *Frederick Hunt of Pitt Island: Twenty-Five Years Experience in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands: an Autobiography* by Frederick Hunt, Rhys Richards (ed.), Petone: Lithographic Services, 1990, p. 80. See Ernest Langdale-Hunt, *Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes*, Christchurch: D.N. Adams, 1985. This book provided a history of the Hunt family and descendants who settled on Pitt Island. Its biographical section is a useful reference tool about the life of the settlers and their descendants in the Chatham Islands. It is not an exhaustive genealogy account, however, and there are gaps in knowledge within families.

but not in much depth.<sup>50</sup> Nevertheless, this work provides a history of the fishing industry: the people, the companies and the government administration of commercial fishing.

Fourth, in the category of autobiographical histories, Ernest Langdale-Hunt's *The Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes* argued that though the Chathams crayfish boom had gained a large export market, it was sadly overexploited and fished out, with no government control or anyone else; most unfortunate he believed for the islanders and the Island's economy, and tragic, as there was a considerable loss of boats and life, like the early whaling days.<sup>51</sup> Langdale-Hunt drew from E. C. Richards's works, *Chudleigh's Diary*,<sup>52</sup> and *The Chatham Islands* a biographical account.<sup>53</sup> Sheila Natusch's *Hell and High Water*, and Frank Simpson's *Chatham Exiles*.<sup>54</sup> Chudleigh's diary and Simpson's work provide first-hand accounts of fishing in the Chathams, while David Holmes *My Seventy Years On the Chathams* is an anecdotal history intertwined with folklore of this fishing and farming community.<sup>55</sup> Based on oral history interviews, Holmes provided insights into families' lives, including fishermen, key developments and socio-economic conditions in the Chathams over time. His father, Ryan Holmes, was the Constable from 1922 to 1930, and Resident Magistrate from 1930 to 1949. David stayed on to become a farmer, carrier and horticulturist, then a member of the Chatham Islands County Council for 50 years. He was awarded a MBE for services to the Chathams, in 1964, and a CBE in 1992.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Johnson, Haworth, *Hooked: The Story of the New Zealand Fishing Industry*.

<sup>51</sup> Ernest Langdale-Hunt, *The Last Entail Male: The Chatham Islands Through My Eyes*, p. 97.

<sup>52</sup> E. C. Richards (ed.), *Diary of E. R. Chudleigh 1841-1920: Settler in New Zealand*, Christchurch: Cadsonbury Publications, 2003.

<sup>53</sup> E. C. Richards, *The Chatham Islands: Their Plants, Birds and People*, Christchurch: Simpson and Williams, 1952.

<sup>54</sup> Frank A. Simpson, *Chatham Exiles: Yesterday and To-Day at the Chatham Islands*, Wellington: A. H. and A.W. Reed, 1950. In 1949 Simpson, a journalist, arrived at the Chathams from Lyttelton on the *Port Waikato*, and listed my father, Allen Nielsen (Owenga fishing village), as one of the passengers who was returning on holiday. p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson's *The People of the Chathams* is an anecdotal history based on genealogy recorded by Te Miria for posterity.<sup>57</sup> Te Miria was born on the Chatham Islands, a descendant of Joe Dix, partaking oral research there for many years. Because there are no references and footnotes, this book cannot be regarded as a scholarly work, but it is a useful source for tracing family connections. According to some Chatham Islanders, some stories and alleged facts are simply incorrect, exemplifying Gardner's reservations about local histories discussed previously.

Fifth, within academic works there are two major studies: Gerald Arbuckle's, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective*, 1971,<sup>58</sup> and Helen Telford's MA thesis: "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: a Study of Social Relations and Social Categories", 1978.<sup>59</sup> Father Arbuckle surveyed the socio-economic conditions of the Chatham Islands during the time of the crayfish boom up to 1970. Influenced by the ideals and work of the Catholic Church, Arbuckle drew from the Catholic paper *The New Zealand Tablet*, and Bishop's statements, to campaign on behalf of the Chatham Islands people for social justice. He argued that the islanders had their own distinctive culture as a result of isolation, history, and conflict with mainland society and culture.<sup>60</sup> Arbuckle outlined the insider/outsider tensions relevant to folk and urban cultures prevalent during the boom, classing the locals as the indigenous society, a culture more folk than urban, and the government personnel, fishermen and non-government workers as the non-indigenous society, mainlanders, "outsiders", or New Zealanders. Entwined in this folk culture are: resistance to change and ideas, long memories, gossip, and superstition.<sup>61</sup> Presumably, the values attributed to "Small Island" societies, alongside the moral judgements and perceptions of the Chatham Islanders, explained why outsiders were blamed for subsequent misfortunes. It also

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<sup>57</sup> Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams*.

<sup>58</sup> Gerald A. Arbuckle, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective: A Socio-Economic View*, Wellington: Hicks Smith and Sons, 1971.

<sup>59</sup> Telford, "In' and 'Out' on the Chatham Islands: A Study of Social Relations and Social Categories'.

<sup>60</sup> Arbuckle, p. ix.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.



possibly explained why some islanders put covenants on land after the crayfish boom.

Helen Telford provided an anthropological perspective on the insider/outsider dynamics present in the Chathams community, historically, and during the crayfish boom. Telford argued that in the past, isolation was seen as the cause of backwardness, or “arrested” development, hindering progress that called for resolutions. Second, the history and life upon the islands had been affected by developments in New Zealand, and more widely the South Pacific, as for example, Pitcairn Island. Therefore: ‘A definitely contrasting lifestyle and associated values are attributed to the outsider and this lifestyle is regarded as bad where as the Chatham Island way of life (as expressed in traditional ideals) is good’.<sup>62</sup> Third, the values attributed to the crayfish boom exposed the undesirable side of modern life, a theme relevant to this thesis.

### Sources

There is a considerable amount of primary material relevant to this thesis. In particular, the William Beverland Burt Chatham Islands Collection from 1962-1975 is a valuable newspaper source held at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.<sup>63</sup> There were comprehensive records of fishing from government departments, newspapers, parliamentary debates and commissions, such as *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands* (1972). These government records, however, had to be approached with caution because they were written from an outsider perspective, and often reflected the biases of government officials with no knowledge of Chatham Islands society. *Rekohu: A Report on Moriori and Ngati Mutunga Claims in the Chatham Islands* (Wai 64), 2001, contained an indigenous perspective on fishing in the Chatham Islands.

Journals and articles such as, *The Weekly news*, *Listener*, *New Zealand Geographer*, *Blueprint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future* 1972, and

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<sup>62</sup> Telford, p. 72.

<sup>63</sup> William Beverland Burt (1912-1992) was a radio telegraphist at the Chatham Islands (1936 to circa 1939 and 1942 to 1948) who collected newspaper clippings of Island news for over 60 years. He married Marjorie, the daughter of Charles Langdale and Harriet Paynter, See Wills Johnson, pp. 113-18.

*Beyond Tomorrow*, 1975 *Values Party Manifesto*, *The People's Voice*, and the *New Zealand Medical Journal* provided useful primary material. Likewise, because many were written from an outsider perspective, care had to be taken about possible bias of historical evidence.

The major national newspapers were another useful source of information. It is important, however, that the reader assesses their differing editorial styles. For example, the more conservative *Christchurch Press* covered parliamentary debates and discussed the views of government officials. The populist *Christchurch Star*, an evening paper, was orientated towards sensationalism, as was the *New Zealand Truth*. The *Truth's* editors clearly believed that stories about the Chathams crayfish boom were of national significance. Finally, the local regional newspapers *Chathams County Newsletter*, and *Chatham Islands News and Views*, provided an insider perspective and reflected the concerns of the Chathams County Council. The articles about the Chatham Islands in the *New Zealand Tablet*, a Catholic newspaper, were found in the W. B. Burt Chatham Islands Collection.

My private collection of photographs provided raw evidence of the people and fishing community, as did those from papers and journals. The strength of oral interviews was the participants' recall of long-term memory about events; the accuracy of memory against fact was one weakness. Again, as with all evidence, care needs to be taken about possible bias of the informant.

This, then, is a social history of fishing in the Chathams Islands from 1910-1975, focussing on the crayfish boom, and the insider/outsider issues that arose during this period. Chapter one provides an overview of fishing in the Chathams from the late nineteenth century to 1965, as historical background. Thus, providing the basis to compare how things changed during the crayfish boom. It investigates the relationship between the Chatham Islands fishermen and the government in three areas. First, it identifies the government's continual reluctance to provide assistance for the Chathams fishermen, and the interconnection between fishing and land rights; the government's reluctance to impose fishing restrictions and their reluctance to heed the views of the people who lived there; the belonging of



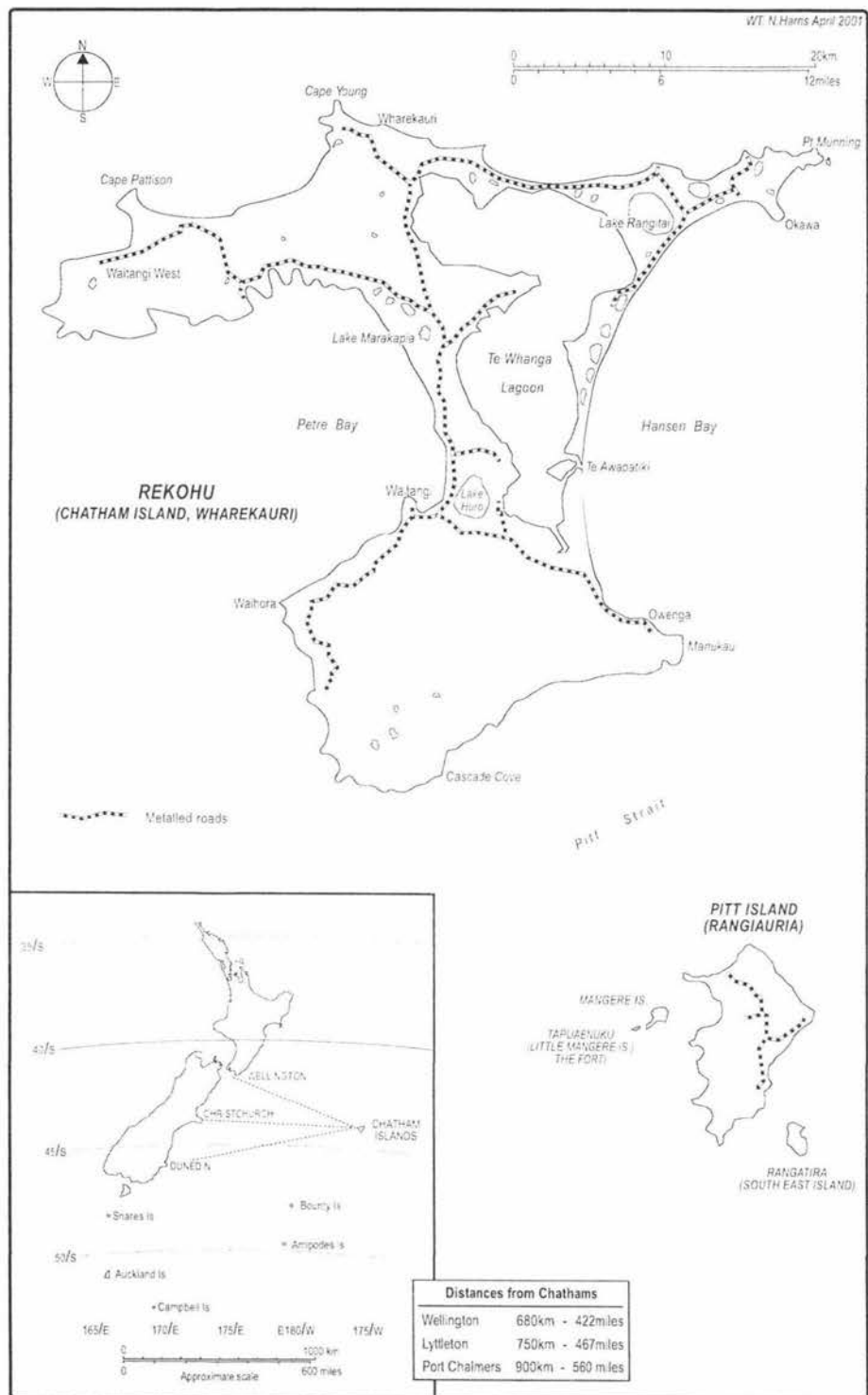
the fishermen to the working class as part of a wider community, and their involvement in unions over time. Second, it explores the islanders' perceived reluctance to become involved in the blue cod fishing industry during World War Two, and the government's threat to bring in "outsiders". Third, it sketches how the government seemed to prefer outsiders, especially, Italian fishermen to work in the Chathams during the 1950s: a prosperous period of export trade for New Zealand. It examines the dispute over employing Italian fishermen that generated tensions between Chatham Islands fishermen and outsiders. The main point is that the impending crayfish boom from 1966 to 1969 did not suddenly result in increased tension between Chatham Islanders and outsiders; rather, it heightened already existing tensions.

Chapter two quantifies the crayfish boom and outlines its effects on the environment in terms of crayfish supplies and failed conservation measures. Second, it explores environmental issues: tailing, evisceration and dumping at sea in the Chathams Islands. It argues that despite the calls to government for conservation, the conservation regulations for crayfish were introduced too late. It seeks to demonstrate that overexploitation had occurred because of neglect of an outlying area. It then discusses the role of Norman Kirk as a Member of Parliament for Lyttelton and from 1966 as Leader of the Opposition. It argues that the crayfish boom strained Chathams infrastructure and for the islanders' brought few benefits. Finally, it examines the Chathams County Council's income from fishing versus expenditure. It argues that although the Council received more money during the crayfish boom, its expenses also increased.

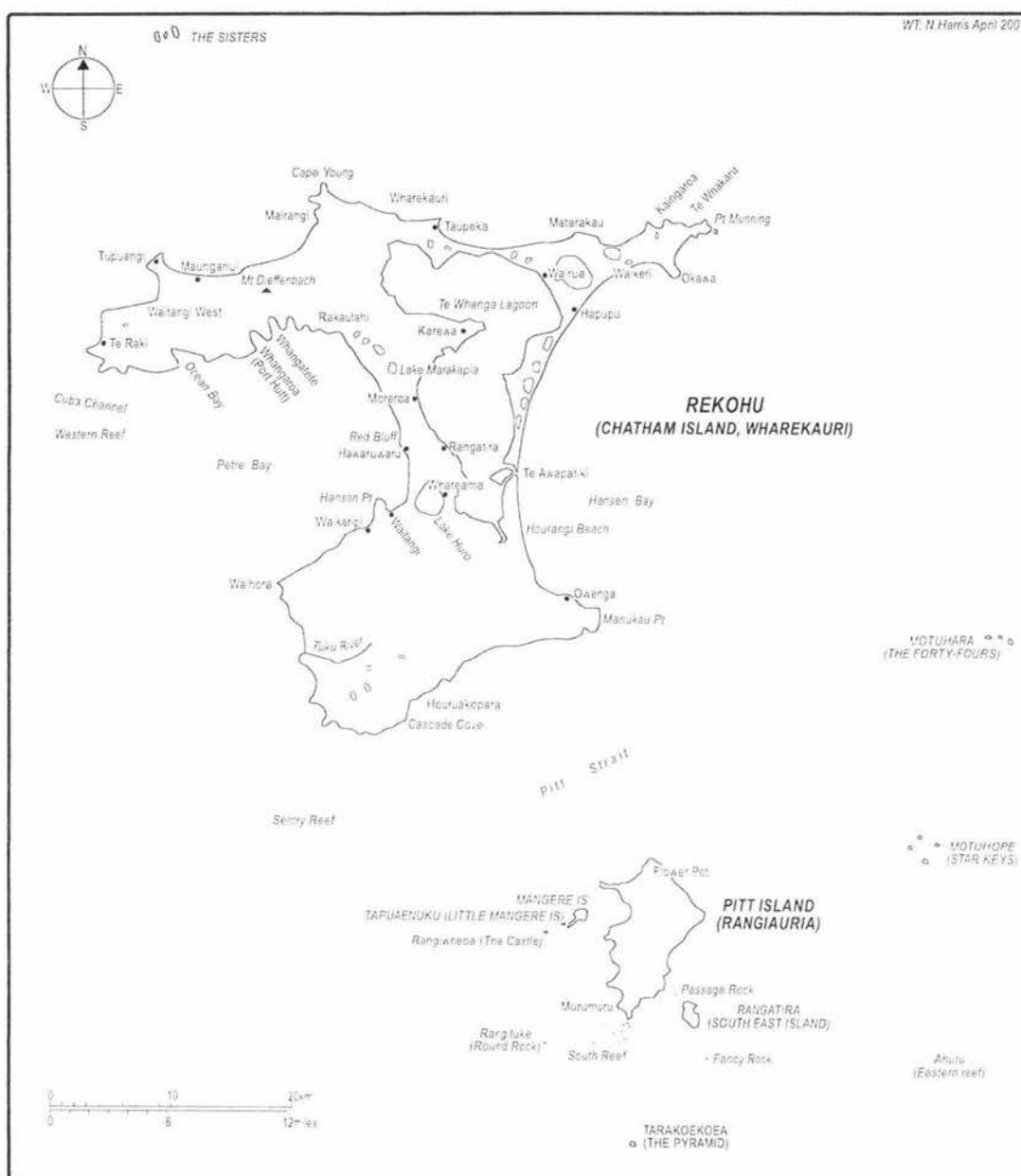
Chapter three outlines the social consequences of the crayfish boom. It examines three key issues that influenced relationships between Chatham Islanders and outsiders: infrastructure, piracy and violence, and safety issues. It argues that collectively, they reinforced perceptions that the Chatham Islands were marginal to New Zealand, and did not benefit from the "boom". Yet, safety regulations were the one area where the government took action, because of the many lives lost at sea. Further, it explores the islanders' calls for improved infrastructure and development. It argues that despite the government benefiting from the export earnings, it appeared to be ineffective in dealing with the Chathams

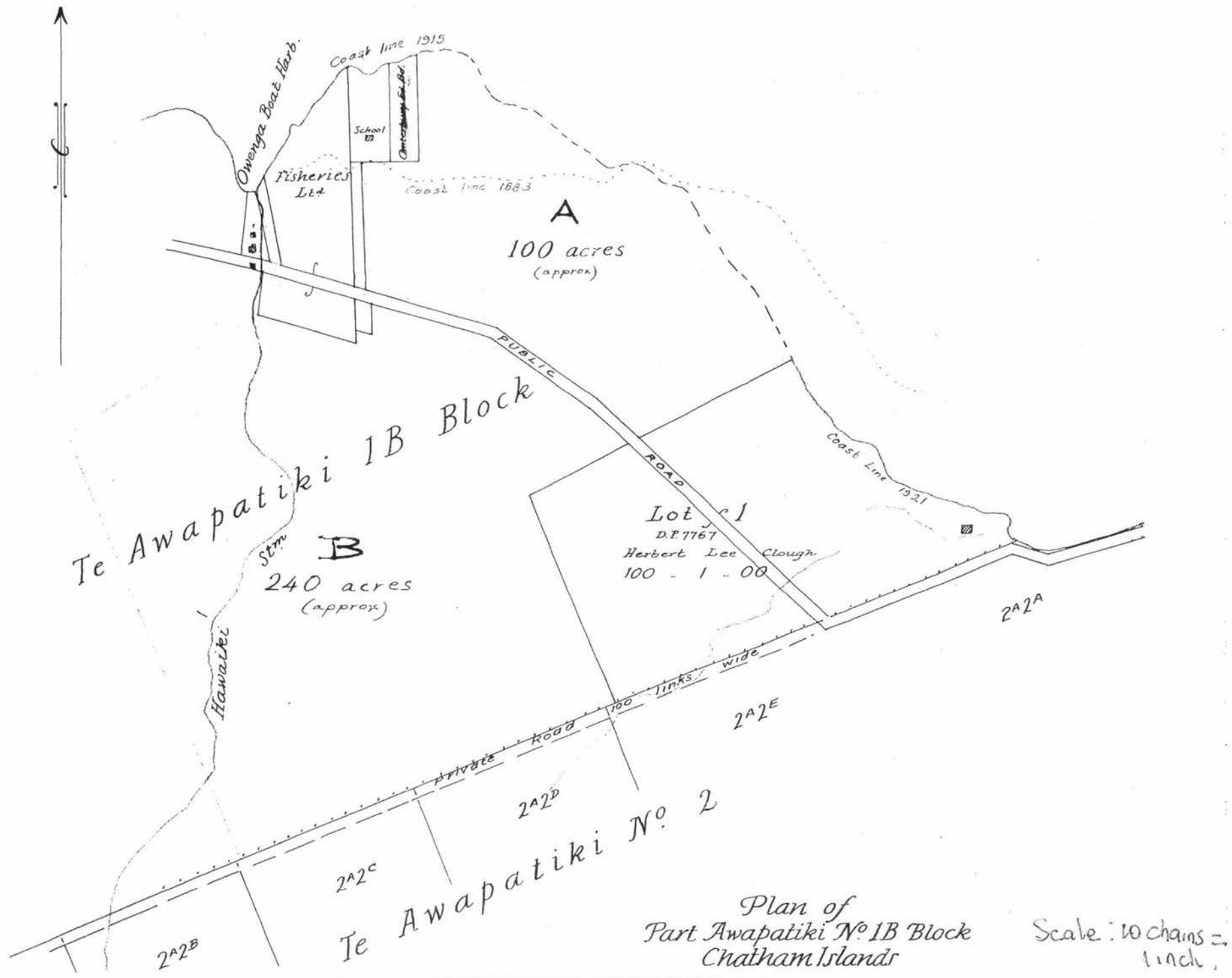
problems. Finally, it sketches the islanders' request for an Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands in 1972.

Chapter four quantifies the crayfish bust from 1971-1975 in order to explain why crayfish conservation became an issue in the 1972 general election; and, why people looked forward to the (belated) Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands. It examines the environmental debates on crayfish in the Chathams, a time when greater attention was being paid to conservation issues in New Zealand. It sketches the emergence of the Values Party, a political party dedicated to environmental issues. It discusses Kirk's role as Leader of the Opposition, and how the Chatham Islands became a "political football", leading up to the 1972 election. It sketches the benefits to the Chatham Islands during the Third Labour Government. Finally, it discusses whether the islanders continued to resent outsiders after the boom and whether lessons had been learnt from the crayfish boom about conservation for the future.



Map 1: Rekohu location map





## Chapter One

### 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter begins with an overview of fishing in the Chatham Islands from circa 1840 to 1965, followed by an examination of key themes that will be re-examined later in this thesis, since they recurred in the crayfish boom. These include: the reluctance of the government to provide housing assistance for fishermen, fishing and infrastructure, repeated refusals to grant a closed fishing season, perceptions of the islanders as lazy relevant to World War Two, collective organization among the islanders including union membership, strained relations with outsiders and the role of technology. It will be demonstrated that by 1961 a viable fishing industry had developed in the Chathams. First, as background, I provide an overview of Chatham Islands settlement.

#### 1.1 Overview of Chatham Islands Settlement

The current belief is that East Polynesians first settled New Zealand circa late 1200s.<sup>64</sup> Upholding an East Polynesian origin, the colonisation of the Chatham Islands by Moriori probably occurred after the initial settlement of New Zealand circa AD 1500.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, no evidence exists of cultural archaeological remains dated pre AD 1500, and the discovery of Mayor Island (Bay of Islands) obsidian in various Chatham Islands sites, and similarities of language and tradition, suggests that Moriori came from New Zealand.<sup>66</sup> The first European to sight the Islands was William Henry Broughton in HMS *Chatham* who visited the Chatham Islands in 1791. The next phase of colonisation in the South Pacific was the Maori settlement of the Chathams in 1835 after New Zealand, followed by the Maori-Moriore colony in the Auckland Islands from 1842 to 1856.<sup>67</sup> Atholl Anderson pointed out that within ethno historical population data,

<sup>64</sup> *Dominion Post*, 4 June 2008, p. A8.

<sup>65</sup> A. Anderson, "Retrievable Time": Prehistoric Colonisation of South Polynesia from the Outside in and the Inside In', in *Disputed Histories: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts*, Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney (ed.), Dunedin: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. Obsidian is a black, natural glass produced in small amounts by volcanoes; primitive people used it for weapons and tools.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

Moriori gave their numbers as 161 in 1861 (Moriore claimed Maori killed about 300 and 1300 died of despair) yet, the Moriore population was approximately 1600 in 1862. These population estimates, therefore, showed that Moriore were not in decline by the late eighteenth century, despite an impending land claim against Chathams Maori. Thus, it seemed that the main advantage of the Chathams over all the other outlying groups was its natural food resources; and, fishing has always been important.<sup>68</sup> According to A. E. McLintock, the Chathams had a population of 500 people, and Moriore had disappeared by 1966.<sup>69</sup>

## 1.2 Overview of Chatham Islands Fishing circa 1840-1965

### 1.2.1 Fishing and Moriore/Maori

King explored the importance of seafood to Tchakat Moriore people, particularly their spiritual and cultural value.<sup>70</sup> Moriore had a complex tapu system in relation to fishery and the sea. According to King: 'For the Moriore, marine food resources were to prove far more abundant, diverse, reliable and resilient than land foods'.<sup>71</sup> Fur seals were an important food and clothing source, while blackfish, or pilot whales, had a religious significance: the Moriore people regarded them as gifts of the sea Gods: Tangaroa, and Pou.<sup>72</sup> Yet, in competition with the sealers and declining seal rookeries, this food supply for Moriore was reduced.

Historically, commercial sealing and whaling were the earliest forms of contact between the Chathams and Europeans. As previously mentioned, Rhys Richards's *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands* explored the exploitative sealing and whaling industries, and, like King, highlighted the

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<sup>68</sup> Anderson, 'Retrievable Time', p. 27.

<sup>69</sup> A. H. McLintock, *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1966, pp. 334-35. Ibid., the Chatham Islands County was established in 1901 for local administration, but the first council was not elected until 1925.

<sup>70</sup> "Tchakat Moriore" is the term applied to the first inhabitants of the Chatham Islands, before the first contact with Maori and Europeans; prior, they needed no other name than their personal and tribal ones. See King, *Moriore: A People Rediscovered*, pp. 18, 160.

<sup>71</sup> King, *Moriore: A People Rediscovered*, p.25.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

effects of overfishing for Moriori without thought for future supplies.<sup>73</sup> Even though the islanders and whalers benefited from a reciprocal trade (compared to the crayfish boom, later), the social impact on the Chathams community was significant. Nevertheless, some sealers and whalers did settle establishing enduring families and farms.<sup>74</sup> From 1869 with the decline of whaling the islanders needed a livelihood. As early as the 1900s, the potential for commercial fishing with Maori involvement was noted.

Meanwhile, the Chathams had developed a history of trading that revolved around shipping. With the influx of European settlers from the 1860s, pastoral and agricultural development in sheep farming and cattle rearing was established for the New Zealand and Australian markets, along with wheat and potatoes. Maori grew potatoes for the Wellington and Auckland market, cared for stock, and bred horses.<sup>75</sup> According to John Campbell, the goldfields of California, Australia and New Zealand received potato supplies from this “Pacific garden”.<sup>76</sup> But, in 1908 the growing of potatoes stopped because of the potato blight.<sup>77</sup> Still, because the price of wool dropped in the early twentieth century, sheep farming declined, despite there being approximately 60,000 sheep on the islands. Consequently, fishing for export as a commercial venture was added to the Chathams farming industry.<sup>78</sup> Most significantly, the “outsiders” became the “insiders”.

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<sup>73</sup> Richards, ‘Sealing at the Chatham Islands – A Fragmentary Record?’ in *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, p. 29.

<sup>74</sup> Richards, ‘Whaling on the Chatham Grounds: A Historical and Quantitative Assessment’, in *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>75</sup> R. A. Falla, ‘The Chatham Islands’, *New Zealand Geographer*, 17:1 (April, 1950), p. 10, MS-Papers-434-44, WTU.

<sup>76</sup> John Campbell, ‘Historical Shipwrecks at the Chatham Islands’, *Working Papers in Chatham Islands Archaeology*, (13) Anthropology Department, University of Otago, Dunedin, 1977, WTU.

<sup>77</sup> Correspondence, W. T. Glasgow, Secretary and Inspector, Department of Trade and Customs, Wellington, to G. H. Gibson, Esq., Officer in Charge of Customs, Chatham Islands, 30 April 1908, W. B. Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-09, WTU.

<sup>78</sup> Falla, pp. 9-10.



### 1.2.2 Pakeha and Maori Involvement in Fishing

In a 1900 report to the Marine Department the Resident Magistrate, Robert Stone Florance, wrote about the excellent state of fishing in the Chathams, but stated the marketing of fish was problematic because of uncertain shipping transportation: the steamer *Toroa* visited the Chathams bi-monthly. Lyttelton was the nearest market (the Chathams lie 500 miles from Lyttelton or 400 miles from Napier). Though the oldest settlers maintained that nearly all the carp species of fish could be caught round the coasts in deep water, with high catches during the winter months: most fish caught, then, was for local consumption. Accordingly, Florance urged for the Marine Department and capitalists to assist in establishing the Chathams fishing industry for economic prosperity.<sup>79</sup> Also, the marketing of large oysters and sponges beds that lay near the shores, along with the eels and flounders at Awapatiki and in most of the inland lakes, were to be considered.<sup>80</sup> In the marketing of fish, Florance looked to the directors of the St George carving works at Dunedin as possible investors maintaining that a ship, a shore refrigerating operation, and cool chamber was needed.<sup>81</sup> Also, Florance called for fish canning and experimental trawling: trawling would lead to the overexploitation of crayfish in the 1960s boom.

Interested in fisheries expansion, the government undertook surveys of trawling grounds, and what varieties of marketable fish could be obtained. In 1907 the steamer trawler *Nora Niven*, owned by the New Zealand Trawling and Fish Supply Company, made an exploratory visit to the Chathams to test line fishing and investigate trawling grounds, finding an abundance of blue cod, hapuka (groper) and crayfish. Crayfish, however, was not seen as a commercial viable product.<sup>82</sup> Most surprisingly, this opportunity for establishing a crayfish industry

<sup>79</sup> Correspondence, R. S. Florance, Resident Magistrate, to the Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 15 September 1900, MS-Papers-0434-11A, WTU.

<sup>80</sup> R. S. Florance, RM, 'Chatham Islands', *New Zealand Official Year Book*, 1900, p. 535, MS-Papers-0434-49, WTU.

<sup>81</sup> Correspondence, R. S. Florance, RM, to Messrs Irwin and Stevenson, St George Carving Works, Dunedin, 20 February 1901, MS-Papers-0434-11A, WTU.

<sup>82</sup> Johnson, Haworth, p.76. Ibid., p. 69. The first Fisheries Chief Inspector, Lake Falconer Ayson, played an important role in the early development of the New Zealand fishing industry and fishing policy from 1898 to 1926.

at the Chathams was ignored for almost sixty years.<sup>83</sup> One possible reason for this is that prices for crayfish were not good at this point because there was no demand. The government did not recognise the potential of this fishery. Rather, the government believed that 'hapuka and blue cod of the finest quality' would become important sources of fish supply, and would benefit the New Zealand fishing industry.<sup>84</sup> Accordingly, the report recommended a blue cod fishery in the Chathams Islands.<sup>85</sup> As the islanders' representative, H. W. Lanauze (Te One), expressed interest in the fishing industry.

### 1.2.3 Zohrab and Fishing

Following this, the Wellington Harbour Ferries Company's Manager, Edward Goodwin Fortescue Zohrab, established the Chathams cod fishing industry. The Wellington Trawling Company was also formed at this time. No longer needed for harbour service and fitted with a refrigeration plant, the Wellington tug *Duco* transported fish caught by the islanders to Wellington, but on its second voyage in September 1909 it disappeared along with its fifteen crew.<sup>86</sup> Zohrab then purchased 20 acres of land adjoining Hawaiki Creek, where he built a freezer, dwellings and various other buildings in 1910, coordinating fishing and freezing together. According to David Holmes, the fishermen's dwellings erected on the south side of the creek were wooden framed, lean-to type, with outer coverings of ponga, weatherboards, corrugated iron, and a wood-burning stove for cooking.<sup>87</sup> Also, in 1910 John McLean established a freezer at Kaingaroa. Accordingly, the blue cod fishing industry established in 1910 remained the main source of fishing until the 1960s.

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<sup>83</sup> Seminar, Fisheries Development in New Zealand, Victoria University of Wellington, 1968, *Fisheries and New Zealand, Proceedings of a Seminar Held 21-23 May, 1968*, E.B. Slack (ed.), Wellington: Department of University Extension, Victoria University of Wellington, 1969, p. 6.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>85</sup> Annual Report, Marine Department, *AJHR*, 1911, H. -15, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> Johnson, Haworth, p. 85. See *New Zealand Times*, *NZT*, 16, 23, 24 September; 6, 7, October; 23 November 1909.

<sup>87</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 122.

#### 1.2.4 Development of Blue Cod Fishing

In June 1911 the Chathams Fishing Company Limited was established at Owenga, as part of the Te Awapatiki, Number 1 B Block, on the public map of the Chatham Islands.<sup>88</sup> In *Rekohu* Fiona Holmes confirms that McLean managed the Kaingaroa freezer for the Chathams Fishing Company, and the *Himitangi* transported fish on the Lyttelton-Chatham-Lyttelton run from 1911.<sup>89</sup> As mainland trawlers began operating in the Chatham waters, the Chathams blue cod fishery developed steadily, most fish were either shipped to the Australian market, or to the mainland markets such as the Wellington Municipal Fish Market, opened on 4 October 1912. Nevertheless, as the Marine Department pointed out, there was a shortage of good competent fishermen in the Chathams.<sup>90</sup>

With mainland trawlers competing with the islanders' small vessels, and their livelihood threatened, some islanders combined farming and fishing operations.<sup>91</sup> Others moved from farming to fishing that accompanied a population drift to the Owenga and Kaingaroa fishing villages. According to Telford, despite labour being "imported" from the mainland for the respective fish factories, cod fishing initially offered hope to small farmers, and farm labourers, freeing them from economic dependence on the large run holders.<sup>92</sup> At that time, "outsiders" from all over the world were integrated into the Chathams community; many partook in the fishing industry.<sup>93</sup> For instance, Scandinavian sailors, Theodor Nielsen, and Norwegian Magnoald Andreassen, navigated the *Fannie* from Lyttelton to the Chathams circa 1914 and remained there, since

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<sup>88</sup> Chatham Islands Fishing Company Limited, CO-W, W3445, box 142, 1910/27, Archives New Zealand. Wellington Harbour Ferries was a foundation shareholder of the Chathams Fishing Company: Edward Zohrab was the manager.

<sup>89</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 48.

<sup>90</sup> Annual Report, Marine Department, *AJHR*, 1914, H.- 15, p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> *Rekohu: A Report on Moriori and Ngati Mutunga Claims in the Chatham Islands*, Wai 64, Waitangi Tribunal Report, 2001, p. 235.

<sup>92</sup> Telford, p. 21.

<sup>93</sup> Register of Aliens, Chatham Islands County, New Zealand, 1917, Repro 1658, Archives New Zealand. See also Register of Aliens Act, 1917, Archives New Zealand.

sailors rather than fishermen who did not belong to Federated Seamen's Union, were employed to take fishing boats there.

Still, both Maori and Pakeha were prominent in the fishing community, either fishing for the trawlers, or processing fish for the mainland companies. Te Miria's *The People of the Chatham Islands* argued that as sealing and sporadic whaling declined, the blue cod industry flourished from 1910 into the 1960s. Accordingly, a new breed of settler arrived, a "hardy and hard-working calibre" of seamen and fishermen, until the discovery of crayfish.<sup>94</sup> Such settlers included: Clough, Donaldson, Duncan, Hill, Johanson, McGregor, McClurg, Nielsen, Paynter, Preece, Prendeville, Smylie and Weisner.<sup>95</sup> Later, some of their descendents became involved with the crayfish boom. Others included: John Edward Corbeth, Tom Soowik, Cecil Wagstaff,<sup>96</sup> and Captain E. H. Day (County Clerk and Harbour Master, 1944).<sup>97</sup> These people were a cosmopolitan mix compiled of Irish, English, Scots, Welsh, Scandinavian, German, Greek, Russian and American nationalities. For example, fishermen Reginald McGregor and brothers Jock and Laurie Duncan at Kaingaroa were Shetland Islanders that were originally based at Island Bay, residing with the Italian fishing community.<sup>98</sup> Also, from Island Bay, J. Inkster, owner of the *Silver Dawn* fished at the Chathams from circa 1930.<sup>99</sup> As mostly mature men, about 30 years old, they

<sup>94</sup> Wills Johnson, p. 234.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 1. Although not all involved in the fishing industry, further settlers included: Ernest Guest, Cannon, Cox, Lanuaze, Mitchell, Renwick, Rua, Seymour, Thomas, Tuanui, Wishart, and Whaitiri. See Register of Aliens, Chatham Islands County, New Zealand, 1917, Repro 1658, Archives New Zealand. See also, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>96</sup> See Wills Johnson, p. 118. See also *Press*, 11 February 1969. Cecil Wagstaff who came to the Chathams in 1915 was a blue cod fisherman. He described the methods of catching blue cod and crayfish alongside the role of women.

<sup>97</sup> Chatham Islands Private Line Switching Station List 1944, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-01, WTU.

<sup>98</sup> Annie Wotherspoon, January 2008. See David Livingston Holmes, Chatham Islands Papers, MS-Papers-1681-1, WTU. In 1928 commanded by Captain Tom Sawyer, the small ship *Awarua* carried frozen fish to Wellington during the winter months; mostly she could hold 1200-1400 cases. From the Owenga and Kaingaroa freezers, loads of cased blue cod were surfed out to *Awarua*. Because few boats had a wireless in those days, she ran on coal.

<sup>99</sup> Newspaper clipping, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59-2, WTU.

either married women within the community, or arrived with their wives: many had large families.<sup>100</sup> For example, Owenga freezer manager, John Prendeville, an Irishman and Roman Catholic, married islander Linda Seymour, and Richard Thomas Paynter married Isabel Grennell (1871), only daughter of Captain Grennell, later, a sheep farmer at Pitt Island for 40 years. Their son Robert Paynter was manager of the Kaingaroa freezer during the Depression.<sup>101</sup>

Some established Chatham families fished then, such as Albert Murphy (Owenga) owner of the *Mary*, and the Gregory-Hunts. Other Maori families included: Brown, Dix, Goomes, Grennell, Hough, Page, Pohio, Remi, Rereti, Hau Thomas, Te Wiata, Tuanui, Tuuta, and Pomare. “A full-blooded Moriori”, named Te Rangitapua Horomona Rehe lived at Manakau station.<sup>102</sup> When Horomona died in 1915, his son Tame Horomona Rehe, commonly called Tommy Solomon, inherited Manakau station, but took up sheep farming.<sup>103</sup> Moriori seemingly fished for food, and there is no evidence to suggest that they were involved in the fishing industry, though the Manakau station supplied firewood to the close Owenga fishing village.<sup>104</sup>

Maud Seymour’s thesis ‘A History of the Chatham Islands’ presented an historical account of the Chatham Islands up to 1924: the first university study of the Chathams.<sup>105</sup> At this time, the Chathams were seen as a “mans paradise”.

<sup>100</sup> *New Zealand Free Lance*, 19 December 1934, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59-2, WTU.

<sup>101</sup> Letter, Ernest Matthias Guest, Owenga, Chatham Islands, to Jack and Lilian Guest, 21 August 1938, MS-Papers-3877, WTU. See also obituary, R. T. Paynter, *Ellesmere Guardian*, August 1933, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>102</sup> King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p. 138. Manakau was a Moriori reserve allotted for Moriori use after the settlement of Chathams land claims by the 1870 Native Land Court (most of Chathams land went in favour of the Maori claimants: eight small reserves went to surviving Moriori). See King, *Moriori Rediscovered*, pp. 123-135.

<sup>103</sup> ‘The Last Letter by Tom Solomon to Noel Cox’, Manukau, Chatham Islands, 9 August 1930, History and Life of Cox Family and Self, Manuscript, Hocken Library, Dunedin.

<sup>104</sup> Letter, Ernest Matthias Guest, Owenga, Chatham Islands to Jack and Lilian Guest, 21 August 1938, MS-Papers-3877, WTU.

<sup>105</sup> M. E. Seymour, ‘A History of the Chatham Islands’, MA Thesis, University of New Zealand, 1924, p. 1.

Seymour did not discuss class, ethnicity and gender; however, these did not feature prominently in histories written during the 1920s. Seymour stated that the Chathams was a good tourist spot “for the sportsmanlike visitor” who enjoyed the excellent opportunities for fishing, and with its exquisite native scenery, shooting, fishing, boating and riding form pastimes: a holiday resort.<sup>106</sup> Seymour noted, however, that communication problems handicapped the fishing industry, because of the infrequent shipping and the tumultuous crossing. Nevertheless, the abundance of natural foods meant the islanders had a sufficient livelihood: ‘it is indeed a land of plenty’.<sup>107</sup> Seymour also asserted, perhaps in a patronising tone, that because of the Chathams isolation and small population, high culture and education had to be foregone, and a certain primitive and uncivilised quality of life existed there.<sup>108</sup> Seymour’s work indicated the state of Chathams fisheries before overfishing occurred by “outsiders”:

The freezing and export of fish (Hutton: - Trans of Phil. Instit. Vol. 5, p. 245) constitutes an important industry there being several freezing plants which have been established for some years. Marine fish, which are common to both New Zealand and Australia, abound in enormous quantities and in spite of the freezing industry they are almost as plentiful as ever. It is a very common thing to procure a small rowing boat, and go out no more than a hundred yards or so from the shore, and by line fishing alone, pull up within an hour as many fish as the boat will hold. No fish can be more delicious than the Chatham Island blue cod.<sup>109</sup>

In October 1926 Zohrab discontinued a fishing trade with the Chathams for two reasons. First, Zohrab criticised the Marine Department for its rules concerning the navigation of fishing boats, which hindered his business interests there. Zohrab argued that the New Zealand fishing industry was disadvantaged, compared with Great Britain; British fishing boats that had a fishing master’s certificate could go some 1,500 miles from Britain. Conversely, New Zealand

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., p. 16. See F.W. Hutton, *Transactions and Proceedings of the New Zealand Institute*, vol. 5, 1872, p. 245, WTU.



laws disallowed fishing vessels to go no further than 50 miles without a navigating crew; hence, for Zohrab until: 'the law was altered in regard to fishing vessels it would be quite impossible to introduce trawlers'.<sup>110</sup> As previously noted, the Secretary of the Seamen's Union disallowed fishermen as non-members of his Union to sign up; therefore a sailor, rather than a fisherman was employed to take fishing boats to the Chathams, despite capable fishermen being available for this task.<sup>111</sup> Second, Zohrab's Company had helped finance fishermen to obtain launches, yet the Promotion of Fisheries Act had set aside £25,000 to assist the industry, to which the Chathams fishermen were entitled.<sup>112</sup> When Zohrab sold out of the Chathams fishing industry, in 1926, after fifteen years involvement, his two freezers had employed thirty fishermen, and other hands, supplying blue cod for export to Australia. In a 1926 report, he predicted that the blue cod catches were as good as ever, the fishery did not show any sign of depletion, and more intensive fishing could be carried out.<sup>113</sup> Thus, the infrastructure Zohrab established set supply levels for Chathams fisheries prior to 1961.

During the 1930s Depression most fishermen with large families experienced difficulties when the two fishing stations closed.<sup>114</sup> In 1933 Stanley Matthew Mill's thesis showed that a Chathams report had given a disconcerting picture of the fishing industry, because the freezing works, at Kaingaroa, and Owenga, had closed.<sup>115</sup> Fortunately, when New Zealand Fisheries reopened the Kaingaroa and

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<sup>110</sup> Memorandum J. Anderson to C. G. Godfrey, Marine Department, Wellington, 1 October 1926, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Memorandum, Fisheries Expert, Marine Department, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 23 June 1926, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand. The Chatham Islands Fishing Company transferred to Fisheries Limited, and then transferred to New Zealand Fisheries Limited on 6 May 1930, AAMK, 869 W3074 663C 19/1/227, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>114</sup> *New Zealand Free Lance*, 19 December 1934, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 2, WTU.

<sup>115</sup> Stanley Matthew Mills, 'A History of the Chatham Islands and their Inhabitants', MA History, Victoria University of Wellington, 1933, p. 81. See



Owenga works, in 1934, the fishing industry revived and frozen fish was transported to Wellington on the *Tees*, counteracting the effects of the Depression. Later, in 1936, when New Zealand Fisheries bought the South Seas Fishing Company (Christchurch), its trawler *South Sea* also transported frozen fish to the mainland.<sup>116</sup>

Over time rivalry between the two fishing companies and competition for the fishermen's services arose, in the process of catching, loading, weighing, cleaning, rinsing, packing and freezing the fish.<sup>117</sup> However, when the Owenga freezer, managed by John Prendeville, closed in 1937 because its boiler gave out requiring extensive financial repairs, the Owenga community of approximately two hundred people faced difficulties.<sup>118</sup> According to David Holmes, fishermen either sought work at the Kaingaroa works, or with the trawler *South Sea*, based at Whangaroa (Port Hutt), while some families left for the mainland.<sup>119</sup> Later, in 1946 the Kaingaroa freezer fell into disrepair and closed down.

In 1947 the *New Zealand Herald* reported that Wellington and Napier fishing companies were making a profit from the rich Chathams fishing grounds, which had barely been exploited since 1941. In 1946 a syndicate of ex-servicemen

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1933 unpublished report, Census office. Mills also mentioned that a Waitangi fish freezer closed down in 1933.

<sup>116</sup> See *Evening Post*, 28 March 1959, MS-Papers-0434-59: 4, WTU. New Zealand Master Mariner, Captain Andrew Dowell, was instrumental in forming the South Sea Fishing Company and Chathams fish trade. Built at Goole for fishing in the White Sea and about Iceland, the trawler *South Sea* was taken to the Chathams from England by Captain Dowell's brother Peter in 1932, and transported fish until the outbreak of war in 1939. In 1939 the Royal New Zealand Navy converted the *South Sea* into a minesweeper, but she sunk in collision with the *Wahine* off Point Halswell in Wellington Harbour on 19 December 1942. In 1922 Captain Dowell had formed the Westland Shipping Company Limited, and purchased the steamer *Tees* (546 tons), bringing her to New Zealand for the Chatham Islands trade until 1931. See also Westland Shipping Co., Shipping Chart, c. 1930, Printed Matter, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MSI-Papers-0434, WTU.

<sup>117</sup> Newspaper clipping, 26 February 1934, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 2, WTU.

<sup>118</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 48. Prendeville had managed the Owenga freezer from 1916 to its closure, and then fished at Kaingaroa until circa 1944, retiring back to Christchurch.

<sup>119</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 124.

formed the Chathams Fishing Company Limited, and with their gratuity money and rehabilitation assistance from the government, they bought the *Manuka* (an ex-acoustic minesweeper), which freighted blue cod from the Chathams to Wellington; the entire catch was then sold in Australia. Though other companies primarily from Napier had made good hauls, the new 12-man company had so far been the most successful, and probably, 'one of the finest examples of the rehabilitation of a dozen men in a co-operative venture'.<sup>120</sup> The crew of the mother ship did not fish themselves, but bought the fish from the islanders who filled their launches within a few hours, loaded their catches onto the *Manuka*, and made a substantial profit: three tons of fish daily was only an average haul for a Chatham Islands fisherman.<sup>121</sup> The company hoped to make ten round trips to the Chathams a year, each voyage lasting about three weeks, or a month.

In the early 1950s the Chathams fishing industry flourished: several private fishing companies developing during this time. In 1951 Gus Wiesner had gone into partnership with New Zealand Fisheries Cooperative, in opposition to Chathams Fisheries Limited, at Owenga. Owned by Albert Meo, but managed by James Jurie (a Croatian), it was officially opened in late 1951. Some ex-service members had withdrawn from the Chathams Fishing Company, because of past disagreement, selling out to the Meo family, who also owned the Wellington Trawling Company Limited.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>120</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 16 May 1947, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid. See Wills Johnson, *The People of the Chathams*, p. 65. Fred Abernethy was *Manuka's* engineer and mostly older islanders fished for her, such as Ted Nielsen and son Philip, Donaldsons, Preece, Jack Brown, and *Margaret's* skipper. See also Correspondence (A-G), Te Miria Kate Wills Johnson, 2000-068-13, WTU; Correspondence, Clifford Kaipuke Whitiri, Chatham Islands to Fred Abernethy, 3 December 1991, Norm Thomas, Gen (Geneva) Panirau, Paul Tuuta, and Peter Brown cleaned cod. See also memorandum, R.T.G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Marine Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand; cod fishing existed on the rocky bottom or reef found abundantly off the shore, where mica, ore schists and igneous rocks formed the coast lines, an area from Point Weeding south of Waitangi, and in similar conditions of the Chathams coastline. The distance to the main outlying fishing grounds from the shore station at Owenga was approximately: South East Island, 30 miles; Hamilton reef 30 miles; the Forty Fours 25 miles; and the Star Keys 20 miles.

<sup>122</sup> Memorandum, E. P. Doogue, to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 20 May 1953, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

When the Wellington Trawling Company took over the *Manuka* in 1950, it developed boiler problems and sunk in 1952, when moored at Port Hutt as a freezer vessel.<sup>123</sup> The *Port Waikato* then transported fish to the mainland. From April 1951 the Wellington Fishermen's Cooperative floating freezer *Cobar*, managed by Salvi Dellabarca, was moored at Kaingaroa (formerly used for the Wellington to Eastbourne ferry service), but leased to the Jurie Shipping Company Limited, Wellington. From 1952 when permanently moored as a freezer vessel, at Port Hutt, she was destroyed by fire in March 1958.<sup>124</sup>

In 1953 the Wellington Fishermen's Cooperative, managed by Dellabarca was set up in opposition to the Chathams Fishing Company and Owenga freezer, with a refrigeration unit and three boats at Kaingaroa.<sup>125</sup> The 1951 Department of Island Territories Fishing Industry's Annual Report had expressed its concern about the two shore freezers operating, stating that neither company would be able to pay its way, unless the maximum weight of 500 tons taken of fish was increased. The Marine Department, however, had stipulated that 500 to 600 tons of green fish per annum was the maximum amount of fish to be taken from all Chathams fishing grounds.<sup>126</sup> Also, Dellabarca and Wiesner had requested additional licences to the ten stipulated by the Inspector of Fisheries, Constable A. Geary, while Meo wanted licences for the Italian fishermen he intended to employ as labour. This resulted in the Senior Fishery Officer, J. H. Sorensen, informing the Chathams Fishing Company that no further licences were to be granted to the Chatham Islands in February 1959.<sup>127</sup> However, the Marine Department's Licensing Officer, G. L. O'Halloran, did state that the *Gleneagles*, *Margaret* and the *Moehau* could have craypots inserted to their boats licences, provided that full use was made of all methods for which licensed, and all

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<sup>123</sup> Campbell, 'Historical Shipwrecks at the Chatham Islands'.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid. See *Evening Post*, 12 March 1958.

<sup>125</sup> Memorandum, E. P. Doogue, Department of Island Territories to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 20 May 1953, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>126</sup> "Greenweight" the weight of fish prior to any processing or removal of any part of the fish. See Glossary.

<sup>127</sup> Correspondence, J. H. Sorensen, Senior Fishery Officer, Marine Department to Chathams Fishing Company, Wellington, 11 February 1959, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

crayfish was to be landed whole and not tailed at sea.<sup>128</sup> In that year, several small island boats began cod fishing for the mainland trawlers, as for example, Donaldson's *Fern* for the *Miro* and *Te Rino* for the *Coromel*.<sup>129</sup> Later, in 1963 Alan Aberdein's *Picton* fished around the Chatham Islands for blue cod, seemingly, he had a policy of fishing only in areas unreachable by smaller local boats. Yet, local people were employed to process the fish.<sup>130</sup> The islanders, initially, built their own fishing boats (25 to 35 feet in length) from imported kauri.<sup>131</sup> For example: *Lone Star*, *Gliding Star*, *Three Sisters*, *Defiance*, *Tangaroa*, *Pursuit*, *Mary*, *Minnie*, *Betty* and *Te Aroha*. But, because these small boats were not always economical, mother ships, like the *Manuka* were used.

In summary, like the sealing and whaling eras, the Chathams cod fishery followed an historical pattern of a boom and bust. Given this overview of fishing, a number of themes emerged during the 1910-1965 period, which would resonate during the crayfish boom.

### 1.3 Government Neglect of the Chatham Islands

#### 1.3.1 Housing for Fishermen

There were requests for government to obtain housing for fishermen in 1916, 1921 and 1924. The recurring perception of government neglect towards housing saw the fishermen call for government assistance to purchase land. As fishing and land rights were closely intertwined, a long struggle to acquire land for the fishermen developed. Consequently, a collective organization amongst the fishing community emerged in the process of petitioning the government. In 1916 the Inspector of Fisheries, G. H. Fry, stated that acquiring land rights for the fishermen was essential to the future development of the Chathams fishing

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<sup>128</sup> Correspondence, G. L. O'Halloran, Licensing Authority, Marine Department, Wellington to Constable C. S. Hutcheson, Chatham Islands, 24 February 1959, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>129</sup> Correspondence, J. H. Sorensen, Senior Fishery Officer, Marine Department to Chathams Fishing Company, Wellington, 11 February 1959, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>130</sup> Emmanuel Makarios, 'An Epitaph to', *Seafood New Zealand*, December 1994, p. 10.

<sup>131</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 122. See Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 48.

industry.<sup>132</sup> Moreover, the Fishing Company at Owenga held merely 20 acres comprising buildings and paddocks for horses used by the works, yet living in hutments on a corner of this land were 66 people, about one sixth of the population of the Chatham Islands. Furthermore, most of the breadwinners, except those constantly employed, became idle when the bad weather set in, and lived in unsanitary conditions. In 1919, with unchanged conditions, Fry stressed that though the company treated the fishermen well, they could not provide land for them when it could not be privately obtained; most of the land belonged to absentee owners.<sup>133</sup> Again, in 1921 Fry drew attention to the unsanitary living conditions experienced by the fishermen, and families, which finally prompted the Marine Department to investigate the possibility of acquiring land for a fishing settlement in the Chathams. Under Section 64 of the Fisheries Act, 1908, power was given to the Governor-General by Order in Council to set upon the coastline of New Zealand, or of any bay, harbour, estuary, salt water creek, or other inlet of the sea, any Crown Lands as sites for fishing townships.<sup>134</sup> That sanitation was limited by economics clearly explained the government's oversight towards improved social conditions, a pattern of neglect seen throughout this thesis.

Consequently, a group of Chathams fishermen at Owenga petitioned the government in 1924, requesting that it purchase land for those fishermen working for the fishing industry. Their petition stated, 'the shocking conditions

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<sup>132</sup> Correspondence, Constable G. H. Fry, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Wellington, 6 May 1916, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-1928, M1, 2/12/234, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>133</sup> Alan Ward, *Rangahaua Whanui National Overview*, Wellington: GP Publications, 1997, vol. 3, p. 280. When Judge Rogan presided over the Chatham Islands Native Land Court in 1870, he awarded at Te Awapatiki, 32,495 acres to Maori and 1977 acres to Moriori, which was leased to Thomas Ritchie. When Wi Naera Pomare sought a subdivision claim on 7 February 1885, the block was divided into Te Awapatiki 1a (of 7161 acres) and Te Awapatiki 1b (of 23,544 acres). Later, when Pomare died Te Awapatiki 1a was leased to Shand and Cox, whereas Ronald MacDonald owned Te Awapatiki 1b.

<sup>134</sup> Correspondence, Under Secretary of Lands and Survey to the Secretary Marine Department, 29 September 1921, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-1928, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.



under which at the present time we are compelled to live in order to gain our likelihood [sic] beggars description'.<sup>135</sup> The petitioners (some misspelt) included: John H. Prendeville, (Manager Owenga freezer works), Reginald A. McGregor, Matthew W. Donaldson, Peter Bowker, I. Martin, Ernie M. Guest, Theodor Nielsen [my grandfather], Albert Murphy [my great-great uncle], Cecil Wagstaff, Charlie H. Preece, Jack Wenton, L. Lagrofey, O. Lindstrom, and Richard Paynter.<sup>136</sup> Overall, as a group, the Chathams fishermen generally felt marginalised.

With no Crown lands, either near the Owenga or Kaingaroa fishing stations, the government sought freehold land at the fishing places. Accordingly, the Under-Secretary, Department of Lands and Survey, J. B. Thompson, informed the Marine Department that the land near the Owenga harbour was all freehold; Messrs. Rhodes and Macdonald held approximately 23,500 acres of Te Awapatiki Block No. 1B; the Chathams Fishing Company and the Canterbury Education Board held two small areas together of about 25 acres.<sup>137</sup> Because the Owenga Estate had 40 acres of available land, the Minister of Lands, A. D. McLeod, urged the trustees, Rhodes, Ross and Godby, 'to sell the area required for cutting up and allotting to fishermen', and steps be taken to acquire land under the voluntary acquisition clauses of the Land for Settlements Act, 1925.<sup>138</sup> Backed by Manager, John Renwick, the owners refused to sell for two reasons: the land was important to the running of the Owenga Estate sheep farm. Second, there may have been tensions because of religious differences between Renwick and the manager of the Owenga fishing station, Prendeville. Nevertheless, the

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<sup>135</sup> Petition, Fishermen, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Chatham Islands to the Hon. Minister of Lands, Wellington, 14 July 1924, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Correspondence, J. B. Thompson, Under-Secretary, Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington to the Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 18 August 1924, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>138</sup> A. D. McLeod, Minister of Lands, Wellington to Messrs. Rhodes, Ross and Godby, Barristers and Solicitors, Christchurch, 16 August 1926, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

Inspecting Engineer of the Public Works Department, H. H. Sharp, drew up a report in response to the frequent representations to the government for land acquisition.<sup>139</sup>

In his 1927 report, Sharp noted that Owenga had a population of approximately 150 people, who were mostly associated with the thriving fishing industry that employed forty to fifty men, the majority of whom were married and had families. Moreover, the Owenga School had a roll of thirty-eight children, 'almost the whole of whom are children of men engaged in the fishing industry'.<sup>140</sup> This observation is significant because education was one area that undermined all claims of government neglect. Indeed, according to Sharp, most of 'the better class of the population' was involved in the fishing industry, reflecting a somewhat biased sentiment about social status within the community. Second, the fishing industry was important to the general financial prosperity of the Chathams; both the Owenga and Kaingaroa fishing stations paid out about £10,000 a year, most of which went to the Chathams. Yet the company's works and accommodation for the fishermen, workmen and their families was on a mere 20 acres of land adjacent to the harbour.<sup>141</sup> Third, most of the landholders were absentees, while the remainder generally had high mortgages; therefore, neither the company nor individual fishermen (with two exceptions) had been able to purchase any additional land, because of its high cost. Hence, the employees were prevented from having a garden, a cow, and even a horse, all essential in the Chathams as 'boots and shoes in a more civilised community'.<sup>142</sup> This statement indicates that the Chathams local community was classed as backward, possibly even uncivilised.

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<sup>139</sup> Correspondence, J. B. Thompson, Under Secretary for Lands, Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington to H. H. Sharp, Inspecting Engineer, Public Works Department, 19 November 1927, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>140</sup> Report, H. H. Sharp, Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Department to the Marine Department, Wellington, 23 December 1927, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.



In 1928 the government finally obtained land for the fishermen. Consequently, James McCombs, and the representative of the Chathams Maori people, Sir Maui Pomare, praised the government for the 97 acres of land acquired under the Land Settlement Act, 1925. As James McCombs stated: 'I am willing, on behalf of the Hon. [Maui Pomare] the Minister, who represents the Maori people at the Chatham Islands, and on my own behalf, to thank the Government for what it has done'.<sup>143</sup> In particular, he thanked the Minister of Lands for allocating land to the Owenga fishermen, the land cut up into 21 sections had all been sold by 11 July 1930. David Holmes confirmed that the government purchased about 80 acres of land at Owenga, cutting it up into sections of three to four acres circa 1930, selling it off as building sites at a Waitangi auction to the fishermen for approximately £100 in 1932. Most fishermen, cleaners and factory hands bought a section, and built comfortable homes complete with fences, gardens, and ample grazing for a horse, and a cow, raising their standard of living.<sup>144</sup> Significantly, Labour supporter, Elizabeth McCombs (wife of James, and mother of Terence H. McCombs, Lyttelton MP) campaigned on behalf of the Chathams people and fishing industry, until her death in 1935. In September 1933 she was elected as New Zealand's first woman MP, believing that if the Labour Party got into power, it would benefit from the concern it had demonstrated to the Chathams.<sup>145</sup> The perceptions of government neglect towards housing and social conditions would be a perennial problem throughout this period of study.

In fact, as early as the 1900s a low standard of living was identified in the Chatham Islands. Later, in June 1946 the Minister of Internal Affairs, William E. Parry, told the islanders that, 'as citizens of New Zealand the 500 people of these

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<sup>143</sup> *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates*, (NZPD), 6 September 1928, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, Archives New Zealand. See Jean Garner, 'McCombs, James 1873-1933', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

<sup>144</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 124.

<sup>145</sup> Letter, G. Wiesner, Kaiwhata to T. H. McCombs, MP Lyttelton, 26 July 1936, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands General File, 1936-1953, M1, 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. See also, Jean Garner, 'McCombs, Elizabeth Reid 1873-1935', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

islands are entitled to all the amenities the Dominion can provide'.<sup>146</sup> Here two issues are noteworthy. First, both Terence McCombs and the Medical Officer had informed the Marine Department about the poor living conditions prevalent among the fishermen's residences, at Kaingaroa, owned by New Zealand Fisheries Limited.<sup>147</sup> Instead of ameliorating the social conditions, the Marine Department, however, fobbed the responsibility of the health problem onto the Health Department.<sup>148</sup> Second, in November 1946 resident Medical Practitioner, Dr G.T. Davies, highlighted the social problems relevant to government neglect in the *Dominion*, stating that the social conditions there were appalling with low standards of living, bad housing, poor diet, poor amenities, immorality and general anti-social activities. Despite this, one advantage for Davies in being the sole doctor was his close contact with the islanders, while earning some repute as a crusader for better conditions. Conversely, officials who visited the Chathams preferred to remain anonymous, even though they agreed with Davies's assumptions about the bad standard of living.<sup>149</sup> Similarly, journalist, Frank Simpson, asserted that based on either personal visits, or on department reports, such outspoken criticism provoked a series of defensive statements from government spokesmen.<sup>150</sup>

Simpson's *Chatham Exiles* highlighted the social conditions, and the Chathams fishing industry in 1949, especially Owenga, where, 'Around the shores of Chatham can be seen relics of other futile enterprises such as the ruins of the fish-freezing plant'.<sup>151</sup> At that time, fishermen reaped a rich harvest from fishing bands that were left untouched in the war years, supplying the trawler from Wellington.<sup>152</sup> At one level, fishing experts from the mainland doubted whether this venture would succeed, because of isolation problems and heavy losses in

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<sup>146</sup> S. J. S. Barker, Mount Mason, Hawarden, North Canterbury to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 27 June 1966, MS-Papers-0434-37, WTU.

<sup>147</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Marine Department to A. E. Hefford, Marine Department, 22 February 1946, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>148</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Marine Department to T. H. McCombs, MP, Wellington, 6 March 1946, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>149</sup> *Dominion*, 2 November 1946, p. 6. See Simpson, pp. 164-66.

<sup>150</sup> Simpson, p. 166.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*

bad weather.<sup>153</sup> At another level, Simpson stressed that it might overcome the problems of communication; the flying boat transported cargoes of fish to the Wellington market and as an economic undertaking, this method of handling the Chathams fishing trade was waiting to be seen.<sup>154</sup> For Simpson, the cultural, spiritual and material advancement of the Chathams depended on an impartial inquiry into Chathams conditions.<sup>155</sup> This request would be reiterated in the crayfish boom in light of what some residents perceived as the social invasion of the Chathams.

#### 1.4 Problems with Fishing and Infrastructure

Throughout the cod years technological problems arose concerning the maintenance of cool stores and mother ships. In 1946 Terence McCombs reported to the Marine Department that the Kaingaroa freezer was in a bad state. However, according to Weisner, New Zealand Fisheries Managing Director, R. S. Alward, had attempted to evade the Company's responsibilities here, claiming that the problems were rectified and materials had been sent to the Chathams for repairs.<sup>156</sup> McCombs then urged for the Marine Department to build a freezer at Owenga sufficient for 2,000 cases of fish, either on a cooperative basis owned by fishermen, and financed primarily by the government, or entirely financed and operated by the government.<sup>157</sup> However, when the Fisheries Inspector investigated the situation, he raised doubts as to whether the Chathams fishermen could work on a cooperative business. In a patronising tone, he contended that past experiences of the 'better classes of fishermen have

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>156</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Bureau of Industry to Fisherman, G. Wiesner, Kaiwhata, Chatham Islands, 9 August 1945, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>157</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Marine Department to A. E. Hefford, Marine Department, 22 February 1946, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. See G. H. Scholefield, (ed.), *Who's Who in New Zealand*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., Wellington: A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1951, p. 144. Terence Henderson McCombs (Lyttelton MP) from 1935; Under-Secretary to Minister of Finance 1945-1947; Minister of Education and Scientific and Industrial Research, 1947-1949.

registered failures in that line'.<sup>158</sup> Paradoxically, the Chathams Fishing Company (*Manuka*) proved to be a successful venture in the export of blue cod to Australia, as noted previously. Consequently, the Fisheries Inspector suggested a mother ship, like the *South Sea*, working from the mainland under good business management, because of the cost of the building, operations of a fish shop, refrigerators, and transportation from the Chathams.<sup>159</sup>

Again, in 1949 a new Owenga land freezer in conjunction with the *Manuka* was sought, because of increased fish catches. Investigating the situation, Chief Inspector of Fisheries M. W. Young compared the two ventures and found that the main drawbacks were: competition, fish conservation and the economic running of the *Manuka*. According to Young, with such intensive fishing the fish population in the fishing grounds would reduce; therefore: 'a further increase in price to the fishermen would be required to keep their operations on an economic footing'.<sup>160</sup> The *Manuka*'s advantage was that it saved fuel and fishing time; all grounds could be worked according to weather and fish stocks; the launches did not have to return to their home port each night, and the time between catching and freezing the fish was minimal. This meant that the fishing grounds could be rested. Conversely, the long periods away from home, the high running costs, inability to fish in bad weather, and limited freezing capacity for the daily amount of fish caught in fine weather reduced the fishermen's earning capacity, but as high fish yields showed in 1947 and 1948, this was not a serious factor.<sup>161</sup> Hence, Young stated that the Owenga venture would be uneconomical, the government could not find the finances to support it, and the freezer would cripple the *Manuka*.<sup>162</sup> Also, the government declined a proposal for a freezer at

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<sup>158</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Marine Department to T. H. McCombs, MP, Wellington, 6 March 1946, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

<sup>160</sup> Memorandum, M. W. Young, Chief Inspector of Fisheries to Secretary Marine Department, Fisheries Branch, Wellington, 8 February 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. The fishing area workable by day boats was 20-25 miles anchorage from any port, and the blue cod fishing grounds limited to the reefs and rough bottom.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid. See also Campbell, 'Historical Shipwrecks at the Chatham Islands'.

<sup>162</sup> Memorandum, M. W. Young, Chief Inspector of Fisheries to Secretary Marine Department, Fisheries Branch, Wellington, 8 February 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

Waitangi, until the economic freezing of other primary produce (for example, butter and meat) was examined, and the Waitangi to Owenga road made suitable for heavy traffic at all times of the year.<sup>163</sup> The issue of infrastructure resurfaced in the crayfish boom and will be discussed later.

The concept of conservation and overfishing detrimental to future stocks also became apparent in the Chathams at this time. In April 1949 as representative of the fishermen, Terence McCombs, MP, urged the government for a closed season for blue cod from October to December. However, the Minister of Marine, Fred Hackett, argued that with no fishing, the *Manuka* would be uneconomical, and the men would be forced back to the closed Kaingaroa freezer.<sup>164</sup> Further, if the *Manuka* stopped fishing from mid-October to mid-January, it would put the Chathams Fishing Company out of business. Because of an irregular shipping service to empty the freezer, and sometimes an idle Kaingaroa freezer, there was a loss of good fishing time: the fishermen stopped fishing when the freezer was full, until a steamer was available.<sup>165</sup> According to Hackett, the Marine Department's fishing policy of keeping the total catch down to a reasonable level meant that the spawning season was not the main issue, stating: 'Our policy as you are aware has been to keep the total catch within reasonable bounds. This has been done by preventing as far as possible the advent of new companies into the field at the Chathams, as it is considered that one Mother ship can take quite sufficient fish from these grounds'.<sup>166</sup> This statement indicated that the Marine Department had some control over fishing activity and fisheries management at that time unlike the later crayfish boom. The Chathams Fishing Company requested another vessel, like the *Manuka*, for the blue cod industry in early 1950. Incidentally, 1500 tons of blue cod was taken to the mainland in three years, bringing in a profit of over £15,000 to the islanders. Four reasons accounted for this request. First, the factors concerning

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Memorandum, F. Hackett, Minister of Marine to T. H. McCombs, Minister of Education, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, 12 May 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>165</sup> Memorandum, F. Hackett, Minister of Marine to T. H. McCombs, Minister of Education, 19 July 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.



the *Manuka* itself. It was often unseaworthy, slow, and because of cramped conditions on board it proved difficult to recruit crew. Moreover, only seven out of the ten planned trips were made owing to bad weather.<sup>167</sup> Second, the cod fishing industry was the only profitable industry for the Chathams, therefore, with another vessel operating between the mainland and the Chathams, the *Manuka* would receive fish at all times, though not in the area. Furthermore, the Chathams Fishing Company could become defunct, losing at least 500 tons of blue cod annually, affecting export trade to Australia, and a valuable loss of revenue to the Chathams, if this request was declined.<sup>168</sup> Third, despite land-based freezers providing better living conditions and a more stable industry, mother ships led to more efficient fishing operations. Also, the limited area in which the boats could fish, and the overfishing of the reefs within that radius, disadvantaged shore-based freezers.<sup>169</sup> Fourth, official opinion upheld that floating freezers, or mother ships, benefited the Chathams economy as a whole, whereas the profits from land-based freezers went to their owners. Accordingly, for this reason the Marine Department endeavoured to restrict the total weight of fish taken to 500-600 tons per annum.<sup>170</sup> However, in November 1953 Marine Superintendent A. Knight, noted that the trawler *Miro* which employed three islanders (two fishermen holding licences and one cleaner), had loaded only 50 cases of fish from the *Cobar* and about 185 fish cases had been dumped, because the *Cobar* was in a bad state of disrepair.<sup>171</sup> This evidence demonstrated that the problems of fishing and infrastructure were linked to transportation difficulties and isolation.

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<sup>167</sup> Correspondence, McGavin and MacGoun, Barristers and Solicitors, Wellington to Mr MacDonald, Minister for Defence, Parliament Buildings, Wellington, 17 March 1950, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Memorandum, W. C. Smith, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington, 4 April 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>170</sup> Annual Report, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T. G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>171</sup> Correspondence, A. D. Knight, Marine Superintendent, Chatham Islands to Marine Secretary, Wellington, 20 November 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

For example, in mid-December the *Port Waikato* carried 1300 cases of frozen fish to the mainland, but despite this full quota of fish dispatched, the Chathams Fishing Company's profit margins depreciated, because of the shipping strike on the mainland, and the high cost of alternative freighting. Consequently, the *Viti* (Tasman Co.,) took a small load of fish to Australia, and some fish was freighted by air to Wellington. Also, the Chathams County Council incurred additional expenses for road maintenance, and with the building of the new shore freezer, a reason for lifting the dues exemption on the fishing industry.<sup>172</sup> As the 1951 Department of Island Territories' Report showed, the shore-based freezers faced similar trawler opposition, in 1936, whereby the county council had issued a surcharge on all imports and exports, to compensate for the non-payment of land rates, when the Owenga freezer closed in 1937.<sup>173</sup> Still, with the industry's small "land stake" in the Chathams, and use of amenities, Judge Harvey had stipulated that the fishing industry was free of import and export dues; the council's sole source of revenue. Also, since no road existed between Owenga and Waitangi, the farming community was not taxed for road maintenance used by the fisheries.<sup>174</sup> Thus, the problems associated with fishing and infrastructure were inextricably linked to the Chathams economy.

### 1.5 Economic Effects of Fisheries

Historically, the isolated Chatham Islands have relied on fisheries to sustain their economy; yet, many islanders were affected by the commercial exploitation of the Chathams seas, and Crown fish management policies that put them out of the fishing industry. In the 2001 Waitangi Tribunal Report, *Rekohu: A Report on Moriori and Ngati Mutunga Claims in the Chatham Islands*, Wai 64, Moriori and Maori claimants alleged that they were affected more than Pakeha Island fishermen because they had customary interests such as food 'cognisable as rights in law' that were denied. Hence, a national settlement was determined in a

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<sup>172</sup> Annual Report, Department of Island Territories, 1951, Chatham Islands Official Papers, MS-Papers-0619: 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>173</sup> King and Morrison, *A Land Apart*, p. 139.

<sup>174</sup> Annual Report, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T. G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.



later period.<sup>175</sup> According to the *Wai 64* report, over-fishing of inshore stock by mainland fishing companies in the 1950s depleted stocks and placed the island industry into decline in the 1960s.<sup>176</sup> The islanders' small launches were no match for the mainland trawlers in harvesting the offshore fisheries.<sup>177</sup> Like farming, the government failed to provide development loans to get Chathams Maori into fishing businesses: an important economic resource. However, unlike pastoral farming, Maori had traditional experience in fishing. Perhaps, insufficient money accounted for lack of Maori fisheries development, just like farming. Possibly, aversion to Maori customary fishing claims, and their interest in their surrounding waters in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, accounted for the lack of assistance. Nonetheless, according to the report, a definitive oversight occurred in the government's failure to provide assistance to Maori to purchase boats or trawlers of their own.<sup>178</sup> For commercial exploitation, licences were required under law; yet, Maori could claim an independent aboriginal right in fishing, whether commercial or otherwise.

In May 1953 further dissatisfaction with the government occurred when the Chathams Fishing Company applied for a loan (financial assistance) from the Crown, because their profits were down from overfishing. Investigating the situation, the Marine Department found that the company employed 32 personnel: 22 fishers as crew (6 boats at 3-4 boat) 8 cleaners and an engineer at the fish factory, and two transport workers. Still, for the year ended 31 March 1952, the company had landed about 350 tons of dressed fish in Wellington, equivalent to about 500 to 525 tons of green fish.<sup>179</sup> Even though the Chathams Fishing Company, and the Wellington Fishermen's Cooperative's fishing territories slightly overlapped, the government believed that their individual fishing returns would be unaffected, unless they extended their activities. That

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<sup>175</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 1.3.2, p. 9.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, claim, 12.5, p. 240.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, claim, 12.5, p. 239.

<sup>179</sup> Memorandum, E. P. Doogue, Department of Island Territories to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 20 May 1953, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

Meo and Dellabarca's fishing companies were in opposition, because of past disputes, meant that joint charters were not considered.<sup>180</sup>

Nevertheless, the government declined to grant financial assistance for the Chathams Fishing Company, a decision upheld by the Marine Department, Treasury Department, and the State Advances Corporation. The applicants were advised by Acting General Manager, J. D. Wood that under Section 29 of the State Advances Corporation Act, 1936, the Corporation could make loans for development of existing industries, or for the establishment of new industries, but under existing government policy, the Owenga Company could not receive financial assistance from the Corporation. According to the Marine Department's Secretary, W. C. Smith, and the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, M. W. Young, the proposition was unviable, because of the enduring capitalisation and running cost of the Owenga freezer. Also, if fish prices receded transport charges could cripple Chathams fishing, and the fishermen allegedly were difficult and demanding.<sup>181</sup> The government also declined financial assistance to Company Manager, Albert Meo.<sup>182</sup> This had implications for Chathams fisheries and future development.

According to David Holmes, Meo sold the Owenga Fishing Company to the local fishermen, who carried on as a fishermen's cooperative with the aid of a government loan. However, because the Owenga fishing venture was uneconomic, with high overheads, such as fish cleaning, packing, wages, fuel, and transportation costs, and low prices paid in Wellington, it closed after two or three seasons. The fishermen received 1s 4d to 1s 6d a pound for blue cod on the Wellington wharf, but it sold at 3s 6d in the market. Consequently, the government took the Company over, but later sold it to Messrs Yovich and Hopkins of Hikurangi Fisheries, North Auckland, who operated during the crayfish bonanza. With the decline of the crayfish industry in 1971, the business sold out to the Chathams Packing Company.<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 125.

## 1.6 Fishing and Conservation

The repeated failure of the government to heed the islanders' pleas and impose fishing restrictions was a recurring theme that resurfaced in the crayfish boom. The government refused to grant a closed season in 1913, 1936, 1937, 1946, 1951, and 1953. This caused a rift between the government and the islanders who frequently petitioned the government. For example, in July 1913 a group of Chatham Islands Maori petitioned the government stating that they wanted, 'the seas of our forefathers reserved, not to trawl or to be fished on, by the Fishing Company. We wish your Government to look after and reserve these fishing grounds for our own consumption, for food, and not to sell'.<sup>184</sup> The boundary of the reserve started from Whangaroa in a straight line across the sea to Te Ngaio, then curved along the coast to Tiki Tiki, Waitangi, the Bluff, Kekerione, and along the coast to Whangaroa where it commenced.<sup>185</sup> The petitioners included: Te Tapuhi Arapata, Paki Hianu, Rikimuhiki, Te Hau Mataira, Toone Pura, Ngamoni Whari Witi, Te Oti Nataro, Wiremu Dix, Piriki and Rakete Tipene.<sup>186</sup> Further, Chathams Maori requested that the government reserve a portion of Petre Bay solely for the use of Maori who fished there for food. However, the Marine Department's Secretary, George Allport, stated that the law did not give any authority to specifically reserve any fishing place for the sole use of Maori.<sup>187</sup> This action demonstrated the government's reluctance to prevent overfishing and ensure sustainability of future stocks.

As the largest employer of labour, however, the fishing industry benefited the Chatham Islands. Again, when New Zealand Fisheries bought South Sea Fisheries, in 1936, the Chathams fishermen hoped that the two companies would agree on conservation measures concerning a closed season for blue cod, but

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<sup>184</sup> Correspondence, Chatham Islands Maori, Waitangi, Chatham Islands to the Native Minister, Wellington, 11 July 1913, M1 2/12/1/pt. 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Some Maori names may be misspelt because of difficulty reading the names on an old document.

<sup>187</sup> Correspondence, George Allport, Marine Department to H. Scott, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 20 August 1913, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Petre Bay, M1 2/12/1/ pt. 1, Archives New Zealand.

they remained unheeded.<sup>188</sup> Concerned for the Chathams people, Terence McCombs had urged the Minister of Marine, L. B. Campbell, for a closed season in August 1936. Although Campbell acknowledged Kaingaroa fishermen, Gus Wiesner and L. Duncan's request for a closed season, he could not comply with the South Sea Fishing Company's Chairman of Directors, A. L. Cropp, and Secretary, James Ainger's request for regulations regarding fishing operations, and a closed season during spawning for blue cod in 1937.<sup>189</sup> Perhaps, this was because of the Company's business intentions, and the fact that the Marine Department disapproved of new firms entering the fishing industry for the export trade.

As Under-Secretary for the Minister of Finance, Terence McCombs called for a closed season in February 1946. In response, the Minister of Marine, Jas O'Brien, stated that, 'prescribing a close season or any other restriction on fishing operations is that restrictive regulations can only be justified on the grounds that it is necessary for the proper conservation of a fishery or for its national and economical exploitation in the public interest, present or future'.<sup>190</sup> This statement exemplifies a definite oversight by the government in regard to the islanders' livelihood and economic wellbeing. When Chathams fisherman, W. Donaldson requested a closed season for blue cod during the months of October, November and December, in June 1946, he stressed that fish stocks would benefit, as the catch was low during these months. The Marine Department declined this request for two reasons: first, because blue cod spawned in the months of September and October, a closed season would not protect the spawning fish. Second, unlike line fishery, trawl fishery did not

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<sup>188</sup> Letter, G. Wiesner, Kaiwhata to T. H. McCombs, MP Lyttelton, 26 July 1936, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands General File, 1936-1953, M1, 2/12/551, Part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>189</sup> Correspondence, L. B. Campbell, Secretary, Marine Department to Chief Inspector Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 28 April 1937, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands General File, 1936-1953, M1, 2/12/551, Part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>190</sup> Correspondence, Jas O'Brien, Minister of Marine to T. H. McCombs, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the Minister of Finance, Wellington, 21 February 1946, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

disturb fishing operations in the spawning season.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, the government's reluctance to impose fishing restrictions effected fish supplies.

In May 1949 the implications of overfishing were still causing concern. Ted Nielsen stressed that many promised investigations concerning the conservation of the Chathams fishing resources had yet to be made, and a report about seals from R. A. Falla was pending.<sup>192</sup> Surprisingly, in July 1949 the Minister of Marine, Hackett, stated that: 'Not so long ago the fisherman wanted a shore freezer, as well as the *Manuka*, now they want a closed season'.<sup>193</sup> Therefore, the department declined a closed season.

The 1951 Resident Commissioner's Annual Report revealed significant information about Chatham Islands fisheries, past and present. As table one shows, the *South Sea's* returns per cwt from 1935 to 1941 were: 1935-36, 7,951; 1936-37, 8,739; 1937-38, 9,458; 1938-39, 11,361; 1939-40, 9,636; 1940-41, 2,769. In comparison, the shore stations per cwt from 1935 to 1946 were: 1935-36, 17,279; 1936-37, 6,373; 1937-38, 6,448; 1938-39, 2,299; 1939-40, 4,673; 1940-41, 3,702; 1941-42, 3,908; 1942-43, 4,176; 1943-44, 4,326; 1944, 4,420; 1945, 2,078, 1946 figures were incomplete.<sup>194</sup> The *South Sea* took on a substantial amount of blue cod from the Chathams waters until 1940, when stocks diminished because of overfishing. In comparison, the shore stations processed most fish from 1935 to 1936, and in amounts less than the mother ship, with fluctuations in decline. Moreover, before the *South Sea* was taken for war service, she took out so much fish from the Chathams waters that the catch

<sup>191</sup> Correspondence, Secretary, Marine Department to W. Donaldson, Owenga, Chatham Islands, 5 June 1946, M1/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>192</sup> Correspondence, Fisherman, Theodor F. Nielsen, Owenga, Chatham Islands to T. H. McCombs, Minister of Education, Parliament Buildings, 29 May 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>193</sup> Memorandum, F. Hackett, Minister of Marine to T. H. McCombs, Minister of Education, 19 July 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>194</sup> Annual Report, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T.G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary for Marine, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

per annum showed a steady decline, each trip took longer to load up, returning to the mainland incompletely loaded.<sup>195</sup>

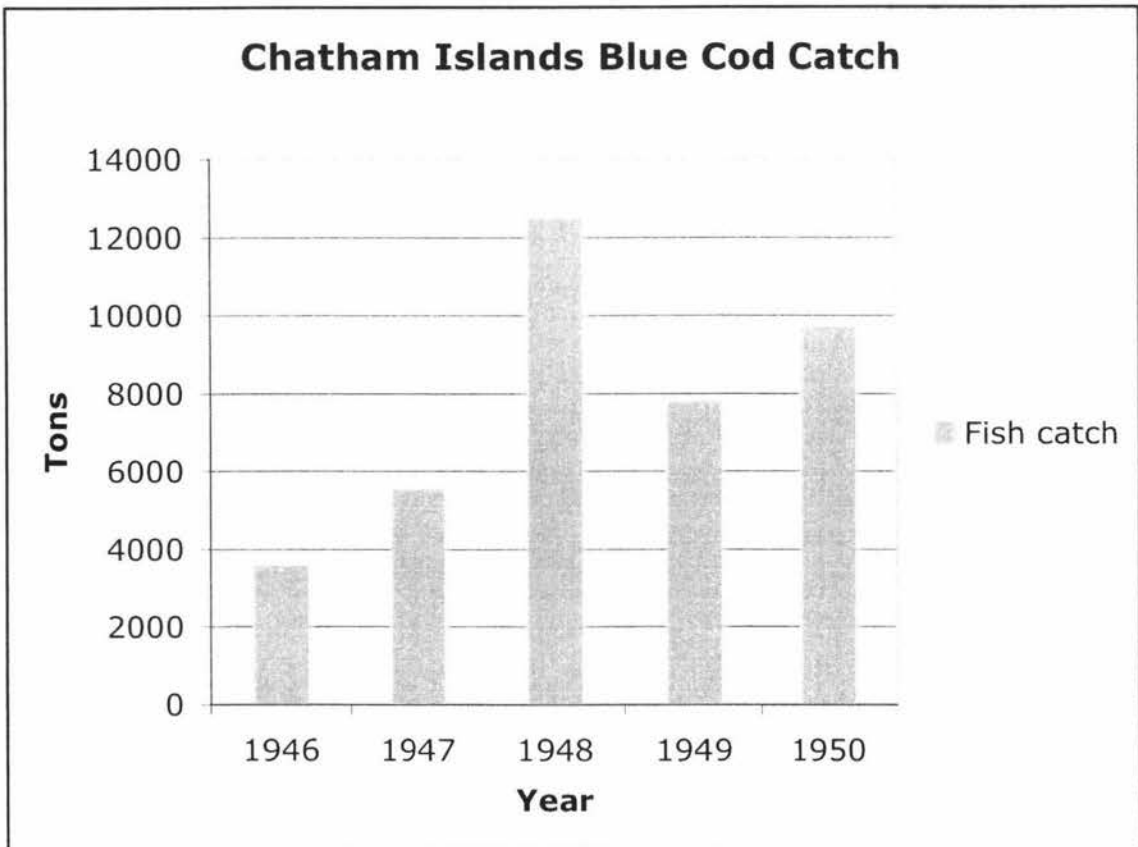
Table 1.

Chatham Islands Blue Cod Catch Per Cwt		1935-1946	
<i>The South Sea</i>		Shore Stations	
1935-36	7,951	1935-36	17,279
1936-37	8,739	1936-37	6,373
1937-38	9,458	1937-38	6,448
1938-39	11,361	1938-39	2,299
1939-40	9,636	1939-40	4,673
1940-41	2,769	1940-41	3,702
		1941-42	3,908
		1942-43	4,176
		1943-44	4,326
		1944-45	4,420
		1945-46	2,078
		1946-	N/A

The graph below shows the amount of fish caught in tonnage from 1946 to 1950: 1946, 3586; 1947, 5565; 1948, 12490; 1949, 7816; 1950, 9718.<sup>196</sup> These figures indicate that the mother ships took on a substantial amount of fish from Chatham waters, especially in 1948. This graph also shows a recovery in blue cod catches 1946-1950, suggesting that the government was justified in its claim that there were sufficient fish available.

<sup>195</sup> Memorandum, W. C. Smith, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington, 4 April 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.



In early 1951 the Resident Commissioner drew attention to the fact that different companies, some successful, had exploited the blue cod beds lying off the Chatham Islands and adjacent islands over the past years. While some islanders had supplied most of the labour, both for fishing and cleaning the fish, others had managed to invest some of their available capital to buy fishing launches, employing local men who after paying a percentage of their returns to the owners received payment on a weight basis at a central depot.<sup>197</sup> Overall, the 1950s was a prosperous time for New Zealand, especially in its export trade, which saw fewer restrictions on fishing licences.

In March 1953 Dellabarca, for instance, wanted more fishing licences for mainland fishermen, intending to reopen the old Kaingaroa freezer, because the

<sup>197</sup> Annual Report, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T.G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.



*Cobar* had limited freezer capacity, and could handle only five tons of green fish at a time (two boats made a catch of over two tons).<sup>198</sup> Because the Chathams had a policy of only issuing ten licences per year, Geary stated that: 'It seems that he is putting the thin edge of the wedge for more boats on the island, hence the fishing industry here will suffer to a greater extent than when the *South Sea* was here'.<sup>199</sup> The Chathams fishing industry clearly needed constraint; the harvest taken being more than necessary for the preservation of the fishing grounds socio-economically. Ironically, the Marine Department informed Dellabarca that another boat to pioneer new fisheries (set nets, long lines for groper, craypots, trawl, but not line) could reduce overfishing with the islanders' approval, but, if any unlicensed boat landed fish for the *Cobar*, the department would take action: the three-mile limit still applied.<sup>200</sup>

Later, in November 1953 Ted Nielsen stated to the Marine Department that Chathams fishermen wanted steps taken to prevent the trawler *Miro*, or other fishing boats, returning to the mainland from the Chatham Islands fishing grounds.<sup>201</sup> Again, the Marine Department responded that no authority prevented the *Miro* fishing near the Chathams provided her catch was landed at Wellington.<sup>202</sup> Most islanders believed that the influx of mainland fishing vessels jeopardised their livelihoods, and they should reap the benefits accrued from their rich fishery resource, rather than the profits going to the mainland.

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<sup>198</sup> Correspondence, Constable Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 27 March 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Correspondence, W. C. Smith, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to Constable Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 20 April 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>201</sup> Telegram, Theodor F. Nielsen, Chatham Islands to the Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington 3 November 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. See Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 129, Owned by Jack Wilson of Wellington, the trawler *Miro* fished for blue cod and groper in the 1950s. It also carried mail. With a crew of four, they line-fished, cleaned, cased and froze the fish, sailing to Wellington when her freezer was full where the catch was off loaded. A round trip would take a month to six weeks. Also, the *Miro* trawled for crayfish and drill between the Horns and the Western Reef from the mid 1960s.

<sup>202</sup> Telegram, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to Theodor Nielsen, Chatham Islands, 4 November 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

Ironically, Wiesner informed the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Young, that fishermen sought work elsewhere, because of poor fishing at Kaingaroa, yet the local superintendent could do nothing about the bad cases of fish on board the *Cobar*.<sup>203</sup> Such a statement illustrates the effects of failed conservation measures by the government at that time.

In November 1954 the *Christchurch Star-Sun* noted the constraints on the Chathams fishing industry by the government at the expense of the islanders' livelihood. According to the Owenga Fishing Company's Manager, James Jurie, and member of the Chathams County Council, the New Zealand Government had granted only eleven fishing boat licences, and a maximum fish catch of 500 tons a year, yet, mainland trawler's reaped wealth from the grounds without restriction, arguing: 'When islanders applied to the Marine Department for more licences the excuse was given that licences had to be limited to protect the fishing grounds. Yet New Zealand trawlers were allowed to come at any time'.<sup>204</sup> Furthermore, the article discussed the recurring problem of the Chathams isolation, as seen in the stopping of the November to April, Tasman Empire Airways (TEAL) service to the Island, and the inactivity of the vessel *Port Waikato* since August. Accordingly, 150 tons of fish were held up without shipping facilities and transportation. Fortunately, the *Holmlea* transported the fish to the mainland, but the islanders still lacked provision and fuel for the freezer.<sup>205</sup>

According to the Waitangi Tribunal, the islanders' perceptions of overfishing were valid. The *Wai 64* Report found that Maori petitions to the government to have their inshore fisheries reserved against over-fishing by mainland fishing companies had been unheeded since 1913.<sup>206</sup> Maori were on the periphery, yet they fished for the trawlers and processed fish for mainland companies.

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<sup>203</sup> Correspondence, G. Wiesner, Kaiwhatu, Chatham Islands to M. W. Young, Chief Inspector of Fisheries, Wellington, 1 November 1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>204</sup> *Christchurch Star-Sun*, 4 November 1954, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 12.5, p. 240.

According to historian, Alan Ward, both Moriori and Maori claimant groups alleged that the Crown failed to protect and preserve areas of customary significance for mahinga kai and cultural harvesting and the traditions associated with these practices.<sup>207</sup> Traditionally, Maori had a highly developed ethic for the conservation of the fish resource, which Chathams Maori upheld. The people had customary rights in respect of the seas, and with a small land resource, Moriori and then Maori were more dependent on the ocean's resources than most Maori.<sup>208</sup> Maori were allegedly denied the right to harvest fish from their traditional resource.<sup>209</sup> Moreover, the government's legislation and policies for the Chatham Islands were not in accordance with the claimants' rangatiratanga (self determination) over their fisheries. Traditionally, areas of the Chathams coast had been used for the islanders' subsistence, including the gathering of paua, therefore, Kaumatua declared areas to be kept free of commercial use in 1972.<sup>210</sup>

### 1.7 Perceptions of Chatham Islands Fishermen and Class Affiliation

Thus, far the perceptions of government neglect associated with a pattern of overfishing have been demonstrated. In explaining why this was the case, and to what extent it affected the islanders, a number of points are worth noting. First, the correspondence between Marine officials and individual accounts criticised the islanders as lazy. For example, in June 1926 Fisheries Expert, A. E. Hefford, stated that Zohrab employed mostly Maori fishermen, and though skilful in their work, they were not particularly industrious. Hence, the reason why Zohrab wanted to employ more Shetland fishermen (in addition to the six he already employed), as seemingly they were more steady and reliable.<sup>211</sup> Zohrab's sentiment that 'the inhabitants of the Chatham Islands have nearly all a strain of Maori blood, and the characteristics of the Maori was that if he had a few pounds

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<sup>207</sup> Ward, *Rangahaua Whanui National Overview*, p. 287.

<sup>208</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 12.5, pp. 240-41.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, claim, 12.5, p. 240.

<sup>210</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 12.5. p. 242.

<sup>211</sup> Memorandum, Fisheries Expert, Marine Department, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 23 June 1926, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-1928, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

in his pocket he did not care to work<sup>212</sup> was clearly coloured by his own perception. Presumably, this perceived laziness prevented Zohrab from fishing continuously, but it may also be construed as racist. Moreover, government officials failed to recognise that Chathams fishers' livelihood depended on the weather.

In May 1947 the *New Zealand Herald* reported that the Chathams fishing grounds had barely been exploited since 1941 because of wartime conditions.<sup>213</sup> During World War Two the government criticised Chatham Islands fishermen, because they refused to fish, thereby affecting New Zealand fish supplies.<sup>214</sup> There is no explicit statement to this effect, but it might be argued that the islanders' reluctance to become involved in fishing stemmed from their belief that the government had ignored the Chathams in peacetime. Therefore, they may have believed the government had no moral authority to call on them during wartime. Nevertheless, the Marine Department did initiate a wartime project, specifically, for the Chatham Islands, requesting that the fishermen consider the possibility of going to the mainland to fish in wartime conditions. Because the Admiralty wanted the trawler *South Sea* for naval duties, the fishing industry was reorganised. The Inspector of Fisheries, Constable Spencer, however, claimed that the fishermen were more interested in Italy's entry into the war than the resettlement issue. The majority, supposedly, indicated that they would be better off staying on the Chathams, where the cost of living was cheaper.<sup>215</sup> Also, some fishermen with large families ran small sheep holdings to supplement their fishing income, and some single fishermen were liable for military service with the ballot system.

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<sup>212</sup> Report, Minister of Marine, Marine Department, Wellington to C. G. Godfrey, Secretary, Marine Department, 1 October 1926, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-1928, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>213</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 16 May 1947, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>214</sup> Memorandum, Constable C. L. Spencer, Inspector of Sea-fishing, Chatham Islands to the Secretary, Marine Department, 8 August 1940, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.* Yet, one man, Epiha Hough, (Jack) designated a quarter caste native, about 45 years of age and married, allegedly stated in Spencer's presence and to the others that he would shift to New Zealand, if he could get a fishing stand.

At this time, the catching of commercially viable quantities of fish and the problems of disposal, storage capacity, and transportation caused concern. Ironically, in light of previous neglect, the government proposed to buy land off New Zealand Fisheries to build a freezer at Port Hutt, lease it to New Zealand Fisheries, and build a freezer on the abandoned Owenga site.<sup>216</sup> Later, in September 1940 the government bought 1621 acres of land, at Kaingaroa, at £1350.<sup>217</sup> When the Admiralty withdrew the *South Sea*, in June 1940, the *Tees* transported fish to Wellington, but the local fishermen found fishing for a shore station inconvenient, because of time reaching the fishing grounds, fishing, then returning at nightfall. Conversely, when the *South Sea* accompanied them around the fishing grounds, they lay at night in the nearby bays.<sup>218</sup> That the fishermen were idle for two to three days, whenever the ten fishing boats brought their catch back to Kaingaroa, alarmed government officials.<sup>219</sup>

The fishermen's attitude to work caused a rift between the government and the Chathams fishermen. Hence, Crown officials attitude to race and class resurfaced once more, because the fishermen saw themselves as a tight working class: a reflection of their social status in the wider community. Furthermore, in February 1941 New Zealand Fisheries Manager, Prendeville, informed the Marine Department that only three launches had fished since January, yet seven launches lay idle at Kaingaroa because of fishermen's apathy, which he regarded as pathetic considering war conditions. Concerned about the Chathams Fishing Industry, Prendeville called for fishermen's licences not engaged in the industry

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<sup>216</sup> Memorandum, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to M. W. Young, Senior Fisheries Officer, Marine Department, 8 August 1940, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>217</sup> Memorandum, District Land Registrar, Christchurch to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 23 September 1940, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. (See New Zealand Fisheries Limited, Part Wharekauri IR2: Certificate of Title, Volume 461, Folio, 305).

<sup>218</sup> Memorandum, Constable, C. L. Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 March 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>219</sup> Memorandum, Constable C. L. Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, (Report, Fishing Industry and Licences, Chatham Islands), 7 February 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.



to be cancelled, and pressed for government action. This resulted in the Inspector of Fisheries, Spencer, reporting on the state of Chathams fishery.<sup>220</sup>

In his report, Spencer pointed out two factors. First, there had been a lull in fishing since October 1940, because of the fishermen's reluctance to fish; for instance, only 900 cases of fish were in store when the *Port Waikato* called. For this reason, her future cargo would consist of only sheep from the Chathams. In Spencer's view, considering the number of fishing boats, the good fishing weather, and the need for fish on the mainland, the behaviour of the apathetic fishermen was unjustified. Their apparently cavalier approach offended the sensibilities of government officials who had expected the fishermen to act submissively, and in a patriotic manner in wartime. Second, the Chathams fishermen had obstructed the important fishing industry in not recognising that the country was at war, and that most New Zealand trawlers were used for war purposes. Paradoxically, Spencer reversed his stance being determined to keep the fishing industry moving, especially after the sinking of the *Holmwood* (former S.S. *Tees*), stating that the licensing of fishing boats, and fishermen, was unnecessary for that current year until the resumption of mail. Only two boats had fished without a licence since early 1941.<sup>221</sup> About sixteen Chatham Islanders enlisted during wartime and their names may be seen at the Memorial Hall in the Chathams. Some men stayed behind because they were needed for "central industry" (farming and fishing).<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>220</sup> Memorandum, T. J. Schmitt, Secretary, Department of Industries and Commerce, Tourist and Publicity, Wellington to L. B. Campbell, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 24 February 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>221</sup> Memorandum, Constable Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, to Secretary Marine Department, Wellington, (Report, Fishing Industry and Licences, Chatham Islands), 7 February 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>222</sup> Interview with Allen Nielsen, 25 January 2009. Some of the islanders who enlisted during wartime were Jackson Whaiteri and Alfred Preece (Maori Battalion), brothers Hector, Colin, and Harold McGregor (Middle East), Adrian Carson (Air Force gunner, France), his brother was Manager of the Kaingaroa Estate, Robert Pomare (Infantry), Oscar Johanson and Captain Douglas Nielsen (Navy). Nielsen took ammunition to the troops stationed in the Pacific Islands (Later in 1978 he was awarded a MBE for supervision of port development, Dampier, Western Australia). Bill Joker, Allen Nielsen, Reg McGregor jnr.,

The attitudes of the government officials towards the Chathams fishermen caused bitterness among the Chathams fishing community. When Spencer, for example, urged the fishermen to recommence fishing some fishermen declined, as they had plenty of seasonal work ashore. With the owners of four launches running small sheep holdings, they were not so dependent on the fishing industry for money, and when their launches were idle, they did shearing, dipping and so forth. Crews either found seasonal work or were employed by boat owners. Still, Spencer argued that if at least four or five fishing boats kept the freezer working to its capacity, the fishermen could work on their farms and fish continuously, weather permitting, and, 'only a severe threat to their position as fishermen will jerk the majority out of their lethargy'.<sup>223</sup> Consequently, in March, the Secretary of Marine, Campbell, authoritatively, stated that the failure to fish without a good reason meant that the government would not supply the fishermen with licences, or benzine supplies.<sup>224</sup> This implied that they recognised the community was acting collectively, and would not respond to patriotic arguments, so a more coercive approach was taken.

In late February 1941 the Marine Department had drawn up a list of men and boats fishing compared to those idle, hoping that the Chathams fishing industry would return to normal when a steamer service resumed.<sup>225</sup> In this sense, Spencer recognised that October, November and December were conservation months when the cod spawned. However, the islanders true to their comradeship had commenced fishing in mid-January, the freezing station being ready to accept fish early January. Accordingly, the first boat *Minnie* owned by M. W.

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Tom Tuuta were in the Occupation Force based at Japan. Later, Alfred Preece and Tom Tuuta obtained rehabilitation land at Owenga. Those who remained for central industry were Charlie Preece, Herbie Preece (Pitt Island), Philip Nielsen, and Donaldsons.

<sup>223</sup> Memorandum, Constable Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington (Report, Fishing Industry and Licences, Chatham Islands), 7 February 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>224</sup> Memorandum, L. B. Campbell, Secretary, Marine Department to the Chief Inspector of Fisheries, 6 March 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>225</sup> Memorandum, L. B. Campbell, Secretary, Marine Department to Constable Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 28 February 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.



Donaldson, and, son Maurice Donaldson, was followed by the Preece brother's boat *Fern*, then, Rex and Leslie Donaldson's the *Puanga*, and in February the remaining boats commenced fishing, except R. and J. Brown's, the *Margaret*, P. Dix's, the *Silverdawn*, and Epiha Hough's, the *Rosa Maree*.<sup>226</sup> Moreover, the *Margaret* had not fished since October 1940, the *Silverdawn* since June 1940, and the *Rosa Maree* since November 1940. Although the South Seas Fishing Company at Christchurch owned the *Rosa Maree*, Maori fisherman, Epiha Hough, used it for fishing, and paid the company a percentage of the receipts. Overall, apart from these three boats, fishing continued spasmodically at Kaingaroa; arguably, the islanders were concerned about conservation of their fisheries because the government had unfairly treated them in peacetime.

The government's report levelled further criticism at the young Chathams fishermen who they alleged were irresponsible and fished only when they felt inclined, preferring to go shooting or have a day's laze: such pastimes being enjoyed in bad weather. This grievance culminated in March 1941 when Spencer called for "outsider" fishermen from the mainland to replace Chathams fishermen as labour, even taking over their boats, arguing that an influx of new fishermen would overcome the lethargy, resulting in more fishing days.<sup>227</sup> These wartime plans, however, did not happen. The actions of the Chathams fishermen offer a counter-narrative to many recent New Zealand war histories aimed at celebrating the war effort.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Memorandum, Constable, C. L. Spencer, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 March 1941, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Recent examples of war histories authored by staff of the Ministry for Culture and Heritage include: Megan Hutching (ed.) with Ian McGibbon and Alison Parr: forward by the Right Honourable Helen Clark, *Against the Rising Sun: New Zealanders Remember the Pacific War*, Auckland: HarperCollins Publishers in association with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2006; Megan Hutching (ed.) with Ian McGibbon: forward by the Right Honourable Helen Clark, *The Desert Road: New Zealanders Remember the North African Campaign Campaign*, Auckland: HarperCollins Publishers in association with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2005; Megan Hutching (ed.) with Roberto Rabel: forward by the Right Honourable Helen Clark, *A Fair Sort of Battering: New Zealanders Remember the Italian Campaign*, Auckland: HarperCollins

In the 1950s the government continued to regard the islanders as unproductive, and seemed to prefer “outsider” fishermen as labour. One example was when Jurie requested a wine licence in September 1950 for the Owenga fishermen, and the Resident Commissioner, J. Neville, in response claimed that Jurie was “a go-getter” out to make a profit. Yet, when Jurie alleged that a small group of resident native fishermen at Owenga breached the law, Neville contended that he had known that the natives concerned had purchased large quantities of beer for many years, and the parties lasting several days at the fishermen’s houses were harmless. Although the parties could end up in fights if the islanders acquired wine. Following this, the Department of Justice enquired into the transfer of a wine seller’s licence from the mainland to the Chathams.<sup>229</sup> Paradoxically, when the Owenga freezer opened in late 1951, Neville alleged that the local fishermen fished for only three out of twelve days, refused to fish in fine weather, partied for several days and were uncooperative.<sup>230</sup>

Another example was when the Secretary of the Marine Department, Smith, stated that he would keep the fishermen employed, but they would have to work to retain the concession and not party. In discussion with the President of the Seamen’s Union, Fintan Patrick Walsh, the general consensus was that the Owenga men would pull their weight when Walsh placed the alternative to them.<sup>231</sup> Walsh had influenced the direction of the industrial and political wings of the industrial movement for more than 30 years.<sup>232</sup> Overall, the Chathams fishermen’s point of view concerning their pay rates and dangerous conditions at sea was not heard.

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Publishers in association with the History Group, Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2004.

<sup>229</sup> J. Neville, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands to J. Gifford, Acting Under-Secretary, Department of Justice, Wellington, 25 September 1950, IA 1 97/10, W2603, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>230</sup> Correspondence, J. Neville, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 14 October 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>231</sup> Correspondence, W. C. Smith, Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington to J. Neville, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 30 October 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>232</sup> Pat Walsh, ‘Walsh, Fintan Patrick 1894-1963’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

In 1960 Doctor W. Tucker wrote an article in the *New Zealand Medical Journal*, about the social and economic conditions in the Chatham Islands, he had experienced as resident there in 1958. Deemed a special area, he drew from islanders' perspectives, his own observations and a dearth of publications.<sup>233</sup> According to Tucker, the Chathams, though a marginal seat in the Lyttelton electorate, was part of New Zealand politically, but not geologically or geographically, the reason why it had received a fair share of government attention over the past two years, despite a population of 500.<sup>234</sup> He further attributed the public profile of the Chathams to the 'remarkable energy in the cult of letter writing, often malicious, to people in authority in New Zealand' that he believed the islanders engaged in.<sup>235</sup> Though biased at times, Tucker's assessments are historically insightful about apathy, and what he termed the "manana attitude" among the islanders. According to Tucker, such a characteristic was seen in other isolated mainland communities, or on other islands (the Spanish word "manana" means procrastination, or a slow attitude). Hence, a "Chatham Island time" or an easy-going attitude of the Island has prevailed. Nevertheless, in such communities, a natural suspicion to outsiders has also prevailed, confirming Arbuckle's assumption, 'that administration neglect by the government and suspicion of outsiders united the islanders' in the Chatham Islands.<sup>236</sup>

### 1.7.1 Fishermen as a Tight Working Class

There were flow-on effects. The Chathams fishing community had many characteristics of a "tight working class" group, including a strong sense of group loyalty. Indeed, arguably, a class struggle would develop between the business interests of the capitalists, aspiring to be the upper class, and the Chathams fishers: the workers within the Chathams fishing industry.<sup>237</sup> Hence, a

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<sup>233</sup> Dr W. N. Tucker, 'The Chatham Islands', *New Zealand Medical Journal*, February 1960, p. 72.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>236</sup> Arbuckle, p. 60.

<sup>237</sup> The term "tight working class" refers to a group of workers that share a strong sense of solidarity. It does appear that the Chathams fishermen were like this in their engagement with government, refusal to fish during WW2 and a perception of their strong sense of unity by government officials. See James

combination of class and ethnic concerns associated with isolation were evident. As noted, Zohrab discontinued a fishing trade with the Chathams because the general Secretary of the Seamen's Union, Tom Young, employed sailors to navigate boats to the Chathams, as fishermen were not part of his union and called for a change in the law.<sup>238</sup>

The union movement demonstrated in part the views of the working class community. Chathams fishermen had a high level of union membership, and generally identified with the more militant end of the working class, going on strike in support of the radical workers in the 1951 waterfront dispute. This despite the fact that militant unions have never been especially popular in New Zealand.<sup>239</sup> Chathams fishers also recognised that their industry was important to the economy and they wanted a share of the profits. By 1951 most fishermen were members of the Federated Seamen's Union of New Zealand, who negotiated on their behalf in disputes regarding the price paid for green fish. Notably, the price paid for green fish had doubled over the past twelve years: the price paid for blue cod was twopence halfpenny per lb. green. Despite the lower price paid for groper, it was also popular.<sup>240</sup> Hence, in April 1951, the fishermen went on strike, requesting an increase of halfpenny more for their fish, bringing it up to three pence per pound. Fortunately, after meeting with Constable Geary,

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Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders from Polynesian Settlement to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1996, pp. 433-434. Belich refers to crews, a tight working class group, that saw themselves as respectable decent workingmen, whereas they were often seen as disreputable off the job.

<sup>238</sup> Report, Minister of Marine, Marine Department, Wellington to C. G. Godfrey, Secretary, Marine Department, 1 October 1926, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, Acquiring of Land for a Fishing Settlement, 1917-28, M1, 2/12/234, part 1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>239</sup> Correspondence, Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Marine Department, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 4 April 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. See Keith Jackson, Alan McRobie, *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand*, Auckland: Longman, 1996, pp. 252-53. The Waterfront Strike (1951) lasted for 151 days between February and July 1951.

<sup>240</sup> Annual Report, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T.G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

Inspector of Fisheries, Neville informed the Owenga fishermen that Albert Meo had agreed to the half penny rise, urging them to resume fishing.<sup>241</sup> It is curious that the islanders were suspicious of the mainland, yet the Seamen's Union was a mainland organization. The key point is that though the relationship with central government was fractious, belonging to a union suggested an affinity with a mainland New Zealand organisation sympathetic to their class, suggesting that Chathams fishermen did not disapprove of all "outsiders".

Chathams fishermen had a high degree of collective organization, and the trade union movement assisted them. In general, mainlanders did not seek employment there because of its isolation and hard living conditions, despite good financial returns.<sup>242</sup> For example, from 1948 to 1951, the launches *Lora*, *Fern*, *Margaret*, *Minnie*, *Te Rino* and the *Nui* fished for the Chathams Fishing Company, Wellington, and the *Manuka*. Still, Wiesner (married farmer) owned *Te Rino*, a 3-man boat, crewed by the owner and W. Pomare (married family man); B. Preece, owned *Fern*, a 3-man boat, crewed by D. Goomes, I. Harvey, and 2 Preeces, having farm interests; Ted Nielsen, sheep farmer owned *Lora*, a 4-man boat, crewed by the owner and son, Philip Nielsen, Charlie Hill, and R. Thomas; Donaldson owned *Minnie*, a 3-man boat, crewed by the owner and two brothers; and Pohio owned *Nui*, a 3-manboat, crewed by the owner, Jack Hough, and R. Cannon. Further employees included five fish cleaners; namely, T. Tuuta married with a family, N. Thomas married with a family, R. Fraser, single, Mau Tuuta married with a family and Bunn Panirau, married. At this time, the Chathams fishing community had twenty-two men with dependant families with an Island population of approximately four to five hundred people.<sup>243</sup> The fishing returns of the Chatham Islands fleet showed only one boat (*Lora*) fished

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<sup>241</sup> Correspondence, Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Marine Department, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 4 April 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>242</sup> Memorandum, E. P. Doogue, Department of Island Territories to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 20 May 1953, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>243</sup> Annual Report, Chatham Islands Fishing Industry, Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 1951; Memorandum, R.T.G. Patrick, Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 21 February 1951, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.



efficiently from 1950 to 1955.<sup>244</sup> This helps to explain why the Marine Department urged that outside labour be employed.

Consequently, disputes arose over outsider firms employing outsider labour, as seen when Meo wanted to employ Italian fishermen experienced in various types of fishing, including catching crayfish by new methods in 1952. When the 1955 returns of the Chathams fleet showed that only one boat fished efficiently throughout the year, and because Meo faced crew shortages, four Italian fishermen were recruited as labour. But, because the islanders refused to fish with the Italians, the father and son, Baxters, became shareholders in the Chathams Fishing Company along with Italians Luigi Dileva and Frank Dileva in January 1956.<sup>245</sup> In January 1957 the Marine Department's Deputy Licensing Officer, Young, informed Meo that in terms of the Fisheries Amendment Act, 1945, these shareholders did not require crew licences to fish on any boat owned and licensed by the company.<sup>246</sup> Alternatively, the Fisheries Act, 1958, required that licensed fishing boats owners should make returns to the Marine Department: 'in such form and at such periods as may be prescribed, of all fish caught'.<sup>247</sup> By 1957, and, again in 1959, the Chathams cod catch rose to the peak level of the *South Sea* period. However, with an increasing number of mainland vessels fishing in the Chathams waters, the number of small local boats declined.<sup>248</sup> Overall, their calls for government involvement remained unheeded.

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<sup>244</sup> Fishing Returns, Chathams Fishing Company Limited, Chatham Islands to Marine Department, Wellington, 27 September 1950; Constable A. D. Knight to Inspector of Fisheries, Waitangi, Chatham Islands, 12 January 1956, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand. Most boats fished in and about the Western Reef, Cape Patisson and Cape Young.

<sup>245</sup> Memorandum, Marine Department, Wellington to Constable A. D. Knight, Inspector of Fisheries, Waitangi, Chatham Islands, 12 January 1956, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>246</sup> Correspondence, M.W. Young, Deputy Licensing Authority, Marine Department, Wellington to A. Meo, Chathams Fishing Company Limited, Wellington, 16 January 1956, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>247</sup> G. L. O'Halloran, Licensing Authority, Marine Department, Wellington to the Chathams Fishing Company Limited, Wellington, 23 July 1958, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>248</sup> Johnson, Haworth, p. 171.

### 1.7.2 Social Conditions of Fishing

As a predominately male occupation, fishing for Chatham Islands fishermen was not only essential to their livelihood, but tough work as they fished for many days away from home, enduring physically demanding work in unpleasant conditions. In the early twentieth century, according to David Holmes, line fishing was the principal method used to catch blue cod and groper, the fishermen bagged the fish on the boat, brought it ashore in dinghies, loaded it onto drays drawn by three horses, and took the fish to be cleaned at the freezer, where it was scrubbed and packed into wooden slat cases ready for freezing. Still, in time, a ship would call to uplift the frozen fish for delivery to the company's Wellington premises; carted in baskets from the factory to the ship entailed hard work.<sup>249</sup> Second, the fishermen initially sold fish by the dozen, but in the 1920s cod paid a penny-farthing a pound, with a bonus of a farthing a pound if the fisher caught over 20 tons. Also, a further farthing was paid if the boats caught a particular collective tonnage, making a total payment of one and three-quarter pennies per pound.<sup>250</sup> Third, the fishing season ran from January to November, November was the month when less fish were caught. At this time, the fishermen undertook shearing, other casual employment and overhauled their boats until the season resumed in January. In terms of fishing performance, March and April were seen as the best months, while 90 fishing days a year was the average, and for a fisherman, £300 a year was deemed a good wage. The smaller boats carried a two-man crew, the larger three; each fisherman paid the boat-owner 15 percent of his catch for his stand on the boat. Fourth, there were problems such as fuel cost, safety (each boat had to carry a set of sails), the open-sea moorings (insurance companies were reluctant to insure the boats because of the Chathams conditions), and the unfavourable weather conditions, when the fishers either worked in their gardens, did casual work for local farmers, or played cards.<sup>251</sup> Life essentially was hard for these fishers who could

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<sup>249</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 122. See miscellaneous Chatham Islands searches, 1964-1974, AAMK 869 W3074/663C 19/1/227, Archives New Zealand. Involved in the fishing industry were: Thomas Patrick McClurg, cleaner; Reginald Arthur McGregor, fisherman; Robert Jameson Smylie, fisherman and John Prendeville, Manager, Owenga freezer.

<sup>250</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 123.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.



spend up to eight consecutive days' fishing, hauling in laden lines, resulting in hardened, sore, hands. Later, *Miro's* Skipper, Ron Brown, commented that he understood the hard nature of the old fishermen's work since in, 'those days it was wooden boats and iron men who sailed the oceans'.<sup>252</sup>

### 1.7.3 Working Class Culture

Within this "tight working class culture", most islanders experienced the advantages in community living, where the hub of the community centred on education and the school. Also, parents took a great interest in the extra-curricular activities such as football, basketball, and other sporting events; the "Bring and Buy" fairs that provided funds to buy amenities for the school library, and the popular euchre evenings in wintertime.<sup>253</sup> On Saturday evenings movie programmes such as the popular cowboy films were held at the Centennial Hall, with indoor bowls and small clubs held weekly. Otherwise, the highlight of the year's activities was the annual race meeting held at the Chatham Islands Jockey Club racecourse (one of the oldest in the Commonwealth); its stand one of the smallest, renowned as the "Duke" box, was named after the Duke of Edinburgh when he visited the Chatham Islands in 1956. Traditionally, most islanders have attended this meeting wearing their best clothes and with picnic lunches packed. In addition, most islanders have attended weddings and funerals. For instance, traditional Maori funerals mostly upheld a custom of visiting the deceased relatives, shaking hands, and weeping and wailing. The deceased was usually placed in a wooden coffin covered in black paper, and then removed from the house through a different door than they had entered. They would be buried with all their worldly possessions and the tools used at the graveside washed clean. Conversely, weddings were festive, prolonged celebrations, and a hangi was usually prepared.<sup>254</sup> As cited earlier, Gardner's argument about local histories draws upon these characteristics of "tight" communities. The tough conditions, perceptions of isolation, perception

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<sup>252</sup> Extracts, Letter, Ron Brown, Chatham Islands to Dot Wilson, Lyttelton. See also, 'An Epitaph to', *Seafood New Zealand*, December 1994, p. 11.

<sup>253</sup> Dr Tucker, p. 77.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

of being a neglected group and union affiliation possibly all contributed to the “tight working class” nature of the Chathams fishing community.

### 1.8 Tensions between “Insiders” and “Outsiders” in Fishing

Possibly, this identification as a “tight working class group” explained the hostility towards “outsiders” such as Italian fishermen, and also why outsider firms sought to use outsider labour. In frequent communication with the government, the islanders authoritatively posited that overfishing by outsiders meant that their livelihood was at stake; the profits of the fishing industry should go to the “locals” rather than “outsiders”. As shown, back in May 1949, the representative of the fishermen, Ted Nielsen, at Owenga, had informed Terence McCombs that they wanted a closed season, ‘to protect the fishing industry on the island for the future, no fishing should be done after the 14 October’.<sup>255</sup> Further, he argued that the Inspector of Fisheries, Young, should recognise that an enormous quantity of female fish were cleaned, and spawn wasted, between October and December: cod fishing for the whole year was not in the fishing industry’s interest stating:<sup>256</sup>

You have mentioned the weight of blue cod, the “Manuka” has brought up to Wellington during these months of 1947 and 1948, but will that compare favourably with the catches of the trawler “South Sea”, while she was operating here during the same months. I know myself, as I was fishing for her, that she often had to go away with small catches, at the end of the year, and we were then talking about closed seasons, as we thought the fishing was overdone.<sup>257</sup>

This had also been apparent in 1951 when Albert Meo informed the Chathams Fishing Company that he had been granted three extra fishing boat licences for the *Nui*, *St Guiseppe*, and the *Southern Cross*. John Harvey manned *St Guiseppe*, Jack Hough and two Italian fishermen manned *Southern Cross*, and the *Nui*, was

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<sup>255</sup> Correspondence, Fisherman, Theodor F. Nielsen, Owenga, Chatham Islands to T. H. McCombs, Minister of Education, Parliament Buildings, 29 May 1949, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

in the Chathams. According to Meo, the Italians had experience in various types of fishing, including the catching of crayfish by new methods: a money-spinner for New Zealand.<sup>258</sup> This resulted in “outsider tensions” relating to Union involvement and Italian fishermen. The key point is that the Marine Department did stipulate that licences for the Italian fishermen would not be a precedent for others to follow from the mainland, despite the Italians being members of the Seamen’s Union, and possible settlement. Still, Meo emphasized that he employed the Italian fishermen because of his substantial capital investment in the Owenga freezer, high overheads and running costs, and without consistent production, the Owenga venture would fail.<sup>259</sup>

Although fishing boats’ licences were restricted, and outsider boats placed under surveillance to conserve fish stocks, the Marine Department did approve of additional boat licences to the Chathams Fishing Company provided they were islanders. But, in March 1952 when J. Patterson replaced Neville as Resident Commissioner, he stated that if Island crews were unavailable, licences to non-Islanders might be provided. Following this, Owenga fishermen representatives, Philip Nielsen, Rex Donaldson, Patterson, and the Inspector of Fisheries, Constable Geary, drew up a list of local fishermen willing to work for the New Zealand fishing industry that included: J. Gillespie, Norman Thomas, Ned Thomas, B. Brown, J. Brown, R. Tuuta, R. Goomes, D. Nesbit, J. Pohio, A. Hough, H. Preece, T. Tuuta, M. Tuuta, R. Cannon, J. Goomes, E. Dix, C. Remi, and J. Remi. Accordingly, Patterson advised against licences to outsiders, unless Chathams fishermen either declined employment, or worked unsatisfactory.<sup>260</sup> Under these terms, Patterson urged that the Marine Department grant only provisional licences to the Italian fishermen for two reasons. First, Meo upheld

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<sup>258</sup> Correspondence, Albert Meo, Managing Director, Chatham Islands Fishing Company Limited, Wellington to Secretary for Marine, Wellington, 10 April 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Correspondence, J. Patterson, Resident Commissioner to Secretary, Department of Island Territories, Wellington, 21 April 1952, Sea Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 1936-1953, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

that they were to explore crayfishing by new methods. Second, local fishermen could not object to an untapped fishery of little interest to them.<sup>261</sup>

However, New Zealand Fishery's Manager, Dellabarca, at Kaingaroa, wanted to fish for the *Cobar* all year round outside the three-mile limit, arguing that no legislation prevented fishing boats coming from the mainland, and taking the catch back to the port of registry. Similarly, when Wiesner requested six extra licences for outsiders without Constable Geary even seeing them, he claimed that few fishermen were available on the Island. Paradoxically, Geary had stipulated that no licences would be granted to mainland fishermen, yet no legislation prevented the taking of the Island quota (500 ton of cleaned blue cod). Consequently, Wiesner accused Geary of threatening the Chathams fishing industry, and the *Cobar* should be cancelled. This is not surprising because there was a price war between the Kaingaroa and Owenga freezers: the Kaingaroa freezer paid more for cleaning fish, whereas the Owenga freezer had better conditions.<sup>262</sup>

Ironically, in May 1952 the Marine Department changed its policy from only crews that were islanders to no mainland crews, unless islanders are not available, or will not work reasonably well.<sup>263</sup> Chathams fishermen allegedly were unreliable, reportedly consumed excessive quantities of alcohol, and refused to work even in reasonable conditions. According to the Marine Department's Licensing Officer, W. C. Smith, the department changed its policy to keep the fishing industry going, but, arguably, officials issued licences on the spot because of administrative difficulties. Cancelled in Wellington, Meo's boats, for instance, had to be licensed and registered by Geary on the Chatham's

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid. Fishing boat licences were discontinued in 1963, following the recommendation of the Scott Report in 1962. It also recommended that instead of conservation being the sole guiding principle of New Zealand fisheries, the export market was to take precedence. See Johnson, Haworth, pp. 174-75.

<sup>262</sup> Correspondence, Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 2 May 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>263</sup> Memorandum, W. C. Smith, Licensing Authority, Marine Department, Wellington to the Resident Commissioner, Chatham Islands, 22 May 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

Registry. Despite this, the “Green” fishermen apparently made a profit.<sup>264</sup> Indeed, Smith, strategically, stressed that Dellabarca should be observed, and his three boats fishing for the *Cobar* were sufficient, but informed Geary that craypots, or trawl nets, could be added to the fishermen’s licences, and certificate of Registry without extra cost. That is, provided these fishing methods were only for the Chatham Islands.<sup>265</sup>

The Resident Commissioner became concerned about the repercussions if the Owenga freezer closed down. Ironically, both Jurie and Geary considered that if licences were given to the Italian fishermen, it would be a spur to the rest of the “lackadaisical fishermen”. However, fearing repercussions and animosity between the two freezers Geary stated that he would wait for the *Southern Cross* to arrive before he granted the licences, as Jurie feared that the Owenga freezer might close if the catches did not improve. Also, for Geary, outsider fishermen might be a disincentive for the Chatham fishers to work; Meo might force out and buy the entire fishing fleet, at Owenga, in the future, and the venture might close down in eight years time. Alternatively, if the fishermen got onto the crayfish grounds, and had larger boats, they could do well with the help of the Italian fishermen.<sup>266</sup>

In studying the general progress of the fishermen, their attitude, and aptitude towards the fishing industry, Geary observed that the number of boats fishing for the Owenga Freezer had slackened off, as the season wore off. Since May, the daily catches were poor, which possibly explained the islanders’ hostility towards outsiders. Despite a rift between the Owenga and Kaingaroa freezers, Geary requested information about dates, boats out, crews, catch, daily weather conditions, and suitable weather for fishing respectively. Geary concluded that if the Owenga freezer did not receive more fish, it would have to close down: ‘the

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<sup>264</sup> Correspondence, W. C. Smith, Licensing Authority, Marine Department to Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, 22 May 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid.

<sup>266</sup> Correspondence, Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands, to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 24 July 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand. Initially, two Italian fishermen were issued with licences in July 1952.

records obtained show that if every boat went out every fishing day, or even every day the *Laura* [sic *Lora*] or *Fern* went out, it would make the difference of the Freezer paying its way'.<sup>267</sup>

### 1.8.1 “Outsider Tensions” relating to Union involvement and Italian Fishermen

In 1952 and 1956, disputes erupted between fishing boats, and their crews, over outsider firms employing Italian fishermen as labour. This had repercussions for the Chathams fishing industry, as predicted. For example, A. M. Pohio and, A. Meo, were unable to hold the crew of the *Nui* (held in partnership), whereas skipper Reriti wanted to take on Italian crew, but because his crew advised against it, he informed Jurie that he was unable to fish because he could not get crew.<sup>268</sup> Further, in 1956 both the *Gleneagles* (previously *Southern Cross*) and *Margaret*'s catches were down, because fishermen Paynter and Page refused to fish with the Italians (Meo had purchased the *Margaret* from Page).<sup>269</sup> Furthermore, Meo had requested 16 extra Italian fishermen, along with the two already present, and the two en route from Italy. Conversely, *Gleneagles* and *Margaret*'s skippers asserted they would fish with the Italians.<sup>270</sup> Possibly, union connections and racial grounds, combined with hostility to outsiders, explained why most Chathams fishermen refused to fish with the Italians.

In the pending crayfish boom, with the influx of more fishermen, the islanders would recall the time when outsider firms used the Italian fishermen as outsider

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<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Correspondence, Constable A. Geary, Inspector of Fisheries, Chatham Islands to Secretary, Marine Department, Wellington, 16 August 1952, M1 2/12/551, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>269</sup> Correspondence, M.W. Young, Deputy Licensing Authority, Marine Department, Wellington to Constable A. D. Knight, Inspector of Fisheries, Waitangi, Chatham Islands, 12 January 1956, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>270</sup> Correspondence, Inspector Fisheries, Waitangi, Chatham Islands to the Marine Department, 19 December 1955, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand. See correspondence, M.W. Young, Deputy Licensing Authority, Marine Department Wellington to Constable A. D. Knight, Inspector of Fisheries, Waitangi, Chatham Islands, 12 January 1956, M 24, item 3, Archives New Zealand. Later, in January 1956 Ted Nielsen informed Meo that he would no longer skipper the *Gleneagles*.



labour.<sup>271</sup> They also recalled their earlier struggles to obtain adequate infrastructure for fishing and repeated requests that the government institute closed fishing seasons so stocks might be conserved. The crayfish boom presented new challenges, but the many issues it raised had been a part of Chathams history.

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<sup>271</sup> See Emmanuel Makarios, *Nets, Lines and Pots: A history of New Zealand fishing vessels*, Wellington, IPL Books, 1996, p. 30. During World War Two, official attitudes caused bitterness among the Italian Community at Island Bay, because many Italians there were interned as enemy aliens on Somes Island in Wellington harbour. In mid 1940 the officials permitted the Italians to fish, but they needed police permission and their vessels and gear inspected. This measure sought to keep the supply of fish up and keep the fishermen employed. Many Italian fishermen came from Southern Italy, such as the island of Stromboli.





Family, Denis and Mary Murphy, Chatham Islands, circa 1880s.  
(Private Collection)



Cottage, Owenga Estate, circa 1910.  
(Renwick Collection)

# European War August 1914.

## Chatham Islands

### Donations & Volunteers

TE AWATEA.	62	11	0
A.W. PALMER	35	15	0
H.G. BLYTH	26	0	0
OHINIMAMA	25	10	0
J.J. FOUGERE	25	5	0
M <sup>rs</sup> SHANDS	17	10	0
H.A. HUNT	15	0	0
H. DAYMOND	14	10	0
C. WISHART	12	7	0
H. RANGITAPUA	11	16	0
R.T. PAYNTER	10	0	0
OWENGA E <sup>st</sup>	10	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> M <sup>rs</sup> BRATNEY	10	0	0
J.M. BARKER	10	0	0
J. CLELAND	9	13	0
TUTA	8	16	6
OWENGA S <sup>ch</sup>	7	17	0
H. PIWARI	7	12	6
TAPUHI	7	2	6
A.W. MITCHELL	6	5	0
W.M. BRATNEY	5	15	0
C.W. HE SLOP	5	15	0
H. ODMAN	5	10	0
J.G. HUNT	5	0	0
J. SANTOS	5	0	0
ERCHUDLEIGH	5	0	0
METAI	4	8	0
T. LANAUZE	4	0	0
J.H. PRENEVILLE	4	0	0
D.W. MEIKLE	4	0	0
G. JOHANSON	4	0	0
W.A. COX	3	10	0
T. RITCHIE	3	2	0
E. HOUGH	3	1	0
J. RENWICK	3	0	0
S.J. SAPSFORD	3	0	0
C.C. HOWARD	3	0	0
A. JOHANSON	3	0	0
H. RERITI	2	14	6
PANIORA	2	14	6
M <sup>rs</sup> HETA	2	7	0
RUA	2	7	0
F. MITCHELL	2	3	0
M <sup>rs</sup> TAYLOR	2	2	0
C. JOHANSON	2	0	0
D. MURPHY S <sup>ch</sup>	2	0	0
D. MURPHY J <sup>ch</sup>	2	0	0

## Roll of Honour

SERG. H.F. FOUGERE. NELSON Cpy C.I.
Wounded.
PVTE. J.R. CLELLAND.
PVTE. A.J. MITCHELL. Wounded
TRPR. W.R. MITCHELL. Wounded
SERG. W <sup>m</sup> DAVIS. 1 <sup>st</sup> Maori Con <sup>st</sup> .
GUNNER. HUGH. LANAUZE. N.Z.F.A.
TRPR. E.H. REGNAULT. 4 <sup>th</sup> Reinft.
W.C. ELLIOT.
PVTE. R.M. GREGOR. 5 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Cpy
PVTE. A (SAM) HOUGH. 5 <sup>th</sup> Infantry Cpy
PVTE. HENRY. DAYMOND. 1 <sup>st</sup> Maori C <sup>st</sup>
PVTE. L.F. REGNAULT. 7 <sup>th</sup> Reinft
CPRL. B.S. K. COX. E.L.O.
SERG. MAJ. SAXON. FOSTER.
D.J. SEYMOUR. AUS' RAMC.
JACKSON.

L. MILLER	2	0	0
G.H. WOOD	2	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> MEIKLE	1	10	0
A. HOUGH	1	10	0
N. REMI	1	10	0
P.G. BIRDLING	1	10	0
TOTE. HAPUA	1	10	0
E. SEYMOUR J <sup>ch</sup>	1	7	0
P. LANAUZE	1	5	0
R.J. SMYLYE	1	3	0
R. KATE	1	2	0
J. WARWICK	1	1	0
F. WEBB	1	1	0
K. ARMSTRONG	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> M <sup>rs</sup> LANAUZE	1	0	0
W. JACOBS	1	0	0
" " " " " " " "	1	0	0
TIWAI	1	0	0
TAHI	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> MONTGOMERY	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> RENWICK	1	0	0
R. PAYNTER	1	0	0
PRUA	1	0	0
K.O. REMI	1	0	0
W.F. WHAITIRI	1	0	0
H.L. CLOUGH	1	0	0
C.E. BEGGS	1	0	0
J.E. BIGGS	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> R.T. PAYNTER	1	0	0
" " " " " " " "	1	0	0
C. JOHANSON	1	0	0
W. HOUGH	1	0	0
NEHU. TEWIATA	1	0	0
G. RIWAI	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> B.T. PAYNTER	1	5	0
G.L. JOHANSON	1	2	0
M <sup>rs</sup> WHITE	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> RENWICK	1	0	0
M <sup>rs</sup> KAMO	1	0	0
O.D. KENSIE	1	0	0
W. MURPHY	1	0	0
R. JOHANSON	1	0	0
SUBSCRIBER	9	6	0
T. STEVENS	5	0	0
W <sup>m</sup> KENSIE	2	6	0
J. Mc KAY	10	0	0

## Total Collected

FOOD FOR BRITAIN FUND	186	4	8
BELGIAN RELIEF FUND	97	18	8
EMPIRE DEFENCE FUND	165	10	7
PATRIOTIC FUND	9	11	2
O.S. CLUB TOBACCO FUND	17	1	0
AMOUNTS PAID IN N.Z.	18	10	0
PATRIOTIC BALL. 18-12-14	13	12	0
" " " " 1-1-15	12	2	0
HOSPITAL SHIP BALL	23	0	0
NEW POST OFFICE BALL	176	6	4

£ 719 16 5

The voting for the "BELLE OF THE BALL" at the Hospital Ship Dance was won by M<sup>rs</sup> R. Ropu with 99 votes. Votes realized £6.

A "QUEEN OF THE ISLAND" voting competition held in connection with the New P.O. Ball was won by M<sup>rs</sup> Flora Renwick. Farmers nominee with 4863 votes. Total number of votes polled 13202 realizing £165 0 6.

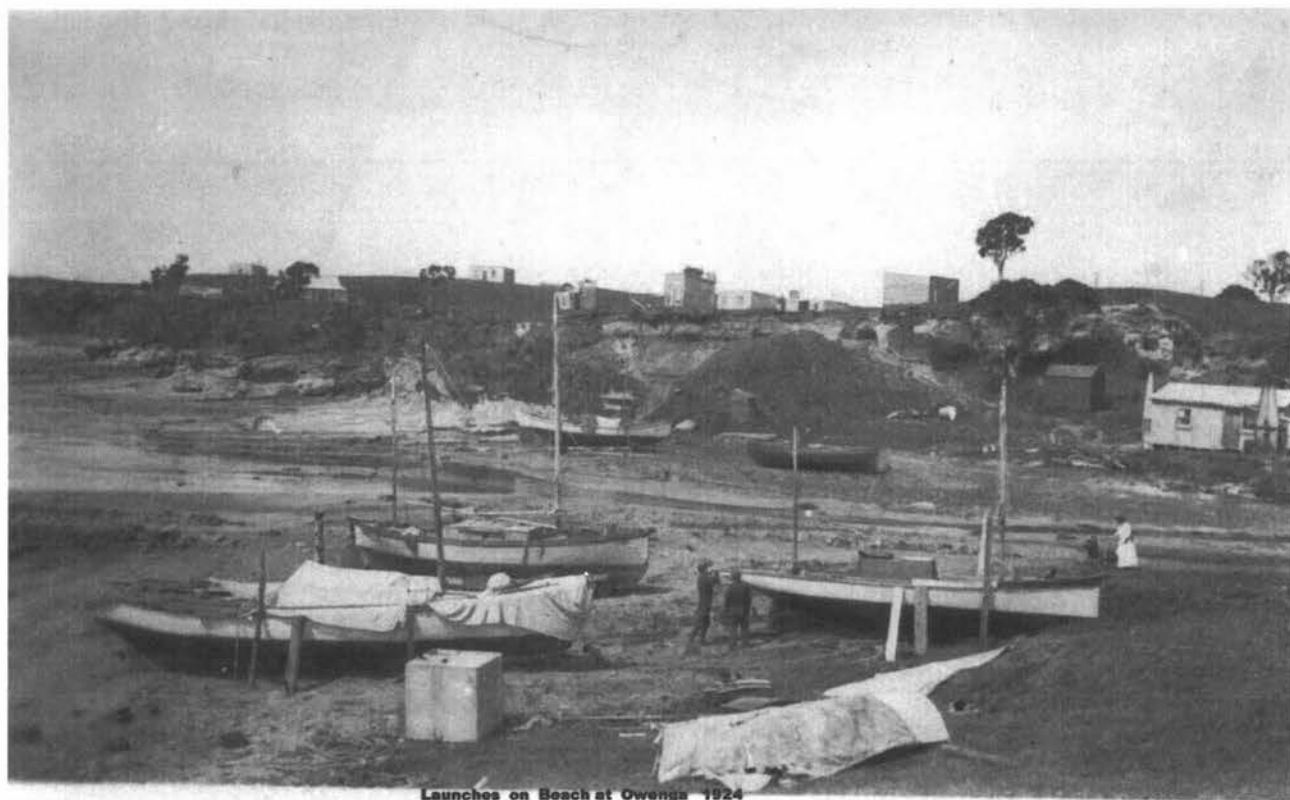
The price of this card is 1/- the proceeds will be devoted to the BELGIAN FUND.



Fishermen at Owenga, Chatham Islands, circa 1910.  
(Renwick Collection)



The fishing boat *Pursuit*, Owenga, Chatham Islands, circa 1920s. Owner Theodor Nielsen.  
(Private Collection)



Launches on Beach at Owenga 1924

PSP 5163

Fishing boats at Owenga circa 1924.  
(Bob Weston Collection)



Owenga

PSP 5172

Owenga circa 1920s.  
(Bob Weston Collection)





The fishing boat *Lora Owenga*,  
Chatham Islands, circa 1930s.  
Owner Theodor Nielsen.

Left to Right:  
Bob Smylie, Ted Nielsen, and Charlie Hill.  
Loading fish on to the *South Sea* trawler.  
Right: Douglas Nielsen.  
(Private Collection)



The fishing boat *Lora Owenga*, Chatham Islands, circa 1930s. Owner Theodor Nielsen.  
(Private Collection)

## The Owenga Community School



1933



1934



1936  
(Bob Weston Collection)

Owenga children enjoying a picnic with Vicar Collins circa 1940



Basil Hill, Peter McGregor, Ray Donaldson, Rewai Preece, Charlie Hill, Kevin Prendeville, Michael Prendeville, Jim McGregor, Iris McGregor, Ryan Nielsen, Eileen Preece, Dorothy Donaldson, Daphne Hill, Sylvie Nielsen, June Nielsen, Anne Nielsen, Neta Black, Veronica Prendeville, Barbara Hill, Joyce Nielsen.

Private Collection



First Service Taken By Arthur Locket at Owenga  
 Tony Pomare Mrs Harvey Damien Kamo Grace Pomare Marie Pomare Joan Pomare Mrs Nielsen Sam Nichol Arthur Locket PTN 143

St Barnabas Anglican Church, Owenga, Chatham Islands.  
 Vicar Samuel Nicholl (1951-1960) and Arthur Lockett.  
 (Bob Weston Collection)



## Weekly News -2 January 1957

Mrs Flora Nielsen  
"meat carver" and  
Mr P. S. Prendeville



Leaving the hospital accompanied by the matron, Sister Mary Imelda, of the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary. The medical superintendent, Dr R. Davidson (without hat), is shaking hands with a member of the Duke's staff

The tour of the Duke of Edinburgh,  
December 1956

W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59:2,  
Alexander Turnbull Library.

Duke of Edinburgh  
being introduced to  
officials and Wives.  
(Bob Weston Collection)

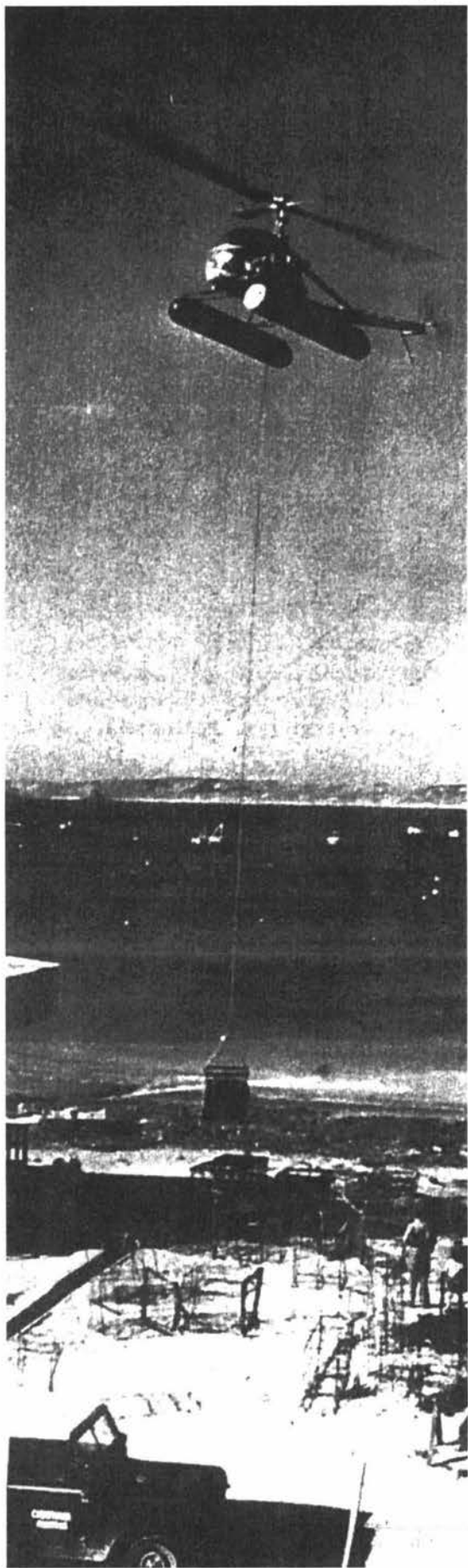




Mr John Nielsen, a Chatham Islands fisherman, with two groper. These fish find a ready market in New Zealand.



A catch of blue cod ready for cleaning and storing in the Fishermen's Co-operative Association's freezer at Owenga.  
W.B. Burt collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59:5 Alexander Turnbull Library.



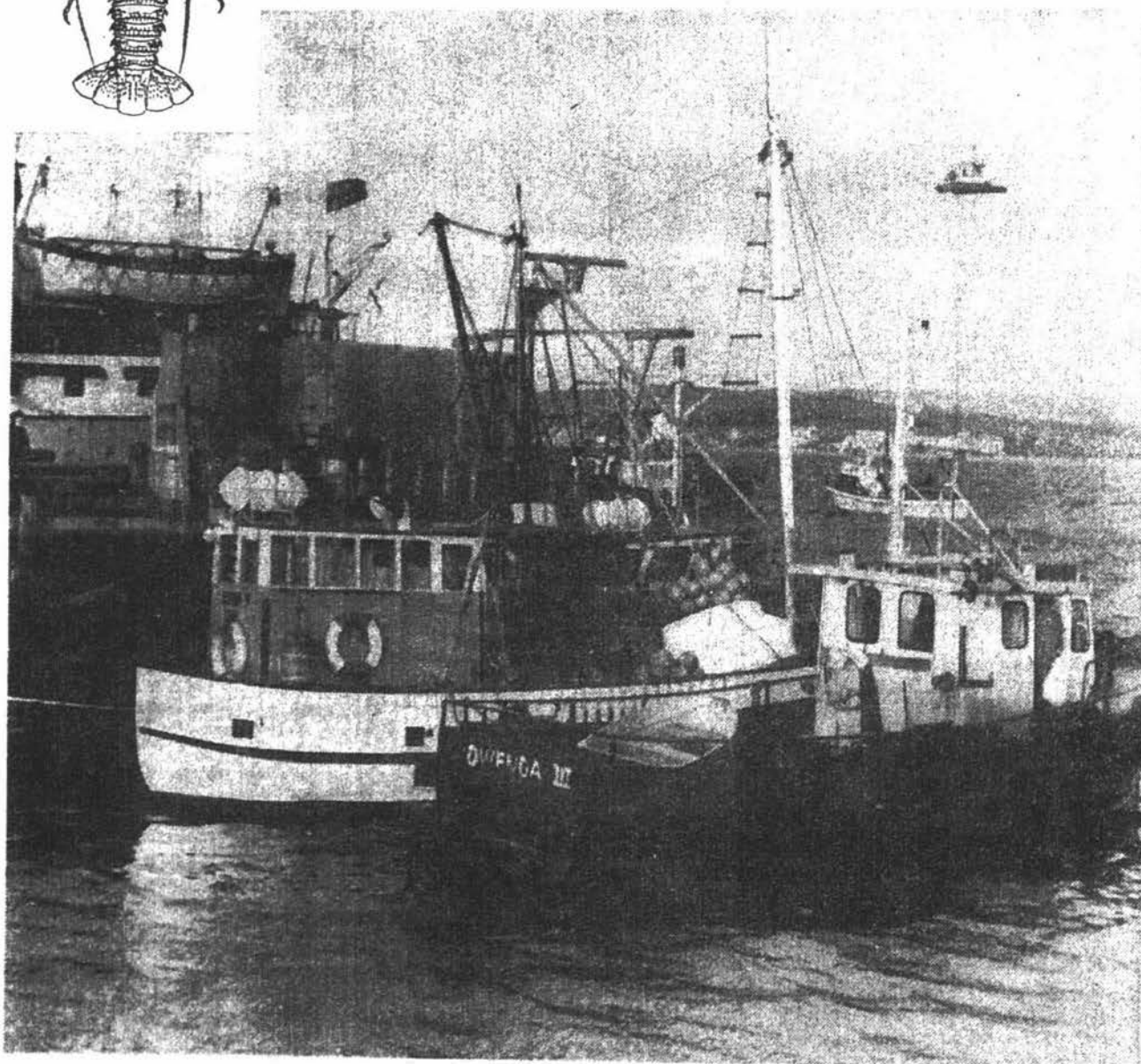
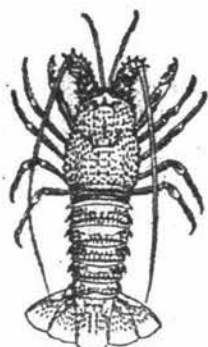
A helicopter manoeuvres a basket of crays for unloading beside the processing plant at Waitangi.



Each a good meal. A worker at the processing plant with two big crays to be tailed.

W.B. Burt collection, Chatham Islands  
MS-Papers-0434-59:6  
Alexander Turnbull Library

# Crayfish Bonanza



The boats are in.

W.B. Burt collection, Chatham Islands MS-Papers-0434-59:6 Alexander Turnbull Library



**Thursday Magazine, 15 November 1973**



Busy splicing a Rock Lobster Pot Rope.

W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, Alexander Turnbull Library,.



Two Modern Crayfish Boats - Chatham Islands.

R. Coombs, *New Zealand Natural Heritage*, 2: 27, 1974. NIWA

## Chapter Two

### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRAYFISH BOOM

#### 2.1 Background to the Crayfish Boom

To begin with, it is helpful to canvas fishing from 1961-1965, the beginnings of extensive commercial crayfish exploration in 1965, followed by an overview of the crayfish boom from 1965-1970.

By 1961 both the blue cod fishing and farming industry had declined, yet both had future potential. Some islanders turned to the crayfish industry for their livelihood. This chapter examines the crayfish “boom” from 1966 to 1970, widely perceived as a period when mainland trawlers plundered the Chathams waters of crayfish, renewing tensions between the islanders and outsiders. It provides a quantification of the crayfish boom and examines three issues: crayfish supplies, failed conservation measures, and concerns over environmental safety, especially dumping at sea. It argues that many islanders perceived that the so-called “boom” provided few benefits for them, believing they were missing out from crayfish export earnings. The government’s responses to the Chathams problems, and Norman Kirk’s campaign to expose the weaknesses of the government, are also discussed.

It will be recalled that recent reports have characterised the period as one of exploitation, and this thesis will discuss this. The *Wai 64* report states that the local industry revived with the crayfish boom from 1967 to 1972, but noted that this was short lived, with overfishing through mainland involvement.<sup>272</sup> Belich also made similar observations, stating: ‘The boom was intriguingly reminiscent of nineteenth-century rushes, with high rewards, sharp practice, little regard for locals or environment, and a quick exhaustion of the resource’.<sup>273</sup>

Back in 1961 the Owenga School had a meagre roll of nine, including the teacher’s children; yet, a thriving industry once dwelled at the Owenga fishing

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<sup>272</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 12.5, p. 240.

<sup>273</sup> James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, Auckland: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 2001, p. 449.



village.<sup>274</sup> At that time, seven farmers owned the Owenga Cooperative Fish Freezer; their seven launches filled the “ten-ton” freezer powered by diesel engines. Compared to the New Zealand-based trawlers that took about 400 tons a year from Chatham waters, they exported just over 150 tons of frozen fish a year. The fishermen were paid £3 1/4 d for their catch, cleaned, packed in cartons and frozen. Out of this sum, however, they needed to pay overhead expenses, fuel for the launch, lines and hooks. In 1961 the price for fish landed at Lyttelton dropped to £1/1½ d, yet retailed at about £3/9d in the North Island: a substantial profit. In a good season, the fishermen could earn well over £1000, and, even then, some fishermen undertook part-time farming either on their own farms, or as casual farm labour, if bad weather prevented fishing.<sup>275</sup> That the true value of the pound was about 10s, and taxation high, meant, ‘Many of the services for which it is placed in Government coffers, are poor or non-existent’.<sup>276</sup> This had socio-economic repercussions. Island fisherman, John Nielsen, recalls that 1000 pounds a year for some fishermen was just sufficient to live on. Others did earn more from supplementing their income with wool and part-time farming. The decline in fishing saw the Chatham Island’s Fishing Cooperation sell to Hikurangi Fisheries owned by Happy Yovich. In 1966 it became Yovich and Hopkins fisheries when Bill Hopkins joined the crayfish fishery.<sup>277</sup>

From the islanders’ perspective, the Chathams economic problems associated with high costs, of labour shortage, high freight costs, poor services, competition from mainland firms, and poor housing justified the request for government aid for subsidies on housing, fencing material, fertilisers, and air services.<sup>278</sup> In a telling statement, County Council Chairman, David Holmes, observed that: ‘The sooner New Zealand Governments face up to their responsibilities here, the

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<sup>274</sup> *The Weekly News*, 13 September 1961, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 3, WTU.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>277</sup> Interview with John Nielsen, 28 April 2009. John fished with Athol Soanes and Tony Pomare on his boat *Te Rino*, and then with Basil Hill on his boat *Gleneagles* until 1969.

<sup>278</sup> *The Weekly News*, 13 September 1961, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 3, WTU.

sooner the Chathams problem will be off their hands'.<sup>279</sup> Accordingly, in April 1962 a Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry investigated the Fishing Industry at the Chathams relevant to the depletion of blue cod stocks.<sup>280</sup> It found that in the year ended 31 January 1959, 22,798 cwt of blue cod was landed at the Chathams.<sup>281</sup> However, in the year ended 31 December 1962 only 10,819 cwt of blue cod was landed.<sup>282</sup>

## 2.2 1965 - Beginnings of Extensive Commercial Crayfish Exploitation

Extensive commercial crayfish exploitation began in the Chatham Islands, when Captain Alan Aberdein's *Picton* discovered commercial quantities of crayfish there in June 1965. Aberdein was fishing for the Wellington Trawling Company, owned by Italian brothers Albert and Salve Meo.<sup>283</sup> This family had fished during the Chathams blue cod period; subsequently, the Meo's joined the lucrative crayfish market.<sup>284</sup> Later, in January 1966 the oyster dredge, and fishing trawler, *Miro* (Owners, Mick Fowler and Kessie Roderique, Bluff) returned from a 10-day trip to the Chathams loaded with 40-tons of whole crayfish. Both the Chathams, and Bluff, were cod fishing areas with Maori and Chatham Island family connections. Consequently, as commercial fishing firms took over from 1966, vessel numbers increased seeking big money from Chathams crayfish.

Aberdein indicated that the yearly crayfish amounts landed were still undetermined, as crayfish took seven years to reach maturity. He also significantly predicted that: 'In four or five years, I reckon, crayfishing will end up as a domestic industry for the Chatham Islands. There won't be enough in it

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> *Christchurch Press*, 5 April 1962, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers- 0434-59: 3, WTU.

<sup>281</sup> *AJHR*, 1960, H.15, p. 56.

<sup>282</sup> *AJHR*, 1963, H.15, p. 43.

<sup>283</sup> *Press*, 15 November 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers- 0434-58: 3, WTU. See *Press*, 12 July 1966, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. The *Picton* Fishing Company owned the *Picton*, formerly the *Koau* (150-ton), and had a crew of six. See also *Press*, 13 October 1967, *Christchurch Star*, 23 November 1967, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>284</sup> Johnson, Haworth, p. 192.

for outsiders'.<sup>285</sup> Later, Aberdeen's *Picton* returned to codding because the price for wet fish in the North Island was good, at about \$100,000 a year, compared to crayfishing.

Most relevant to this research are the fishermen's tales about the crayfish boom. At this time, the Chathams cod fishermen cast aside their handlines and ventured into the rock lobster industry; however, their wooden, double ended launches were not as adaptable.<sup>286</sup> When writer for *Catch* magazine, Frank Saxton, asked fishermen Philip Nielsen, Ron Brown, and Bob Jacobs about crayfish, they stated: 'Well, we knew they were there but we never thought any more about them, not until later anyway. And now it is only crayfish we are after: no money in cod nowadays'.<sup>287</sup>

For Owenga hermit, Cecil Wagstaff, a cod fisherman from 1915, crayfish had always been there, yet: 'nobody wanted them, then, not worth twopence', but because the Americans liked the lobster tails, the crays became gold.<sup>288</sup> For instance, fishing off his boat, at Owenga, one man took about 80 tons of crayfish in 1968 (nearly 30 tons of tails, worth about \$60,000) whereas, fishing away from the Island they received £11 or less previously.<sup>289</sup> Lyttelton fisherman, Ron Threadwell (*Theseus*), recalls how he received 15 hundred dollars a ton in the 1960s for his catch of crayfish tails: deemed good money. His biggest unloading was a ton of tails, filling 7 helicopter baskets, taking one hour to unload for Ferons at Owenga. Moreover, what made crayfishing so attractive was the 15 percent tax incentive, that is, 15 percent of what fishermen earned was untaxed. In 1970 his crayfish catch went down to one and a half baskets per day out of 40 pots.<sup>290</sup> Development of airfreight was important in getting crayfish to the lucrative American market.

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<sup>285</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>286</sup> Wills Johnson, p. 70.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.

<sup>288</sup> *Press*, 11 February 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> Interview with Ron Threadwell, 14 March 2009. Threadwell fished for crayfish in the Chathams from 1967-1971; President of the Lyttelton

The red crayfish, or koura (*Jasus edwardsii*), found at the Chathams, was a valuable resource for the overseas market. Once common all around New Zealand, their population was depleted in many places from the 1950s because of overfishing. By contrast, the packhorse crayfish (*Sagmariasus verreauxi*), with its olive-green colouration and smooth tail segments, was less valuable. Under the 1969 Rock Lobster regulations, the official name of red crayfish was changed from crayfish to rock lobster in line with international commerce.<sup>291</sup> Here, for consistency I will refer to crayfish throughout the thesis.

Fishermen and boats flocked to the Chathams Islands from all over New Zealand from 1966 to 1969. The 1970 Fishing Industry's Committee Report showed catch per boat, and the quantity of shipping, within this period. Evidence revealed that on average the export value per boat peaked in 1968, but dropped substantially by 1969, suggesting the overexploitation of the crayfish grounds.

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Fishermen's Association for 21 years; Executive Member of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen and President of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen.

<sup>291</sup> See glossary, Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 8, *New Zealand Parliament Fishing Industry*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1971.

**Table 2**

Chatham Islands - Catch Per Boat Each Month 1966-1969 <sup>292</sup>								
	1966	1966	1967	1967	1968	1968	1969	1969
	No.	C.P.B	No.	C.P.B	No.	C.P.B	No.	C.P.B
	Boats	(cwt)	Boats	(cwt)	Boats	(cwt)	Boats	(cwt)
Jan	4	125.5	24	271.1	58	209.9	95	143.5
Feb	8	143.2	24	335.7	65	258.1	98	188.9
Mar	11	227.6	26	116.6	61	136.1	112	43.1
April	7	86.3	13	47.9	13	12.7	30	20.3
May	5	152.8	13	89.1	28	51.9	43	36.4
June	7	272.8	19	380.3	59	143.2	93	53.5
July	14	289.4	30	233.6	89	154.1	151	51.6
Aug	17	241.4	30	317.1	87	210.6	139	39.3
Sept	14	115.6	28	237.1	69	86.0	124	25.8
Oct	25	107.3	26	59.3	49	155.1	110	27.3
Nov	26	219.6	46	183.5	92	159.4	127	72.9
Dec	22	197	52	105.7	88	103.7	144	56.8
					1966	1967	1968	1969
Average No. of boats fishing during year					13	28	63	106
No. of boat fishing permits					36	59	120	186
Average catch per boat (cwt)					2,178.5	2,377.0	1,680.8	759.4
Landed value per cwt					\$17.40	\$15.61	\$21.28	\$36.18
Average landed value per boat					\$37,916	\$37,105	\$35,767	\$27,475
Export value f.o.b. per cwt					\$131.28	\$126.65	\$204.48	\$247.78
Average export value per boat					\$71,498	\$75,262	\$85,922	\$47,041
C.P.B = Catch per boat.								

In 1965 the Marine Department statistics showed that 39 cwt of crayfish (green weight) was landed at the Chathams.<sup>293</sup> In 1966, with 36 crayfish vessels operating with fishing permits, 24,965 cwt of crayfish was landed.<sup>294</sup> In 1967, with 59 crayfish vessels operating with fishing permits, 65,080 cwt of crayfish was landed.<sup>295</sup> In 1968, with 120 crayfish vessels operating with fishing permits 117,032 cwt of crayfish was landed: the export of crayfish tails peaked.<sup>296</sup> By 1969, with 186 crayfish vessels operating with fishing permits, 81,451 cwt of

<sup>292</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>293</sup> *AJHR*, 1966, H. 15, p. 46. See glossary, green weight is a term given to fish that have just been freshly caught.

<sup>294</sup> *AJHR*, 1967, H. 15, pp. 41, 48.

<sup>295</sup> *AJHR*, 1968, H. 15, pp. 49, 57.

<sup>296</sup> *AJHR*, 1969, H. 15, pp. 55, 63.

crayfish was landed at the Chathams.<sup>297</sup> By 1970 with 125 vessels operating, 34,379 cwt of crayfish was landed at the Chathams.<sup>298</sup>

The crayfish “stampede” brought fishermen, financial gain, excitement, tragedy and allegations of piracy to the Chathams.<sup>299</sup> In *Rekohu* Fiona Holmes asserts: ‘So began the “Crayfish Bonanza Years” in the Chathams – an ocean-going stampede to make a fortune from the “gold” which came slithering and splashing out of the sea when the crayfish pots were hoisted in’.<sup>300</sup> In a sense, however, only tragedy seemed to hit the media headlines. Despite the treacherous Chatham Islands run, 11 lives and 13 fishing boats had perished between 1966 and 1969.<sup>301</sup> The issue of safety of vessels will be explored later.

Crayfish remuneration was a major contributing factor for this crayfish stampede. In early July 1966 a debate arose in Parliament about a Bluff fisherman who had chartered a Douglas DC 3, costing £300,000, bringing two fishermen home from the Chathams, when a 500 tons crayfish catch fetched £500,000. H. Pickering (MP Rangiora) questioned the Minister of Marine, W. J. Scott, whether crayfish was remunerative enough to warrant such expense, and, if so: ‘could the country expect a rapid development of this type of industry adjacent to the Chatham Islands’.<sup>302</sup> In response, Scott stressed that a rapid development of the industry could be expected, but experience in South Westland had shown that large catches could only be expected for a limited period. Hence, the Marine Department had sent two officers to the Chathams to assess the extent of the stocks. Yet, he stated that crayfishing was very remunerative, especially: ‘when heavy catches can be expected from

<sup>297</sup> *AJHR*, 1970, H. 15, pp. 53, 61.

<sup>298</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1971, H. 15 A, p. 61; *AJHR*, 1972, H.15A, p.13. See also table, J.H. Annala, ‘New Zealand Rock Lobsters: Biology and Fishery’, *Fisheries Research Division Occasional Publication*, No. 42, 1983, 36p.

<sup>299</sup> *Dominion Sunday Times*, 29 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>300</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 65.

<sup>301</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 26 April 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS- Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. See also *Christchurch Star*, 13 June 1969, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>302</sup> *NZPD*, 346 (1966), p. 1257 (H. E. Pickering).



accumulated stocks'.<sup>303</sup> Indeed, the Chathams crayfish industry had already earned one million US dollars for New Zealand on the overseas market from March 1966 to January 1967.<sup>304</sup>

An example of the catch saw the sea freighter *Holmburn* land, at Lyttelton, 60 pounds of crayfish tails weighing about 30 oz each, in 1100 cartons, in July 1966. This went to the lucrative American or European markets.<sup>305</sup> Some of *Holmburn*'s crayfish cargo was also railed directly to Bluff for processing, reflecting a burgeoning crayfishing industry. In April 1967 Captain C. A. Brown (*Holmburn*), compared the crayfish boom to a "gold rush", when he landed 55 tons of crayfish, at Lyttelton. He claimed that, with 28 boats operating, a good boat of tails made a thousand pounds daily. By comparison at the height of the boom, the *Holmburn* carried a full freezer load of 6000 cartons of crayfish tails, along with wool and general cargo.<sup>306</sup> Significantly, the Manager of the Holm Shipping Company, R. E. Muxlox, revealed the demand for increased crayfish freight meant the *Holmdale* was also used for the Chatham run from March 1968.<sup>307</sup>

At one level, the crayfish industry was good for the New Zealand economy, and in part the Chathams. Initially, it seemed the crayfish boom would be long lasting. According to Milford Whitiri, a Bluff fisherman, with Chathams family connections, crayfish would never be fished out in a hundred years. From the outset, however, the Chatham Islands fishermen found it difficult to benefit from the crayfish boom. Although crayfishers had rekindled the fishery, in 1966, the islanders had neither knowledge, nor gear, nor the boats to do it. For most of the islanders as farmers, fishing for them was a sideline, owning only five small

<sup>303</sup> Ibid. See *Press*, 9 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>304</sup> *Press*, 31 January 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>305</sup> *Press*, 5 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>306</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 18 October 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>307</sup> *Press*, 6 March 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

boats. Therefore, compared to the bigger New Zealand hold boats that fished out far, they were disadvantaged because they could not catch as many crayfish.<sup>308</sup> Newspaper reports conveyed the islanders' resentment of "poaching" in their waters by mainland boats, or "the foreign boats". In a similar way New Zealand fishermen resented Japanese trawlers.

Some islanders did quickly join the crayfishing bonanza including A. Cooper and R. Wishart. Their boat, the *Javelin*, the second largest fibreglass fishing boat built in New Zealand, at 36 feet long and 12-foot beam, cost \$17,000.<sup>309</sup> Others included members of the Owenga Chatham Islands Fishermen's Cooperative: Tom Tuuta, Basil Hill, Charlie Hill, Rex Donaldson, John Nielsen, Alfred Preece, Athol Soanes....<sup>310</sup> One example, when islanders cooperated to enjoy the boom was in September 1967, whereby fishermen from all villages pooled together, and raised \$7000 for the Chathams community.<sup>311</sup> In 1970 the Chatham Islands Resident Fishermen's Cooperative included: R. Preece, D. Tuck, J. Dixon, C. Preece, B. Penrose, D. Gunn, G. Hough, P. Tuuta, J. Lanaghan, H. Page, H. Pohio, Jim Pohio (farmer, fisherman, and skipper of a 30ft crayfish boat).<sup>312</sup> Steve and Tim Gregory-Hunt, and Bob Alan were resident Pitt Island fishermen.<sup>313</sup>

The overexploitation of the fishery began with the harvesting of the near virgin crayfish beds, but ended in March 1970, when T. Hokianga, Master of the

<sup>308</sup> *Press*, 12 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>309</sup> *Press*, 27 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. See also *Press*, 4 October 1967, *Javelin* photo, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>310</sup> See Chatham Islands Telephone Directory, 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. Ibid. Others included: Hamish Gregory-Hunt, Joe Tuanui, Jim Pomare, and Manuel Goomes. See *Christchurch Star* 20 July 1968, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, in 1968, T. Solomon was foreman of the Chatham Island Packing Company, and C. Scott was the manager; Ian Tuanui processed crayfish. Mary Moffett (Pitt Island) worked at the Stella Fishing Company, managed by Peter Lewis.

<sup>311</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 20 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>312</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 92.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

*Marilyn H.*, one of four trawlers, arriving at Lyttelton stated that “the rape” of the Chathams was over. This phrase is mentioned later.<sup>314</sup> Some islanders perceived that more profit went to the mainland. It is in this respect, not dissimilar to the old whaling days and part of what they saw as their ongoing history of neglect and exploitation. There was a sense that the Chathams deserved to benefit more, because it was receiving only a small share of the \$2 million industry, in March 1968. Echoed in the *Christchurch Star*, and seeking government support, R. E. Smith, a Christchurch businessman and past President of the Chatham Island Import and Export Committee, urged that the crayfishing industry materially assist in overcoming the handicaps of high freight charges, and poor communication, that the Chathams had historically endured.<sup>315</sup> Compared to farming, crayfishing was the money-spinner. Because freight charges kept local prices high, few were interested in farming, because it cost \$35 to get a bale of wool to market, or \$40 to shift a beast to the mainland. Even though the *Holmdale* came fortnightly to Waitangi, some goods brought by the Bristol Air Freighters were cheaper. The possibility that land development could provide an insurance against fishing slumps depended on whether the land was made available, and the labour force returned from the mainland.<sup>316</sup>

### 2.3 Quantification of the Boom

The table chart below shows the profitability of the Chathams crayfish industry, indicated by the landed value of crayfish for the fishermen, and processing factories, as sold on the overseas market. Most noteworthy, on average each dollar of estimated export value in the Chathams over the 4 years represented 49.61c of landed value, and 2.53 lb of crayfish as landed.<sup>317</sup> It is interesting that although the quantity of the catch declined, the income earned increased.

<sup>314</sup> *Press*, 3 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>315</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 23 March 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>316</sup> *New Zealand Weekly News*, 14 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-51, WTU.

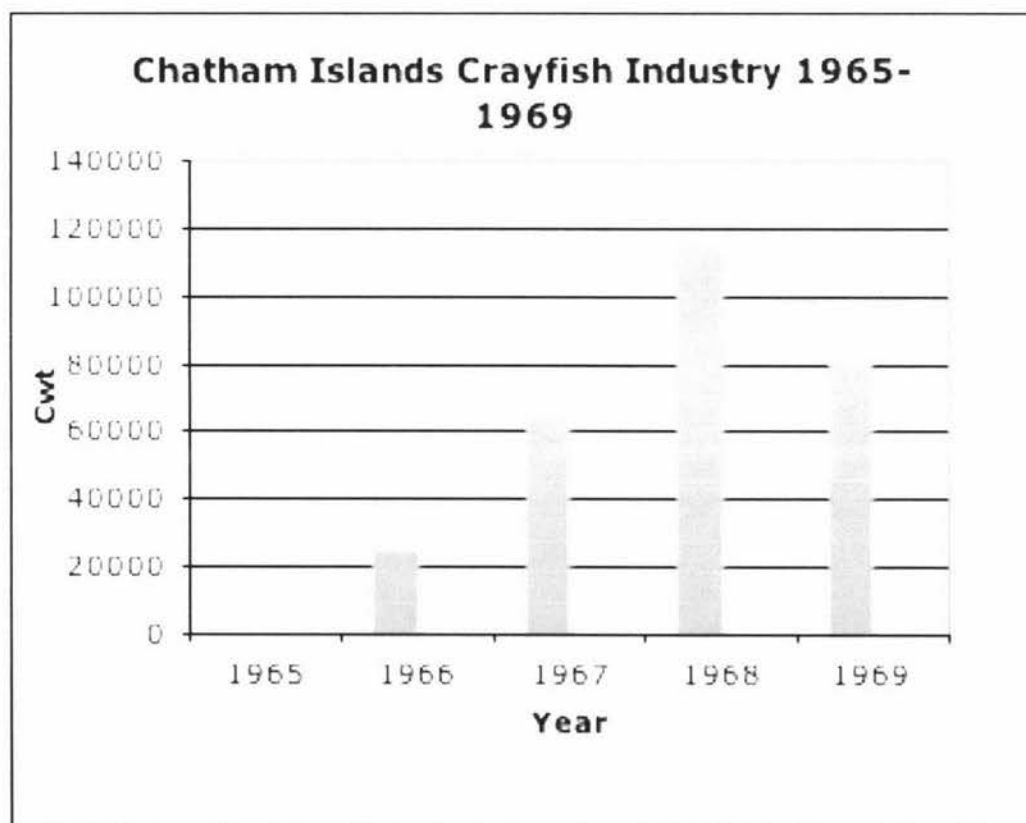
<sup>317</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 81.

**Table 3**

Total Crayfish Landings for the Chatham Islands 1965-1969<sup>318</sup>

	Cwt	\$000 (New Zealand Dollars)
1965	39	-
1966	24,965	746
1967	65,080	1,767
1968	117,032	4,088
1969	81,451	4,650

The graph below shows the crayfish caught from 1965 to 1969.



The total value of crayfish exports caught in New Zealand waters between 1966 and 1969 was NZ\$24.5 million, whereas the total value of crayfish exports caught in Chatham waters comprised NZ\$11.3 million.<sup>319</sup> For the year ended

<sup>318</sup> *Press*, 18 September 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*

March 1968, the Fishing Industry Board reported that crayfish landings at the Chathams represented 54.5 percent of the total New Zealand landings, compared with 40.9 percent in 1967, and Marine Department statistics on crayfish permits revealed that 10 percent of the permit holders (i.e. those operating in the Chatham Islands) were producing more than 50 percent of the total catch.<sup>320</sup> As noted, by 1970 the Marine Department statistics showed that 34,379 cwt of crayfish was landed at the Chathams, less than half the quantity caught in 1969.<sup>321</sup>

By 1970 with a glut on the United States market prices subsequently dropped.<sup>322</sup> In February 1969, the newly appointed district officer of the Department of Industries and Commerce, P. L. Harland, a former New Zealand Assistant Trade Commissioner, and Vice-Consul (commercial), at New York, claimed that the demand for New Zealand crayfish would ease as other supplies of crayfish became available on the United States market. Nor would prices continually rise because of resistance to current prices.<sup>323</sup>

By August 1969 despite over 200 boats fishing, compared to 150 in 1968, and smaller crayfish catches, large vessels still engaged in crayfishing. The skippers clearly believed that they could still earn good money from crayfish. According to David Holmes, when the crayfish boom peaked private boats allegedly took 400 tons of tails to New Zealand before control laws came into force, and: 'They tailed at sea and dumped the bodies-thousands of them'.<sup>324</sup> Moreover, as crayfish catches declined from 1969, and with crayfish beds depleted by 1971, the large boats left for the mainland.<sup>325</sup> Perhaps, optimistically, the Marine Department claimed that the valuable fishery would stabilize itself, providing regular supplies for overseas and local markets, and, thus appointed an administration officer, a permanent fisheries inspector and an engineer surveyor to the

<sup>320</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1969, H. 15 A, p. 9.

<sup>321</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1973, C. 6, p. 50.

<sup>322</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 6 February 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>323</sup> *Press*, 4 February 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>324</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 131.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

Chathams.<sup>326</sup> But these changes did only come after considerable political debate. It will be seen that Norman Kirk played a pivotal role in promulgating these changes.

### 2.3.1 Controlling the Crayfish Boom

The crayfish boom in many respects brought both problems and prosperity to the Chathams. There was an interface between these problems and the politics of the Chathams. Instances such as the installation of a wharf, slipway and workshops, at Waitangi, were vital not just for export earnings, but also for the safety of fishermen travelling to and from the islands.<sup>327</sup> Both Sir Basil Arthur, (MP Timaru, Labour) and the Minister of Marine, W. J. Scott in Parliament confirmed this in September 1968. Yet, on 17 June 1969 in the *Christchurch Star* Kirk claimed that: ‘the Chatham Islands crayfish industry was being allowed to run wild’.<sup>328</sup> With the air of an opposition Member of Parliament, Kirk criticised the government for not limiting the number of boats and for not conserving the crayfish grounds. He argued that this resulted from the Marine Department delicencing the fishing industry in 1963, permitting vessels to sail in convoy, in cases where unqualified crew could not make the run alone.<sup>329</sup>

B. R. Walker, Chairman of the New Zealand Fishing Boat Owners’ Association, a non-Chatham voice supporting Chatham Islanders, supported Kirk claiming that the government had: ‘very little control over the exploitation of this natural resource’.<sup>330</sup> He urged that the Marine Department halt the depletion of the Chathams crayfish beds, and the New Zealand coastline. It is significant that in his reply, Scott argued that since 1963 a policy was adopted of permitting fishermen to fish in such waters, and for such species, as they desired. Therefore, he did not believe that: ‘The present degree of exploitation of crayfish in the Chatham Islands would justify the imposition of restrictions in the interest of

<sup>326</sup> *AJHR*, 1970, H. 15, p. 7.

<sup>327</sup> *NZPD*, 356 (1968), p. 1587 (Sir Basil Arthur and Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>328</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>329</sup> *Press*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>330</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



conservation at this stage'.<sup>331</sup> This statement is one of a number of instances when the government proved reluctant to heed the concerns of the islanders.

## 2.4 Crayfish Supplies and Failed Conservation Measures

The conservation issues were twofold: maintaining sustainable supplies of crayfish, and the environmental effects of crayfishing.

### 2.4.1 Background

The calls for crayfish conservation occurred at a time when environmental issues within New Zealand politics were emerging. In the 1960s institutionalised environmental politics developed in New Zealand; accordingly, the National Government placed some importance on the conservation of the environment. In 1962, for example, it set up the Nature Conservation Council, a quango (an acronym for “Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization”) to advise the Government on conservation issues.<sup>332</sup> Several years earlier Labour held a conference on the Conservation of New Zealand’s scenic attraction in 1959. During the 1960s environmental controversy arose over government negotiations with Comalco, an overseas consortium, in the building of the aluminium smelter at Tiwai Point that needed cheap electricity. This ultimately led to the Labour and National Governments negotiating with Comalco, and agreements signed, in the 1960s.<sup>333</sup> Also, the National Government set up an environmental quango (the Environmental Council), seeking a Minister of Environment in 1964. Following the recommendations of the 1968 National Development Conference, professionals, influential “conservation academics”, and university professors of natural sciences attended a Physical Environment Conference in 1970, but, notably, few environmental activists. According to Christine Dann, environmental issues became more politicised in the late 1960s and early

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<sup>331</sup> *NZPD*, 360 (1969), p. 835 (Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>332</sup> Quango an umbrella term used to describe a wide variety of statutory agencies set up by the government, but which lie outside the traditional government structure. Jackson, McRobie, *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand*, p. 194. The government provides financial support and makes senior appointments.

<sup>333</sup> Simon Nathan. ‘Conservation – a history’, *Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 4-Dec-2008, URL: [http:// www.TeAra.govt.nz/ The Bush/ConservationAHistory/en](http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/TheBush/ConservationAHistory/en)

1970s.<sup>334</sup> But, overall conservation did not become a major political issue until the 1972 election campaign.

In 1968 the Fishing Industry Board highlighted that fishermen's organizations were concerned about the conservation and preservation of the important Chathams fishery, seeking a comparison of catch effort, including the size and sex distribution of the rock lobsters caught, suggesting paradoxically overexploitation had already occurred.<sup>335</sup> By setting up this special committee in September 1967, the Board sought to conserve crayfish and specifications for crayfish handling, and quality, for the Chathams. It also proposed new regulations after 31 March 1969; hence, stricter controls ensured better quality, the fishery preserved, and malpractices controlled.<sup>336</sup> Despite the islanders' efforts, these actions came too late because of overfishing.

In July 1969 the *New Zealand Weekly News* stated the crayfish bonanza had ended, blaming the government for not heeding the islanders' concerns, yet telling them "seek your own salvation". Moreover, it compared government policies allowing the fishing industry a free hand to reap the crayfish harvest (by taking the tails then dumping the claw and body meat back in the water) to collecting fire cones for seed, because it fetched \$2 a pound then burning down the forest.<sup>337</sup>

At this time, the newspapers were aware of the issues. In June 1970 the *New Zealand Truth* (a national tabloid newspaper that lent itself to sensationalism) reported that like a "gold rush", the crayfish era had boomed and waned, ending

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<sup>334</sup> Christine Dann, 'The development of the first two Green parties in New Zealand and Tasmania' in 'From Earth's last islands. The global origins of Green politics', Ph.D. thesis, Lincoln University, New Zealand, 1999, URL retrieved 15 February 2008, from <http://www.globalgreens.org/literature/dann/chapterfive.html>, p. 5.

<sup>335</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1969, H. 15 A, p. 10.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.* At this time, millions of dollars were added to New Zealand's overseas earnings, as New Zealand rock lobster tails fetched high prices in the United States market. Comparatively, a lower price was paid for Australian and South African tails several years earlier.

<sup>337</sup> *New Zealand Weekly News*, 14 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-51, WTU.

the scramble for wealth. According to the Marine Department's Director of Fisheries, B.T. Cunningham, the Marine Department had warned the fishing industry several times that catches would decline. The government had warned them that the Chathams waters were unable to take the big boats, and the Fishing Companies operating there risked overcapitalisation.<sup>338</sup> Nevertheless, Cunningham believed crayfishing would remain a valuable local industry in the Chatham Islands, but: 'It will cease to be a mainland industry and will be conducted by smaller boats operating from the islands'.<sup>339</sup> Furthermore, the crayfish grown to beyond the minimum size limit would be harvested annually, providing a reasonable return for the fishermen.

#### 2.4.2 Calls for Government Action

The boom that occurred from 1966 to 1969 ended abruptly because of overexploitation. Although some of this is mentioned previously, several factors contributed to this decline: an uncontrolled number of boats; large intensive catches that were unsustainable; crayfish took a long time to mature, and stocks needed a long time to recover. Some islanders believed that crayfish would indefinitely continue with regulation of vessels, but some vessels that required surveying in the mainland never returned to the Chatham Islands.

In mid-1966 Leader of the Opposition, Kirk, suggested to the Minister of Marine, Scott, after discussions with the Chatham Islands Fishermen's Cooperative, and the Chathams County Council, that the crayfishing industry needed a limitation of the fishing fleet, and the introduction of a Chatham Islands register for fishing vessels. This would also ensure that the catch rate could be steeped up to the maximum that the grounds could stand without depletion, and maintained at this rate indefinitely, 'without a "boom-and-bust" cycle'.<sup>340</sup> This prediction proved inaccurate. It is important to note that the

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<sup>338</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 30 June 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>340</sup> *Press*, 23 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. See thesis J. B. Atkinson, 'A Case Study of the Chatham Islands Crayfish Levy, 1966-1969', MA thesis, Political Science, University of Canterbury, Christchurch, 1971.

Internal Affairs Department prevented a Fishing Industry Report from being published in 1966 concerning the problems of the Chathams crayfish fishery associated with its rapid growth.<sup>341</sup> It is unclear why Internal Affairs prevented this report being published. It may be that the income from fishing was more important to the New Zealand economy than conservation. It may also be that the reports from the United States about the bad quality of the Chathams crayfish tails, compared to Western Australia and South Africa, tailing at sea, and live evisceration of crayfish, caused considerable concern.<sup>342</sup>

The Fishing Industry Board set up a sub-committee, which studied the crayfishing industry in the Chathams and Western Australia in September 1966. In particular, the successful processing methods used in Western Australia, and the way crayfish was kept alive and transported long distances there. The Minister of Marine became concerned about the quality of some whole frozen crayfish that had been landed from the Chatham Islands. The committee comprised: D.K. Hope and J.S. Campbell, Fishing Industry Board; A.C. Kaberry, Marine Department; G. P. Topp, Agriculture Department; J.B. Hayward representing the Federation of Commercial Fishermen of New Zealand, J. Thompson representing the wholesale fish merchants and processors. A committee meeting held at the Chathams comprising 70 fishermen, crewmembers, local residents and other interested parties, found that differing views between, 'those who wished to tail at sea and those (generally interested in factories, and local residents) who did not agree with tailing at sea'.<sup>343</sup>

The report identified four problems affecting the Chatham Islands Fishery: processing, production, quality and economics of the crayfishing industry; the safety of operatives in the industry; factors affecting conservation and utilization of the fishery, and factors affecting the welfare and development of the Chatham

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<sup>341</sup> *Press*, 1 June 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>342</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia. Papers about Crayfishing at Chatham Islands and Western Australia, New Zealand Seamen's Union: Records, 80-307-74/22, WTU. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7.

Islands. It is not possible to outline the reports analysis of these problems in full here, but some important points were made. First, that the Marine Department had the responsibility for the conservation of the fisheries, but should work in conjunction with the fishing industry, through the Board, who cooperated with the Department, 'in preserving for the future a permanent and lasting industry'.<sup>344</sup> Catch restrictions by quotas, pot restriction or by a closed season were suggested as possible conservation measures. Also, research was sought into the possible duration or level at which the fishery could be sustained. If the number of vessels were to be restricted from a safety point of view, from a conservation point of view, or to preserve high standards of quality, a rostering of vessels was also to be considered. Finally, the argument raised against trawling for crayfish in the Chathams related to the bad condition of crayfish caught in a trawl net, compared to those caught in a pot (the net made no distinction between female in berry and undersized crayfish).<sup>345</sup> Perhaps, the fact that catches from trawling were at times so large (Hanson Bay) meant that processing and freezing facility were swamped affected quality. The Marine Department and the Board recommended that trawling for crayfish be prohibited.<sup>346</sup> This meant that all crayfish had to be taken by pots. Also, the report suggested that a quota system be applied. The report recommended three significant points: crayfish quality standards should be finalised and adopted as soon as possible; urgent consideration be given to ways and means of attaining the maximum sustained yield in the Chatham Islands and other crayfisheries; and, full consideration should be given to the best methods of conserving the crayfisheries of New Zealand, including implementing closed seasons. The report pointed out that 'there had not been a complete seasonal cycle of catching to establish any sort of annual catch pattern (and this may evolve only after several years)'.<sup>347</sup> That waste of bodies be reduced by recovery of the meat, or the manufacture of meal from bodies was another recommendation.

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<sup>344</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid.

<sup>346</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia, Papers about Crayfishing at Chatham Islands and Western Australia, New Zealand Seamen's Union: Records, 80-307-74/22, WTU.

<sup>347</sup> Ibid., p. 7. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

Regarding processing, production, quality and economics, the report recommended that there should be ‘no extension of tailing at sea in the Chathams as arguments against this seemed to outweigh those for tailing at sea’.<sup>348</sup> If the fishermen tailed at one place, they fouled up the grounds with bodies, attracting blind eels and other scavengers. Also, the toxic discharge from decaying bodies was detrimental to other crayfish, drawn away from this area. Yet, evisceration of live crayfish, and similar processes, by fishers circumvented the prohibition of tailing, because of the way it was defined in the current regulations. Changing the regulation to require that all crayfish be landed alive at the processing stations was seen as an effective way of enforcing the requirement. Hence, helicopters were introduced.<sup>349</sup> Later, in 1967 J. B. Hayward, representing the fishermen, still upheld tailing at sea stating: ‘until someone can tell definitely that the quality is affected I maintain this is the most hygienic, economic and safe way of producing cray-tails’.<sup>350</sup>

According to the fishing report, the members of the fishing industry at the Chathams believed that the Chatham Islands should receive some benefits from the fishery, which had developed there. Such benefits could lead to permanent advantages for the islands by way of increased facilities in the wharfage space, moorings, slipway, improved roading, improved airfield and improved access to the airport’.<sup>351</sup> The Board, in discussions with the County Council, agreed that the wharfage on crayfish should be raised to the same level as other produce exported from the Island. The case for a special levy on crayfish, however, depended upon future amenities. Therefore, the report recommended that ‘every

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<sup>348</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia, p. 1. Papers about Crayfishing at Chatham Islands and Western Australia, New Zealand Seamen’s Union: Records, 80-307-74/22, WTU. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>349</sup> Ibid. Tailing: Separating the tail from the body. Evisceration: The body is cut across having some still attached to the tail and able to be measured. Some fishermen used this method to circumvent tailing at sea. See glossary.

<sup>350</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia, Appendix 1, p. 2.

<sup>351</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia, p. 15. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.



assistance be given to the Chatham Islands County Council to enable it to provide essential facilities. These should not be a charge on the local residents'.<sup>352</sup>

The report highlighted that there had been some difficulty in getting all the crayfish away from the islands by the existing sea service. Furthermore, crayfishermen could not afford to have huge shipments idle at the Chatham Islands, as they already incurred fairly heavy expenses in transporting the fish away from the Port of Lyttelton, which was the landfall for the *Holm* services. Moreover, it was in New Zealand's interest to enable this fishery to operate at the most economic level and already high costs existed on supplies and other necessities. Hence: 'There should be improved shipping facilities and lower freight costs for cargoes to and from the Chathams'.<sup>353</sup> Perhaps, surprisingly, the report suggested that the safety of vessels to and from the Chathams and their service at the Chathams, affected the economics of the fishery. The Marine Department did, however, acknowledge its responsibilities here. It conceded that only 35 vessels could be safely accommodated at the Chathams, and slippage and other facilities were required.<sup>354</sup> The Department also insisted on a high standard of sea-worthiness for the vessels, and ability of the crew, in light of difficulties with convoys of vessels, qualifications and experience of crewmembers of vessels in convoys, and size of craft.

In summary, the Fishing Industry Board's report proposed changes to established crayfishing practices under the existing Fisheries Regulations. The utilisation of the Chatham Islands resources were to be within the framework of the regulations proposed and, because of the special nature of the Chatham Islands industry, take in account the long-term well being of the local population. In the best short and long-term interests of the crayfishing industry as a whole, that is, in New Zealand and the Chatham Islands, the Marine Department approached government to make substantial changes to the existing

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<sup>352</sup> Ibid., p. 2. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid. See also AAAC 6015 Acc W5224, 158, Chatham Islands Fisheries, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

control regulations. These changes aimed at a maximum use of valuable crayfishing resources, and the production of the highest quality products for sale on local and export markets, following the Marine Department and the Fishing Board's investigations in 1966. Significantly, the Minister of the Department of Internal Affairs did not visit the Islands between 1963 and 1969, suggesting a disinterested government.<sup>355</sup>

Later, in January 1968 the General Manager of the Fishing Industry Board, Campbell, stated that after discussions in the United States and South Africa, 'a very firm policy of management and conservation and the urgent need of attaining a consistently high standard of quality and presentation', and the need to improve New Zealand's marketing of crayfish was paramount.<sup>356</sup>

One year earlier a 1967 *Press* article argued that in "the ocean-going stampede" for crayfish, the Marine Department was caught off-balance. It also stressed the need for a definitive policy for the Chathams crayfish industry by all parties: the department, the fishermen, the owners, the processing firms, and others. Such a policy, arguably, would have counteracted the Department's indecision, and conflicting decisions, that bedevilled what should have been a valuable industry for New Zealand.<sup>357</sup>

Despite the fact that both government reports and the media advocated conservation measures be implemented, as early as 1967, no action was taken until 1969. The Minister of Marine, Scott, stressed that in the Chathams "gold rush fever", the fishermen thought more about catching large quantities of crayfish than to the long-term conservation interest.<sup>358</sup> Yet several years earlier in September 1967 a *Christchurch Star* article headlined "Too Much Gold Rush Fever", suggested the Marine Department was unable to cope with the chaotic situation. Ron Threadwell maintains that the Chatham Islands were not exploited by the government, but by the New Zealand fishermen. Moreover, the crayfish

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<sup>355</sup> Arbuckle, p. 15.

<sup>356</sup> Papers about Crayfishing at Chatham Islands and Western Australia, New Zealand Seamen's Union: Records, 80-307-74/22, WTU.

<sup>357</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 16 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*

industry in New Zealand had no control over this, or fishing per se. Because there were no quotas in those days, fishermen could catch any species, and sell anywhere with no control. The government certainly was lax for not introducing some control over fishing, but under the auspices of the Marine Department, such controls were almost non-existent for the fishing industry. Fish became a real commodity for the fishing industry since the Chathams crayfish boom.<sup>359</sup>

Consequently, to overcome the problems associated with the expansion of the crayfishing industry, the Chathams County Council banned the further building of crayfishing processing factories in November 1967. The Council stated that until some organised fishing control was established, local restrictions were urgent, given the overcrowding of anchorages and facilities. In October 1967, when the Chathams County Council began discussing port development, and a new air service with Marine Departmental Officials, the Secretary of Marine, R. N. Kerr, a Fisheries Inspector, and a Ministry of Works engineer went to the Chathams to inquire into port development and to inspect possible slipway sites.<sup>360</sup> Yet requests for both development and harbour facilities were declined; apparently, both the government and the Council lacked finances, even for a slipway.

Still, a 1967 Fishing Industry Board report emphasized that crayfish was the best export earner for the industry's future. Further to the 1966 safety regulations, the Board asserted that the government should provide adequate and sensible conservation measures; escape gaps to reduce damage to undersize crayfish, investigation of a closed season, and the prohibition of diving for crayfish.<sup>361</sup> But the government undermined the important Chathams fishery. Despite the possibility of earning NZ\$2 million a year in perpetuity, for the Chathams economy, the government did not pass conservation regulations to protect the grounds for future prosperity, allowing many boats to participate, and allowing the same yearly crayfish landings, in spite of warnings about declining crayfish

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<sup>359</sup> Interview with Ron Threadwell, 14 March 2009.

<sup>360</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 26 October 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>361</sup> *AJHR*, 1967, H.15A, p. 19.

numbers.<sup>362</sup> The islanders sought an over-all plan to control fishing, and prevent waste from the government, on which the development of the Chathams depended.<sup>363</sup>

In June - July 1968 the Marine Department's Fisheries Research Unit comprising three Marine Biologists, Fisheries Research Division, began investigating the Chathams crayfish beds, classified as the most prolific around the New Zealand coasts.<sup>364</sup> It carried out a preliminary tagging experiment involving 950 crayfish.<sup>365</sup> They sought to determine the growth and mortality rates, recruitment, and other parameters, estimating the maximum sustainable yield in order to plan for the rational exploitation of the fishery.<sup>366</sup> The unit investigated how long the Chathams crayfish population could withstand the onslaught of so many fishing boats in 1969.<sup>367</sup> The investigation, however, was too late to prevent crayfish catches declining significantly in 1970. Over the same period, the Fishing Industry Board investigated the quality of New Zealand export crayfish, and how to help fishermen improve the quality taken.

In August 1968 the Marine Department told Parliament that in 1967 New Zealand fish exports were worth \$7,758,773, an increase of \$1,897,277 over the total exports of 1966. In comparison, crayfish was valued at \$6,261,655 (compared with \$4,575,318 in 1966) in 1968. Moreover, the Secretary of Marine, R. Kerr, reported that the intensified crayfishing in the Chathams had created many problems, more work for the Department, and recommended the changing of the Fisheries Regulations, despite increased fish exports and

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<sup>362</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>363</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 3 August 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>364</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 25 July 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>365</sup> *Press*, 13 December 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>366</sup> Arbuckle, p. 23. See Annual Report, Marine Department, 31 March 1969, p. 50.

<sup>367</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

earnings in overseas funds.<sup>368</sup> Thus, the Department clearly voiced reservations about the state of the fisheries at that time.

### 2.4.3 Kirk's Role

It will be seen that Norman Kirk was a strong advocate for the Chatham Islands: a mixture of personal concern and political motivation. According to his biographer, Norman Kirk's role, as a vigorous Labour candidate for the Chathams people gained momentum during the crayfish bonanza.<sup>369</sup> Kirk never neglected the islanders, embracing them as family. He recognised "their deep-rooted superstition" and had an empathy with Maori people.<sup>370</sup> As part of his 1972 political campaign, Kirk reiterated the Labour Government's political philosophy as: 'a social programme, which will promote the housing of our people, protect their health, and ensure full employment and equal opportunities for all'.<sup>371</sup> The Labour Party was also more attuned to environmental lobby groups. Even when Keith Holyoake's National Party defeated the Labour Government, in 1960, Kirk retained the seat for Lyttelton and continued to campaign on the Chatham's behalf. On the one hand, Kirk's concern originated from his background and working class sympathies, which gave him an affinity with the tight working-class community. Yet, Kirk saw the Chatham Islands as a means of embarrassing the government, by exposing its weaknesses, not only seeking power for his party, but also as a means of fulfilling his expected duty as an electorate MP. The government could not provide a fair deal for fishing, disappointing the islanders. Indeed, in the 1969 elections Labour won 39 seats

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<sup>368</sup> *Press*, 19 August 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>369</sup> Kirk was Labour MP for Lyttelton from 1957 to 1969, then, transferred to Sydenham. In December 1965, he became the leader of the parliamentary Labour Party, and Leader of the Opposition. On 25 November 1972, Kirk became Prime Minister of the third Labour Government, toppling Jack Marshall's National Party. Kirk died of poor health on the 31 August 1974, aged 51. See Michael Bassett, 'Kirk, Norman Eric, 1923 – 1974,' *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

<sup>370</sup> Margaret Hayward, *Diary of the Kirk Years*, Wellington: A. H. and A. W. Reed, 1981, p. 24.

<sup>371</sup> Michael Bassett, 'Kirk, Norman Eric 1923 - 1974', *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

against National's 45, closing the gap from the 1966 election when Labour had won 35 seats to National's 44.<sup>372</sup>

Margaret Hayward worked as Norman Kirk's private secretary when he was Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister. In her *Diary of the Kirk Years*, she wrote that Kirk expressed anger at the crayfish plunder, when fishermen from all over New Zealand rushed to the Chathams, seeking profit from the sudden export boom.<sup>373</sup> For Kirk, the government did not consider crayfish conservation relevant to sustain the Chatham Islands economy, arguing that the government had no effective conservation policy. He cited the example of 1000 craypots being set in one square mile of water, and unrestricted trawling as examples of government neglect. According to Hayward, Kirk took three years to get regulations prohibiting trawling implemented: 'and then they finally gazetted regulations that had a loophole, and the trawling went on'.<sup>374</sup>

In January 1969 the Leader of the Opposition, Norman Kirk, and three cabinet ministers, initiated a "top-level" investigation into crayfish conservation. It was sadly true that exploitation had been too rapid and uncontrolled. The Minister of Marine, Scott, recommended prohibiting crayfishing at the Chathams for two or three months during the breeding season, a conservation measure that would protect against overfishing, but this plan was not enacted. According to the Minister, the crayfish grounds could be fished out, like the commercial overexploitation on the Stewart Island and Fiordland coasts, an accurate prediction, since: 'if the Chathams are fished out a great natural resource will have been foolishly exploited'.<sup>375</sup> As shown, despite two scientists being engaged in crayfish research since June 1968, insufficient knowledge about

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<sup>372</sup> 'Calculated from the Official Returns of the Justice Department's Chief Electoral Officer', Stephen Levine and Juliet Lodge, *The New Zealand General Election of 1975*, Wellington: Price Milburn, 1976, p. 7. See also Nigel S. Roberts, 'The Politics of Discontent' in Ray Knox (ed.) *New Zealand's Heritage*, 7:100 (1973), p. 2774.

<sup>373</sup> Hayward, p. 217.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 16 December 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



crayfish breeding cycles failed to predict the short-term future of the industry.<sup>376</sup> Nevertheless, the Marine Department did recommend the utilisation of natural Chatham Island resources, like toheroas, oysters and whitebait, and regulations on crayfish conservation.<sup>377</sup>

The Marine Department's recommendations, however, came too late. On 30 January 1969, at an informal meeting of the Chathams County Council, the Minister of Marine, Scott, announced new regulations in order to conserve crayfish and to improve export quality. These regulations ensured steep fines for unlawful fishing: crayfish trawling within three miles of the shore of Chatham, and Pitt Island until 1 December 1970, and during the berry season (when the female crayfish was carrying and latching eggs over a period of three months); escape gaps in crayfish pots from 1 June; bans on crayfish landed ashore alive (apart from the South Westland and the Southern Sounds being tailing at sea areas); crayfish and crayfish tails suitably labelled, as to preserve the owner's identity and consignee when in transit; the live crayfish when landed ashore were transported to the processing factories, like wet fish, enforced in the amended Fisheries Act.<sup>378</sup> Furthermore, the crayfish were to be landed whole and alive when the processing started (a 6 inch tail measured by a stick was standard, whereas processing tails under 6 inch was an offence). It was made compulsory for the total catch to be unloaded from vessels returning from a closed area; all leg meat and body meat was to be utilized, and tailing and meat processing on factory ships was prohibited, except in the tailing-at-sea area. All craypots and buoys were to be marked with the port letters and number of the fishing boat. A maximum penalty of \$1000, plus \$10 per unlawful tail, applied with an amateur catch reduction limit to six crayfish per person (30 per party), enforced. Scott asserted that: 'Factory ships for crayfishing are already illegal

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<sup>376</sup> Ibid.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid.

<sup>378</sup> *Press*, 31 January 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. See glossary for wet fish and berry (in berry) females bearing attached eggs, Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, I-14, p. 8.

outside the tailing at-sea area . . . Therefore they are not legally entitled to work off the Chathams'.<sup>379</sup>

Not only did the government seek to conserve crayfish stocks, but it also sought to increase the amount of edible crayfish meat from November 1968.<sup>380</sup> By processing the legs for the New Zealand market, the claws and body meat for export, it hoped to earn millions of overseas dollars.<sup>381</sup> According to David Holmes, the Chatham Islands Packing Company pulverised and dumped \$1.5 million worth of body meat into the sea at Waitangi before reclamation, and Yovich and Hopkins Co., at Owenga, was the first to reclaim crayfish legs and body meat in 1968.<sup>382</sup> Conversely, in March 1968 the *Press*, highlighted that P. Feron and Sons Limited, managed by M. L. Newman, and twelve staff, the largest and most modern of the eight crayfish factories, was the only one processing crayfish legs for the New Zealand market at Owenga.<sup>383</sup>

Unfortunately, with the decline of the crayfish industry, the business did not grow, and returned to the mainland in 1970.<sup>384</sup> The Chatham Islands Packing Company processed bodies for the New Zealand market in June 1969.<sup>385</sup> They continued, as did the Kaingaroa factory, despite overexploitation. By 1978 the factory extraction of leg and body meat was in full swing. In the early 1980s a

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<sup>379</sup> Ibid.

<sup>380</sup> *Southland Times*, 2 November 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. The Americans preferred to eat the sweet, delicate meat from the crayfish tails (Gourmet Rock Lobster), rather than the more pungent meat from the bodies. Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009, the tail contains the third of the weight of the crayfish and the most valuable part, because it contains the most meat.

<sup>381</sup> *NZPD*, 358 (1968), p. 2778 (Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>382</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on Chatham Islands*, p. 132.

<sup>383</sup> *Press*, 1 March 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 6, WTU. Feron Seafoods Ltd., (Timaru) was later acquired by Sanford Limited, a NZ fishing company.

<sup>384</sup> Johnson, Haworth, p. 203. See *Press*, 18 September 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>385</sup> *Press*, 3 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 6, WTU.

new method of processing crayfish developed; the leg and body meat was cooked, extracted and shipped out.<sup>386</sup>

In August 1969, at the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Federation of Commercial Fishermen, Nelson, the Minister of Marine, Scott, asserted that the Chathams were not yet fished out, despite catches levelling off.<sup>387</sup> Yet, evidence suggested that fewer crayfish tails were being shipped from the Chathams.<sup>388</sup> Moreover, following the 1969 Rock Lobster Regulations, the Marine Department took no further action to conserve remaining stocks; hence, the New Zealand fishing industry felt the flow-on effects in the form of falling income derived from the Chathams. Though the Fishing Industry Board had received \$116,847 from a levy on fish sales from 1968-1969, compared to a meagre government grant of \$20,000, the Board's income from the levy in turn dropped substantially.<sup>389</sup> By this time, the fishery had become uneconomic as predicted. In September 1969 Rev. B. P. Ashby, Roman Catholic Bishop of Christchurch, wrote to the *Press*, claiming that the decreased levy was a poor deal for the islanders.<sup>390</sup> The levy was one of the current controversies that affected Chathams future development.<sup>391</sup>

According to the Annual Report of the Department of Internal Affairs, the Council had applied for a substantial additional dues on crayfish exported from the islands, partly to finance "projected development". Most of the projected developments arose from the opening of an abattoir and the anticipated

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<sup>386</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009. Lea's parents, Herbert Richard (Dick) and Althea Elizabeth Clough (née Arnesen), left the Chathams in 1937. Althea was the first qualified midwife there when the hospital opened in 1927.

<sup>387</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 20 August 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>388</sup> *Press*, 7 August 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>389</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 30 June 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>390</sup> *Press*, 15 September 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>391</sup> *Press*, 16 September 1969; *Christchurch Star*, 17 June 1969; *Christchurch Star*, 27 September 1969; *Press*, 27 September 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

continuing prosperity of the crayfish industry.<sup>392</sup> Although the Chatham Islands Council received considerable revenue from the lobster levy, it needed to spend money on a slipway; the fishing fleet consumed fuel oil almost as fast as it could be shipped from the mainland, and the islands storage was inadequate. Also, the wharf, anchorage, shore processing, and transport facilities were strained, the processing and inspection of crayfish for export needed improving; and the policing of the growing crayfish fleet was perfunctory. Hence, to serve the growing crayfishing and meat industries the islanders sought better wharves, roads, power supply, and transport to the mainland. On the other hand, S. Gregory-Hunt, a local veteran fisherman, claimed that the government gave no recognition to the fishing industry, or the fishermen, in the Chathams, but taxed them highly. Some of the fishermen, for example, had paid 75 cents in the dollar to the Inland Revenue Department, while receiving nothing from the government.<sup>393</sup> One observer, though the minority, asserted that no danger of overfishing existed then: 'There are perhaps more crays than is realised. It is a storm in a teacup, really'.<sup>394</sup> But, whereas boats hauled in hundreds of thousands of pounds of crayfish a day, in 1969, crayfish catches had dropped off, substantially, by February 1970, because few crayfish took the bait. The Chathams crayfish bust, like the boom, had quickly arrived, and, thus the Marine Department's efforts in resource management to determine the level of exploitation came too late.

In May 1969 the National Development Conference Fisheries Report stated that: 'experience in the Chathams will probably parallel what has happened on other new grounds. The catch is expected to fall sharply, level off, and then partially recover. Accordingly, it is assumed that the catch will fall to 6,000 tons by 1973 and then rise to 7,200 tons by 1978'.<sup>395</sup> These predictions proved inaccurate; it is

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<sup>392</sup> Editorial, *Press*, 2 August 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>393</sup> *Press*, 28 January 1969, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>394</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 25 July 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>395</sup> Report, Fisheries Committee to the National Development Conference, Wellington: Government Printer, May 1969, p. 19.

true that the catch declined in line with the normal phenomenon of the post-bonanza stage development of a fishery, in 1970, but it did not recover.<sup>396</sup>

Unfortunately, for the Chathams crayfish industry, the government neither introduced legislation against crayfish meat wastage worth thousands of pounds, nor legislation enforcing conservation of the crayfish beds. By 1968 there was evidence to suggest that the Marine Department's regulation, prohibiting crayfish trawling at all times in Petre and Hanson Bays, was introduced belatedly because no crayfish was taken from the Petre Bay area between 1969 and 1971, formerly the richest of all the Chathams crayfish beds. Also, crayfish trawling during the "berry season" was prohibited, within the three-mile radius of the Islands.<sup>397</sup> Another amendment to the fisheries regulations, gazetted 7 June 1969, restricted trawling in Chathams waters, a measure pivotal to fisheries management, and for conserving the fishery in the future.<sup>398</sup>

These regulations had been introduced too late, a fact acknowledged by a Parliamentary Select Committee led by the Minister of Marine, Allan McCready, set up to inquire into crayfishing in the Chathams in 1969. By 1970 the crayfish boom was over.<sup>399</sup> Despite the recommendation that the rock lobster industry take measures to maintain a maximum level of production, both within the mainland and the Chathams waters, the government had set up the Committee too late. At one level, the Committee had studied oyster production, trout farming and the fishing industry in the Chathams. Because it heard submissions in Gisborne first, however, the crayfish report was delayed until 1970.<sup>400</sup> Consequently, the recommendations of the report were irrelevant, because the crayfish stocks were overexploited. Moreover, just as conservation regulations for crayfish were introduced too late, so too was professional expertise in scientific research in the Chatham Islands.

<sup>396</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, p. 79.

<sup>397</sup> Arbuckle, p. 24.

<sup>398</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 7 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>399</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 6 February 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>400</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 30 June 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

## 2.5 Environmental Issues

### 2.5.1 Tailing At Sea

Another problem arising from the crayfish boom was the pollution caused by live tailing of crayfish at sea. The Fishing Industry Board did state that any changes in procedures at the Chathams (especially the tailing of crayfish at sea in that area) could not be made until the various research projects on crayfish had been completed. According to the Board, they had two objectives: to ensure the quality of the export product, and to obtain the maximum continuing economic utilisation of the available resource. But, they also stated that hasty decisions not based on scientific investigation meant their objective could not be obtained.<sup>401</sup>

Throughout the 1969 election year crayfishing at the Chathams became embroiled in the wider political arena. In January 1969 the islanders hoped for government intervention, with the impending visit of Kirk; J. B. Gordon, Minister of Transport; Scott, Minister of Marine, and D. C. Seath, Minister of Internal Affairs.<sup>402</sup>

Kirk added fuel to the debate about crayfish conservation, arguing: 'If the fishing had been properly controlled from the outset, the grounds might well have returned \$2m a year in perpetuity...The Government promised regulations last January to protect the industry in the Chathams. That protection has not yet materialised.'<sup>403</sup> In response the government stated that stricter controls between the Marine Department and the fishing industry were anticipated in an impending conference. The fishermen had apparently forced the crayfish out of their natural cycle by digging them out of the sand, where they hibernated for certain periods of the year. Both S. Gregory-Hunt, a veteran Chathams fisherman, and Kirk concurred that: 'unless conservation measures were

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<sup>401</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1967, H. 15 A, p. 24.

<sup>402</sup> *Press*, 28 January 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>403</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



introduced the crayfish would disappear'.<sup>404</sup> Kirk gained traction with his complaints because the government seemed to be ineffective in dealing with the Chathams problems, but benefited from the export earnings. The Chathams County Council required money for Island development from its Fishing Industry.<sup>405</sup> Paradoxically, the increased number of outsiders exacerbated the Chathams social and economic problems.

In February 1969 a deputation representing Napier crayfish interests, the New Zealand Wholesale Fish Merchants' Association and the New Zealand Commercial Fishing Boat Owners' Association, attacked the change in crayfish regulations.<sup>406</sup> They probably wanted to keep tailing at sea, receiving higher prices for their catch since devaluation, rather than land live crayfish ashore for processing. Despite their grievance with the government, tighter controls of crayfish exports prevailed. For instance, it prohibited export of crayfish unless they were packed in premises, approved by the Department of Agriculture, and accompanied by a certificate signed by a departmental veterinary officer.<sup>407</sup> Later, in May 1969 the New Zealand Fishing Industry representative, Secretary of three Napier Fishing Companies, G. R. Blampied, criticised the Marine Department for the new crayfishing laws.<sup>408</sup> As pointed out, the new crayfishing laws enforced, in July 1969, prohibited the evisceration of crayfish at sea.<sup>409</sup>

In the previous year, the Marine Department had held a meeting with the Commercial Boat Owners' Association to discuss the 1966 Fishing Industries Board's report on crayfishing at the Chathams, and the proposed change in legislation concerning crayfish that directly affected the commercial fishermen.

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<sup>404</sup> *Press*, 28 January 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>405</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 6 August 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>406</sup> *Press*, 6 February 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>407</sup> *Press*, 15 March 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>408</sup> *Press*, 22 May 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>409</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 17 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

The Seamen's Union was prompted to act on behalf of those Seamen Union members within their Unions jurisdiction, though not invited. A representative of the fishermen pointed out that some fishermen eviscerated at sea which 'due to a technicality was lawful'. Investigated by Massey College and an Agricultural Department's Inspector, Christchurch, the final product was deemed first class. The argument raised against the Marine Department in stopping evisceration rested on its stipulation that crayfish was landed ashore and processed. Second, the sheds seemingly wanted to recoup their outlay of money. Accordingly, they increased their charges by 15 cents a pound to the high price of 58 cents a pound, compared to several years ago when the gross price for jumbo's was 6/4 per pound. Yet, the price for crayfish was still high in 1968. The main point was that the fishermen had no option but to land ashore, though they could eviscerate provided the regulations were not changed. Moreover, eviscerating would save them 41 cents a pound, by tailing and packing their product in Christchurch.<sup>410</sup> The boom created environmental problems in the Chathams associated with the evisceration of crayfish at sea, and the pollution it caused. Even though the Marine Department acted and passed regulations against it in 1966, this legislation was clearly ignored. Also, some fishermen not only breached the regulation, but they also did not pay the levy, possibly because they were upset about the concession granted to the South Western rock lobster fishery. In the islanders' view, with no fisheries inspector to enforce the regulations, the law-breakers made a substantial profit.<sup>411</sup>

In October 1967 the Marine Department stated that mother (factory) ships for crayfishing were illegal at the Chathams.<sup>412</sup> As noted, mother ships processed fish for market during the blue cod period, and were a means of registering fishing boats from the mainland and conserving fish stocks; also, a time when islanders believed profit should go to the island economy rather than the

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<sup>410</sup> Correspondence, Commercial Fishermen's Representative, Chatham Islands, to the President Seamen's Union, Wellington, 30 January 1968, Papers about Crayfishing at Chatham Islands and Western Australia, New Zealand Seamen's Union Records, 80-307-74/22, WTU.

<sup>411</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, p. 73.

<sup>412</sup> *Press*, 21 October 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

mainland.<sup>413</sup> A sense of government neglect emerged as the islanders began to have reservations during the boom. Yet, these regulations did not deter some fishermen from seeking out Chathams crayfish. In 1969 contrary to regulations, a Wellington based fishing company used the mother ship *Hotunui* to harvest thousands of US dollars from crayfish meat that was normally wasted.<sup>414</sup> Accordingly, Chathams fisherman, S. Gregory-Hunt, sought a showdown between the Marine Department and the crayfishers. A 1969 February edition of the *Press* conveyed that despite the Minister of Marine's responsibility, disregard to existing crayfish regulations prevailed.<sup>415</sup>

The environmental impact of the crayfish boom was significant. The Marine Department's regulations in the 1950s, and in 1962, had stipulated that live crayfish be processed ashore; yet, both the Marine Department and the Fishing Industry Board raised concerns about fishing practices and the environment in the Chatham Islands. In particular, tailing at sea, evisceration and the taking of large quantities of crayfish without future replenishment of stocks. Arbuckle confirmed that legislation forbade tailing at sea (except in the South Westland area), because the bodies attracted eels, and other scavengers; the decaying bodies let out a toxic discharge detrimental to crayfish coming to the area. Second, crayfish being brought in whole and alive to the processing plants in highly efficient crate carrying helicopters ensured they could be properly inspected; the resources conserved and export quality attained. Third, in terms of quality, the exported tails needed to be of a high standard, as Chathams crayfish competed with Australia and South Africa (the South African crayfish beds had

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<sup>413</sup> The licensing of fishing vessels was restricted up to 31 December 1963, under the Fisheries Amendment Act 1945, and directed by the Sea Fisheries Licensing Authority. After a Parliamentary Select Committee inquiry in 1962, licensing was changed to one of registration and permit using management as basis for conservation of stocks.

'Fishing Industry', from *An Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, edited by A. H. McLintock, originally published in 1966.

*Te Ara – The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 26-Sep-2006, URL: <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/1966/F/FishingIndustry/en>

<sup>414</sup> *Press*, 18 January 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>415</sup> *Press*, 7 February 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

closed for conservation purposes in 1967). Fourth, some fishermen continued to eviscerate the live crayfish (cutting the body but leaving a portion remaining on the tail), the tails washed, rough-packed and frozen were then transported to the mainland for further processing and packing. Although, the fishermen made a profit, incurring less costs than the other method, the foul marine environment remained.<sup>416</sup> Napier fisherman, Burt Stephenson eviscerated crayfish. His vessel the *Pirimai* equipped with a large freezer transported the tails directly back to New Zealand. Undoubtedly, the dumping of crayfish bodies occurred, but there was also diesel pollution in the sea, resulting from the large number of boats.<sup>417</sup>

### 2.5.2 Crayfish Tailing Penalties

Further perceptions of government neglect occurred in February 1968, when new crayfish regulations were gazetted, belatedly in the view of many, by the Marine Department to protect honest fishermen against pirates. The identification of crayfish pots would now provide evidence for the police against crayfish pirates. If possible, policing would eliminate the illegal tailing at sea, especially evisceration (a method of legally tailing at sea in big “mother ships”). Directed at conservation, these new regulations sought to maintain the quality of tails for the United States market: deemed beneficial to the industry. Despite this, the Marine Department could not provide a permanent nor 3-month assistant for Constable W. Hampton, as policeman and Marine Superintendent, the Department’s only permanent officer. Furthermore, the Marine Department neither had a boat, inspection vehicle for travelling by land, nor a helicopter when the policing of regulation runs required it, yet the commercial firm operated three helicopters and charged \$2 minute.<sup>418</sup> Overall, the government was not entirely complacent about the exploitation of Chathams crayfish, but penalties were not high. On one rare occasion the skippers, and crews, of the boats *Willomee*, *Marie Ann* and *Kingfisher* were fined a total of \$750 on charges relating to tailing at sea, in February 1968, because for D. S. Reid, RM, such practices were lucrative to offenders and offences of this kind were difficult to

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<sup>416</sup> Arbuckle, p. 22.

<sup>417</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009.

<sup>418</sup> *Press*, 4 February 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

detect.<sup>419</sup> In October 1970 Kirk stated that tons of crayfish were caught by trawling, tailed, and their legs and bodies dumped in a gully to rot from 1965 to 1970.<sup>420</sup> According to Kirk, 'Tailing of crayfish was a prohibited activity, yet on the beach one could see literally tons of crayfish with no tails'.<sup>421</sup> With a lack of proper fishery conservation measures, overfishing had occurred: a loss to the Chathams and a loss to New Zealand. This also meant that crayfish became scarcer and more expensive in the shops.<sup>422</sup> Also, even a Fisheries Amendment Bill gave oyster fishermen the right to catch crayfish in the off-season.<sup>423</sup>

The Fisheries Committee of the National Development Conference urged for more effective government assistance in research and investigation to reinforce process development in April 1969.<sup>424</sup> Crayfish, one of New Zealand's main export earners, was predicted as the most valuable asset to the New Zealand fishing industry, for at least the next decade. In August 1969 the Minister of Marine, Scott, pointed out that the export goal for 1973 for the fishing industry set by the National Development Conference had already been reached. In the 1968 year the export value of fish was NZ\$15 million, NZ\$12 million of which came from crayfish, and the value of fish exports since 1964 had risen by more than 180 per cent.<sup>425</sup> But, according to the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, the fishing industry would need new investment; skills, technical knowledge and markets before the National Development Conference export earnings reached its target of NZ\$25 million by 1978.<sup>426</sup> In terms of fisheries management for the Chathams, this depended on the Fisheries Division of the Marine Department; sufficient rock lobster for fishermen to take, and regulations as tools of fisheries management and conservation measures.

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<sup>419</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 8 February 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>420</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 23 October 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>421</sup> *NZPD*, 364 (1969), p. 3612 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>422</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 23 October 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>424</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 11 April 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>425</sup> *Commercial Fishing*, August 1969, p. 13.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

In May 1969, in the House of Representatives, Mrs Tirikatene-Sullivan (Labour, Southern Maori) criticised the government for imposing on the crayfishermen regulations that could create disincentives, even placing them out of business. Furthermore, Sullivan argued that the fishing industry was being built from the target proposals from the National Development Conference, which had already reached its 1973 target figure. The fishing industry would not meet the aspirations of the National Development Conference that the government expected it to fulfil, unless the government removed the regulations.<sup>427</sup> Sullivan pointed out that its Fisheries Committee had reservations as to what could happen to crayfish export figures, as it felt that the crayfish export figure could drop, 'if the Chatham Islands area became over-fished'.<sup>428</sup> Nevertheless, Sullivan believed that the 1978 target would be reached by 1973 or 1974.

As shown, the Marine Department revised regulations to control the taking and handling of crayfish by commercial and non-commercial fishermen by Order-in-Council, gazetted on the 4 December 1969. Under the new regulations, crayfish were referred to as rock lobster. The labelling of crayfish as rock lobster was necessary to promote marketing in overseas countries. All rock lobster taken for commercial purposes had to be taken ashore alive for processing. The practice of evisceration aboard boats domiciled in New Zealand ports, other than the Chatham Islands, and fishing in the Chatham Islands fishery, was permitted until 31 March 1970.<sup>429</sup> Meanwhile, trawling was still permitted in Hansen and Petre Bays, latterly, the pitfall of this legislation. The Deputy Chairman Councillor of the Chatham Islands County Council, David Holmes, recalled a time when under the cliffs at Green Point, in an area of half a mile square, 200 tons of crayfish were taken until it was fished out. At that time, because most fishermen used 40 to 60 pots at a time, the demand for steel for crayfish pots saw Chatham Island fishermen buying up the entire steel stock of Christchurch, leaving none for the city's builders. For Holmes, the many crayfish pots lost helped lead to the

<sup>427</sup> *NZPD*, 360 (1969), pp. 226-27 (Mrs Tirikatene-Sullivan, Southern Maori).

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 345 (Mrs Tirikatene-Sullivan, Southern Maori).

<sup>429</sup> *Auckland Star*, 5 December 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



crayfish bust, stating: ‘I would venture to say that those pots held thousands of tons of dead crayfish, which helped the crayfish decline’.<sup>430</sup>

Furthermore, the newly appointed Minister of Marine, Allan McCready, alleged that crayfish was being sold at sea by New Zealand fishermen to foreign buyers in March 1970, stating: ‘It is one thing to create offences, but quite another thing to be in a position to police and enforce the law’.<sup>431</sup> Such offences occurring in the Chatham waters were difficult to police for three reasons: first, their remoteness, and frequent bad weather; second, offenders evaded any patrol vessel acting in a surreptitious manner; third, unless an informer came forward to present a case in court, the detection of unlawful transfer of crayfish at sea was difficult to prove.<sup>432</sup>

As seen, the crayfishing laws caused conflict between the Marine Department and the New Zealand Fishing Industry. Moreover, there was a link between the boom and the self-interested calls for infrastructure. For example, Timaru fisherman, John Inkster, member of the New Federation of Commercial Fishermen, and owner of the trawler, *Norseman*, claimed that there were problems in exploiting the fishery, because of isolation and the lack of facilities at the Chathams in 1966. In particular, Inkster outlined that in the processing of crayfish all fish had to be landed on the Chathams, unlike Fiordland (some of the plants processed the meat from the body and legs of the large male crayfish), all goods, fuel and food had to be carried to the Chatham Islands.<sup>433</sup> According to Inkster, the Chathams crayfish industry was in a “shambles”, calling for a businessmen’s inquiry, the Marine Department’s bureaucracy had obstructed a valuable source of overseas income for New Zealand, especially since the USA paid big money paid for crayfish. Still, that the fishers experienced exposed dangerous conditions in the unloading of deck cargoes onto barges close inshore to the rock coasts; that they found unloading of deck loads of sliding cargo hard

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<sup>430</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chathams*, p. 132.

<sup>431</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 31 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7 WTU.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

<sup>433</sup> Jenny Haworth, ‘Salt of the Ocean: The Inksters Legends of the Chathams’, *Seafood New Zealand*, November (2007), p. 32.

to handle in rough weather; that the high seas prevented landing, because a law stipulated either dump overboard, or wait until the weather improves at the risk of complete spoilage. Hence, for these reasons Inkster urged for a change of regulations permitting crayfish for export to be tailed aboard fishing boats in dangerous seas.<sup>434</sup> Alternatively, frozen freight flown direct to the mainland increased the value of overseas funds essential to the New Zealand economy, but a good Chathams airstrip was needed at that time.

Most fishing boats were unloaded by helicopters owned by Alexander Helicopters Limited, Wanganui, others were unloaded at the wharf, or by punt.<sup>435</sup> During the boom's heyday helicopters cost one pound per minute.<sup>436</sup> From 1968 to 1969 nine processing crayfish plants were in action, and over 200 boats operated, but when the last helicopter flew out in August 1970, only three processing plants remained.<sup>437</sup> This caused dismay for some islanders, because they relied on the helicopters for many tasks, such as unloading cargo from various Lyttelton and Auckland boats. Manager of the Chatham Islands Packing Company, C. Scott, though a mainlander, argued that the departure of helicopters by contingency was bad for the Chathams.<sup>438</sup> On the other hand, the government stated that despite many years of heavy service, the service was uneconomical because of insufficient demand.

## 2.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the crayfish boom and the effects of overexploitation, particularly, conservation and the environment. It demonstrated that in terms of value of exports, the Chathams crayfishing industry was especially important for the USA markets. As the Chatham industry peaked at speed over a short period,

<sup>434</sup> *Press*, 17 April 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>435</sup> *Press*, 22 May 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>436</sup> Emmanuel Makarios, 'An Epitaph to', *Seafood New Zealand*, December 1994, p. 11.

<sup>437</sup> *Press*, 18 September 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>438</sup> *Press*, 7 February 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

the number of boats, the quantities of equipment, and the reservoir of skills built up in the mainland were quickly applied to this fishery.<sup>439</sup> However, the fishery did not have its own corrective mechanism, that is, fewer boats meant less profit, and the smaller catch landings were not a normal phenomenon of the post bonanza stage of the development of a fishery, seen in the South Western fishery of Bluff and Stewart Island from 1955 to 1959. The 1970 Parliamentary Select Fishing Industry Committee did not recommend necessary measures to maintain a maximum level of production, in line with the report to the Second Plenary Session of the National Development Conference in 1969. Hence, the government undermined the need for conservation. The sustainability of crayfish stocks depended on good management and protection of the fishery, yet business interests of the fishing industry prevailed. For the islanders, the Marine Department's Fisheries Inspection Branch (Fisheries Management Division) at the Chathams lacked staffing. Hence, environmental problems emerged, despite Marine Department regulations in 1966. With no fisheries inspector to enforce the regulations, law-breakers made a substantial profit, angering the islanders.<sup>440</sup> Also, the disparity between the Chathams Council incomes from fishing, compared to Council expenditure, became apparent. Here, Kirk played a pivotal role in Chathams politics, highlighting the problems of conservation and infrastructure, while the islanders sought government support and advice to solve their problems. Chapter three explores the social consequences of the boom, examining three key issues: infrastructure, piracy and violence, and safety that helped reinforce divisions between insiders and outsiders.

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<sup>439</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, p. 22.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

## Chapter Three

### **3. THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRAYFISH BOOM**

This chapter focuses on the social consequences of the boom and explores four issues: infrastructure, piracy, violence and safety that influenced relationships between islanders and outsiders. Collectively, they reinforced perceptions that the Chatham Islands were marginal to New Zealand and did not benefit from the “Crayfish Boom”.

#### **3.1 Infrastructure**

As discussed in chapter one, there were concerns over poor infrastructure in the Chatham Islands before the boom. The boom reinforced this perception these perceptions of government neglect. In 1966, for example, Federated Farmers Member, S. J. S. Barker, pointed out to the Department of Internal Affairs that Prime Minister, Keith Holyoake, back in October 1960, had promised that the government would guarantee better shipping service, and a land-based air service, within five years, for the Chathams.<sup>441</sup> Six years later, these services had not materialised. As a further example of government disinterest in the Chathams, he noted that the map used to represent the Islands in 1966: ‘Chatham Islands from a map compiled by the New Zealand Government, 1868. Soundings chiefly from a plan by Lieut. Fournier of the French Navy 1840’ was nearly one century old.<sup>442</sup>

Another problem was that all sea and air passenger tickets from Chatham carried conditions stipulating no liability of further transport should the carrier be diverted from its original destination. According to Doctor Tucker, only essential surgery was done on the Chathams; minor operations such as tonsillitis had to be done on the mainland; and, when discharged from a New Zealand hospital, rather than Waitangi, Chatham patients bore the cost of accommodation and return fares.<sup>443</sup> Despite representations to the Minister of Health, Mr McKay, the

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<sup>441</sup> Letter S. J. S. Barker, Mount Mason, Hawarden, North Canterbury to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 27 June 1966, MS-Papers-0434-37, WTU. See also Arbuckle, pp, 35, 38.

<sup>442</sup> Ibid.

<sup>443</sup> Dr Tucker, ‘The Chatham Islands’, p. 80. Medical treatment could take up to six weeks for some patients.

situation remained unchanged. Also, if a patient required a general anaesthetic, at Waitangi Hospital, the doctor would act as both anaesthetist and surgeon, while for fractured limbs and obstetric cases only the simplest of anaesthetics was administered.<sup>444</sup>

Some islanders criticised the wasted spending of government money in the planning of the long-term future of the Chathams. In the 1970s Chatham Islands Development Committee Chairman, the Catholic Father Dr Falconer, criticised the rebuilding of Te Kairakau School, costing \$56,000, arguing that Te One School nearby, or one central school, would have accommodated these pupils. The spending of \$40,000 on a freight shed, at Hapupu, without providing a suitable road first was another instance. For Falconer an economic survey relevant to short-term and long-term expenditure in future planning was more expedient.<sup>445</sup> In 1966 the Chathams County Council certainly lacked money for facilities, especially for the servicing and safety of fishing fleets, as the fishing boats paid no wharfage. Moreover, the County Council's wharf rate needed revision and a levy on production introduced at that time.<sup>446</sup> Despite the Chathams County Council collecting wharfage dues during the crayfish boom, it became apparent that no plans for local development and progress could proceed, without government assistance.<sup>447</sup> The *Wai 64* noted that as its primary source of revenue, the wharf dues, or customs, were insufficient to build the founding infrastructure, even roads.<sup>448</sup> One potential source of revenue was the "Chatham Island County Council Empowering Act 1936" that applied during the "boom", gave the County Council power to charge, an Import-Export Levy on

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<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>446</sup> *Press*, 23 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. See Atkinson, 'A Case Study of the Chatham Islands Crayfish Levy, 1966-1969'.

<sup>447</sup> Letter S. J. S. Barker, Mount Mason, Hawarden, North Canterbury to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 27 June 1966, MS-Papers-0434-37, WTU.

<sup>448</sup> *Wai 64*, claim, 12.6, p. 244.

all goods passing over the wharf in lieu of rates, based on land rating, but, as will be discussed further, this was contingent on goods being processed ashore.<sup>449</sup>

Although the Chatham Islands Council received more money during the crayfish boom, its expenses also increased, because the existing infrastructure was strained. Hence, the islanders believed they were missing out on facilities. According to Chathams County Chairman, Fred Lanauze, although the crayfishing industry had doubled county revenue, it had more than doubled, and appeared to treble, the Council's expenses. The only thing that kept the economy ahead was the import and export levy on goods, coming into and going out, to the Chatham Islands, and if demands for less packaging prevailed, the levy would bring in less.<sup>450</sup> In July 1968 the Chathams received a four-cents-a pound crayfish levy, whereas just a few months back, they received nothing. But not all the fishermen paid it, since some tailed at sea and, local rumour held that it was sold to foreign interests off the coast. Some fishermen, however, who paid the levy insisted that money go towards infrastructure, for example, roads to the widely spaced packing plants, better wharves, refuelling aids and repair slips. Concerned for the Chathams future, the County Council urged that the government consider an Island Development scheme, such as fish farming in Te Whanga Lagoon, market gardening and Tourism.<sup>451</sup>

The government did assist the Chathams in some ways. For instance, the government and the Minister of Marine, Scott, set up freezing plants on shore in order to benefit the islanders in 1967.<sup>452</sup> There was some public debate over the extent of government responsibility for the Chathams. J. L. Boyce, a Christchurch cartage contractor and businessman, charged with building roads in the Chathams, argued that "apathy" among the islanders accounted for the lack

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<sup>449</sup> Letter S. J. S. Barker, Mount Mason, Hawarden, North Canterbury to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 27 June 1966, MS-Papers-0434-37, WTU.

<sup>450</sup> *New Zealand Weekly News*, 14 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-51, WTU.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 14 July 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.



of progress there.<sup>453</sup> F. C. Mitcalfe in the *Press* (July 1968), however, argued against the disparaging comments pointing to the problem of isolation.<sup>454</sup>

Chatham Islands County Clerk, G. R. Head, concurred, emphasizing the resignation born out of 100 years of isolation and the National Government's indifference was a distinguishing feature of Island.<sup>455</sup> Undoubtedly, some income derived from crayfish levies for the County resulted in improved facilities, such as the wharf, and the Ministry of Works drew up plans for extensive road improvements, awaiting approval by the Fishing Industries Board.<sup>456</sup>

In mid July 1968 the government informed the council that they were unable to provide the finances for the urgently needed harbour amenities, airstrip, better roads, and lower freight costs.<sup>457</sup> In mitigation, they cited incidences of their generosity towards the Chathams, such as subsidizing shipping to maintain a sea service (the 1967-68 figure was \$61,300), guaranteeing the present air service, and giving generous grants, and technical assistance (usually the responsibility of local councils).<sup>458</sup> Conversely, in the *Christchurch Star*, Sunday Hough, County Council member for twenty years, member of the Marginal Lands and Civil Land Settlement Board, the Licensing Committee, and the Tribal Committee stated that: 'The islands are well awake. Perhaps, once we were a liability to the government, but now with our crayfish industry, and meat industry opening up, we are a money spinner'.<sup>459</sup> Arguing that the islanders received only minimum government assistance during the crayfish boom, Hough urged that the government guarantee a viable economic future in development,

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<sup>453</sup> *Press*, 29 June 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>454</sup> Letter to the Editor, *Press*, 2 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>455</sup> *Press*, 2 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>456</sup> *Press*, 18 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>457</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 18 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>459</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 19 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

especially, transport, the airstrip, wharf facilities, roading, marine safety and fishing control.<sup>460</sup> Overall, despite the “boom” many Chatham Islanders did not benefit economically.

Sunday Hough’s wife Elsie, a Chathams community leader, provided a woman’s perspective on the lack of infrastructure, noting Island women had fewer facilities than those on the mainland: in particular living without electricity and modern conveniences. Elsie asserted that most women viewed education as the key to success for their children, ‘and we want the best education, and the best facilities to get that education’.<sup>461</sup> At that time, the residents needed a better bus service for the main school at Te One; therefore, Elsie requested that the Education Department provide a gate-to-gate service for all children. Also, because of an erratic mail service most people collected mail from the main Post Office, at Waitangi; therefore, a good rural service was needed. The expensive cost of petrol was another drawback.<sup>462</sup>

By 1970 the government recognised that a public slipway was needed for safety reasons, existing roads needed improving, and new roads and houses constructed. Moreover, it predicted that the Chathams rock lobster fishery could look forward to long-term annual earnings of approximately \$3.4 million, in terms of foreign exchange, upon reaching maturity. Thus, these earnings underlined the need for investment in facilities.<sup>463</sup> In subsequent years these plans eroded with overexploitation of the fishery. Chairman of the Chathams County Council, David Holmes, pointed out that the Chatham Islanders were not a race apart, but New Zealanders, who paid New Zealand taxes and rightly expected something in return.<sup>464</sup> He considered that the New Zealand Government had exploited the islanders in fishery and monetary assistance since, ‘the Chatham Islands have always been dependent on ships and now aircraft to carry their imports and exports on the same basis as New Zealand is

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<sup>460</sup> Ibid.

<sup>461</sup> Ibid.

<sup>462</sup> Ibid.

<sup>463</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, p. 83.

<sup>464</sup> *Press*, 18 March 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

required to trade with the outside world.’<sup>465</sup> With government assistance, he argued, both fishing and farming could develop further increasing the islanders’ wealth.<sup>466</sup>

Having to channel requests for improved infrastructure through different government departments posed further obstacles to developing infrastructure. In June 1962 a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the State Services in New Zealand investigated the administration of the Chatham Islands. Although the report excluded Moriori, it stated that the population of the Chatham Islands, consisting of Maori and European, all enjoyed New Zealand citizenship and the same political, social rights and obligations as the mainlanders. Because the Chatham Islands were considered a county of New Zealand, and not an Island Territory, the Commission removed the Chatham Islands administration from the department making it responsible to the Department of Internal Affairs in 1962.<sup>467</sup> Here it is worth noting that in 1961, a newly formed Inter-Departmental Committee had investigated and reported to the government, on the future administration of the Chatham Islands. Later, in 1971 the Inter-Departmental Advisory Committee comprised representatives from the Department of Internal Affairs, Maori and Island Affairs, the Marine Department, the Ministry of Works and the Treasury, but remarkably not the Education and Agriculture Departments. Hence, the government, Arbuckle argued, undermined two important departments vital to the Islands welfare in the understanding of local problems.<sup>468</sup>

### 3.1.1 Airstrip

As noted in 1966, when Barker the Chatham Islands Delegate of the North Canterbury Federated Farmers, wrote to the Department of Internal Affairs, he pressed for better transportation and communication; primarily a regular air service, since, ‘with a reliable service the islands could increase production ten-

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<sup>465</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 173.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.

<sup>467</sup> *The State Services in New Zealand: Report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry*, Wellington: Government Printer, June 1962, pp. 177-78.

<sup>468</sup> Arbuckle, p. 15.

fold'.<sup>469</sup> Even though the Minister of Internal Affairs, David Seath, acknowledged that the Chathams residents would pay £85,000 towards the cost of this airfield, it was not built by 1966. Consequently, in February 1966 the Leader of the Opposition, Kirk, reported to the New Zealand Press Association that no money had yet been provided for a new Chatham Islands airfield and sought government action. The air service, he argued, must be maintained as fish quantities underlined the urgent need for an airport.<sup>470</sup> This controversial issue sparked debates in Parliament in 1966.

Kirk raised concerns about safety such as the landing on the grass airfield with no fire equipment or first aid equipment. Moreover, the airfield was a considerable distance from medical assistance both within the Island and to the mainland, with the nearest source of communication being a wireless operator, sitting in a corrugated iron shed half a mile away. The passing of the Sunderland flying boats threatened air services because there was no airfield suitable for larger aircraft and no land for a new airfield.<sup>471</sup> According to Kirk, passenger aircraft in mainland New Zealand would not be permitted to operate under such conditions blaming Seath for 'his cynical disregard of the needs and well being of the people of the Chatham Islands in not providing an air service'.<sup>472</sup> Kirk criticised the government for not constructing an airfield at the Chatham Islands.<sup>473</sup> It was the Labour Government who had initiated the Sunderland air service in 1958, only for it to be discontinued in 1967 by the National Government who decided to upgrade the Hapupu airfield at a cost of \$20,000 in September 1967. Rather than develop the alternative (and in the view of many) a better placed site near Big Bush because of financial constraints. According to the Minister of Civil Aviation, John Gordon, the regular air service would meet the demands of the fishing industry and passengers.<sup>474</sup> Later, Gordon revealed

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<sup>469</sup> *Press*, 27 January 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-50: 5, WTU.

<sup>470</sup> *Press*, 2 February 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>471</sup> *NZPD*, 346 (1966), pp. 1883-84 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1976 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>473</sup> *NZPD*, 349 (1966), p. 3515 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>474</sup> *Press*, 27 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

that the Big Bush airfield would have cost \$1.5 million or, if import dues had been deducted, \$1.1 million. He also stressed, ‘consultations were taking place on a proposed development of the whole of the Chatham Islands by building a causeway, reclaiming a substantial area and upgrading the roading system’.<sup>475</sup> Also, because planes ran twice a week, ‘the economy of the Chathams had been completely revolutionised’<sup>476</sup>

The Internal Affairs Department Report, ended 31 March 1968, also opposed the proposal for Big Bush because of the high costs involved. Undeterred, the islanders petitioned the government for a new airstrip, supposedly, serving 95 percent of the Chathams population. Accordingly, the County Council sought to increase its dues levied on crayfish tail exports to 10 cents per pound, with 5 cents going towards the new airstrip, and 5 cents going towards harbour development.<sup>477</sup>

The future development of the Chatham Islands caused considerable concern post boom. The media highlighted “the plight of the Chatham Islanders” to the rest of New Zealand. As fellow New Zealanders, the islanders wanted the ministers concerned to come and see the conditions for themselves because from their perspective the Chathams could either become a prosperous farming-fishing community, or a wind-swept fishing base that had slipped back economically. For the Chathams to progress they needed: an airstrip, a roading programme, lower freight costs both to and from the mainland, harbour development to aid the fishing industry, a berth for ocean going vessels, a plan to control fishing and prevent waste, finance for farm development and forestry schemes, and more settlers to justify the services required.<sup>478</sup> Perhaps, a *Christchurch Press*’s editorial suggesting that: ‘a thorough inquiry into the

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<sup>475</sup> NZPD, 357 (1968), p. 2506 (Hon. J. B. Gordon).

<sup>476</sup> Ibid.

<sup>477</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 18 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>478</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 3 August 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

economics of the Chatham Islands might produce some politically unpalatable findings; and perhaps that is why it has been so long delayed' was correct.<sup>479</sup>

### 3.1.2 Chatham Islands Import and Export Committee

The Chatham Islands Import and Export Committee, an interim mainland support group, was formed in Christchurch in October 1968. It argued that since the Chathams contributed between \$6m and \$7m a year, mostly in overseas funds to the national economy, like the rest of New Zealand, it merited long-term social and economic development planning.<sup>480</sup> Its members comprised: the Convener R. E. Smith and Chairman Father Dr R. Falconer, Catholic parish priest at Waitangi that sought better services, and an economic survey to investigate future development. The Committee's report noted that given the growth of landings, and export potential, regular freight services were required, especially a local airline and efficient transportation to export fresh catches of fish at an affordable price. This compared favourably to the lower prices for frozen products back. Still, the islanders relied on indefinite shipping for fuel supplies for fishing, the shore plants, and machinery; and, medical supplies.<sup>481</sup>

Coinciding with the expansion of the fishing industry, the cooperatively owned Chatham Islands Meat Company replaced sheep and cattle exports to the mainland. This meant that the demand for more facilities increased; namely, hotel, store supplies and general cargo, timber imports, extensions to the radio station, a government-building programme, and a workingmen's club at Owenga.<sup>482</sup>

In May 1969 the Chatham Islands Development Committee, a voluntary organization, replaced the Chatham Islands Import and Export Committee, bringing together for the first time representatives of the County Council, local business segments, and the fishing industry, to promote the welfare of the

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<sup>479</sup> Editorial, *Press*, 2 August 1968, p. 8, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>480</sup> *Press* Clipping, Christchurch Paper, 25 October 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*



Islands.<sup>483</sup> The Committee comprised: Father Falconer, independent Chairman, Messrs J. Tuanui (farmers), W. West (fishing), A. Bonney (meat), D. Holmes (County Council and residents), G. Hough (fishing boat crews), W. Lanauze (stores and hotel), C. Scott (fishing companies), H. Lanauze (fish distributors), and Mrs Eva Lanauze (Pitt Island).<sup>484</sup> The Committee urged for a more facilities, amenities and public services as more outsiders meant more money was needed for a swimming pool, accommodation for factory staff and fishermen's families, and another hotel licence from the Licensing Control Commission.

As statistics showed, in 1966 the Chatham Islands had a population of 520 (279 males and 241 females).<sup>485</sup> In 1971 the Chatham Islands had a population of 716 (388 males and 328 females), an increase of 37.7 per cent, or 196 persons.<sup>486</sup> The male population increased during this period; most people resided, at Waitangi, its population 310.<sup>487</sup> Comparatively, in 1976 the Chathams had a population of 615 persons: 251 persons lived at Waitangi, 72 at Owenga, 52 at Kaingarua, 9 persons at Port Hutt and 31 persons at Pitt Island.<sup>488</sup> The Committee called for an economic survey of the Chathams Islands in February 1971. By 1970 the crayfish catches had dropped and the agriculture situation was precarious. Hence, the prosperity of the crayfish boom was short-lived. In 1968 the islanders sought government intervention hoping that, 'from this could emerge a positive

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<sup>483</sup> Arbuckle, p. 59. The representative Export Import Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of the local Catholic Parish Priest, Father Dr R. Falconer of the Christchurch Diocese. See also Arbuckle pp. 35-6.

<sup>484</sup> *Press Clipping*, Christchurch Paper, 25 October 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>485</sup> *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings*, 1966, Department of Statistics: Wellington, 1967, p.19.

<sup>486</sup> *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings*, 1971, Department of Statistics, Wellington, 1972, p. 47.

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74. See Department of Statistics, *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, 1969, Wellington: Government Printer, 1969, on the 1 April 1968 the population estimate for the Chatham Islands was 500 people for a land area of 372 square miles, p. 70.

<sup>488</sup> *New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings*, 1976, Wellington: Department of Statistics, 1977, p. 34.

line of action that will give every interest on the Chathams – fishing and farming – a fair deal'.<sup>489</sup>

In early 1970 Tom McGuigan (Labour Member of Parliament for Lyttelton) pointed out that the islanders lived in conditions that mainland New Zealanders experienced 50 to 60 years ago. Given the size of the Chatham Islands, and contribution to the national export income, he asserted that this was appalling.<sup>490</sup> In an April 1970 Parliamentary debate, McGuigan stated that the Chathams future depended on an economic survey, and an officer, or officers, to be solely responsible for the coordination of local and central government interests. In his speech, he highlighted the high cost of living compared to the mainland; that a house costing \$7000 on the mainland cost approximately \$14,000 on the Chathams; the price for coal was three times the retail price paid in Christchurch; about 80 percent of the housewives on the islands cooked on coal or wood-fired ranges; that there were no sealed roads or footpaths. He suggested that household generators at an annual cost of \$600 could overcome the lack of central electricity supply; and, 'land development was of utmost importance for the islands, but there was also a future for afforestation and some industry in addition to fishing'.<sup>491</sup> This contrasted with an earlier statement in December 1968 that, 'the continued development of the Chathams depends almost solely on crayfish'.<sup>492</sup> The Minister of Marine, Scott, leader of the team that investigated the problems caused by the growth of the crayfish industry knew this, as noted in the previous chapter.<sup>493</sup>

The Minister of Internal Affairs, Seath, told McGuigan in Parliament, that because the main economic issues for the Chathams were farming and fishing, an economic survey was inappropriate. Furthermore, all the appropriate

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<sup>489</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 3 August 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>490</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 4 February 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>491</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 10 April 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>492</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 16 December 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*

measures had been taken by the government to provide advice and money grants.<sup>494</sup> Allan McCready, the Post-Master General, then, announced that a special issue of stamps commemorating the Chatham Islands would be made in December 1970.<sup>495</sup> For many, this vignette demonstrated the contempt in which the government held the Chathams, and failed to address the problem of economic development. Consequently, McGuigan challenged McCready by pointing out that high freight charges, inflated prices, the need for children to be educated on the mainland, and scant work prospects were more important issues.<sup>496</sup> Nor did Falconer support the stamps, but nonetheless upheld McGuigan's views.<sup>497</sup>

The debates on infrastructure in the Chatham Islands were part of a wider debate as to whether the Islands had a viable economic future. As Falconer pointed out: 'The Chatham Islands have become a political football, and so many things are clouded by political issues'.<sup>498</sup> Falconer's call for an unbiased survey by an independent competent body, rather than by government departmental officers, meant its findings could neither be challenged nor dictated by party politics.<sup>499</sup> A "blanket" survey whose terms of reference included: the investigation of agriculture, communications, fishing, education, forestry and minerals meant economic guidelines for the future could be assessed.<sup>500</sup> Falconer asserted that like any under-developed region, it required money for development, but, if the survey only considered economic factors, and not social and cultural forces

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<sup>494</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 2 December 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>495</sup> *Press*, 30 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>496</sup> *Press*, 10 April 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>497</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 30 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>498</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 27 February 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>499</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>500</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 27 February 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

active in the community, it would fail.<sup>501</sup> Such sentiments echoed Arbuckle's call for social justice for the islanders. Similarly, the Leader of the Opposition, Kirk, argued that: 'an economic survey could force recognition of the islands' needs. A well worked-out and systematic approach to development based on such a survey could make the Chathams self-sufficient'.<sup>502</sup> This statement suggested that Kirk genuinely supported the islanders.

Falconer argued that the islanders were deprived of conveniences found in the mainland, such as state highways, sealed roads, bus services, railways, a central power scheme, a central water supply and television. For instance, by 1970 only 40 percent of homes had flush toilets.<sup>503</sup> Falconer was stationed at the Chathams for four years from 1967 to 1971, coinciding with the rise "boom" and "nose-dive" of the crayfish bonanza. Renowned as 'the only Roman Catholic priest in New Zealand to have worked regularly as a watersider', he stated that because of the labour shortage, 'many of the island men had joined the crayfish hunt'.<sup>504</sup> Although work was irregular, and came hard, it supplemented their income. Perhaps, in such a small isolated community, his daily pastoral work was just as much social as religious. He was an honorary child welfare officer, a master of ceremonies at local dances, played and served as secretary of the local rugby club, helped develop a workingmen's club, and as Chairman of the Chatham Islands Development Committee, and member of the County Council, he was an active political lobbyist. He was something of an unofficial ambassador for the Chathams, seeking better conditions for the islanders and limiting the damage caused by overexploitation of crayfish.

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<sup>501</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU. Ibid., *Southland Times*, 23 May 1972, in 1972 Father Falconer promoted Arbuckle's book, *The Chatham Islands in Perspective* in the *Southland Times*. As Chairman of the Chatham Islands Development Committee, and Coordinator of representations to the government on local social and economic issues, he played an important role in Chatham affairs.

<sup>502</sup> Arbuckle, p. 112. See *Press*, 11 December 1970.

<sup>503</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>504</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 27 February 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU. Father Dr Falconer held a Doctorate in Divinity from Rome University and spent six years there from 1952 to 1958.

Although the islanders knew they needed the technology, and assistance from the “outsiders”, they also wanted to receive some of the money, crayfish was generating for the companies and New Zealand. Paradoxically, the islanders knew about crayfish, but not their habits. Moreover, they could not access the markets, and lacked the necessary capital to finance boats and equipment. Some islanders quickly joined the crayfish boom, having about 35 launches by February 1971, suggesting some benefit although it is not incompatible with a perception that mainlanders were getting a better deal than the islanders. Falconer believed that these fishing boats would form the nucleus of the fishing fleet in future years, but generally by the time the islanders joined in, the crayfish had been fished out.<sup>505</sup> Overall, this evidence is consistent with previous assertions that the islanders did not reap the profits of the crayfish boom, as the islanders small boats could not compete with the mainland based trawlers operated the New Zealand fishing industry.<sup>506</sup> Probably, the islanders missed out because they were either overworked as crew on the bigger boats, or their own vessels were too small. But, despite powerful evidence suggesting difficulties with conservation, infrastructure and piracy, it seemed that some islanders benefited.

By 1970 the symptomatic effects of overfishing became apparent with the closing down of the fishing industry. According to David Holmes, Meo’s Fishing Company, at Whangaroa, sold out to Dalgety Loan for \$250,000, but never caught a crayfish afterwards; the Whangaroa factory sold out to the Chathams Packing Company; the National Mortgage and Agency Company that rebuilt the Kaingaroa freezer, sold out to the Chathams Packing Company, and John Inkster sold his freezer, at Kaingaroa.<sup>507</sup>

The Chathams County Council faced financial difficulties; most of their earnings from the crayfish levy went on roading and harbour work.<sup>508</sup> By February 1971 the crayfish catches had dropped drastically since 1970, affecting the Chathams

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<sup>505</sup> Ibid.

<sup>506</sup> *Wai 64*, claim 12.5, p. 240.

<sup>507</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chathams*, pp. 131-32.

<sup>508</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 27 February 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

economy. Out of the original nine processing plants, only one of the remaining seven processing plants processed body and claw meat, and the last helicopter left in August 1970.<sup>509</sup> The farmers suffered with the precarious agriculture situation, as the drop in wool prices and high freight costs affected sheep farming, and the meatworks was in receivership. Significantly, the government announced that the meat company would cease operations at the end of June 1971, because of financial losses. Hence, the islanders experienced a depressed economy like the rest of New Zealand.

In return for the exploitation of their fishing grounds by the fishing industry, the islanders questioned whether they received sufficient benefits from the government, successive governments having ignored requests for assistance.<sup>510</sup> Arbuckle contended that the National Government was ineffective in dealing with the Chathams problems, but benefited from the export earnings. The crayfishing industry had brought economic and technical benefits to the Islands, yet the government faced difficulties in stimulating the economy.<sup>511</sup> He attributed it to the Chathams having a folk culture, rather than an urban culture, the locals lacking facilities and amenities. Given this history of boom and depression (the latest being the crayfish bust), the locals lived in a poor deprived culture. For Arbuckle, 'the Chatham folk culture, lending itself to superstition and fear, with excesses (drinking being one) are a "vicious circle" that will continue unless the assistance that "justice demands" is forthcoming from New Zealand'.<sup>512</sup> Arbuckle emphasized the need for the country to support the sentiments of the 1969 National Development Conference whereby: 'The future well-being of New Zealand, its standing in the eyes of the world depend on the degree to which the Maori community and other minority groups find a satisfying and worthy place in our life'.<sup>513</sup> In this sense the Chathams was a small-deprived group within the boundaries of New Zealand, but Arbuckle

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<sup>509</sup> Arbuckle, p. 111.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>511</sup> Ibid., pp. 70-71.

<sup>512</sup> *Press*, 11 December 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid.



argued the government and New Zealand had ‘to avoid falling victim of the uniformity trait in the national character’.<sup>514</sup>

### 3.1.3 Politics

The Chathams were in the Lyttelton electorate on the general roll, and in the Western Maori electorate on the Maori roll. Moreover, the 500 or so votes on the Chathams were sufficient for them to be taken seriously as part of an electoral constituency. Historically, an amendment to the Electoral Act in 1922 gave the Chatham Islanders the option to vote in the Lyttelton electorate or Western Maori electorate. From 1922, up to and including the 1954 election, all Chatham Islanders made a statutory declaration about age and entitlement to vote, then they could vote, but they were not listed in any electoral rolls until 1957.<sup>515</sup>

The Labour Party’s percentage of the voting in the Lyttelton electorate dropped from 61 in 1938 to 52 in 1943; and, although the numbers of electors had always been small, they became increasingly important, as the victory margin for the Labour Party declined. Moreover, the National Party gained the Lyttelton seat in 1951 and 1954, though Labour regained it in 1957.<sup>516</sup> Possibly, what Arbuckle asserted was correct, ‘some of the improvements in the Islands in the post-war period may have resulted from the peculiar political circumstances of this time.’<sup>517</sup>

Indeed, the voting potential of the Chathams was of interest to political parties, despite its small population. Keith Holyoake’s National Government held power in the 1966 election year. In 1965 Norman Kirk became the Leader of the Opposition for the Labour Party, being MP for the Chatham Islands attached to the Lyttelton electorate, since 1957. Still, the islanders allegiance to the Labour Party, was reflected the voting pattern results of the 1966 general election (Labour 116, National 19 and Social Credit 3).<sup>518</sup> For Arbuckle, this was more

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<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

<sup>515</sup> Bill Carter, National Library of New Zealand, Wellington. Allen Nielsen interviewed by Bill Carter, 25 August 2008. See *Statutes of New Zealand*, 1956.

<sup>516</sup> Arbuckle, pp. 15-16.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., p. 58.

out of respect for Kirk, referred to as plain, “Norman”, than his policies.<sup>519</sup> Kirk gained traction when he transferred to the Sydenham Electorate in 1969 (McGuigan took over the Lyttelton electorate), leading up to the 1971 elections. In the 1969 general elections, however, the voting pattern swung around more to National than Labour, and Social Credit, ostensibly, because of the crayfish boom.<sup>520</sup> The Chatham Islands being in the Lyttelton electorate reflected a different result; Labour gained 1.7% over National. McGuigan (Labour) received 8800 or 48%, G. De Latour (National) received 8508 or 46.3%, and T. Huggins (Social Credit) received 1042 or 5.7% of the votes.<sup>521</sup>

#### **3.1.4 Irregular Freight Services**

Increased freight and passengers saw increased shipping services, and an air service from January 1968, but the service was irregular and uncertain, the access to the Hapupu airstrip poor. The Chathams Development Committee’s report highlighted that: ‘Economic development within the islands is slowed or altogether halted. The recent National Development Conference has highlighted the necessity of long-term planning and the setting of goals for any proper economic development. Such planning becomes impossible where freight services are indefinite and irregular’.<sup>522</sup> Moreover, the islanders paid exorbitant prices for diesel and oil. There was a 31,000-gallon tank, at Waitangi; a floating 61,000-gallon tank at Port Hutt; and, minor installations that held about 55,000 gallons. This suggests increased money did not mean improved infrastructure, despite the crayfish boom. Yet, as predicted, private individuals, companies, and, in turn the national economy reaped the financial benefits of the boom.<sup>523</sup> One advantage for the Chathams, however, was road development and to a lesser extent communications.

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<sup>519</sup> Ibid.

<sup>520</sup> Michael Bassett, ‘Kirk, Norman Eric 1923-1974’, *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, updated 22 June 2007, <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz/>

<sup>521</sup> Clifford Norton, *New Zealand Parliamentary Election Results 1946-1987*, Wellington: Department of Political Science, Victoria University of Wellington, 1988, p. 263.

<sup>522</sup> *Press Clipping*, Christchurch Paper, 25 October 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid.

### 3.1.5 Roads and Communications

Whereas the government initiated a road development scheme in March 1970, the Chairman of the National Roads Board, Allen, provided a \$442,000 roading programme over two years for the Chatham Islands.<sup>524</sup> The government granted a nine-to-one subsidy on new roading (the government contributing nine dollars to every dollar contributed by the Chathams Council), because of the decline in the crayfish levy. Consequently, the Chathams Council embarked on a large-scale road development plan despite difficulties with the peat soils (a poor base for road building), lack of suitable roading material and gravel deposits. By May 1971 seventeen miles of new road had been constructed in the Chathams; an all weather road for light vehicles ran from Waitangi to Hapupu airfield.<sup>525</sup> One representative from the County of Geraldine noted the seeming government's assistance to the council as generous, but doubted whether the funds allocated for the completion of works were sufficient.<sup>526</sup> Moreover, the issue of development, and the sum to be spent on harbour and roading development, sparked media attention. It represented a major turning point for the government to consider the economic future of the Chathams, otherwise, without expert opinion and planning, its economy risked collapse.

Communications was a long-term issue, even though the government subsidized the Holm Shipping Company, which provided a shipping service to the Chathams. In early 1970, for example, food supplies such as flour, sugar and butter became short, but fortunately food rationing ended for the islanders on the 21 May 1970.<sup>527</sup> Paradoxically, the islanders were blamed for not letting the Holm Shipping Company know their needs.<sup>528</sup> A further example of communication difficulties surfaced in October 1970, when seamen at Lyttelton

<sup>524</sup> *Press*, 18 September 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU. See *Press*, 11 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>525</sup> Arbuckle, p. 112. See *Press*, 1 May 1971.

<sup>526</sup> 'County's Representatives Visit Chatham Islands', *New Zealand Local Government*, September 1971, p. 343.

<sup>527</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 May 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>528</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 25 May 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

refused to man the Chathams supply ship *Squall*, until they got a guarantee of a 20 percent increase in cargo handling.<sup>529</sup>

### 3.1.6 Kirk's Role Advocating for Infrastructure

As noted in the previous chapter, Kirk, as an opposition MP criticised the government on Chathams affairs. As a result of the crayfish boom, Kirk sought better infrastructure.<sup>530</sup> The *Press* in November 1971 highlighted a thesis by Canterbury University student, J. B. Atkinson, entitled *A Case Study of the Chatham Islands Crayfish Levy 1966-1969*. Atkinson claimed Kirk's actions, as a local MP during the levy negotiations were calculated to aggrieve, rather than to appease, contributing nothing more than constructive criticism.<sup>531</sup> But, arguably, constructive criticism is often seen as good, and in the Chathams case appropriate. Others blamed Kirk for politicising the Chathams crayfish industry.

In his campaign, Kirk sought better conditions for the islanders. In the light of a history of privation, compared to mainland New Zealanders, they were wary of central government. In September 1969 when the levy was halved, Kirk told the government that, in return for the money the County Council had lost to the authorities, the fishing industry needed development. Moreover, the complaint, about the 4-cent levy, did not come from the islanders, but from the non-islanders involved in the fishing industry. Thus, suggesting the relationship between the islanders and outsiders was strained. Kirk further challenged the Minister of Internal Affairs, Seath, on his handling of the levy and infrastructure stating: 'I am seriously concerned about the position that has been created and press you strongly for some action that is financially fair to the Chatham Islanders and really effective in enabling the much needed slipway to be built'.<sup>532</sup> This raised the question whether the government would guarantee a

<sup>529</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 27 October 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>530</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 20 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>531</sup> *Press*, 3 November 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU. See J. B. Atkinson, 'A Case Study of the Chatham Islands Crayfish Levy, 1966-1969'.

<sup>532</sup> *Press*, 27 September 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

loan and subsidise repayments to the Chathams County Council. Overall, Kirk was genuinely concerned for the islanders, exposing the trajectory of events as they unfolded. This undermines Atkinson's claim that he just wanted to secure votes for the Labour Party.

Kirk's was an advocate for the Chathams although his endeavours to get "outsider" fishermen recognised as eligible voters showed his political side. In February 1968 Kirk campaigned for fishermen's right to vote in the next elections provided they had been fishing there for three months, gave the Chathams as their address; and, paid the crayfish levy, or rate, to the Chatham Islands County Council.<sup>533</sup> Pat Smith, a fishing boat owner and former member of the Chathams Council, asserted that taxation without representation was unconstitutional, and the presiding County Council Chairman, R. Lanauze stated that fishermen were entitled to vote as ratepayers. It is significant that the number of vessels as at December 1968 had increased to 120, compared to 59, registered there at the end of December 1967. Also, the Marine Department statistics on rock lobster permits showed that the Chathams were producing over 50 percent of the catch. These fishermen were clearly potential Labour voters. As noted, published statistics did not show how many permit holders were full-time commercial fishermen, or indicate vessel size.<sup>534</sup> In 1969 180 boats worked in the Chathams waters, but the wharf capacity was only 80 boats. Yet, the Fishing Industry Committee report noted that of the 186 fishing boat permits issued at the Chathams, 106 boats on average fished during 1969, a decrease from 1968.<sup>535</sup>

Kirk sought these fishermen's votes.

The islanders feared "ugly" fighting would result from the influx of outsiders, because unlike the cod fishing days, boat-fishing licences were not required. As events would show, these fears were not unjustified. While 180 boats worked at sea, about 700 men and women were engaged in the crayfishing industry: the

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<sup>533</sup> *Press*, 3 February 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>534</sup> *AJHR*, 1969, H. 15 A, p. 9.

<sup>535</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-71, Annex G., I. 14, p. 98.

majority employed in the eight processing factories. In 1966 when fishermen began to exploit the American market, five factories opened; hence, the fishermen and processing factories received about \$15m with 3000 tons of crayfish. In 1970 the fishermen were lucky to get 500 tons. In 1968 some mainland fishermen had catches of up to \$2000, but in 1970 they were lucky to get \$150 for a catch.<sup>536</sup> Island fisher, Gary Soanes, asserts that there were high taxes during the boom and few people earned a lot of money. Except for some of “the old coddling guys”, there were few islanders involved in the crayfish boom, no more than four fishing boats. Initially, the outsiders paid the islanders “a flat rate” of \$50 a week, unaware of what a shared basis meant and the money a fisherman could make. Soanes recalls that in 1968 the owner of the *Provider*, Bill Hopkins (Bay of Islands) turned over \$106,000 per year, a high sum considering the boat cost \$65,000 to build.<sup>537</sup>

When the boom peaked, the Chatham Islands Packing Company received the live crayfish that were tailed alive, and speedily packed them. Here, both island and outsider fishermen worked in unison, indicating true working class “camaraderie”. President of the Chatham Islands Fishermen’s Association, W. West, was from Bluff.<sup>538</sup> The above example demonstrates that “insiders” and “outsiders” did not necessarily fight all the time, although clashes did undoubtedly occur.

### 3.1.7 Hostility to Outsiders

During the crayfish boom hostility to outsiders was apparent. Arbuckle stated that the government should face up to its responsibilities relating to the Chatham Islands economy, describing the plight of the local people and exploitation of their resources as the “rape of the Chathams”.<sup>539</sup> That much of the blame for the uncontrolled exploitation of crayfish rested with government is evident.

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<sup>536</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers, 0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>537</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009.

<sup>538</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 20 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. Ibid., Neil Millar, Henry Grennell, Ray Gazeley, W. West junior and Tom West (skipper) fished together.

<sup>539</sup> Arbuckle, p. ix.



Chathams culture, however, must also be considered in explanation of hostility because, 'the local society of permanent residents of the Chatham Islands has its own distinctive culture. The culture is a product of isolation, history and conflict with mainland society and culture'.<sup>540</sup> For Arbuckle, the underlying factors conducive to segmentation within social relations included: geographical isolation of the groups, previous inter-family feuds, religious differences, diversity of racial origin, and diversity of socio-economic status. Alternatively, the factors conducive to total unity included: kinship relationships, common economic and political needs, and common feelings towards outsiders.<sup>541</sup> Arbuckle sought government assistance to overcome the problems of development, and promote conservation of resources, and outsider knowledge of the people.<sup>542</sup>

For the Chathams fishing industry, and considering Chathams history of repeated cycles of economic success and failure, sound government policy was vital.<sup>543</sup> The government finally agreed that an economic survey be carried out by the Department of Industry and Commerce in 1972.<sup>544</sup> However, in terms of insider/outsider relations, the Chatham Islanders relationship with government was strained and long-standing. As previously mentioned, Arbuckle conceded that 'the feeling of administration neglect and suspicion of outsiders definitely unites Islanders'.<sup>545</sup> In 1965, the islanders still experienced problems with an irregular mail delivery. Moreover, water stained letters were illegible at times.<sup>546</sup> Overall, Chathams crayfish industry contributed \$3 million annually to the New Zealand economy from 1966 to 1970, benefiting all New Zealanders. Furthermore, the boom provided employment and profits for the fishing industry, and allied interests; boat builders and suppliers of marine equipment. Moreover, it provided substantial sums for government spending through direct taxation, and overseas funds to pay for imports, helping the overseas balance of

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid., p. ix.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>546</sup> Letter, S. J. S. Barker, Mount Mason, Hawarden, North Canterbury to the Minister of Internal Affairs, 27 June 1966, MS-Papers-0434-37, WTU.

payments. Hence, arguably, the Chatham Islands helped in maintaining and raising New Zealanders living standards.<sup>547</sup> McGuigan argued that the islanders did not benefit from the money earned from crayfish exports.<sup>548</sup> In May 1970 when Catholic Bishop Ashby visited the Chathams, seeking a better life for the islanders, he doubted whether crayfishing would resume in June.<sup>549</sup>

A *Christchurch Star* editorial in November 1970 demanded “A Fair Deal for the Chathams”. For Falconer, this was impossible considering the Internal Affairs Department had ignored repeated requests from the islanders for assistance in future planning. In response, the County Council backed by local organizations, had received platitudes confirming their islanders suspicion that outside of exploiting crayfish, or other profitable assets (at that time four companies were seeking prospecting rights in the peat wax industry), the government, and New Zealanders were not interested in the Chathams.<sup>550</sup>

Arbuckle’s work *The Chatham Islands in Perspective: A Socio-Economic Review* was seen as a scholarly study. Reviewed in the *Press*, in December 1971, Father Falconer noted Arbuckle’s seeming concern for the Chatham “locals”, and praised the work as a refreshing approach by an economist.<sup>551</sup> Although Arbuckle conceded that a certain, “apathy”, suspicion, and, latent hostility towards outsiders prevailed, he attributed these attitudes to misunderstanding by outsiders, requesting sympathetic treatment and assistance.<sup>552</sup> Moreover, Arbuckle’s 1972 recommendations relating to the socio-economic development of the Chathams are found in government records. Whereas the government removed the Islands from the jurisdiction of the Internal Affairs Department, it appointed a Development Commissioner resident in Wellington, coordinating a

<sup>547</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>548</sup> *Press*, 10 April 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>549</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 14 May 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>550</sup> *Press*, 11 November 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>551</sup> *Press*, 11 December 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers- 0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>552</sup> *Ibid.*

development programme with local government, and an administrative officer in Waitangi. From this it was hoped that the interdepartmental delays on Chatham affairs that frustrated the locals could be avoided.<sup>553</sup> One pitfall argued the government was that the Crown's Department's represented on the Chathams needed to be placed directly under a Commissioner, similar to Niue and the Cook Islands, otherwise it would not work. This proposal was remarkably close to what Arbuckle suggested.

In late 1969 the government set up a Parliamentary Select Committee 'to inquire into the crayfish fishery both at Chatham Islands and on the mainland of New Zealand and to recommend measures necessary to maintain a maximum level of production.'<sup>554</sup> In essence, the committee stated that the Chathams crayfish fishery could look forward, after it has reached the mature stage, to long-term annual earnings in terms of foreign exchange of approximately \$3.4 million. Therefore, these earnings for New Zealand justified investment in facilities, especially the roading plans.<sup>555</sup> Nevertheless, it did point out the need for facilities, though it would continue, would be on a different scale from what was contemplated in 1968, 'a repetition of the pattern of landings which had occurred at Bluff and Stewart Island'.<sup>556</sup> The committee, however, 'recommended that the existing situation be maintained and no restriction for economic reasons only be placed on the issue of boat fishing permits', restricted only by the existing legislative and regulatory provisions.<sup>557</sup> Resident Commissioner, Don Reid, was responsible to the Department of Internal Affairs, for control and co-ordination of Chathams affairs at this time. Yet surprisingly, the Minister of the Department did not visit the Islands between 1963 and 1969, signifying a disinterested government.<sup>558</sup> It also meant the cancellation of the economic survey, which

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<sup>553</sup> Facts, Chatham Islands, AAAC 8318, W5224, Box 277, Archives New Zealand. See Arbuckle, p. 96. See also *Press*, 11 December 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>554</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 9. See *Press*, 27 January 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>555</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 83.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>558</sup> Arbuckle, pp. 14-15.

came as no surprise for some islanders, and, others concerned with the Islands welfare.<sup>559</sup>

A set of inherent value judgements united the island community during the crayfish boom. According to Telford, tensions developed because of the insider/outsider differences in values between the folk culture of the Chathams, and the urban culture of mainland New Zealand. Hence: 'a definitely contrasting lifestyle and associated values are attributed to the outsider and this lifestyle is regarded as bad where the Chatham way of life (as expressed in traditional ideals) is good.'<sup>560</sup> Telford argued the following factors: islanders saw mainland New Zealand fishermen as fast, greedy and rude; islanders received few economic benefits from the boom because of government ineptitude; islanders appraised their lifestyle as unique (to be continued) rather than backward. They did, however, believe that increased contact with the mainland brought some benefits, such as a higher standard of living.<sup>561</sup> For example, Jean Brasell whose husband Norman, and two brothers (members of a well-known Lyttelton fishing family) partook in the crayfish boom praised the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary at the Waitangi Hospital for the care sick fishermen received.<sup>562</sup> The negative perceptions of Chatham Islanders, such as laziness continued. According to Captain Brown, *Holmdale*, if you offered an islander £100 a week to fish, he laughed in your face. This resulted in difficulties in finding adequate labour for the fishing boats. The islanders supposedly decided that their sheep

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<sup>559</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>560</sup> Telford, p. 72.

<sup>561</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>562</sup> Interview with Jean Brasell, 16 March 2009. See Taylor Baines and Associates and Lincoln International, *Review of the Chathams Islands Economy, Final Report*, commissioned by the Department of Internal Affairs on behalf of the Ministerial Committee on the Chatham Islands, 1989, p. 58. The Canterbury Area Health Board contracted the hospital services to the Missionary Sisters of the Society of Mary who provided a comprehensive health service including public health nursing. Appendix K6. In 1927 the cottage hospital opened, operated by Sisters of the Order of the Society of Mary, but administered by the North Canterbury Hospital Board (Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1926, s.3).

needed crutching, instead of unloading.<sup>563</sup> Such criticisms may not have recognised the islanders needed to work on other jobs besides fishing to sustain their incomes.

### 3.2 Piracy and Violence

We have seen that during the crayfish boom a perception of exploitation of the Chatham Islands, and hostility towards outsiders, emerged. This section looks at two specific manifestations of this: piracy and violence. Piracy of crayfish pots was reported as stocks diminished. For example, in January 1968 in the House of Representatives, the Minister of Police, P. B. Allen, challenged Kirk as to whether his reports were accurate about certain fishermen committing piracy; firearms being fired at sea to scare off other boats, instead of shooting sharks; and, the reported stealing of fishing goods, particularly, pots, ropes and buoys. These incidents being in contrast to Constable Hampton's report of two thefts of crayfish gear at sea.<sup>564</sup> According to the *Press*, in February 1968, the Minister of Marine had witnessed the plundering of crayfish pots in Chatham waters, where crayfish pirates abounded. As jetsam, pots at sea claimable by anyone, undermined the law and all legislation.<sup>565</sup> Moreover, the fishermen who owned pots worth from \$28 to \$40 each lost hundreds of crayfish worth approximately \$2 each.<sup>566</sup>

The fighting in the, one and only Waitangi hotel, and the stealing of crayfish pots, illustrated the impact of outsiders on the Chathams community. Leo Paul Dana has noted that with the crayfish boom, the former quiet Chatham town of Waitangi became the largest fishing port in New Zealand; the town's male population doubled within a two-year period; and, alcohol consumption and crime increased with population.<sup>567</sup> According to David Holmes, with an estimated increase of fishermen between 400 and 500, the Waitangi hotel was

<sup>563</sup> *Press*, 17 April 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>564</sup> *Press*, 30 January 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>565</sup> Arbuckle, p. 24, See article, W. West, *Dominion*, 19 December 1968, p. 4.

<sup>566</sup> *Press*, 3 February 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>567</sup> Leo Paul Dana, 'The Challenge of Exporting fresh food from the Chatham Islands to Markets Overseas', *British Food Journal*, 105:1/2 (2003), p. 15.

uncontrollable. Moreover, in November 1969, policemen Leslie Spencer and Constable Hampton met the Licensing Control Commission, at Waitangi, seeking various improvements, and repairs, for, it had a small bar, high liquor charges, no draught beer, insufficient accommodation, and did not provide casual meals.<sup>568</sup>

The *Auckland Star* highlighted in January 1970 that these plans did not eventuate; the Commission declared no additional hotel, tourist house, or tavern premises were required in the islands. Hotel Chatham owners then agreed to provide a wholesale liquor service; however, the Commission proclaimed no wholesale licences, or wine reseller's licence, were required. Rather, the Commission approved the building of five single rooms, and one twin bedroom, bringing the hotel's accommodation to eighteen guests in fifteen rooms.<sup>569</sup> Just when these changes and temporary licences began, many fishermen returned to the mainland, as tonnage declined. Consequently, Alan Quartermain (part owner of the hotel) managed to get extra building and improvements deferred.<sup>570</sup> Not all agreed that violence was a problem. According to Alan Aberdein, fights in the pub did occur but not very often, and usually between mainlanders, rather than islanders. Furthermore, it appeared the best parties were apparently held in the policeman's house.<sup>571</sup>

Kirk's private secretary, Margaret Hayward, highlighted that when the crayfish showed signs of depletion, rivalry over the best fishing ground broke out; the crews' shooting at each other across the water. While in Parliament, Kirk had urged the Ministers of the Marine, and Police, to enforce law and order before someone was killed.<sup>572</sup> Kirk criticised the National Government for not formulating a conservation policy for crayfish, but the government was not unaware of the matter, for the *Southland Times* article in December 1968 was

<sup>568</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, p. 33. Leslie Spencer was Police Officer in the Chatham Islands under the Christchurch Administration from 1936-1942, and later became New Zealand's Commissioner of Police. See Claire Bibby, *Policing the Chatham Islands*, MSY-3484, WTU.

<sup>569</sup> *Auckland Star*, 3 January 1970, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>570</sup> Holmes, *My Seventy Years on the Chatham Islands*, pp. 33, 27.

<sup>571</sup> Makarios, 'An Epitaph to', *Seafood New Zealand*, December 1994, p. 13.

<sup>572</sup> Hayward, p. 217.



headlined “MP’s to Investigate Piracy Rife at Chathams”.<sup>573</sup> Moreover, the piracy claim held true. Many fishing vessels seemingly plundered crayfish pots, while others used rifles, claimed a former crewmember of the Chatham’s supply vessel *Holmdale*.<sup>574</sup> Still, the *Hawkes Bay Telegraph* noted that craypots were “plundered” daily in the Chathams in February 1969. If someone was caught “ratting” pots, violent fights often broke out in Waitangi Hotel, where beer was sold at 50 cents a bottle.<sup>575</sup> Such an impact of outsiders upon the Chathams community was significant, and had a significant social cost. Those interviewed about their experiences of this period agreed that piracy occurred, but asserted the media sensationalized some incidents, such as the purported gunshots fired at sea. What was agreed was that extensive partying occurred, one participant being a renowned hard-man of New Zealand rugby, All Black prop Keith Murdoch, played rugby with the locals in 1968.<sup>576</sup> Former President of the Lyttelton Fishermen’s Association, Ron Threadwell, acknowledged that excessive drinking by New Zealand fishermen (not the islanders) led to fighting. Though seen as an adventure for most of these tough fishermen, envy and greed between boat catches, and rivalry between fishing companies came to the fore at the Waitangi pub under the “6 o’clock swell”.<sup>577</sup> Beer sold in quart bottles cost 2 and 6 pence in New Zealand, compared to 5 shillings in the Chathams, because of the freight cost.

The “crew culture” theory advanced in James Belich’s *Making Peoples* may be one explanation for this, especially as excessive drinking was a characteristic of “crew cultures”. Belich has argued that ‘sailors were the leading archetype of

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<sup>573</sup> *Southland Times*, 14 December 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>574</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 29 January 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>575</sup> *Hawkes Bay Telegraph*, 4 February 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>576</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009. Keith Murdock later acquired notoriety when he was sent home by Manager Ernie Todd during New Zealand Rugby Teams (All Blacks) tour of the United Kingdom and France in 1972, owing to an alleged altercation with a security guard at the function held after the test match against Wales.

<sup>577</sup> Interview with Ron Threadwell, 14 March 2009.

crew culture.<sup>578</sup> Belich diverges from Fairburn's argument that colonial New Zealand was a society of isolated individuals, advancing as an alternative his notion of "crew cultures": groups who engaged in violence, drunkenness and civil litigation while off duty but were hardworking when on the job. Belich referred to such behaviour as "Orderly disorder".<sup>579</sup> Both historians agree that without communities to enforce norms and sanctions, bondless atoms committed many crimes.<sup>580</sup> Hence, fishermen formed a crew culture during the boom in two ways. First, they experienced hard and dangerous work at sea during the week. Second, they spent much money on drink at the Waitangi pub onshore (the community centre). Hence, the increased crime and violence underlined the need for more policing.

In November 1969 the *Dominion Sunday Times* highlighted that the Chatham Islands Council had a new problem: how to dispose of the biggest heap of beer bottles in the world. The article noted that more than one million beer bottles lay abandoned in the islands; and, 'it would cost too much to return them to the nearest brewery 450 miles away'.<sup>581</sup> This consumption of beer was very high, considering the total population was 700. Chathams County Clerk, J. G. Stephens, asserted that for empty beer bottle disposal, a bottle-crushing machine was hired from Britain, costing \$4.81 per week in May 1970. The islanders, renowned for their thirst, preferred beer supplied in bottles returnable to the dump, because of freight charges.<sup>582</sup> Further, in December 1974 the *Press* reported that the *Holmdale* unloaded 21,000 bottles of beer at the Chatham

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<sup>578</sup> James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders*, pp. 436, 428.

<sup>579</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 429.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 424. See Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and its Enemies: the Foundation of Modern New Zealand Society, 1850-1900*, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1989. See also Miles Fairburn, 'Local Community or Atomised Society? The Social Structure of Nineteenth-Century New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, 16: 2 (1982), pp. 146-167.

<sup>581</sup> *Dominion Sunday Times*, November 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, WTU.

<sup>582</sup> *Press*, 9 May 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

Islands from Lyttelton.<sup>583</sup> This supports Belich's notion that excessive drinking was a characteristic of "crew cultures".

Another key point is that Kirk had urged for a full-time Marine Department Officer and sea vessel to enforce policing of the fishery since 1966. Moreover, the Chathams Council had waited nearly two years for approval to strike a levy on crayfish tails, in order to provide funds for moorings, a slipway and wharf repairs. Yet, Kirk argued 'an "absolute refusal" to limit the number of registered fishing boats prevailed'.<sup>584</sup> The Minister of Marine, Scott, stated that following the recommendation of the select committee in 1963 that 'the former restrictive system be abolished, the policy has been adopted of permitting fishermen to fish in such waters and for such species as they desire'.<sup>585</sup> Furthermore, Scott argued that the imposition of restrictions in the interests of conservation was not necessary as there was no evidence of overexploitation of crayfish.<sup>586</sup> Later, in 1973 the *Press* noted that low fines were given to those plundering pauas, and crayfish, by the illegal method of using underwater breathing apparatus. Again, this highlighted the importance of fish conservation for the Chathams.<sup>587</sup>

### 3.3 Role of Women during the Crayfish Boom

The written records give very good documentation on fishing itself, but not much insight into the role of women. Back in the 1970s Polytechnic courses were available for men and women who wanted to enter the fishing industry. Hence, in September 1968 the *Dominion* reported that Mrs Edna Wilkinson of Dunedin, mother of five, had attended a local Polytechnic course for new fishers, becoming New Zealand's first woman skipper to participate with her husband in a crayfishing expedition to the Chathams.<sup>588</sup> Also, Mrs Anne Ellison of Dunedin

<sup>583</sup> *Press*, 12 December 1974, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>584</sup> *Press*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. See *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969, p. 118.

<sup>585</sup> *NZPD*, 360 (1969), p. 835 (Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>587</sup> *Press*, 2 April 1973, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>588</sup> *Dominion*, 25 September 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

certified as a coastal fishing boat skipper, and crayfished on the *Pendella* in the Chathams.<sup>589</sup> In November 1973 *Thursday Magazine* wrote about the life of Sue O'Donnell, and her experience working aboard a crayfish boat during the “boom” and gender roles. O'Donnell's story told how an “outsider” (woman) could at least, in some ways, become an insider, and gives further insights into the social lives of fishermen.

Crayfishing was a hard life in wild seas, even for hardy males, and despite prejudice against females, Donnell (aged 21 years) worked as a deck hand. Most younger people were transients over the summer months sharing two things: they disliked the Chathams because of its isolation; and, their only reason for being there was to make money, either as crew, diving, or working in the factories. Socially, alcohol was the number one entertainment along with outdated films, playing darts, exchanging fishing yarns and information, or putting down the owner's reputation behind their backs. Moreover, single women were scarce, mail deliveries erratic, and individual transport was required to get from one part of the Island to another. Conversely, the Chathams were seen as a retreat. For Donnell, three people on board a 30ft boat working pots was too crowded, because of the vagaries of the weather, and thieving fishermen, especially around Pitt Island. Despite these challenges, she quickly learnt the skills of the crayfishing trade: about diesel engines, and radar on return to Owenga at night; how to feed a pot line through a pulley on board *Concorde*, and splicing a pot rope, claiming: ‘I discovered that crayfishing, apart from craydiving, was the only satisfactory, well-paid job I have ever had’.<sup>590</sup> The pitfalls included: the long working hours, fatigue, irritability, and the constant pressure to be out fishing: the price paid for ‘harvesting that wriggling gold’.<sup>591</sup> In turn, Donnell called for conservation of crayfish in order to replenish stocks. She also believed that she gained personal insights into the male/female role structure, particularly, how to live outside this structure; and, by throwing off the shackles of ignorance and mental inertia, she learnt through trial and error,

<sup>589</sup> *Southland Times*, 14 November 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>590</sup> *Thursday Magazine*, 15 November 1973, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>591</sup> *Ibid.*

asserting: 'the only barrier to achievement in traditionally male-dominated activities is in your head'.<sup>592</sup> Finally, she stated the objections against women crew were the strength to handle the work, and an argument based on moral/sexual grounds. That is, the wife's view on the matter. This meant that a married skipper was reluctant to take on female crew, because of perceptions they would be seen as potential bedmates by male crew. In response, Donnell contended that perhaps wives could also work as crew, while male friends provided an environment for learning and advice. Nonetheless, she returned to the mainland having enjoyed the experience.<sup>593</sup>

### 3.4 Safety Issues

Paradoxically, it seemed that the government only acted when safety issues affected outsiders. The government's action on safety contrasted with its inaction on conservation, though it proved ineffective.

#### 3.4.1 Safety of Vessels

In July 1966 the Marine Department stipulated that fishing vessels voyaging over 200 miles, required both a master and a mate with navigation qualifications, and for those vessels up to 90ft in length, a qualified engineer and deckhand. This applied for voyages to and from the Chathams, but the manning both numerically and in the standard of certification for fishing, could be reduced within sight of Chathams land.<sup>594</sup> In September 1966, when the Fishing Industry Board's committee visited the Chathams, it stated that many vessels had been attracted to the area by the large crayfish catches. The Board asserted that some of these vessels were unsuitable and some crews were inexperienced in the difficult conditions. In particular, the lack of safety provisions for vessels operating, and 'the dangers of crossing to and from New Zealand in small vessels, very often not designed for these long journeys',<sup>595</sup> aroused considerable concern.

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<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> *Press*, 8 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>595</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1967, H. 15A, p. 23.

In September 1967 the Federation of Commercial Fishermen, at Lyttelton, in close liaison with the Marine Department, passed convoy regulations for vessels sailing to the Chatham Islands.<sup>596</sup> Despite this, fishermen still jeopardised their safety at sea, and disobeyed the law. Ron Threadwell confirms that the composition of a convoy was 7 boats, and illegal boats joined convoys from Port Levy at Lyttelton.<sup>597</sup> This strained relations between the fishermen and the Department. For instance, the Secretary of the Marine Department, Kerr, highlighted that the *Kowha*, *Jason M.*, *Nimbus*, *Kingfisher*, *Norseman*, *President Kennedy*, *Esperance*, *Centurion*, *Rangiauria* and *Mary G.* sailed from the Chathams without Departmental permission and faced prosecution.<sup>598</sup> A *Christchurch Star* article, however, contended that in the ocean-going stampede for crayfish, the Marine Department caught off-balance, contradicted itself and changed its mind. Therefore, its indecisions and conflicting decisions justified the accusations against it, undermining a lucrative and valuable industry for New Zealand.<sup>599</sup> The Minister apparently stated, 'approval to make the voyage had been given', a justification that the Marine Department was 'constantly contradicting itself and changing its mind'.<sup>600</sup>

In July 1968 the *Christchurch Star* revealed that since 1965-1966, large numbers of boats were moving from mainland waters to the Chathams, risking their own safety in the process of seeking rich crayfish harvests. The boat tallies rocketed from 44 (1966) to 85 (1967) to 120 (1968).<sup>601</sup> Kirk asserted that people were attracted 'by stories of wages of up to \$400 a week and of men making a ton of money'.<sup>602</sup> Consequently, conservation and safety problems came to the attention of the Marine Department, the crayfishing industry and the Chatham Islands economy. The Fishing Industry Board asserted that: 'There is a genuine concern

<sup>596</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 23 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>597</sup> Interview with Ron Threadwell, 14 March 2009.

<sup>598</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 14 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>599</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 16 September 1967, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers- 0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid.

<sup>601</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 18 July 1968, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>602</sup> *NZPD*, 361 (1969), p. 1654 (Mr Kirk).



that the fishery is in danger of over-exploitation in many areas and there seems to be evidence that individual boat catches are declining'.<sup>603</sup> Moreover, the Board found it difficult to assess this position because the necessary statistical data was not available; and, 'Delicensing of an industry of this nature carries a great deal of over-exploitation'.<sup>604</sup> This meant that the higher the demand for the product, and the higher the price, the greater pressure on the fishery. It also meant that small relatively cheap vessels accentuated the problem as, 'many so called amateur fishermen sell their catch of rock lobsters and thus become commercial fishermen in fact if not in name'.<sup>605</sup> The point is that during the boom the Marine Department did not know how many permit holders were full-time commercial fishermen, nor did the published statistics reveal the size of the vessels. Nevertheless, the Department upheld that fishing vessels needed to be "well found and seaworthy" because of the dangerous sea conditions.<sup>606</sup> Further problems arose from overcrowded anchorages and lack of port facilities associated with the rapid growth, but these ceased when the number of boats reduced in 1970.<sup>607</sup>

In May 1968, at a Seminar on Fisheries Development in New Zealand, the Chief Surveyor of Ships, D. J. McKenzie, highlighted the 1961 New Zealand fishing industry Select Committee's Report's recommendation for the survey and manning of fishing vessels. This led to the introduction of a compulsory survey for all fishing vessels over 40 ft-registered lengths from October 1965. Recognising that areas like the Chathams needed slipways, McKenzie emphasized the fact that the government had staffing difficulties. Moreover, W. Martin of the New Zealand Seamen's Union questioned why both the government and the Marine Department, failed to organize facilities for the 400 fishermen at the Chathams who had to go 420 miles to the mainland, with

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<sup>603</sup> Annual Report, Fishing Industry Board, *AJHR*, 1969, H. 15A, p. 9.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>606</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>607</sup> Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobsters, 1970-71, I. 14, p. 80.

restrictions there and back. In reply, the Secretary for Marine, Kerr, stated that although 'providing a slipway would be an expensive operation'<sup>608</sup>, he promised a slipway. In rebuttal, Martin then questioned the Department whether they could equate human lives with money, upon which Kerr replied, 'the practical problems had to be overcome first.'<sup>609</sup> In part, this statement demonstrated that the government was unprepared for the accelerated development of the Chatham Islands crayfishing industry. Moreover, a *Press* editorial writing about a recent Marine Inquiry in June 1969 stated: 'The Inquiry might find that the Marine Department lacks sufficient staff to supervise the industry and enforce even the present regulations on vessels and their manning'.<sup>610</sup> The editorial called for a far-reaching study of the problems.

The media captured the perils of the crayfish boom. For example, the *Christchurch Star* ran a series of articles from April 1969 to June 1969, revealing that 11 lives and about thirteen boats had been lost, mostly from unnoticed reefs.<sup>611</sup> The vessels were *Golden Joy*, April 1969; *Kiwa*, March 1969; *Miss Diana*, November 1968; *Sea Bird*, September 1968; *Darnie*, August 1968; *Sara*, August 1968; *Moehau*, April 1967; *Neptune*, November 1967; *Rimu*, August 1967; *Sea Reaper*, April 1967; *Marion Bay*, February 1967; *Halcyon*, January 1967; and *Karen*, March 1966.<sup>612</sup> Indeed, one grave consequence of the crayfish boom was deaths at sea. It seemed that risk taking and inexperience were the main reasons for loss of life in the tumultuous seas. For example, *La Paloma* and *Kea*, as part of a convoy of 12 vessels from Lyttelton, perished with

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<sup>608</sup> D. J. McKenzie, 'Survey of Fishing Vessels', in *Fisheries and New Zealand*, Proceedings of a Seminar on Fisheries Development in New Zealand held at Victoria University of Wellington, 21-23 May 1968, E. B. Slack (ed.), Department of University Extension, Victoria University of Wellington, 1969, p. 188.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> *Press*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>611</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 30 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>612</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 13 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. *La Paloma*, a 38ft fibreglass vessel was undertow from Lyttelton, as was the *Kea*; both craft slipped their tows in the treacherous sea.

the loss of six men on 12 June 1969.<sup>613</sup> A preliminary inquiry followed. Consequently, when the Minister of Marine, Scott, asserted that the safety rules of the fishing industry had been flouted, the government banned all boat convoys to the Chatham Islands.<sup>614</sup> President of the New Zealand Commercial Fishing Boat Owners' Association, B. R. Walker, supported the Marine Department's action by stating that perhaps factory ships, with small dories, were a better option for crayfishing. Thus, suggesting Walker believed small boats on the Chathams run were unsafe.<sup>615</sup>

In June 1969, in a resolution between industry, union representatives, and Marine Department officials, the Marine Department allowed boat convoys to go to the Chathams, provided that all boats were 40ft long and weighed more than 15-tons, but vessels under 15 tons overall weight were to be carried by ship, or towed. No boats were to be towed to and from the Chathams, except by ships with full deep-sea survey certificates, and another boat in attendance. Convoys were to leave in daylight before noon under the watch of officials, and a more stringent schedule of communication, with shore based radio stations, was to be kept by boats at the Chathams.<sup>616</sup>

At a political level the safety of vessels was contentious. The Minister of Marine's assertion that, 'the Opposition was trying to make political capital out of a tragedy'<sup>617</sup> was perhaps justified. Nevertheless, the fact that Kirk voiced concern about the social costs and dangers of crayfishing highlighted the Minister's inaction. For Kirk, this meant further tragedies with an overburdened local policeman having to assume responsibility in this area, there being no permanent Marine Department official in the Chathams.<sup>618</sup> Kirk believed that 25

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<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

<sup>614</sup> *Press*, 20 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> *Dominion Sunday Times*, 29 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>617</sup> *NZPD*, 361 (1969), p. 1652 (Mr Kirk, and Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., p. 1652 (Mr Kirk, and Hon. W. J. Scott). See Report, Fishing Industry Committee Rock Lobster, 1970-71, p. 107. Resident police officer at Waitangi, Henry Hampton, held a warrant as Inspector of Fisheries until September 1969.

boats and 24 lives were lost in accidents at sea, because of an irresponsible Administration in the development of the fishery. He asserted the Minister had suspended regulations because of the boating tragedy but had not restricted the number of boats, therefore, 'until firm action was taken to reduce the number of boats and to police the fishery adequately, the serious situation would continue'.<sup>619</sup> Conversely, Scott argued hitherto only one boat had been lost in a Marine Department convoy: 'All the others had been lost while going there without authority'.<sup>620</sup>

Scott raised several points in reply to Kirk's statements. First, that in the passing of the Shipping and Seamen Amendment Bill, in July 1969, a vessel had to have a survey certificate, before it could be given a fishing permit. Second, the *Nyroma* had not been surveyed by the Marine Department. Third, the appointment of a harbourmaster, and the building of a slipway, was the duty of the Chatham Islands County, as 'the county was sitting on a very substantial amount of money'.<sup>621</sup> This was certainly inaccurate, because although the Chathams Council received more money during the crayfish boom, its expenses also increased, and government estimates did not provide more money for the Islands. Kirk contended that an Order in Council had been passed, empowering it to collect a levy to pay for the slipway, but it had taken 2½ years from the first council initiative, until the levy had finally been granted'.<sup>622</sup> Moreover, in September 1969 when the crayfish levy was cut from 4 cents to 2 cents a pound, this was seen as "a slap in the face" for the islanders, exposing the government's ineptitude towards the fishing industry and its unhelpful policies in regard to the Chathams.<sup>623</sup> According to Scott, the Department did not overlook the need for a permanent officer at the Chathams, requesting that the Post Office take a single

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From September 1969 to April 1970, resident Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, P. J. Williams, held a warrant as Inspector of Fisheries. From April 1970, R. J. Stanley was resident Acting Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, although his principal designation was Inspector of Fisheries.

<sup>619</sup> Ibid., p. 1644 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>620</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1653 (Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1654 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>623</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 13 September 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

man into its hostel, with no house built. Nevertheless, Scott did act upon Kirk's requests to help the islanders, by supporting the Shipwrecked Sailors Society that gave \$50 monthly to widows who had lost their husbands at sea, until their finances were sorted out.

Although Scott shortly reinstated convoys to the Chathams, his restrictions were ineffective. For Kirk, the Chatham Islands were a valuable fishery, and in the interests of safety (not only for the fishermen, but others involved in the searches), the government should stop small boats going there, stating:

When the Minister brought in the crayfish regulations, which were not universally popular, he (Mr Kirk) had said they did not go as far as he wanted them to go because they did not limit the number of boats, but apart from that he supported every point in the regulations. Such hazardous conditions as existed at the Chatham Islands should not be allowed to continue.<sup>624</sup>

This vignette illustrated that by the time the government acted it was too late. The Minister of Marine blamed the so-called "crayfish fiasco", the 'riotous conditions in the Chatham Islands'; and, 'the stampede of vessels to the fishing grounds there from other grounds'. Presumably, this resulted in the 'overexploitation of the Chatham Islands fisheries', and, needless deaths.<sup>625</sup> Still, in Parliament R. L. Barclay (MP New Plymouth) criticised the Minister of Marine for the administration of his portfolio, stating: 'The Marine Department should be upgraded and brought into line with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Industries and Commerce', in terms of production because New Zealand depended on its natural resource, at least the sea.<sup>626</sup> Indeed, this Department carried out the economic survey of the Chatham Islands in 1972.

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<sup>624</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1654 (Mr Kirk).

<sup>625</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1643 (Mr R. L. Barclay).

<sup>626</sup> Ibid.

In mid July 1969 a *New Zealand Truth* article stated that fortune existed on the Chatham Island run for some, for others misfortune, and death, yet, only the tragedies hit the headlines. Crayfishers flocked to the Chathams waters, lured by the tales of gold, but ill equipped, and inexperienced, they often went to their death. The article then raised the questions: how serious was the danger, how reliable were the weather forecasts, and how great were the risks? A contrary perspective was provided by Auckland news editor, John Baggaley, who signed on as cook aboard the fishing boat *Galilee*, with the *F/V Vulcan Fisher*, a 44-ft boat, that left Auckland in sunshine.<sup>627</sup> They struck bad weather but the experienced skippers of these two vessels stated that neither had been in any danger.<sup>628</sup>

It is significant that these safety issues concerning vessels working in the Chatham Islands occurred simultaneously with other tragic shipping casualties. They were seen as the most tragic shipping disasters around New Zealand coasts for almost 60 years. Although 'New Zealand waters were some of the most dangerous in the world', and every precaution had to be taken, there were no real long-term plans to tighten up on safety measures, despite inquiries.<sup>629</sup> Historically, the Chatham waters have a grave record for shipwrecks. Reportedly, more than sixty vessels had been lost during the past 132 years.<sup>630</sup> However, in the boom even experienced seamen and fishermen broke the rules and regulations. A June 1969 editorial noted, after a boating tragedy, that the licensing of the fishing industry was abolished after much debate. Whether this opened the way to a hazardous calling of men unequipped and inexperienced, was a question for a court of inquiry.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 15 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU. Island fisherman Tony Pomare owned the *Galilee* (44-ft steel vessel-26 tons), equipped with 2 compasses, radar and an echo-sounder.

<sup>628</sup> *Press*, 1 July 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>629</sup> *NZPD*, 363 (1969), p. 2984 (Sir Basil Arthur).

<sup>630</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 13 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>631</sup> *Press*, 17 June 1969, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



Both Scott and Kirk made 128 recommendations as part of the 1961 Fisheries Select Committee. However, a limit on vessels by a harbourmaster, either by issuing or denying moorings, was not implemented in the Chathams. Nor did Scott stop boats from going there, provided they carried a full survey certificate, and longer than 40 feet. At an annual conference of the Boat Owners' Association, at Nelson, Scott raised concern about the many vessels at the Chathams, as convoys declined.<sup>632</sup>

Matiu Rata (Northern Maori) claimed that the 1961 Fisheries Committee had not envisaged that conditions would develop the way they did in the Chatham Islands stating: 'The situation had become out of hand and tragedies were occurring in the name of the economy'.<sup>633</sup> The government and the Minister had the responsibility, of ensuring that such recommendations were made, and the conditions of the industry were met, safeguarding those involved in it. In favouring, the Leader of the Opposition, he urged for action before the situation further deteriorated, and further tragedies occurred.

Alan Aberdein, aged 34, owned the *Picton* and six other boats, including five dories, (an investment between \$45,000 and \$50,000). He argued that a lack of long-range weather forecasts and skippers ignoring storm warnings accounted for the maritime accidents. Further, he contended, Marine Department regulations, such as stipulating towing of boats under 40-feet exemplified the government's tendency to enact safety regulations without understanding the underlying issues. Rather than arbitrary regulation, he asserted, Chathams Islands' fishing boats needed improving. Instead of controlling the size of fishing boats, navigational aids, slipway and safer anchorages (besides the safe Petre Bay), he believed the government should ensure craft were more seaworthy.<sup>634</sup>

In *Rekohu* Fiona Holmes claimed that 22 lives and 38 vessels were lost around Chatham waters and out at sea from 1967 to 1972. Many left mainland waters in

<sup>632</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1656 (Hon. W. J. Scott).

<sup>633</sup> NZPD, 361 (1969), p. 1654 (Matiu Rata, Northern Maori).

<sup>634</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 21 June 1969.

convoy only coming to a tragic end.<sup>635</sup> According to Holmes, a closed season (1 March to 30 April each year) was implemented on all methods of rock lobster fishing at the Chathams from 1976. Declared as a controlled rock lobster fishery, in June 1981, limited licences then applied.<sup>636</sup>

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter discussed the social consequences of the crayfish boom, and how infrastructure, piracy and violence and safety issues were the major factors, influencing relationships between islanders and outsiders. Collectively, they reinforced perceptions that the Chathams Islands were marginal to New Zealand, and did not benefit from the money crayfishing was generating for the companies and New Zealand. At another level, despite these difficulties there was some suggestion that at least some benefited with technology and assistance of “outsiders”. Overall, most islanders believed that the Chathams lacked development, needed more money to stimulate the economy, required a long-term management and development programme for fisheries, and above all needed an economic survey. Chapter four looks at this economic survey and how crayfish conservation became an issue in the 1972 general election.

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<sup>635</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 66.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

## Chapter Four

### 4. THE END OF THE CRAYFISH BOOM

The environmental debates on crayfish in the Chatham Islands occurred at a time when greater attention was being paid to conservation issues in New Zealand. Norman Kirk espoused conservation as part of the Labour Party's political platform, while the *New Zealand Truth* noted 'the plight of the Chathams was a political issue important to buy a marginal seat in election year'<sup>637</sup>. While Lyttelton was not in itself a marginal seat. Kirk exposed the weakness of the government in the way it dealt with the Chathams problems. The lowered crayfish catches in February 1971 followed by the closing of the meat company in March 1971 were two factors that caused controversy. This meant that the Chathams became a "political football" leading up to the 1972 election. This also meant that the National Government undertook an Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands in March 1972. This chapter discusses and quantifies the crayfish bust between 1971 and 1975. It explains why crayfish conservation became an issue in the 1972 general election, and also explains why people looked forward to the (belated) economic survey of the Chatham Islands.

#### 4.1 Quantification of the Crayfish Bust 1971-1975

Figures showed that 942 tons of crayfish tails were exported from the Chatham Islands for the year ended 31 March 1970, compared to 1,762 tons in 1969, about half.<sup>638</sup> This coincided with a marked 50 cents per lb price drop. By 1971 crayfish exports dropped to 356 tons.<sup>639</sup> Consequently, many owner-skipper and convoys, thought twice about returning for the next crayfish run.<sup>640</sup> In 1970 for example Barry Chant's *Kingfisher*, a 52 foot steel boat and champion of Chathams crayfishing boats, unloaded about 550 pounds of crayfish tails, worth

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<sup>637</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 11 April 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU. See Alan McRobie, *New Zealand Electoral Atlas*, Wellington: GP Books, 1989, p. 116.

<sup>638</sup> *Press*, 22 June 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>639</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 30 March 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>640</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 20 March 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

\$1100 to the fishermen. On comparison with previous years this was “pin money”, and likewise for other boats.<sup>641</sup> In 1967 the *Kingfisher* caught 100 tons of crayfish worth NZ\$2.5 million.<sup>642</sup> By 1970, however, fishermen were lucky to get \$150 per catch.<sup>643</sup>

The declining catches caused considerable concern among islanders. The Chathams future was uncertain, with farming making only small profits, and costs spiralling. Resident Commissioner, Don Reid, stated that finance and technology was needed. Chathams County Council Chairman, F. Q. Lanauze, recognising the Chathams lacked capital and technology, was small and easily exploited by those better endowed, wanted more cooperation and less squabbling among the islanders. He sought to make the community self-reliant by investigating its own resources and planning for the future.<sup>644</sup> Moreover, a 60,000-gallon oil tank had arrived, at Waitangi, guaranteeing a long-term supply of diesel oil to the Chathams based fishing launches in April 1972.<sup>645</sup> Overall, the Chathams were disadvantaged, compared to the mainland, paying high prices for petroleum fuels because of transportation costs.<sup>646</sup>

Some islanders, and mainland fishermen, hoped for the return of the crayfish bonanza; but the unknown biological life of crayfish saw overfishing. By 1970 three of the nine crayfish factories had closed, and one, was in receivership. The local meatworks was in receivership. Deemed the backbone of the economy, its sheep farming was unprofitable. As the only county in New Zealand with no

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<sup>641</sup> “Pin money” refers to the money fishermen spent on cigarettes, alcohol and gambling. When fishermen “pulled the pin” they did not do it anymore. Interview with Ron Threadwell, 14 March 2009.

<sup>642</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 6 February 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.

<sup>643</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>645</sup> *Press*, 4 May 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>646</sup> New Zealand Department of Industries and Commerce, *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, Wellington: Department of Industries and Commerce, March 1972, p. 95.

sealed roads, and the only territorial local body in the Dominion that levied no rates, all council revenue came from the dues levied on inward and outward goods. Hence, Councillor, P. S. Prendeville claimed, ‘in this way everyone contributed directly, or indirectly, to the county’s coffers’<sup>647</sup>, and urged the council to set rates on land. In late 1970 a *Press* editorial noted that the Minister of Internal Affairs, David Seath, was not able to answer unequivocally, and, authoritatively, the question whether the Chathams could become “self sufficient”. In essence, until the Chathams formed a viable economic unit, the government would not formulate a policy towards the islands nor even to provide capital. Nor would it evacuate the islands and compensate those who had invested money there.<sup>648</sup> Here, arguably, political expediency between the two political parties, overrode both mainlander interests and the long-term wellbeing of the islanders.<sup>649</sup> Many believed the government had not spent its money wisely during the height of the boom, resulting in economic problems and disappointment for the islanders. According to Chathams County Councillor, Alfred (Bunty) Preece, the Council had learnt a valuable lesson from the crayfish rush.<sup>650</sup>

Lea Clough talks about this being a most peculiar time for the islanders, economically and culturally, and an outsider culture. The Chatham Islanders developed a certain amount of resentment towards outsider fishermen coming from the mainland, “raping” it, and leaving the Island no better off, and developed a proprietary feeling towards their resources.<sup>651</sup> The boom had left badly maintained farms and a culture of living for today. Some examples included fishermen chartering an aircraft to go on a week’s holiday, calling a

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<sup>647</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 5 December 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>648</sup> Editorial, *Press*, 9 December 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> *Sunday Times*, 1 October 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-043-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>651</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009. Lea Clough is a member of the Paua Managing Committee and the Rock Lobster Advisory Committee for the Chathams.

helicopter to carry beer from the Waitangi hotel out to their boats at an extraordinary expense. In addition, much money was gambled away.<sup>652</sup>

Despite this, some islanders benefited. Brothers Gary and Wayne Soanes, for example, saved \$18,000 between them to buy a \$32,000 crayfishing boat.<sup>653</sup> Gary recalls that they bought the *Escapade*, a 34ft steel boat, and then the *Stargazer*, a 40ft steel boat, after he obtained his skipper's ticket at Wellington Nautical School in 1971. Though the boom was over, islanders could still earn good money. On a good day, for example, Gary could earn more than \$20,000. Other islanders, including Howard Page, George Page, Charlie Preece, and son's Roger and Charlie Preece, Bob Rowley and Ronnie Brown continued to crayfish.<sup>654</sup> Howard Page was a top fisherman during the boom, and managed to buy farmland, as did some members of the Preece family.<sup>655</sup>

In September 1971 a *Christchurch Star* article confirmed that though the registered fishing boats in Chathams waters had dropped by about a half, and crayfish packing stations reduced, a reasonable standard of living from crayfishing was possible for the islanders with a return to normal fishing. As this thesis has demonstrated, crayfish regulations were needed to conserve and preserve the fishery.<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> *Dominion Sunday Times*, 1 October 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>654</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009. Gary's parents are Chathams fisherman Athol and his wife Eileen Soanes (née Preece).

<sup>655</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009

<sup>656</sup> *Christchurch Star*, September 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 6, WTU.



**Table 4: Crayfish Landings, vessel numbers and average landings per vessel, 1965 to 1981 at the Chatham Islands.**<sup>657</sup>

Year	Landings (t)	No. of vessels	Tonnes per vessel
1965	2	1	2.0
1966	1,271	36	35.3
1967	3,313	59	56.1
1968	5,958	120	49.6
1969	4,147	186	22.3
1970	1,751	125	14.0
1971	1,211	91	13.3
1972	1,088	82	13.3
1973	1,033	78	13.2
1974	518	61	8.5
1975	331	52	6.4
1976	391	45	8
1977	303	56	5.4
1978	293	65	4.5
1979	391	57	6.9
1980	342	51	6.7
1981	453	61	7.4

The development of the commercial fishery at the Chatham Islands was characteristic of a previously unexploited fishery. It developed rapidly from 1965 and reached its peak in 1968. Landed weight, vessel numbers, and the average landings per vessel declined rapidly thereafter, and from 1974 to 1981 landings fluctuated between about 300 and 500 tonnes per year and the number of vessels

<sup>657</sup> Annala, J. H. 'New Zealand Rock Lobsters: Biology and Fishery', *Fisheries Research Division Occasional Publication*, No. 42, 1983, p. 83.

from 45 to 65.<sup>658</sup> Furthermore, the future export market for crayfish appeared favourable, as the worldwide demand was strong.

Unfortunately estimated values for the period 1971-1975 are incomplete. In 1971, the landed value of 23,790 cwt of crayfish at the Chathams was NZ\$1,343,714.<sup>659</sup> In 1972, the landed value of 21,371 cwt of crayfish was NZ\$1,207,801.<sup>660</sup> In 1973, the landed value of 20,295 cwt of crayfish was NZ\$1,858,725.<sup>661</sup> In 1974 the landed value of 517 tonnes of crayfish was NZ\$964,572.<sup>662</sup> In 1975 the landed value of 331 tonnes of crayfish was NZ\$546,406.<sup>663</sup> The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries sought to develop management plans to ensure sustained high productivity of this resource, and to avoid the results of overfishing, because of its economic significance for New Zealand. However, the Chatham Islands was seen as a separate entity because overfishing had already occurred.<sup>664</sup>

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<sup>658</sup> Ibid., p. 36. See Read Sturgess and Associates, *A Socio-Economic Study of the Chatham Islands Rock Lobster Fishery*, prepared for the Ministry of Fisheries, New Zealand and the CRA 6 Industry Association, 2000, p. 12.

<sup>659</sup> Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1972, Marine Department, *AJHR*, 1972, C. 6.

<sup>660</sup> Annual Report for the year ended 31 December 1973, Marine Department, *AJHR*, 1973, C. 6.

<sup>661</sup> Fisheries Report 1973, catch landing and value of Chatham Islands rock lobsters for the year ended 31 December 1973, p. 43, National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) Library, Wellington. See *AJHR*, 1971-1974, C. 6. See also *AJHR*, 1975, C. 5, p. 63. The decrease for the Chatham Islands catch was partly attributed to the lowering of the conversion factor for rock lobster tails. Up to and including 1972, tail weights were multiplied by four to convert to green weights as a reflection of the true ratio in the larger rock lobsters. The multiplier then changed to three to reflect the decline in the number of large rock lobsters.

<sup>662</sup> Fisheries Report Fisheries Management Division, 1974, catch landing and value of Chatham Islands Rock Lobsters for the year ended 31 December 1974, p. 31 (NIWA).

<sup>663</sup> Fisheries Report, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1975, catch landing and value of Chatham Islands Rock Lobster for the year ended December 1975, Wellington (NIWA).

<sup>664</sup> S. B. Saila, J. H. Annala, J. L. McKoy, and J. D. Booth, 'Application of Yield Models to the New Zealand Rock Lobster Fishery', *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, 13:1 (1979), pp. 1-2. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries took over from the Marine Department in 1972.

The Marine Department's Fisheries Research Division Report in May 1970 stated that it was difficult to obtain catch/effort data from the 9 factories operating at the Chathams. It hoped, however, that when the fishery became more stable economically and socially, co-operation would be obtained for a quantitative assessment. It also anticipated that the situation would parallel that of Fiordland: the fishery would stabilise to produce half of its peak production, that is, 60,000 cwt, or half of its 1968 landings. Surprisingly, the report stated that the appearance of small crayfish in recent catches suggested that there were no over-fishing problems. It also asserted, 'the economics of fishing in the Chathams are such that overfishing is unlikely'.<sup>665</sup> In October 1971 the Inspector of Fisheries, R. J. Stanley reported to the Marine Department the steady catches of crayfish around the Chatham Islands. Yet an official party visiting had made no promises concerning the future of the crayfish industry, but wanted to reopen the meat works. Moreover, R. Tizard (Labour MP) criticised the Marine Department's Research programme into crayfish conservation, stating that no research had even started on pauas.<sup>666</sup>

By 1971 the Otago-Southland-Fiordland fishery had replaced the Chathams fishery in terms of weight of catch landed. The export of crayfish was still important for the New Zealand economy at this time.<sup>667</sup> R. J. Street, a Marine Department Fisheries Division biologist, and local fishermen, studied crayfish returns and catch measurements, to determine effective management there: an important function for this department. Other scientific, and technical work on crayfish was carried out by the Marine Department in the Chathams, and at the Fisheries Research Laboratory at Wellington. It is significant that Street had studied the type and size of crayfish being taken in the Chathams for the Marine Department in 1966.<sup>668</sup> Indeed, by 1971 the crayfish industry at the Chathams

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<sup>665</sup> Report, Fisheries Research Division, Marine Department, Wellington, May 1970, Crayfish Population Studies, M8 W 1833, 63/1/1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>666</sup> Report, R. J. Stanley, Inspector of Fisheries, Superintendent of Mercantile Marine, Chatham Islands to Secretary of Marine, Wellington, 1 October 1971, Crayfish Population Studies, M8 W 1833, 63/1/1, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>667</sup> *Press*, 11 December 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>668</sup> Report on Crayfish, Chatham Islands and Western Australia, Chatham Islands Fisheries, AAAC 6015, W5224, 158, 103/71/35, part 2, Archives New Zealand.

experienced the effects of the National Government's indifference towards overexploitation of this important resource. According to Street, like other fisheries, the crayfish cycle passes through three stages. 'There is the initial fishing of the virgin stock, during which catches rise to a peak, then a downward stage – as is now happening in the Chathams. Then there is a stabilising period with fluctuations in different years'.<sup>669</sup>

In 1971 crayfish population studies had been reduced in the Chathams, because only limited data could be 'collected from this scattered and isolated fishery'. Instead, studies continued on the two mainland fisheries which were used for interpreting catches and landing trends in various sea areas.<sup>670</sup> In 1973 Street described some of the management measures being used and their probable significance for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.<sup>671</sup> A 1979 report suggested that management measures derived from purely biological data were too simple to be used for the management of living resources. 'These must be followed by a detailed socio-economic investigation of the rock lobster fishery'.<sup>672</sup> Nevertheless, biological, economic and social problems were associated with the crayfish boom at the Chathams.

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Ibid., as previously noted, the government disallowed the 1966 Fishing Industry Board's report to be published relating to problems of the Chathams crayfish boom.

<sup>669</sup> *Press*, 11 December 1971, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>670</sup> Report on Fisheries 1971-1974, Annual Report Rock Lobsters, Marine Department, 1971, p. 21.

<sup>671</sup> R. J. Street, 'Trends in the Rock lobster Fishery in Southern New Zealand', 1970-1971, *Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Technical Report*, 116, 1973. Street continued to do research on rock lobsters in the Southern part of New Zealand. Papers had dealt on the biology of the New Zealand crayfish, but little work had been published on the status of the fishery. It was important for the fishery to be economically productive for as long as possible. See R. J. Street, 'Rock Lobster migration off Otago', *Commercial Fishing*, 10: 6 (1971), pp. 16-17.

<sup>672</sup> Saila, Annala, McKoy, and Booth, 'Application of Yield Models to the New Zealand Rock Lobster Fishery', *New Zealand Journal of Marine and Freshwater Research*, 13 (1), 1979, pp. 1-2.

Schiel has suggested that the depredation of marine life accompanied changes in the economy and human culture of the Chathams.<sup>673</sup> This applied to the crayfish bust, though unlike the collapse of whaling and sealing with no economic return, crayfish harvesting continued albeit with lesser quantities caught.<sup>674</sup> Whereas, the elderly crayfish population was typically large, the remaining crayfish were smaller because of overfishing (crayfish have a nine-month larval life, fishable at approximately seven years old).<sup>675</sup> Schiel observed that by 1974 larger, older, crayfish had disappeared; the remaining 61 vessels caught on average an annual catch of 8.5 tonnes.<sup>676</sup> The persistent trawling in Hanson and Petre Bays had led to large numbers of crayfish being easily caught in baited pots, but their natural habitat was destroyed.<sup>677</sup> According to Schiel, fishing would continue as the mainstay of the Chathams economy in the future, therefore: 'all fisheries must be renewable and sustainable'.<sup>678</sup> This rested on the opportunity to get things right to prevent overfishing. Schiel wrote in 1996 that *rahui* and *taiapure* areas were being established to provide protection for reef-dwelling species; enhancement of *paua* population had been trialed, and the quotas for commercial species were reviewed annually.<sup>679</sup> Lea Clough recounted that, unlike the rest of New Zealand, the Chatham Islands have about 13 recreational only reserves, where commercial fishermen may not fish, or dive for shellfish. In his view, there are no *taiapure* and *mataitai* traditional management areas on the Chathams.<sup>680</sup>

In 1974 the *People's Voice* (a Canadian Socialist Journal for the working class) contended that the Chathams Islanders had suffered, because outsider commercial fishing companies had exploited their rich lobster grounds. It questioned whether the Chathams were even a New Zealand colony, so badly had it been treated. It noted that commercial interests sought only the tails for export, the remaining lobsters being dumped, meaning only the wealthy could taste this

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<sup>673</sup> Schiel, p. 62.

<sup>674</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63. Schiel stated: 'In fisheries jargon, a "collapsed" fishery is one that no longer produces an economic return'.

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>680</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009.

once common delicacy. It also contrasted the way in which the government had offered financial inducements to foreign capital, such as Comalco while the Chathams clearly needed financial help. Hence, it argued, demanding consideration for these underprivileged New Zealanders was not unreasonable.<sup>681</sup> The crayfish boom cause a continuing resentment towards outsiders, one example being the attack on the *South Seas*, a fishing vessel which visited the Chathams in 1991.<sup>682</sup>

#### 4.1.1 Japanese Fisheries

In early 1975 the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries sought overseas markets and considered a proposal for Japanese fishing, an innovative change in fishing policy. Hence, under charter to the Japanese Government, and Japanese fishing interests, a 2518-ton stern trawler conducted experimental trawling, seeking new fishing grounds over the Chatham Rise. A *Press* article noted that the Japanese trials ultimately would benefit the local fishermen, but, most importantly, the Chatham Rise proved to be one of New Zealand's richest deep-water fisheries.<sup>683</sup> The possibility of joint venture with the Japanese was discussed but nothing came of it.<sup>684</sup>

#### 4.1.2 Lobster Regulations (1976) - Controls Implemented by 1981

In late November 1976 changes to Rock Lobster regulations, gazetted by the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, prohibited commercial diving for rock lobsters. It also declared a closed season for rock lobsters between 1 March and 30 April each year from 1 January 1977. Furthermore, a new management policy was promulgated for the Chatham Islands paua fishery after a random survey of

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<sup>681</sup> *People's Voice*, 15 May 1974, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU. In 1971 an aluminium smelter opened at Tiwai Point near Invercargill, Jackson, McRobie, *Historical Dictionary of New Zealand*, 1996, p. 25.

<sup>682</sup> Email: Daryl Sykes to Gunilla Jensen, New Zealand Seafood Industry, 28 January 2008.

<sup>683</sup> *Press*, 2 January 1975, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>684</sup> *Dominion*, 5 September 1975, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.



paua divers, and a survey by a team of scientists.<sup>685</sup> These controls for the Chathams rock lobster fishery were implemented by 1981.<sup>686</sup> Arguably, by the time these regulations were introduced between 1976 and 1981, it was too late. In July 1976 County Chairman, Alfred Preece, pointed out in the first edition of *Chatham Islands News and Views* that crayfish industry was still important, and paua had been licensed, which indicates that lessons from the crayfish boom may have been learnt.<sup>687</sup>

One Chatham Islander, however, maintains that the islanders did not learn any lessons from the crayfish boom, making the same mistakes again: history repeated itself with the paua industry. He explained that when pauas became “black gold”, islanders again let outsiders control the industry by selling of their paua quotas. These were mainly purchased by factory owners from Wellington who control the paua industry in the Chathams today.<sup>688</sup> By 1984 most of the top quota paua owners were expatriates mainlanders, except islander John Hough. Another islander Clough owns his own quota for paua and leases out both paua and crayfish.<sup>689</sup>

Commenting on conservation in 1980 the Leader of the Opposition, Bill Rowling, claimed the Chathams fishermen were ambivalent about a closed season for rock lobster, but not averse to a conservation policy. Yet, they queried its rigidity, arguing that on matters affecting Chathams people “on the ground”, officials in Wellington should demonstrate more sense and flexibility. Rowling further pointed out that: ‘Although the closed system had run in the Chathams for three years now, fishermen at Kaingaroa, the second biggest port, had not seen a

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<sup>685</sup> *Chatham Islands News and Views*, November 1976, WTU, p. 4.

<sup>686</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 67. In 1984 about 50 boats fished in the Chatham waters. In the 1983 season the total landings of rock lobster was 542 tonnes. *Ibid.*, p. 79. In January 1983 the first known Packhorse Crayfish (*Jasus verreauxi*) was caught off Munnings Point, Kaingaroa, a larger species than the normal crayfish. See also *Catch* magazine, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries Report, August (1984).

<sup>687</sup> *Chatham Islands News and Views*, July 1976, pp.1-2, WTU.

<sup>688</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009.

<sup>689</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009.

marine biologist in that time'.<sup>690</sup> Furthermore, no step had been taken to see if a closed season worked apart from "guess estimates" of the fishermen themselves.<sup>691</sup> Rowling's comments may well have been politically motivated, but they resonated with Chatham Islanders who saw a pattern of continuing negligence.

Lea Clough, Manager of the Kaingaroa factory, in 1978, asserts that central government made the same mistake with the scallop boom circa 1990. This was because the Ministry of Fisheries issued too many permits for too little fish, and a boom and bust pattern followed.<sup>692</sup>

#### 4.2 Crayfishing and Conservation Debates

At a political level, the emergence of the Values Party, the forerunner of today's Green Party, was significant in that it saw the emergence of a political party dedicated to environmental issues. As a liberal-radical party, its philosophy centred on a "steady state" economy defined in *BluePrint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future*.<sup>693</sup> The radical new policies of the Values Party, such as Zero Economic Growth, Zero Population Growth and abortion, drug and homosexual law reform were all published in their 1972 election manifesto. According to historian and political scientist, Alan McRobie, the Values, as a liberal-radical party, emphasised a "steady state" economy, and environmental protection, that drew national attention.<sup>694</sup> Such a sentiment surfaced in the crayfish bonanza in light of the socio-economic situation in the Chathams.

The decline of the crayfish boom occurred at a time of increasing environmental consciousness among New Zealanders. The proposal to raise the level of the dam on Lake Manapouri galvanised opponents of environmental exploitation. The

<sup>690</sup> *Christchurch Press*, 19 March 1980, AAMK, 869, W3074, 687a 19/2/8, part 6, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid.

<sup>692</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009.

<sup>693</sup> New Zealand Values Party, *BluePrint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future*, Wellington: Values Party, 1972, p. 1.

<sup>694</sup> Alan McRobie, 'Politics of Volatility, 1972-1991', in *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., in Geoffrey W. Rice (ed), Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 387-88.

proposal was affirmed by the Prime Minister Jack Marshall on 7 September 1971 following a select committee recommendation in June 1971.<sup>695</sup> It had aroused much opposition. New Zealand's leading conservation organization, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society petitioned Parliament three times in 1970 about this issue. Founded by Norman Jones, a Southland farmer, and future National Party politician, aligned with doctors, lawyers, senior academics and knights of the realm, it claimed that the possession, and appreciation of pristine lakes and mountains, was a significant part of New Zealand's cultural heritage: a national identity to be kept.<sup>696</sup> Labour's Save the Manapouri Campaign helped it win the 1972 election.

Within the context of dissent, resistance and promotion of alternatives (such as communal lifestyles) progressive social movements arose, such as the Women's Liberation, Gay Liberation, civil rights and the anti-Vietnam movements.<sup>697</sup> By 1972 the "protest movement" was in full force in New Zealand, mirroring international movements, such as peace and human rights, anti-war mobilisations (anti Vietnam War and nuclear war), the Progressive Youth Movement, Maori protest Movement, Women Liberation groups, gay liberation, the Student Christian Movement, environmental conservation and urban communes.<sup>698</sup> The New Zealand Values Party, as a radical youth movement, burgeoned in the late 1960s and 1970s in the midst of this social change. According to Dann, it based its ecological concerns on the malaise of modern society: its premise social democracy rather than conservation of the environment. Later, Green parties would take up these values.<sup>699</sup> Moreover, Values ideas put together as a political party platform, and offered for the first time to the national electorate, were unique.<sup>700</sup>

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<sup>695</sup> Christine Dann, 'The development of the first two Green parties in New Zealand and Tasmania' in 'From Earth's last islands. The global origins of Green politics', Ph.D. thesis, Lincoln University, New Zealand, 1999, URL retrieved 15 February 2008, from <http://www.globalgreens.org/literature/dann/chapterfive.html>, p. 23.

<sup>696</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>699</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>700</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

The first published manifesto, *Blueprint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future*, 1972, corresponded with a documentary screening of the Values party profile on the premier television current affairs programme, *Gallery*, on 17 October 1972. According to Dann, this sparked an overwhelming response formation of a Green Party.<sup>701</sup> As part of its 1972 political campaign, the *Gallery* programme showed Values Party Leader, Tony Brunt, criticising both the major political parties for being opportunistic and immoral, and the small parties; Liberal Reform, New Democrats and Social Credit as conservative and of the right. In terms of policy, Brunt stated that New Zealand should stabilise population, and economic growth to reduce pressure on the environment. Zero population growth would, he argued, stabilise urban growth with its attendant social problems. Because they were a liberal party, and liberals and activists tended to congregate with Labour, the Values indicated that they would vote for Labour, realising they would not win the election. In conclusion, Tony Brunt stressed that historically social change came in 40 year cycles in New Zealand stating: 'I think New Zealand can lead the world in social change again'.<sup>702</sup> As mentioned above, Christine Dann asserted that the Values Party policies were more of a critique of modern society, particularly its organization, management, and control, including the environment.<sup>703</sup>

The Values Party criticised the National Government believing it emphasized economic growth at the expense of the environment. Moreover, it asserted the 1969 National Development Conference 'subordinated social and environmental goals to economic goals'.<sup>704</sup> Furthermore, the National Government's policy of placing "national" growth ahead of "regional" growth, to meet the demands of

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<sup>701</sup> Ibid., p.10.

<sup>702</sup> *Gallery: New Zealand Values Party*, 17 October 1972, Television New Zealand, Avalon Television Archives, Lower Hutt, Wednesday, 23 July 2008.

<sup>703</sup> Christine Dann, 'The development of the first two Green parties in New Zealand and Tasmania' in 'From Earth's last islands. The global origins of Green politics', Ph.D. thesis, Lincoln University, New Zealand, 1999, URL retrieved 15 February 2008, from <http://www.globalgreens.org/literature/dann/chapterfive.html>, p. 6.

<sup>704</sup> New Zealand Values Party, *Blueprint for New Zealand: An Alternative Future*, Manifesto, Wellington: Values Party, 1972, p. 26.

the National Development Conference had social costs.<sup>705</sup> The Chathams needs coexisted with the Values political platform, especially: ‘The encouragement of debate on desirable social goals and values at all levels of New Zealand society’; and, ‘A regional development policy revitalising rural communities and arresting the growth of large urban areas’.<sup>706</sup>

The Values Party’s attitude towards “moral” issues meant its members were encouraged to vote Labour. Crayfish exploitation, lack of socio-economic development, moral issues, and calls for social justice for the islanders were all intertwined during the election year. Even though the South Island semi-rural electorates had been attracted to Labour in 1972 by promises of regional development, it went to National in 1975. The Values Party did not win any seats in the 1975 election, but gained third position (eight seats) in the local authority elections in the Christchurch/ Lyttelton electorate.<sup>707</sup> Labour lost the Lyttelton seat to National.

#### **4.3 Government Responses to the End of the Crayfish Boom**

One reason why the environmental movement and the Labour party gained strong support in the Chathams was the disappointment many islanders felt at the outcome of the long-awaited Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands in 1972. The survey arose out of concerns expressed by people such as Arbuckle, who urged the government to take responsibility for Chathams development arguing that their history was marked by a repeated cycle of economic success followed by failure.<sup>708</sup> As previously discussed Kirk had repeatedly raised concerns about the depletion of the crayfish beds and environmental exploitation of the Chathams, thereby exerting pressure on the National Government to take action.

#### **4.4 An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands (1972)**

The Economic Survey undertaken by the Department of Industries and Commerce in March 1972 concluded that the Chatham Islands had scope to

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<sup>705</sup> Ibid.

<sup>706</sup> Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>707</sup> Levine and Lodge, *The New Zealand General Election of 1975*, p. 33.

<sup>708</sup> Arbuckle, p. 5.

develop in the fields of agriculture and fishery.<sup>709</sup> It suggested that agriculture would remain the main industry on the Chathams but not fishing. Hence: 'The key to the economic future of the Chatham Islands is the guarantee of an improved meatworks on the Chathams for at least 10 years'.<sup>710</sup> Accordingly, the Chatham Islands meat works reopened on a receiver manager basis in early April 1972.<sup>711</sup> Whereas, the government initially would aid the development of these industries; however, it would not sustain the ongoing costs in the long term. In this sense, it was a conservative report. Yet, it also noted: 'The large quantity and wide variety of fish in and round the Chathams offers potential scope for a viable fishing industry in the region, provided these resources are used wisely'.<sup>712</sup> This suggested that crayfish could provide an income for many people and commercial interests, even at the much-reduced level of catch. Seven major recommendations on fisheries were included. First, the reorganisation of the rock lobster industry including 'some rationalisation of the processing factories and equipment'.<sup>713</sup> Second, building-up of the fishing industry generally, and because paua appeared to be a growing industry, 'a system of leasing areas of coastline for commercial harvesting of paua, with preference given to local residents be implemented in the Chathams'.<sup>714</sup> Third, developing an economically viable blue cod and groper wet fish industry, depending on transport costs. Fourth, an investigation into the potential use of the 46,000-acre Te Whanga lagoon for marine farming including, flounders, mussels and oysters.<sup>715</sup> Fifth, for the development of trout farming, 'irrespective of any decisions taken with regard to trout farming on the mainland'.<sup>716</sup> Sixth, for biologists to survey the scallop, tuatua, and Cook's turban shellfish resources in the Chathams.<sup>717</sup> Finally, it

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<sup>709</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 30 March 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>710</sup> *Press*, 1 April 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>711</sup> *Southland Times*, 13 April 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>712</sup> *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, March 1972, p. 225.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>714</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>715</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 225, 229.

<sup>716</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>717</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 30 March 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.



recommended the development of farm forestry, deer, rabbit and weka farming along with “cottage industries”, and tourism.<sup>718</sup> Also, recommended was the development of a peat wax industry, but as Fiona Holmes notes ultimately nothing came of this plan.<sup>719</sup>

The Chatham Islanders had mixed emotions about the recommendations made in the economic report on the Chathams. In particular, the recommendation that the, ‘post of Resident Commissioner on the Chatham Islands be abolished and replaced by a Chatham Islands Commissioner based in Wellington’ from September 1972.<sup>720</sup> E. J. Lynskey was appointed.<sup>721</sup> The Minister of Internal Affairs, David Highet pointed out, ‘if the county council will accept the SAFE agency I see no need for an administrative officer attached to the Department of Internal Affairs to be stationed on the islands’.<sup>722</sup> The government maintained that the Chathams would not be neglected, stating: ‘It is believed that improved communications and transportation services will give scope for the development, under the new arrangements, of closer liaison between the Islands and Government which will lead to opportunities for an accelerated social and economic advancement’.<sup>723</sup> Nevertheless, the Survey indicated that the change in administration was to ‘prevent wasteful expenditure of Government funds’ by centralising government activity in Wellington.<sup>724</sup> Highet denied that the Department of Internal Affairs was ‘shelving its responsibilities towards the Chatham Islands’, asserting the semi-official duties would be carried out by the

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<sup>718</sup> *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, pp. 230-31.

<sup>719</sup> Fiona Holmes, *Rekohu*, p. 81. *ibid.*, about 44% of the Chathams are covered with peat and peat type soils, believed to be from the decomposition of the *Dracophyllum arboreum* forest, which gives high peat content, Most of this land is unproductive. Similar deposits are found in Tierra del Fuego (Chile) and the Falkland Islands. The processed peat forms mineral wax which is used in a number of products such as, shoe polish, floor wax, carbon paper and so forth.

<sup>720</sup> *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, p. 232.

<sup>721</sup> *Chathams County Newsletter*, December/January 1973, p. 2, WTU. Commissioner E. J. Lynskey previously held the post of Deputy Secretary of the Department of Lands and Survey, then Chairman of the Marginal Lands Committee.

<sup>722</sup> *NZPD*, 378 (1972), p. 307 (Hon. D. A. Highet).

<sup>723</sup> *Chathams County Newsletter*, December 1972/January 1973, p. 2, WTU.

<sup>724</sup> *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, pp. 195-96.

postmaster or the policeman.<sup>725</sup> Conversely, the Chathams Council and Tom McGuigan (Chatham Islands MP since 1969) believed that the islanders would not have the same contact with government departments.<sup>726</sup> To whom, he queried could people on the Chatham Islands, 500 miles from the mainland turn for advice if there was no government officer on the islands?<sup>727</sup>

In McGuigan's view, the Minister of Internal Affairs should uphold a promise to the islanders to retain the resident commissioner.<sup>728</sup> He further criticised the Minister's statement that the meat works would only be maintained for three years instead of the ten years promised by the economic survey. In addition, he noted that because the air service would only run from Wellington this meant a 13 percent price increase for islanders who wanted to travel to Christchurch. Moreover, he observed the islanders were unhappy, the Minister had given no indication of how educational facilities would be improved. Highet, he asserted overlooked the cost of petrol, costing 98c a gallon on the Island, or 100 percent more than it cost on the mainland. In McGuigan's view, the government had provided little financial assistance arguing that: 'This is part of the record of a Government that claims to be interested in people'.<sup>729</sup> McGuigan's comments help explain why people were unimpressed with National candidate, John Blumsky in the 1972 election.

The Economic Survey stated that the so-called "crayfish boom" benefited the Chatham Islands in many ways, but it was detrimental to farming and Chathams agriculture. When the crayfish "bubble" burst in 1969 many of the farmers-turned-fishermen returned to their land with large debts outstanding on their fishing boats, and much work needed on their farms.<sup>730</sup> This was possibly a sign of a government who knew it had not performed well in the Chathams during the crayfish boom. According to the Survey, the establishment of the fishery involved problems for the Marine Department, the fishermen and the fish

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<sup>725</sup> NZPD, 378 (1972), p. 307 (Hon. D. A. Highet).

<sup>726</sup> *Chathams County Newsletter*, December 1972/January 1973, p. 3. WTU.

<sup>727</sup> NZPD, 378 (1972), p. 307, (Mr McGuigan).

<sup>728</sup> Ibid., p. 1169 (Mr McGuigan).

<sup>729</sup> Ibid.

<sup>730</sup> *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, pp. 33-34.

merchants. The report, justifiably, or not, stated that: 'To most Chatham Islanders, whose lives were largely centred around farming, these events were somewhat bewildering'.<sup>731</sup> As previously mentioned in chapter two, the Marine Department had set up a committee to investigate the fishing industry in 1966, because of the problems caused by the crayfish boom. Though the Survey indicated that some Wellington-based fishermen practiced evisceration at sea to circumvent the ban on tailing at sea, it did not indicate how the government might stop overexploitation of the crayfish fishery.<sup>732</sup> Nevertheless, the Survey supported the view that high incomes and heavy expenditure during the crayfish boom had distorted the traditional sense of values of Chatham Islanders, and that mainlanders, and mainland owners of the processing plants, benefited from the boom. It is also noteworthy that the Survey considered that the greatest direct contribution from the boom was the export levies, which the County Council collected in lieu of land rates.<sup>733</sup>

Against the weight of evidence the Survey argued that the crayfishermen were better off 'most are no doubt in a much better position now than in 1966'.<sup>734</sup> Conversely, in the year ended 31 March 1966, farmers' incomes compared unfavourably.<sup>735</sup> Undoubtedly, since the advent of the crayfish boom, frozen crayfish tails packed in the Chatham Islands were the greatest earner of foreign exchange.<sup>736</sup> Despite this fact, the Chathams County Council took out a loan for \$400,000 to be financed over a 20-year term, because of the decline in the level of crayfish exports from the Chathams. This loan was to be financed mainly from the special development levy on crayfish exports to carry out harbour works of direct benefit to the fishing industry.<sup>737</sup>

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<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>733</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

The government claimed that insufficient information was available to accurately forecast the long-term yield from crayfish fishing.<sup>738</sup> Even though it could not guarantee “bonanza” catch levels again, it was optimistic that present yields would improve.<sup>739</sup> What it was concerned about, however, was the over-capitalisation, and fragmented nature of the processing facilities after the crayfish boom, urging that these be discontinued.<sup>740</sup> It suggested, however, that lessons had been learnt with the growth of the paua industry and that prospects for commercial paua diving were good. That is, provided proper conservation practices were observed, and the number of fishing permits regulated. It also suggested that ‘the fear of over-exploitation by outsiders, as with rock lobsters is already causing ill feeling on the part of the locals’.<sup>741</sup> Significantly, unlike the crayfish boom, the influx of mainland divers for paua seeking large amounts of money quickly of this resource was not in the interest of this fishery.<sup>742</sup> Hence, the Survey suggested a system of leasing areas of coastline for commercial harvesting of paua, ‘in the interests of the Chatham Islanders and in sustaining a reasonable harvest in perpetuity’.<sup>743</sup>

M. J. Moriarty (Secretary, Industries and Commerce) claimed that the Economic Survey was not a “blueprint” for the future of the region, recognising that both the islanders and mainland supporters would be disappointed.<sup>744</sup> Furthermore, N. L. MacBeth, a *Press* journalist, in critiquing the commission, asserted it failed to disclose its terms of reference, and, ‘the principal question required to be answered was how, not whether, to develop the islands’.<sup>745</sup> Moreover, the viability of the islands expressed in the brief chapter by anonymous authors on the “Extent of Mainland Subsidy” was doubtful. Rather, the extent of the

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<sup>738</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid.

<sup>740</sup> Ibid.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>742</sup> Ibid.

<sup>743</sup> Ibid., pp. 148, 229.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-2.

<sup>745</sup> *Press*, 12 April 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

mainland subsidy to the Chathams needed further investigation, despite frequent assertions of ample assistance relative to small population and size.<sup>746</sup>

#### 4.5 The 1972 Election Campaign

Labour candidate, Tom McGuigan, also criticized the Commission when he visited the Chathams prior to the election. In the *Chathams County Newsletter*, Councillor F.Q. Lanauze highlighted the importance of the fishing industry, particularly, McGuigan's promise that: 'It too, needs confidence for the future and Labour's policy on fishing will ensure this'.<sup>747</sup> Moreover, the key players farming, fishing and other industries were all vital for development in the Chatham Islands, not just farming indicated in the economic survey. Moreover, McGuigan's campaign focused on social justice for the islanders, reflecting past neglect by successive governments, stating: 'The potential of these Islands must be developed to its fullest extent if the standard of living of the people is to be improved, if the facilities, amenities and public services are to be increased, and if the education facilities for the children are to be extended'.<sup>748</sup> Presumably, because these underlying factors (infrastructure) had caused controversy during the crayfish boom, McGuigan sought to highlight the National Government's failings towards the Chathams during this period. For example, McGuigan asserted: 'the exorbitant prices for petrol and diesel on the Islands have been an injustice for too long and a Labour Government will from 1 January 1973 ensure that the prices will be equalised with those operating on the Mainland'.<sup>749</sup> Some islanders credited Norman Kirk (MP) for putting the Chathams before the notice of the mainland.<sup>750</sup>

Reports from a journalist accompanying the Minister of Internal Affairs, Highet, to the Chathams in May 1972, indicated a continuing undercurrent of resentment among the islanders that infrastructure had not improved during the "boom period", and a continuing distrust of "outsiders". In the governance of the

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<sup>746</sup> Ibid. See *An Economic Survey of the Chatham Islands*, pp. 102-106.

<sup>747</sup> *Chatham County Newsletter*, October/November, 1972, p. 2, WTU.

<sup>748</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>749</sup> Ibid.

<sup>750</sup> *Dominion Sunday Times*, 1 October 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

Chathams, Highet campaigned against McGuigan for better communication, arguing that an inefficient transport service was detrimental to development. Subsequently, *Press* political reporter Cedric Mentiplay wrote two articles related to the Chathams problems: “A Wide gap - in Thinking More Than in Distance”; and, “More Positive Leadership Needed - At the Islands End”. In the first, Mentiplay argued that the Chathams must bridge two gaps: the distance from the mainland, and the resistance to change in the islanders’ mindset, before uniting with mainland New Zealand in development. Otherwise, progress and development could not continue, yet: ‘The Chathams is a special case – and will remain so until communications and thinking close their separate expensive gaps’.<sup>751</sup> Here Mentiplay expounded that the main problem was coordination between the mainland and the Chathams. Although the air-link had become the lifeline over shipping, both had coordination difficulties, particularly non-supply followed by double supply delays in delivery. Mentiplay further suggested that the Chathams Council had been dilatory in not providing feasible answers to their difficulties. This provoked a “blame the shipping company”, or “blame the government” attitude. Yet, to some extent this gap could be closed with one purchasing officer in the Chathams handling all orders requiring shipment, or enplaning from the islands to the mainland.<sup>752</sup> In his view, most islanders subconsciously resisted “the invasion” from outside, even admitting their inadequacy sometimes.

Mentiplay’s second article argued that continual resistance to outsiders accompanied a resistance to change, particularly to “big firms” from outside. For example, the islanders, initially, resisted a Geraldine company getting the roading contract, but later recognised the benefits: employment for the islanders and the superior quality of roading. Therefore, they conceded that the “so-called interlopers” brought work opportunity, money and bigger chances. Even in 1972, the locals spoke about the “crayfish bonanza”, the days when men and boats came from the “outside”, depleting the crayfish stocks. Although some islanders

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<sup>751</sup> Cedric Mentiplay, ‘The Chathams Problem - 1, “A Wide Gap – in Thinking More Than In Distance”’, *Press*, 3 May 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid.



shared in the booty, others appreciated the steady work and good wages, while others made large fortunes. Yet, in some cases money earned was spent on cars, jewellery and entertainment on the mainland, consequently they returned to the Chathams sadder and wiser.

Mentiplay's observations about the Chathams economic future were important. To stimulate their economy an increase in population was needed because production did not assist economic development if there was no viable market. To invest in Chathams resources, such as the peat-wax industry, required facilities. Furthermore, the Chathams needed mainlanders, deep-water harbours, better roads, more people, and better services, such as town milk supplies, locally made butter, locally grown vegetables, a bakery and intensive farming. Finally, more positive leadership by Chatham Islanders themselves was needed to alter the resistance to change and aversion to outsiders.<sup>753</sup> One interpretation of Mentiplay's observations was that the Chathams problems rested with the islanders themselves, even the Chathams County Council.

The way in which the *Press* presented the item appeared to endorse this view. Mentiplay's question: 'Are Chatham Islanders to blame for the admittedly marginal state of their home islands?' was captioned in the *Press* in April 1972.<sup>754</sup> The answer it highlighted, clearly, depended on how the government implemented the 52 recommendations of the 1972 Economic Survey. Alternatively, the islanders could be resettled on the mainland. In Mentiplay's view, this, 'would be a first step before proceeding with bulk regeneration schemes on which the remaining islanders would be employed'.<sup>755</sup>

Some islanders supported Mentiplay's views. Crayfisherman, Gary Soanes, believes that the islanders have too long blamed outsiders for their problems, and perhaps they should "stand on their own feet". Nevertheless, he believes the government exploited the Chatham Islands during the crayfish boom and the islanders should have gained more. He maintains that the Chathams have always

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<sup>753</sup> *Press*, 4 May 1972; *Press*, 3 May 1972, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

<sup>754</sup> *Press*, 24 April 1972, AAMK, 869, W3074, 687a 19/2/8, part 6, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*

struggled, perhaps because there are divisions among the islanders. There was good money to be earned after the boom, and there still is, if one is willing to work.<sup>756</sup> Some mainland supporters of the Chathams case contended that an “out of sight out of mind” attitude prevailed, because of its isolation and lack of progress since 1966. Likewise, a *Christchurch Star* editorial had noted, as early as 1966 that the Chathams plight was beyond political issues, because at stake were the wellbeing and development of the Chathams people in this part of New Zealand.<sup>757</sup> Therefore, both locally and nationally, Chathams problems aroused concern.

#### 4.6 The Chatham Islands during the Third Labour Government

When the Third Labour Government came to power on 25 November 1972, Kirk became Prime Minister, promising to focus on the economy, education, housing, better public health facilities, more effective industrial relations policies and lower prices.<sup>758</sup> In particular, Kirk was concerned for the welfare of the Maori people. By 1974 some benefits for the Chathams had materialised including all-weather roads, better port facilities, with reasonably regular transport to the mainland (albeit expensive), and improved schooling for children. Yet, according to *New Zealand Herald's* Wellington Bureau Editor, D. S. Milne, more financial effort was needed before the Chathams could catch up socially and economically with mainland New Zealand.<sup>759</sup> These improvements suggest that the islanders' representations to the government had some effect.

During the term of the Labour Government the number of MPs who visited the Chathams increased. In January 1973 a number of government ministers including Henry May, Minister of Internal Affairs, McGuigan, Minister of Railways, and Koro. Wetere, MP for Western Maori visited the Islands. These visits were especially important because the Resident Commissioner's post had

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<sup>756</sup> Interview with Gary Soanes, 15 April 2009.

<sup>757</sup> ‘The Chathams Case’, *Christchurch Star*, 2 February 1966, W. B. Burt, Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU.

<sup>758</sup> Author unknown, *Life and Career of the Late Prime Minister Norman Kirk*, Auckland: Wilson and Horton, 1974, p. 20.

<sup>759</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 27 August 1974, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

closed down in September 1972, being replaced with a Wellington based Commissioner, E. J. Lynskey. Lynskey promised better co-ordination between the Council and government agencies by visiting frequently. It is noteworthy that McGuigan indicated that the Labour Government had placed Chathams affairs high on its agenda. In this regard, the ministerial visits after just four weeks in office were an encouraging sign. According to Wetere, the Chathams were better represented in Parliament than previously. Of the 14 members who had visited there over the previous two to three years, 10 were now Ministers of the Crown. The Minister of Internal Affairs also sought clarification on the fishing industry survey, the farming industry and the purchase of Wharekauri Station in light of the Economic Survey.<sup>760</sup>

The Labour Government offered some assistance and improvements to the Chathams fishing and farming industries, post 1973. Nevertheless, the *New Zealand Herald* noted in September 1974 that the Fishing Industry Board had not visited there since 1967, and, 'the government was prepared to pour money into supporting farming on the islands while ignoring fishermen'.<sup>761</sup> This meant the government considered their long-term future was in farming not fishing, despite the fact that most islanders were both farmers and fishermen. The government's forecast, however, was inaccurate, because fishing had great potential in the Chathams. Moreover, some remaining boats had switched to wet fishing, especially for blue cod and hapuka to make a reduced living, as crayfish dwindled. Another disadvantage that affected the Chathams economy was the reduced population as mainland fishermen and Chathams youth left the Island.<sup>762</sup>

The government offered loans to fishermen to improve fishing vessels. In November 1974 the *Akaroa Mail* (a Canterbury newspaper) noted a number of commercial cray rock fishermen wanted to diversify into wet fishing, particularly tuna, fish and cod. Accordingly, the Minister of Health, McGuigan, stated the fishing industry had approved an extension to the State Loan and Mortgage

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<sup>760</sup> *Chathams County Newsletter*, December 1972/January 1973, pp. 1-3, WTU.

<sup>761</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 3 September 1974, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*

Guarantee Scheme; and the Rural Banking and Finance Corporation would provide these loans up to five years. Included among these improvements were: the provision of efficient on-board handling, preservation of catches, and greater diversification of fishing effort. Presumably, McGuigan hoped that ‘numerous fishermen in Lyttelton electorate would be keen to take advantage of the new loan provisions’.<sup>763</sup>

The Labour Government addressed some of the infrastructure issues highlighted during the crayfish boom. In 1973 some local fishermen used a new assembled county mobile slipway for slipping their boats. Moreover, the Council’s Harbour Committee met with Waitangi boat owners to establish a mooring system there, and for Owenga and Pitt Island boats. Undoubtedly, fishermen who paid attention to the County’s By-Laws assured better use of the mooring sites.<sup>764</sup> In 1973 H.W. Hampton became Resident Agent, as well as Chathams Commissioner, a post established by Labour Government.<sup>765</sup> Commenced in 1970, the upgrading of roads was completed on both the islands, but not bridging work, and additional roading to Port Hutt, and, Waitangi West. Also, most of the port development on Chatham, but not at Port Hutt because of the silting problem.<sup>766</sup> The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research completed a survey of peat deposits in 1973. Later, a study of engineering requirements of wax processing was undertaken. I.C.I. New Zealand Limited had conducted investigations into markets for New Zealand wax, but the viability of a peat wax industry in the Chathams was unknown.<sup>767</sup> Investigations into whether a peat-wax industry was economically viable were completed by 1974, and results submitted to the government.<sup>768</sup> Moreover, the Labour Government supported SAFE flights. From October 1973, SAFE Air Limited operated a regular air

<sup>763</sup> *Akaroa Mail*, 19 November 1974, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>764</sup> *Chathams County Newsletter*, February, March, April 1973, WTU.

<sup>765</sup> Annual Report, Department of Internal Affairs, *AJHR*, 1974, (Vol. 111), G. 7, p. 40. *Ibid.*, p. 41. Later, in 1974 Hampton’s post was referred to as, “Government Representative Chatham Islands”, and Lynskey’s title redesignated, “Co-ordinator Chatham Islands, Wellington”, which reflected more accurately their respective responsibilities.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

service on behalf of the Crown between the Chatham Islands, Wellington, and Christchurch, increasing to two flights a fortnight.

Despite the improvements outlined above, political candidates continued to play on perceptions of government neglect. In October 1975 Values Party candidate, Peter Heal (Lyttelton electorate), highlighted the government's negligence towards the Chathams. In many ways, he asserted most islanders struggled for their future survival 'without a voice to put their present economic plight'.<sup>769</sup> Moreover, the high freight costs, a strong disincentive to farming, the "bust" nature of the famous crayfish "boom", and the abandonment of the peat wax scheme, justified the islanders' resentment and disappointment. A succession of politicians, departmental experts, and development studies had promised great things, but their promises were fruitless. According to Heal, Chathams prospects were poor (though a "protectorate" of New Zealand) and under prevailing conditions, it could become in 20 years: 'a sparsely populated outcast from this country's anti-social economic system'.<sup>770</sup> For 30 years the government promised a hard landing strip for the Chathams and an NAC service ensuring reliable flight schedules for freight and passengers, like that enjoyed by the rest of New Zealand. For Heal, the government should subsidise a shipping service from Lyttelton to Waitangi, removing high freight costs to allow reinvestment and development of the farming community.<sup>771</sup> The government-chartered *Holmdale*, however, was allegedly reducing its service to one trip every two months. Heal's comments suggested that Chathams problems were still live political issues and that Values' "blueprint" for society provided a solution to the crayfish bust. The results in the 1975 general election (Lyttelton electorate) were Heal 1300 votes (6.2%), McGuigan 9108 votes (43.1%).<sup>772</sup>

<sup>769</sup> *Christchurch Star*, 1 October 1975, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-58: 3, WTU.

<sup>770</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>771</sup> *Press*, 21 October 1975, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 8, WTU.

<sup>772</sup> Norton, *New Zealand Parliamentary Election Results, 1946-1987*, p. 264. Miss C. E. Dewe, National 10107 votes (47.9%); E. G. Crockett, Social Credit, 592 votes (2.8%).

In 1977 the crayfishing industry was still the most important industry for the Chathams in terms of earnings: the best in five years. Nevertheless, a serious bottleneck emerged that meant getting the produce to market from the Chathams was problematic. For best returns, the fish needed to be marketed every week, or fortnight. This was impossible when the bulk of the fish had to wait a month to 6 weeks, for transport to the mainland on the *Holmdale*, and onward to the United States markets. Accordingly, smaller, faster planes to carry the fish out when processed were sought, especially the twin turbo Prop 10 seater, fully equipped passenger and freight plane.<sup>773</sup>

Telford has argued that there was a continuing resentment between islanders and outsiders after the crayfish boom, despite the government improving conditions on the Island. Arguably, the influence of the “old families” continued despite the increased contact with outsiders.<sup>774</sup> The islanders criticised the values and lifestyle of outsider fishermen, and divers, who remained after the crayfish boom, especially “that Kaingaroa mob” (who resided at Kaingaroa). The notion that they received no benefits from their representation, and were the victims of injustice, nonetheless, had political overtones.<sup>775</sup> Some outsider influences were apparent. Dan Doyland, who spent seven months working in a fish factory at Kaingaroa, taught the Bahai Faith in 1975,<sup>776</sup> perhaps, suggesting the islanders opened up to new ideas and lifestyle. During the boom there was tolerance of other faiths and beliefs, away from the religious differences between Catholics and Anglicans previously. However, the Kaingaroa people curiously referred to the islanders as the “bo’s”.<sup>777</sup>

In March 1980 the Minister of Maori Affairs, M. B. Couch, visited the Chatham Islands along with the Under Secretary for Fisheries, R. L. G. Talbot (deputising for the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries), and officials from the Maori Affairs Department, because there was concern about fisheries conservation. In particular, the exploitation of paua and traditional kaimoana that resulted in

<sup>773</sup> *Chatham Islands News and Views*, February 1977, p. 5, WTU.

<sup>774</sup> Telford, pp. 72-73.

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>776</sup> *Chatham Islands News and Views*, November 1976, p. 3, WTU.

<sup>777</sup> Interview with Lea Clough, 17 March 2009.



insufficient quantities for home consumption. Talbot sought the setting aside of an area for this purpose, free from commercial exploitation through legislative measures, but determined as a Take (right) from the Maori Committee. The Manager of the Chathams Packing Company raised another grievance that loan finance was available to purchase boats, but not for the purchase of crayfishing boats. Significantly, the National Government conceded that a controlled crayfish industry called for a policy review; and, thus: 'It is probable that loans will be available once the industry is fully controlled'.<sup>778</sup> In 1978, with reports of foreign fishing vessels, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries requested information from Chathams fishermen on foreign fishing activity.<sup>779</sup>

#### 4.7 South Seas Incident

The *South Seas* incident exemplifies the islanders continued resentment towards outsiders exploiting their crayfish fishery under the quota system and towards foreign fishing vessels (CRA 6 the Chatham Islands commercial rock lobster fishery).<sup>780</sup> It also signifies how islanders, though not a unified group, pull together when threatened from outside.

#### 4.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the decline of the crayfish boom and the overexploitation of crayfish in the Chatham Islands. It explores connections between the environmental movement within New Zealand, and the Labour party's support in the Chathams. It also highlighted the islanders' disappointment at the outcome of

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<sup>778</sup> Ministerial Visit, Chatham Islands, 4-7 March 1980, AAMK, 869, W3074, 687a 19/2/8 part 6, Archives New Zealand.

<sup>779</sup> *Chatham Islands News and Views*, February 1978. The 1977 August supplement of *Catch* contained information about Foreign Fishing Vessels (F.F.V's) and key to their identification.

<sup>780</sup> Email: Daryl Sykes to Gunilla Jensen, New Zealand Seafood Industry, 28 January 2008. On 1 April 1990 the rock lobster fishery was brought into the Quota Management System and the total allowable commercial catch (TACC) for the Chatham Islands (CRA 6) was set at 503 tonnes. See Nathan Walker, Nakome Bentley, 'A Compilation of Weight-Grade Data from the Chatham Islands Rock Lobster Fishery', (CRA 6) New Zealand Assessment Report 2002/45, September 2002, Ministry of Fisheries 2002, URL received 18 May from [http://fpcs.fish.govt.nz/science/documents/%5C2002%20FARS%5CO2\\_45\\_FA\\_R/pdf](http://fpcs.fish.govt.nz/science/documents/%5C2002%20FARS%5CO2_45_FA_R/pdf).

the long-awaited Economic Survey in March 1972. These issues were contributing factors to the Labour Party winning Lyttelton and the 1972 election campaign. Rather than regenerate fishing, successive government's stated that farming was the backbone of the economy, rather than fishing. Accordingly, the islanders continued to see a pattern of continuing negligence. Another repercussion of the crayfish boom was the continued tensions towards outsiders. As mentioned in chapter one, this echoed previous tensions such as when outsider Italians were employed in the 1950s. Although paua became a growing industry, crayfish was harvested at a reduced level, providing employment for the islanders. Fortunately, some lessons had been learnt from the crayfish boom, in the allocation of paua reserves, for future conservation purposes. Some islanders sold their quotas to outsiders, however, thereby sending economic benefits offshore. Thus, in the view of some, history had repeated itself.

## Conclusion

This thesis examined the social history of fishing in the Chatham Islands from 1910 to 1975, focusing on the crayfish boom and the ways in which this affected 'insider' (Chatham Islanders) perceptions of 'outsider' (here defined as both outside fishermen and at a wider level central government and its associated departments). It demonstrated that the crayfish boom could not be studied in isolation in order to understand its effects upon the islanders. Rather, it must be placed in the wider context of relations between Chatham Islands and New Zealand. That the repeated pleas by the fishing industry for better infrastructure and conservation measures during the crayfish boom were not heeded was, for many, but one example of a long-term pattern of government neglect and, indeed, exploitation of the Islands. These historical concerns had implications for the development of the Chatham Islands during this period, creating a sense of solidarity in the islanders' quest for improved living conditions and meaningful conservation measures for their resources.

Chapter one analysed the background to the crayfish boom. It identified why some islanders believed that, from the establishment of the cod fishing industry in 1910, a pattern of government neglect was apparent and that similar issues would resurface during the crayfish boom. It argued that the government did not heed the views of the people living at the Chathams relevant to housing, fishing and infrastructure, and implementing closed seasons for conservation purposes. Essentially, the fishermen had many characteristics of "a tight working-class group", a reflection of their social status in the community. Arguably, an important example of this group solidarity occurred during World War Two, when some Islanders refused to fish because they resented the way the government had treated them in the past. The islanders' hostility towards outsiders re-emerged in disputes about outsider firms employing Italian fishermen as labour during the 1950s. Another controversial issue was the need for conservation that affected islanders' livelihoods. The Marine Department's policy was to keep the total catch down to a reasonable level by restricting boat licences, and new companies entering the field, but they could not halt commercial trawlers in Chathams waters. Ultimately, this led to depletion of

stocks by the 1960s. There developed a widespread perception among islanders that profits from the fishing industry went to mainland New Zealand and not the Islands economy. The chapter concluded that the crayfish boom presented new challenges, but the issues it raised had been part of Chathams history.

Chapter two quantified the crayfish boom from 1966 to 1970 and its economic impact. It examined the issues of crayfish supplies, failed conservation measures, and concerns over environmental safety, especially evisceration at sea. Again, it revealed that the government was lax in formulating effective policies in these areas. Moreover, the Marine Department was unable to prevent the free-for-all overexploitation of the crayfish grounds by the fishing industry (fishing boat licences were discontinued in 1963). Arguably, the renewed tensions between the islanders and outsiders emerged because although the islanders did not disapprove of crayfishing, they wanted to receive some of the money crayfish was generating for the companies and New Zealand. They also wanted to ensure that crayfish would be harvested in a sustainable way.

It is unclear why the Internal Affairs Department disallowed a Fishing Industry Report to be published in 1966, but the Fishing Industry Board's prediction that the catch rate could be steeped up to the maximum, without depletion of the grounds and "boom-and-bust" cycle, was inaccurate.<sup>781</sup> Despite the Board recommending conservation measures, the government did not formulate a management policy to prevent overfishing. It was also ineffective in dealing with Chathams problems associated with the crayfish boom that affected the islanders' socio-economic wellbeing. Following the Rock Lobster Regulations (1969), the Department took no further action to conserve remaining stocks, despite the Fishing Industry Board becoming concerned about the state of the fisheries. The increase in fishing effort the board argued did not reflect the number of vessels registered for crayfishing.<sup>782</sup> Neither did the 1970 Parliamentary Select Fishing Industry Committee recommend measures to

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<sup>781</sup> *Press*, 23 July 1966, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 5, WTU. See Atkinson, *A Case Study of the Chatham Islands Crayfish Levy 1966-1969*.

<sup>782</sup> *AJHR*, 1972, H.15A, p. 13.

maintain a maximum level of production, resulting from the National Development Conference in 1969. Also, fisheries research was too late to prevent crayfish catches declining, because of financial constraints by the government.<sup>783</sup> By 1970 with the crayfish grounds overexploited, the New Zealand fishing industry felt the flow-on effects of the drop in income derived from the Chathams. This occurred despite the Marine Department repeatedly warning the fishing industry that catches would decline and cautions that the Fishing Companies risked overcapitalisation.<sup>784</sup>

The pollution caused by live tailing (evisceration) of crayfish at sea was another problem arising from the crayfish boom. Although the government took action in 1966, some fishermen ignored the legislation. Possibly, because they were upset of the concession granted to the South Western rock lobster fishery. The islanders blamed the Marine Department for not appointing a fisheries inspector to enforce the regulations. Rather, one overworked police officer enforced the law, and acted as Marine Superintendent.

The crayfishing laws caused conflict between the Marine Department and the New Zealand Fishing Industry. There was a link between the boom and the self-interested calls for infrastructure. Some fishermen claimed that there were problems in exploiting the fishery, because of isolation and the lack of facilities in the Chathams. The Federation of Commercial Fishermen urged for a change of regulations, permitting crayfish for export to be tailed aboard fishing boats, believing the Marine Department's bureaucracy had obstructed a valuable source of overseas income for New Zealand. The issue over environmental safety and evisceration became embroiled in the wider political arena. Kirk, a strong advocate for the Chatham Islands, criticised the government relevant to crayfish conservation, determined also to advance the islanders' socio-economic conditions.

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<sup>783</sup> NZPD, 357 (1968), p. 2436 (Sir Basil Arthur).

<sup>784</sup> *New Zealand Truth*, 30 June 1970, W. B. Burt Collection, Chatham Islands, MS-Papers-0434-59: 7, WTU.

Chapter three focused on the social consequences of the “boom”, exploring infrastructure, piracy and violence, and safety issues. It argued that collectively, they reinforced perceptions that the Chatham Islands were marginal to New Zealand, and did not benefit from the crayfish boom. On the other hand, some islanders who bought fishing boats benefited from the crayfish boom. Improved technology and equipment meant large numbers of crayfish once harvested reached markets quickly by ship and air. The debates on infrastructure in the Chathams were part of a wider debate as to whether the Islands had a viable economic future. One of the controversies concerned the decision to upgrade the Hapupu airfield, rather than develop an alternative (and in the view of many a better-placed site near Big Bush) by the National Government in 1967, because of financial constraints. Despite the increased shipping and air services from July 1968, the service was irregular and uncertain: the access to the Hapupu airstrip poor. Therefore, the newly formed Chatham Islands Import and Export Committee sought long-term social and economic development planning for the Chathams, because of the rapid growth of the crayfish industry. The National Development Conference also stressed long-term planning and the setting of goals for any proper economic development. Consequently, the islanders wanted to increase export dues, because of demands on infrastructure, freight costs, petrol and diesel, so vital to the fishing industry.

Although income derived by the County from crayfish levies saw some improved facilities, the islanders hoped that the fishing industry would develop further. Crayfish, as one of New Zealand’s main export earner, was predicted as the most valuable asset to the New Zealand fishing industry for the following decade. Indeed, the government believed the crayfish “boom” would last. However, when the crayfish levy was cut from 4 cents to 2 cents a pound in September 1969, this exposed the government’s ineptitude towards the fishing industry, and connection with the Chathams. Accordingly, the Chathams Development Committee sought an economic survey for future development. The extent of government responsibility for the Chathams became of interest to political parties and featured in some public debates. As Leader of the Labour Party from 1966, Kirk played an important role in these debates, using his



knowledge of the area to repeatedly pressurise the government to heed the concerns of the islanders.

Piracy and violence were two expressions of resentment towards perceived exploitation of the Chatham Islands that resulted in hostility towards outsiders. Outsiders were seen to bring in the worst aspects of mainland culture manifested in the fighting in the Waitangi Hotel. Moreover, Kirk called for a full-time Marine Department Officer and sea vessel to enforce policing of the fishery. The safety of those who fished was another controversial issue politically. The Minister of Marine, Scott, accused Kirk of making political capital out of boat tragedies. Paradoxically, the government seemed to act decisively when safety issues affected outsiders, as opposed to its inaction on conservation measures. As with the conservation measures, it was clearly apparent that by the time the government enforced safety regulations it was too late. Even experienced seamen and fishermen broke the rules and regulations. The delicensing of boats in 1963 meant that no law prevented boats partaking in the boom. Accordingly, in 1981 when the Chathams were declared a controlled rock lobster fishery, limited licences applied.

Chapter four outlined the decline of the “boom” and how crayfish conservation became part of wider environmental debates during the 1972 and 1975 general election campaigns. It stressed that the environmental movement and the Labour Party gained support in the Chathams because of the outcome of the long-awaited Economic Survey in 1972. The government emphasized agriculture would remain the main industry on the Chathams, but not fishing. It also stressed that it would not be able to sustain the ongoing costs of these industries in the long term. Accordingly, the islanders continued to see a pattern of continuing negligence. Despite the bust, the islanders continued to earn an income from crayfishing, but at a reduced level. By 1971 the Chathams fishery was replaced by the Otago-Southland-Fiordland fishery in terms of value of crayfish exports. Biological, social and economic factors were all important in the crayfish boom. Schiel argued that provided all fisheries were renewable and sustainable, fishing would remain a mainstay of the Chathams economy in the near future. Indeed, paua regulations suggested that some lessons had been learnt from the crayfish

boom regarding conservation. In the view of others, however, the paua boom indicated that history had repeated itself. Some islanders sold their quotas to outsiders, thereby sending economic benefits offshore. Another repercussion of the crayfish bust was the continued hostility towards outsiders, as demonstrated in the tensions within the Kaingaroa community.

At a wider level, the crayfish boom raises significant questions about the tensions between local histories and national histories. Whereas national histories tend to emphasise the essential unity of New Zealanders, the experiences of the Chatham Islanders are an interesting example of a people who felt on the periphery of the Nation. In a period when New Zealanders were intent on celebrating progress, the islanders repeatedly raised questions about the way in which the New Zealand government treated a group of its own citizens who, in geographical, economical and cultural terms, perceived themselves as being on the margins of New Zealand.

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