

The Mastery of Smallwood and Interlocutory Rhetoric

ROBERT PAINE

Some weeks ago, I sent a considerable number of levelheaded Newfoundlanders travelling through the big stretch running all the way from White Bay to Trinity Bay. . . . They were to act as my ears and eyes. . . . The instruction I gave them was simple, they were to learn what the people were thinking about the IWA and about the strike. . . .

I will tell you what the people are thinking in those hundreds of settlements.

J. R. Smallwood, on radio, February 12, 1959

WHEN SMALLWOOD brought Newfoundland out of the weather and into the shelter of Confederation with Canada in 1949, it seemed as though a new dawn had broken for the people—no less than for himself.¹ He became the symbol of this new beginning and the people, seemingly, became his. Yet in the winter of 1958-59 he faced a “rebellion”: a large number of Newfoundland’s 20,000 loggers went on strike and put up picket lines. The strike was organized by the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) and led by a non-Newfoundlander. The IWA “parachuted” into Newfoundland from British Columbia and the union organizer, H. Landon Ladd, was a man of unusual organizational and rhetorical abilities (Gwyn 201; *Smallwood* 400). So it was the IWA and Ladd who, almost ten years after Confederation, were capturing the imagination and making the news in Newfoundland, not Smallwood. At least they did so for a short while. A confrontation became inevitable and the public waited nervously. Not all of

the 20,000 loggers had joined the IWA and there was dissension in the logging towns and camps. But Smallwood kept silent for forty-five days after the picket lines went up.²

This essay looks at the speech—the IWA speech, as it was called—that Smallwood delivered on radio on February 12, 1959. Aside from its remarkable emotive power, the speech is an outstanding example of a particular rhetorical structure or technique favoured by Smallwood. It is one whereby he imparts to his audience the sense of a conversation, albeit one that is entirely in his hands. So behind the metaphor of conversation lies another: that of playwright. For Smallwood “wrote” the lines for different sectors of his audience. He then spoke them.

That this was at all possible owes much to the transformative effect of the victory of Confederation, of which he was the architect and champion. For this brought him into close contact with most Newfoundlanders at three of the principal points where their lives intersected social, cultural and political reality: family, Newfoundland and Canada (see Paine, “The Persuasiveness of Smallwood”). And in order to keep alive this effect, he liked, in his years of public speaking as premier, to “share” that victory with all Newfoundlanders even though half of them had opposed it. Thus Smallwood, as no one else, could “touch” Newfoundlanders and put them in touch with each other. It was he who controlled the symbols and networks through which Newfoundlanders were brought into relationships with himself and thence with each other.

That these relationships were sometimes putative mattered not one jot in Smallwood’s handling of them: we find him *constructing relationships*. In other words, his involvement with the different sectors of his audience (as broker of information, as custodian of values, as arbiter of ambiguities or disputes) was in large part itself a remarkable rhetorical creation of his own. The outcome he sought—and largely achieved—was a series of ideal equivalences among Newfoundlanders whereby their relations with each other were conceived in relation to himself.

I call this rhetoric *interlocutory* in a simple extension of the Oxford English Dictionary definition of interlocution as “the action (on the part of two or more persons) of talking or replying to each other.” There is an element of *mediation* about it, and this is crucial to the whole rhetorical process (Figure 1). Different persons, groups or even values in Newfoundland society and culture are brought together through the mediator. Ideally, Smallwood puts himself in this role. However, in the crisis around the IWA dispute we find Smallwood adding refinements to this pattern; other per-

sons (e.g., “my ears and eyes”) or an institution (e.g., a union) are sometimes in the mediating role in the Smallwood script. In his peroration he promoted mediation in the name of such values as “decency” and “justice.” Most interesting of all is his placing of the IWA in a “false” or “negative” mediating role as part of the demonstration of how “the IWA has

Figure 1.



Newfoundland society
(persons, groups, values)

failed the loggers” and how “there is not room enough in Newfoundland for the Government and the IWA at the same time.” Whether or not he puts himself in the role of mediator, the plan of his rhetoric—and here it is important to consider the sequence of the speech as a whole—is such that *he* draws off the political capital from all these interlocutions.

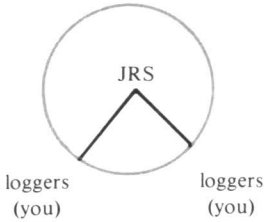
Of course, mediation is associated with peacemaking and to associate Smallwood with that may occasion surprise. After all, was he not always at the centre of controversy, imposing his will upon others? And what illustrates this better than his handling of the IWA strike? Smallwood, the political bully, was, and is, nearer the conventional opinion. These things are also true, but this essay points to his skill in the self-appointed role of “mediator”—even while he is being the bully—as a necessary part of the explanation as to how he *won* those political battles.

The IWA Speech³

The speech divides naturally into four parts which I have called Legitimation, Assault, The Plan and Peroration. A commentary follows the text of each of these parts and I have added a narrative postscript. Alongside each paragraph of the text of the speech there is an interlocutory notation in accordance with the principle of Figure 1.

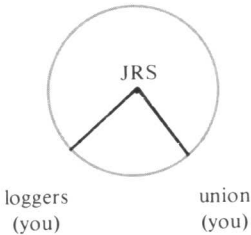
Legitimation

Para. 1



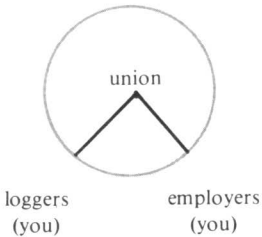
My talk tonight is addressed especially to all the loggers of Newfoundland, not only those who are on strike, but all loggers wherever they may be, the 20,000 of them, full-time loggers and part-time loggers.

Para. 2



Now the first point I want to make is that I am absolutely sure and certain that all our loggers must have a strong union to protect their interests and help them forward in the battle of life. It would be madness or suicide for our loggers to be without a strong union. They never got anywhere in Newfoundland until they got their first union twenty-odd years ago. If they found themselves without a union they would go downhill very fast. Without a union they would wake up some day to find that their last state was worse than the first. The loggers would not be fair to themselves if they failed to have a strong union of their own. It is absolutely necessary for our Newfoundland loggers to have a strong union to guard their interests, to protect their future and to represent them in dealing with the employers. But it is not enough for them just to have a union. The union must be strong, it must be honest, it must be honourable and it must be independent of the employers. It would be better to have no union at all than to have one that was only a company stooge. The loggers must have a union, the union must be strong, honest, honourable and independent of the employers, and the union must have a written agreement with the two paper companies: the AND [Anglo-Newfoundland Development] Company and Bowaters, or their contractors. This written agreement with the employers must settle wages, rates of pay, rates of board, camp conditions and everything else affecting the lives of the loggers.

&



Para. 3



JRS
(me)

loggers
(you)

Now I speak to you tonight as the Premier of Newfoundland, the leader of Her Majesty's Government in this Province. And as Premier of Newfoundland, I say, that for Newfoundland's sake, for the sake of peace and contentment in Newfoundland, the loggers must have a strong union, a union that is independent of the employers and a union that is able to make written agreements with the employers covering wages, conditions and everything else touching the lives of the loggers. There will never be peace or contentment in the logging industry without such a union. My task in bringing a third great paper mill to Newfoundland would be made much harder than it is if there was no strong independent union of loggers that could represent the men in dealing with the employers. Without such a union, I would see nothing ahead but discontent and unhappiness amongst the loggers and their families for many years to come.

Para. 4

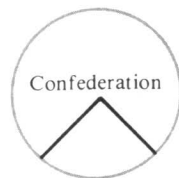


JRS
(me)

loggers
(you)

But it is not only as the Premier of Newfoundland that I say this—I say it as a man who has favoured trade unions and labour unions all my life. I have myself organized many unions, at least a dozen of them in my time. I have helped to organize other unions as well. I have reorganized still other unions; the last union I organized was in Gander not many months before I became Premier and I have helped to form another union since I became Premier. I believe just as firmly today in good strong decent unions as I ever did in my life. As a lifelong labour and union man, I tell the loggers tonight that the one thing they must have is a good strong union, but it is not only as the Premier of Newfoundland and a lifelong union and labour man I tell you this. There is another reason.

Para. 5



JRS
(me)

loggers
(you)

In a few weeks from now, Newfoundland will be ten years old as a Province of Canada. I did my part to bring that about and the great majority of you loggers helped me to do it. If it were not for the loggers of Newfoundland we probably would not have Confederation today, and our people would have been forced to do without the great blessings of Confederation. All Newfoundland owes you and your wives a great debt of gratitude for the noble part you played, often right in your camps, on the day the referendum was held, in that glorious fight for Confederation. I can never forget the part you played at that time, nor can I ever forget how you have stood by me from that day to this. I want Con-

federation to succeed in Newfoundland. I want it to be a success. It can never succeed, it can never be a success so long as there is discontent and unhappiness amongst the loggers, their wives and their children. This is something that must be understood, not only by the loggers but the employers and everybody else in Newfoundland tonight. We cannot have a happy and prosperous Newfoundland if the 20,000 loggers and their wives and families are unhappy and suffering under a sense of injustice.

Commentary. Contrary to what was expected, Smallwood does not criticize the strikers; instead he legitimates them as loggers, as Newfoundlanders, as supporters of Confederation and, above all, as men needing a union. At the same time he legitimates himself as Premier, as a friend of unions, and as the champion of Confederation. Already in his opening sentences he identifies himself firmly and personally ("my talk," "I want"). He also draws together the loggers and himself in order to reestablish, rhetorically at least, his patronage over them; he speaks of "our" loggers and their "battle of life." This is about as near as Smallwood will come to speaking of political ideology, and even here he slurs over the differences between the striking and nonstriking loggers, and undercommunicates differences between management and labour, between government and labour.

No mention whatsoever is made of the IWA in this early part of the speech in which he declares emphatically that the loggers need a union. (Indeed, the entire speech proves to be without a serious discussion of the IWA.) To reestablish his patronage, he chooses to place the IWA beyond the pale—by not noticing its existence. With the IWA on his listeners' minds anyway, it is possible for Smallwood to let its shadow fall all the more darkly over the patriotic scene he is painting by reference to another fight in which the loggers had taken part years ago, but as though it were yesterday: that one had been a "glorious" fight (for Confederation). He lets the loggers and their wives know that all Newfoundland is in their debt for the part they played, "often right in your camps" (where, while he was speaking, there was strife). In these early paragraphs, the loggers also hear Smallwood telling the timber companies and the public at large that they, the loggers, are not to be disregarded or trifled with—they are tough and they also have rights.

Smallwood goes so far as to suggest that the present strike could undo the work of Confederation (para. 5). The Newfoundland public had come to expect appeals from Smallwood in the name of Confederation, the political source of his ascendancy; the appeals would be made as though Confederation were the source of all that Newfoundlanders now enjoy. In this case,

however, both Confederation and his own person are given less prominence and less emphasis than “a union.” This is the salve that will bind and heal the wounds: “union” is mentioned thirty times in the first four paragraphs before he turns to Confederation. The union (otherwise left vague) must be “strong” and he identifies his premiership with this view; and “strong” (he did not say “powerful”) is associated repeatedly with “decent,” “good,” “independent,” “honourable,” and “honest”—elementary analogues that can be understood in terms of what one wishes for one’s family. Recognizing (without stating it yet) the influence of the IWA over the loggers, Smallwood realizes that he needs the symbol of “a union” to mediate between the loggers and himself, as the first stage in the process of regaining his own accustomed position as the preeminent mediating symbol (in just about all affairs of the province). For the moment, then, the message of his rhetoric is based more on what he shares with the loggers than on what they can share with him by his dispensation.

Smallwood is now ready for his assault on the IWA.

Assault

Para. 6



loggers
(you)

IWA
(them)

The IWA strike is a failure and the IWA itself is a failure. The IWA has failed the loggers of Newfoundland and failed the loggers’ families. In my opinion, the IWA never will and never can win in Newfoundland. That organization has not led our loggers, they have misled them. They have not given leadership to the loggers, they have given the loggers misleadership. They have not won the friendship of the people of Newfoundland, they have turned the people of Newfoundland against them. The vast majority of our Newfoundland people tonight are shocked and horrified by what is going on.

Para. 7



loggers
(you)

IWA
(them)

Some weeks ago, I sent a considerable number of level-headed Newfoundlanders travelling through the big stretch running all the way from White Bay to Trinity Bay. They had their strict orders from me to keep their mouths closed and their ears and eyes open. They were to act as my ears and eyes in travelling throughout the section where 98% of the AND Company loggers come from. The instruction I gave them was simple, they were to learn what the people were thinking about the IWA and about the strike. It was my duty as Premier to try to learn how people were thinking. In addition to these persons that I sent out as my ears and eyes, I wrote a great many clergymen, pastors and officers of the dif-

Para. 8



Nflders.
(you)

Nflders.
(you)

ferent religious denominations in that big stretch of coast line and other quiet, decent citizens as well, asking them to give me strictly confidential reports of how people are thinking about the IWA and about the strike. In addition to this, I arranged to have many other reports brought to me all the time from people living or traveling in the section between White Bay and Trinity Bay. It was the feeling and thoughts of the people out on the coast, out in the bays, in the coves and settlements that I wanted to know about.

I will tell you what the people are thinking in those hundreds of settlements. The loggers and their wives, the general public, ordinary men and women, ordinary Newfoundlanders—here is what they are thinking. First, the loggers must have a good strong union; second, it would be a disaster for the loggers to be without a good strong union; third, the IWA is a failure and this strike never should have been called; fourth, the great majority of the loggers want to get back to work; and fifth, the Premier should step in and try to do something to help the loggers in their plight. This is the opinion of the vast majority of all the people, including the loggers and their families, all the way from White Bay to Trinity Bay.

Para. 9



loggers
(you)

IWA
(them)

Oh, I know very well the loggers are very strongly in favour of the IWA, but there are only a few such places in all Newfoundland tonight. Thousands of loggers have lost their faith and confidence in the IWA. Of course they would still support the IWA if the IWA was the only union they could have. The great majority of the loggers are so determined to have a good strong union to represent them, so determined that they would still have the IWA if this was, if this was the only union they could have. Thousands of loggers who in their heart of hearts feel that the IWA has misled them will still support the IWA as long as the IWA is the only union that they can see to represent them. If I myself were a logger, if I were a logger and if I had to make a choice between the IWA and taking the risk of going back fifteen or twenty years, I would be just as strong for the IWA as any other logger.

Commentary. “The IWA strike is a failure and the IWA itself is a failure”: this judgement is delivered as “my opinion” and immediately linked to the “shock and horror” of the “vast majority” of Newfoundlanders. It is especially in the paragraphs denouncing the IWA that Smallwood resorts to

a rhetorical form of dialogue between himself and different sectors of the Newfoundland public. Emotively, it is a rhetoric of concord based upon Smallwood's earlier assertions of mutual legitimacy and—in deliberate counterpoint—of dissonance due to the intrusion of the IWA into Newfoundland society. The use of the same rhetorical form of dialogue for both kinds of messages makes it difficult for his listeners to evade the contrast that Smallwood wants to establish between himself and the IWA leadership (their "misleadership"). This contrast is between "positive" and "negative" social relations and "true" and "false" propositions regarding Newfoundland society. Relations with the IWA can be only negative, the reason being that the IWA leaders do not understand the true nature of relations between Newfoundlanders. They can only falsify these relations and desecrate them. He returns to this theme with still more force in his peroration.

Meanwhile the necessary assurance that Smallwood's own propositions are true is found in the apparent fact that their source is other Newfoundlanders. He tells his audience (para. 7) about his "ears and eyes" over the past weeks—the "levelheaded" Newfoundlanders, the "clergymen, pastors and officers of the different religious denominations" (note the necessary care taken with the phrasing here) and "other quiet, decent citizens" who have delivered strictly confidential reports to him.⁴ Then (para. 8) he reveals what they told him in a passage that recapitulates points he has already made; but they are now presented as the judgement of "ordinary" people, a case of the *ex cathedra* being adroitly dressed up as *vox populi*. Smallwood allows these ordinary people to instruct him: "the Premier should step in and try to do something to help the loggers." He has his mandate.

Note should be taken of various refinements made here (and repeated) in the basic interlocutory scheme. First, there is the "as if" component introduced by Smallwood for the procurement of his mandate; it is "as if" the people request and government obliges, but there is this rider: the people must know what to request and it is Smallwood who sees to that. Secondly, he deliberately casts other persons, instead of himself, in the role of mediating symbol; thus his "ears and eyes" provide him with an alibi for the action he is about to take at the same time as they place a strong element of social control over possible future actions of the loggers. The handling of the "ears and eyes" is also typical of Smallwood's use of brokerage: information brokers run messages to him for public dissemination at his discretion; it is rarely the other way around (cf. Cohen 80-81). Finally—and as

noted above—he introduces “negative” interlocutory relationships or “false” equivalences (denoted as ———/——— on the diagrams): in this case it is to identify the IWA leadership in Newfoundland as a grave source of dissonance.

Smallwood’s acknowledgement (para. 9) that there are loggers “very strongly in favour of the IWA” is made right after he declares his mandate, and just before he unfolds his proposals. He is concerned to disarm the militants among the loggers before making the proposals: he wants to show them how they can withdraw without losing face. He is probably also telling the less militant how to deal with the arguments of the militants. “If I myself were a logger,” he says, “and if I had to make a choice between the IWA and taking the risk of going back fifteen or twenty years, I would be just as strong for the IWA as any other logger.” But the “answer” (to militants’ arguments) lies in all that he has said so far: no logger in Newfoundland risks going back in time with Smallwood and with “a good, strong union” (repeated twice in the previous paragraph).

In summary, Smallwood still shies away from attacking the loggers, but “surrounds” them with a rhetorically contrived public opinion (it is to the loggers that he says: “I will tell you what the people are thinking”). He hints at their becoming prodigal sons (“the great majority of loggers want to get back to work”). Nor does he yet hit the IWA all that hard. He wishes to centre attention upon himself rather than the IWA, and upon the relations that loggers should have with him rather than those they have recently had with the IWA organizer. Since he is about to “advise” the loggers (threats and sanctions are kept for the peroration), he avoids shaming them, or baiting them, with too personalized attacks on the IWA.

Para. 10



Nfld.
(us)

IWA
(them)

The Plan

And now, I am going to outline a course that I think the loggers should take, and take without a moment’s delay. If they follow my advice, this is what the loggers will do. First send the IWA about their business. Send them out of Newfoundland. Tell them never to come back here again, write or better still telegraph at once to the IWA telling them that you are no longer a member of that organization. Second, form a brand new union for all the loggers of Newfoundland. If the loggers who are still in Mr. Thompson’s union want to join up in this new union, give them a hearty welcome. If the loggers who are still in Mr. Fudge’s union want to join up in the new union, give them a hearty welcome. Give all loggers a

hearty welcome to your new union. If you want help from me to form this new union I will be happy to help you with all my strength and all my heart. Third, in a very few days it would be possible for you to have the new union formed and negotiations started with the AND Company. Fourth, the men could be back in the camps working within the next week, and within the next fortnight or so new working agreements can be signed between the new union and the AND Company. I would be very willing to help bring this about. Fifth, give careful consideration then to banding all the fishermen and all the loggers together in one great Newfoundland union. You could go then to the Federation of Fishermen and ask them if they would unite their Federation with the new union of loggers. And sixth, with the IWA driven out of Newfoundland and a much stronger union organized to take their place, you could then decide if you wanted to affiliate with the Newfoundland Federation of Labour. They would probably be very glad then to have you, because you would then have as many members as the Federation has itself.

Para. 11



loggers
(you)

fishermen
(you)

Now I have talked all this business over with a man who is highly respected in Newfoundland by thousands of fishermen and thousands of loggers: Max Lane, the General Secretary of the Fishermen's Federation. Max Lane is as you all know a true blue Newfoundlander, an outpost man, a man who is educated, experienced, fearless and with enough grit for five men. I said to Max Lane that I thought it was his duty as a Newfoundlander to get into this thing and launch a great new loggers' union. Mr. Lane has agreed if the loggers want him, he has agreed to throw himself into this great task without a moment's delay to organize a great new union of loggers. He is already known to thousands of you because of course thousands of loggers are fishermen and every fisherman knows Max Lane. I myself would be delighted to give you every bit of help in my power and I would be able to bring in many good helpers with me. Mr. Lane as you know is a member of the House of Assembly. Now the loggers might want him to resign from the House of Assembly, and if they did, he would be quite willing to do so, but if the loggers felt that it would be good for them and for the new union for him to keep his seat in the House of Assembly, he would be perfectly willing to do that also. It would be all the same to him. The House of Assembly would lose one of its

Para. 12



best members if he resigned, but we would be willing to take that loss for the good of the loggers.

Now let me sum it up. Number one, you must have a good strong union to represent you. Number two, you must have a signed agreement with your employers fixing the conditions and the pay you are to receive. Number three, the IWA has failed and never can be a success in Newfoundland. Number four, you should send the IWA packing and tell them never to show their faces in Newfoundland again. Number five, you should at once, tomorrow morning, notify the IWA that you are no longer a member. Number six, you should immediately invite someone to form a new loggers' union to include all the loggers of Newfoundland. If you want Max Lane to organize the union he is ready and prepared to do so. Number seven, in a fortnight or a little more from tonight, the committee of the new union can be sitting down with the AND Company negotiating and signing a new contract. Number eight, within a month at least, at most within a month from tonight, that new contract can be signed. Number nine, you could then decide with your new union if you wanted to, to bring in all the fishermen to your ranks and make the biggest union that Newfoundland has ever seen and this union could decide then if they wanted to affiliate with the Newfoundland Federation of Labour.

Para. 13



loggers
(you)

Nfld. govt.
(us)

Now I offer you my help and my service to get this new union formed and to get your new union contract with the AND Company. I would be willing to drop all other work for the next fortnight and give my time, day and night, to help bring all this about. Besides myself, I can bring a great many others in to help you. The full weight of the Government of Newfoundland would be thrown in on your side to help you and will be there at your back after this present civil war is over.

Commentary. Thus, if only the loggers did what the Premier bade them, the loggers would be masters of their house—and of more, for their union could become the “biggest . . . that Newfoundland has ever seen.” But the indicative mode in which Smallwood speaks of the proposals scarcely serves to disguise the mood of political imperative he attaches to them. At the same time as some care is taken to phrase things as though the decisions lay with the loggers, Smallwood does not hesitate to make promises: a new union “in a very few days,” the resumption of work “within the next week” and new agreements signed with the lumber company “within the next fort-

night or so.” It all sounded so painless, and the breathless timetable a wonder to contemplate, matched only by the magnanimity of a premier “willing to drop all other work for the next fortnight . . . to help bring all this about.”

The rhetorical task Smallwood set himself here was to present an imposed solution (which included the decertification of the IWA) as a consensual and honourable one. The loggers had to see themselves not as surrendering to Smallwood but to their own good sense, and the source of this good sense was their Newfoundland heritage. The rhetoric made the loggers out to be the champions of this heritage at the same time as they were inextricably involved in it with all other Newfoundlanders.

In the terse sentences of a plan of action, then, Smallwood holds to the active role of cultural and political mediator: Send the IWA packing! Sign an agreement with the AND Company! Open yourselves to *all* loggers! Include the fishermen! Affiliate (and take over?) the Newfoundland Federation of Labour! Take Max Lane as your leader! Let the government throw its weight on your side! Implied here is that Smallwood speaks not only on behalf of the loggers who became entangled with the IWA, but also on behalf of Mr. Thompson’s and Mr. Fudge’s local mill unions, the fishermen, the Newfoundland Federation of Labour (pro-IWA), Bowaters and the AND Company. The serious undercommunication of management-labour and inter-union difficulties, in all that he says, is likely to be deliberate. For part of the attraction of the proposed plan of action for the loggers is designed to rest on the assumption that they, the loggers (undiscriminated), possess the friendship of Smallwood through whom all is made possible.

Such “friendship” is, of course, patronage (Paine, “A Theory of Patronage and Brokerage”). Newfoundlanders had long since adapted to systems of patronage as part of their political ideology. Confederation had not changed this, and Smallwood, even as the IWA in Newfoundland aspired to challenge this system, appealed to the loggers through dexterous handling of the circumstances and symbols that supported the ideology of patronage. An important part of its circumstances was the tradition of occupational pluralism in rural Newfoundland, whereby men were loggers or fishermen (and sealers) according to season. With regard to this, the IWA stood for a single and full-time occupational status in the logging industry, a policy that created misgivings in the countryside because of its likely restrictions on employment mobility. On the other hand, the IWA received much support by pointing out how the tradition of occupational pluralism had imposed upon the rural worker a subordinate place in the arrangement of the affairs

of the province, even when they touched directly upon his interests.

Smallwood’s answer to all this was a “true blue Newfoundlander.” In the person of Max Lane (para. 11), the rural worker would be represented by one of his own kind; one who was educated (“an outport man, a man who is educated”) and yet retained the virtues of the countryside (“experienced, fearless and with enough grit for five men”), and who respected the traditional occupational patterns (“he is already known to thousands of you because of course thousands of loggers are fishermen and every fisherman knows Max Lane”).

Also in the person of Max Lane, Smallwood would have a front man at the head of the new union. And in summing up his proposals, we find Smallwood offering himself to the loggers in their travail. This is the “gift” of a patron to his subdued (if not grateful) clients. Lest anyone in his audience misunderstand that, the dark metaphor of “civil war” (foreshadowing ultimate sanctions in the case of resistance) is thrown in right at the end. Smallwood is now ready for his peroration.

Peroration

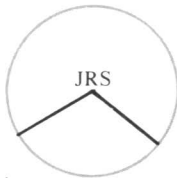
The Government don’t want the IWA. The Government will never work with the IWA, will never talk to them, will never answer a letter or telegram from them, will never have anything to do with the IWA. We think and the great majority of our Newfoundland people think that the IWA are the greatest danger that ever struck Newfoundland. We think that they are the greatest danger that ever came to the loggers and their families. There is not room enough in Newfoundland for the Government and the IWA at the same time. One or the other must go. It is not a strike they have started, it is a civil war. By their fruits ye shall know them and what bitter fruit from this terrible outfit. The IWA since they came to Newfoundland have brought nothing but trouble, trouble, bad feeling such as we have never known before. Lifetime neighbours have been torn asunder. Father torn from son, fisherman from logger, settlement from settlement, union from union. There is hate in Newfoundland tonight, bitter and ugly. There is more lawlessness, more violence, more lies, more falsehood, more cheating, more deceit in the past four weeks than we ever saw in Newfoundland before. We see hate and suspicion and fear and falsehood. This is what the IWA has set loose in our beloved Newfoundland. How dare these outsiders come into this decent Christian province

Para. 14



father fisherman settlement union (you) son logger settlement union (you)

versus
(by inference)



father fisherman settlement union (you) son logger settlement union (you)

and by such desperate, such terrible methods try to seize control of our province's main industry. How dare they come in here and spread their black poison of class hatred and bitter and bigoted prejudice. How dare they come into this province amongst decent God-fearing people and let loose the dirt and filth and poison of the last four weeks.

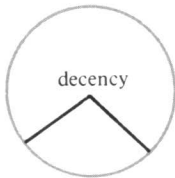
Para. 15



Nflders.
(you)

IWA
(them)

versus (by inference)



Nflders.
(you)

Nflders.
(you)

The very presence of the IWA in Newfoundland tonight is an insult to every decent Newfoundlander. Every decent Newfoundlander should feel that he has been made dirty by the presence of this wicked and mischievous body of reckless and irresponsible wreckers. As long as I live on this earth, as long as God gives me breath, I will denounce this vile outfit for what they have done to our decent Newfoundland people. Now our House of Assembly will be called together in the very near future. We will be ready to meet the brute force and wicked violence of this unspeakable body with all the majesty of British law. Ninety-five or ninety-six or ninety-seven out of every hundred loggers are decent, respectable, law-abiding, God-fearing Christian men. Thousands of loggers and their wives tonight are broken in heart and tormented in spirit by the terrible way in which the IWA has misled them. A few young hotheads, a few young hotbloods may think that this is a great bit of fun, but not so the decent family men who want to live decent lives and want a decent union to help them protect their living in the future. Thousands of decent loggers who know that this strike has already cost them a million dollars and more don't look upon this strike as anything but a disaster.

Para. 16



JRS
(me)

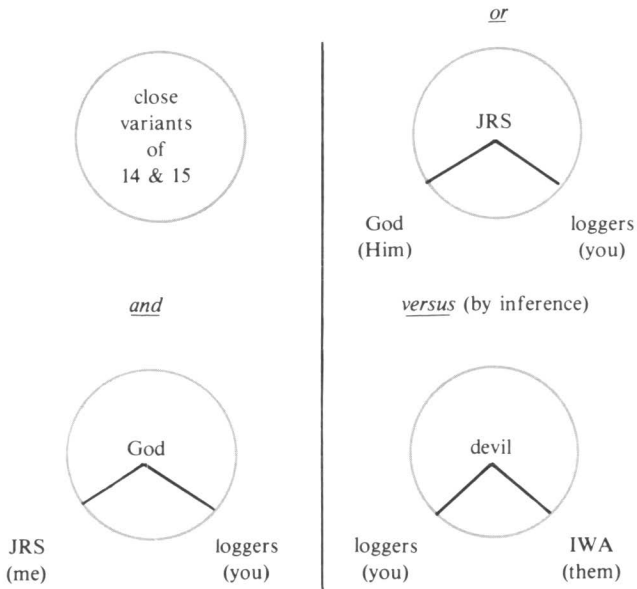
loggers
(you)

(cf. 3,4, & 5)

In the hearing tonight of hundreds of thousands of my fellow Newfoundlanders I pledge my strongest support and the Government's strongest support to our loggers in their fight for justice. Send me your telegrams starting first thing tomorrow morning. Tell me that you want to be rid of this black nightmare that goes by the name of IWA. Tell me in your telegrams that you want a clean decent strong union to represent you and to protect you, a strong union that will have the backing of your Government, that will not bring your young men and even your women out to fight against the law. Save Newfoundland, you loggers, save Newfoundland from the awful danger that faces us all, send me telegrams in thousands tomorrow.

Para. 17

If you want trouble and ever more trouble, trouble without end, if you want lawlessness, violence, lies and ever more lies, lost wages, unhappiness and failure, follow the IWA. If you want peace and work and wages, if you want a strong safe decent civilized successful union that will quickly get you a union contract with the AND Company, follow the advice I have given you tonight. If you want civil war and bitter defeat, bitter defeat, follow the IWA. If you want peace and victory, I have shown you the way. May God guide you in your decision.



Commentary. The metaphor of civil war (para. 13) is also the climax from which Smallwood can now begin his peroration. It opens with an imprint of unflinching authority: “the government” are its first words (para. 14); the consensual phrase “our Newfoundland people” follows parenthetically. Smallwood blasts the IWA off the face of the island. How can outsiders know the needs of Newfoundlanders? But thousands of Newfoundlanders are IWA members, and when Smallwood says “there’s not room enough in Newfoundland for the government and the IWA,” this is also to be taken as an ultimatum to the loggers.

In detailing the strife wrought by the IWA upon their arrival in Newfoundland (and elaborating on the civil war metaphor), Smallwood denies that the strike organized by the IWA is a strike at all. Again, this is as much a message to the Newfoundlanders who are taking part in the strike as it is to the IWA leadership. Also implied here is that Smallwood's notion of a union is quite different from that which experience with the IWA may have taught some Newfoundlanders; there must be no "contamination" of his ideas of a union by IWA ideas.

But it is the symbol of "IWA" that Smallwood must, wherever possible, appear to be attacking and not Newfoundland loggers, even while he lectures the latter and presents them with an ultimatum. Thus most of his peroration is taken up with the IWA, which he has already virtually pronounced as dead in Newfoundland, and the metaphor of civil war is helpful in portraying the iniquity of the IWA inside Newfoundland. First there is the passage (still in para. 14) with negative interlocutory associations ("father torn from son, fisherman from logger"); this is followed by the passage in which the forces of evil and good are polarized. Lawlessness, violence, lies, falsehood, cheating, deceit, suspicion, fear, class hatred, bigoted prejudice and more—these are the "poisons" that outsiders have spread among the decent, Christian and God-fearing people of "our beloved Newfoundland."

Because the evil comes from outside Newfoundland (the xenophobic appeal would not be lost), the island can be cleansed. This is the burden of paragraph 15. The evil-versus-good opposition is reduced to one between dirt and decency: "every decent Newfoundlander should feel that he has been made dirty" and "ninety-five or ninety-six or ninety-seven out of every hundred loggers are decent." Found in the private domain ("decent family men . . . decent lives"), decency is also a force in the public domain ("decent union") where it is associated with two of the historical symbols of legitimacy and authority in this culture: Christian morality and "the majesty of British law."

The peroration concludes with an appeal for mutual pledging, followed by a threat. The rhetoric has subtle turns to it here. Smallwood pledges himself twice (para. 15 and 16) and he urges all Newfoundland, especially its loggers, to pledge themselves. In paragraph 15 his pledge is to fight the IWA (not the striking loggers), and in paragraph 16 he pledges support to "our loggers"—loggers who in their thousands (and sometimes with their women) have maintained picket lines for six weeks across Company roads in the middle of winter. As he entwines "decent" and "a union," he finds he can say "Save Newfoundland, you loggers!" Then there is the threat of

what will befall them should they refuse to heed his advice: “If you want trouble and ever more trouble, trouble without end” On the other hand, if they pledge themselves, their union will be “strong safe decent civilized successful” (in this final encoding of “a union” he still does not say “powerful”).

He closes with an *ex cathedra* judgement: “If you want peace and victory, I have shown you the way. May God guide you in your decision.” So God is the ultimate broker; but his audience may be forgiven for possibly hearing, even believing, that Smallwood has summoned Him, too.

The peroration is particularly noteworthy on account of the following two interconnected points. Its structure (1) is the reverse of the speech otherwise: the first task of the speech as a whole was to “win” the loggers, whereas the first task of the peroration was to expose the IWA as anathema. Notable, then, is (2) the different employment of “negative” and “false” interlocutory relations—always in relation to the “positive” and “true”: in his peroration Smallwood worked from “explosion” (shocking, negative associations) to “commitment” in order that the last be maximally charged.

Postscript

It all came out the way Smallwood wanted it. The IWA was decertified; Smallwood oversaw the agreements with the companies; and the new union, presided over by a political crony and known as “Max’s Fish and [Wood] Chips,” provided Smallwood with virtual control over labour for the next decade. Many loggers’ families and many labour unionists in the province never forgave him. As for his rhetoric, they deemed it transparently hypocritical in its political intentions even from its opening sentences, and so quite worthless: this speech for these people was Smallwood’s meanest hour. For perhaps the majority of the striking loggers, however, the speech chilled their political nerve, leaving them with but a numb response. Other circles in the province found in the speech a belated measure of assurance that in the hands of Smallwood, Confederation had a definitely limited ideology.⁶ (At the same time as it helped to ensure a lifespan of a full political generation to *Smallwoodism*, the speech confirmed this political phenomenon as a “conservative” one in important respects.) Yet for still others (I suspect for many others), the speech was to be compared with the victory of Confederation itself! The nerve that Smallwood touched in these Newfoundland men and women could, I suggest, be adequately expressed as that of patriotism.

The rhetoric placed the matter of being a Newfoundlander above that of

being a logger, and Smallwood, in keeping to a low ideological but a high emotive key, was able to anaesthetize many of the supporters of the defiant loggers with his own rendering of Newfoundland values. Whereas the IWA offered *gesellschaft*, Smallwood spoke of *gemeinschaft*. That this may have been largely an illusion mattered less than that he chose to speak of it. (After all, who is ever sure of the boundary between the visionary and the illusionist?) Such rhetoric also helped to legitimate the “big man” role that he had enacted for Newfoundlanders for a decade: Smallwood was not simply their political Master, he was also their Muse. And I suggest that in this particular cultural drama—for it would surely be insufficient to consider the IWA incident simply in terms of its ostensible political form—Smallwood, for many, became the knight who killed the dragon, Ladd.

In conversation with an ex-labour union man only a few years ago, I heard an echo across the reach of time of “there is not room enough in Newfoundland for the Government and the IWA.” This man told me that, up to the moment of Smallwood’s speech, he had been “one of Ladd’s,” but that after listening to Smallwood, “I realized there wasn’t room for both a Ladd and a Joey in Newfoundland . . . and I went to Joey.”

Conclusion

The IWA speech is a process of cultural metonymization put together by Smallwood. When he juxtaposes individuals and groups it is not to compare them, not simply to say that they are alike, but rather to state that each is an integral part of Newfoundland and hence integral to each other. This is an altogether stronger, more binding relationship than one of mere similarity. Early in the speech Smallwood places himself in that kind of fundamental relationship with the loggers (me/you). Otherwise it is the metonymic relations among the Newfoundland work force (you/you) that Smallwood insists upon: logger is fisherman and fisherman is logger in the sense that both are, first of all, Newfoundlanders. This is the sense that Smallwood presses when, for example, he introduces Max Lane to the loggers; there is a strong message about cultural loyalties and constraints involved in “being a Newfoundlander.” In fact, the IWA speech is based upon Smallwood’s vigorous mediation of what it is (or should be) to be a Newfoundlander, and a metonymic sequence of this approximate order is developed: “We are each other”: “You (loggers) and you (fishermen) are each other”: “You all are part of me.”

The dramatic counterpoint to this use of metonymy occurs later in the speech when Smallwood mentions “outsiders.” *They* stand only in a

metaphoric relationship to Newfoundlanders. Whether particular outsiders are similar to or (as is more often the case) dissimilar to Newfoundlanders, they always stand outside the metonymic (that is, closed) relationship all Newfoundlanders are meant to share with each other. Whereas bonds of similarity are susceptible to change and to breaks, those of metonymy (part-whole) are inalienable in precept and—Smallwood urges—must not be broken. The sin of the IWA was to try to break them.

By retaining what I call an interlocutory structure in his speeches and, moreover, basing it on metonymic relations, Smallwood not only kept a tight control over the whole of his political constituency (renewing his entitlement to preside over labour relations) *but also kept alive an impression among his audience that they had "speaking parts" in a continuous political conversation about their province.* This last was true even though "it was Joey this and Joey that" (Guy, "This Present Lot"). For many, what they heard is what they believed themselves to believe, or what they supposed they had forgotten to say but now remembered.

Notes

¹The argument of this essay was first worked through in a graduate seminar when a Visiting Professor at the University of Stockholm in 1976, and I wish to thank the Department of Anthropology and its seminarists for that occasion.

²For an account of the staging and breaking of the strike, see Gwyn, *Smallwood: The Unlikely Revolutionary*; and for the background of labour relations in Newfoundland, see Hattenhauer, "A Brief Labour History of Newfoundland."

³Delivered over the radio, 12 February 1959. Repeated references are made in the speech to the AND Company: this is the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, one of two large paper mills on the island—the other was Bowaters. Officially, the IWA struck against the AND Company only, yet this was but a formal difference: "essentially the strike pitted loggers against both pulp-and-paper companies and the conditions which each of them allowed to exist" (Gwyn 203 n.).

⁴Enoch Powell used a similar rhetorical tactic in his "rivers of blood" speech (Lloyd-Jones 99).

⁵Smallwood spoke of this as though it were a rare event, which he well knew it not to be.

⁶There had been fears—particularly among the merchants of the province—that Smallwood (in keeping with his ideology earlier in life) would usher in "socialism."

References

- Cohen, Anthony P. *The Management of Myths: The Politics of Legitimation in a Newfoundland Community*. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1975.
- Guy, Ray. "This Present Lot." *Evening Telegram*, October 1, 1977.
- Gwyn, Richard. *Smallwood: The Unlikely Revolutionary*. Rev. ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.
- Hattenhauer, Rolfe G. "A Brief Labour History of Newfoundland." Report prepared for the Royal Commission on Labour Legislation in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1970.

- Lloyd-Jones, David. "The Art of Enoch Powell: The Rhetorical Structure of a Speech on Immigration." In *Politically Speaking: Cross-Cultural Studies in Rhetoric*. Ed. Robert Paine. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1981.
- Paine, Robert. "A Theory of Patronage and Brokerage." In *Patrons and Brokers in the East Arctic*. Ed. Robert Paine. St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1971.
- . "The Persuasiveness of Smallwood: Rhetoric of *Cuffer* and *Scoff*, of Metonym and Metaphor." *Newfoundland Studies* 1:1 (1985):57-75.
- Smallwood, Joseph R. *I Chose Canada*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1973.