

# Chapter III

## First Political Campaign

*Upon returning to St. John's from Oxford University in the summer of 1922, Bill Browne became a law clerk to John Fenelon<sup>1</sup>. Bill was admitted as a barrister and solicitor in October of 1922 and established his own legal office.*

*From an early age Bill had a keen interest in politics and he now wished to run as a candidate in the election of 1923. He described the political situation then:*

*There was a good deal of talk going on against the Government in St. John's in 1922. The War had been a prosperous time for the fishermen, but the prices for food had also become very high. Following the War there was a dreadful slump and much unemployment. The Government of Sir Richard Squires tried in various ways to alleviate the problem. The Prime Minister had been elected in 1919 and, in alliance with William Coaker of the Fishermen's Protective Union, had defeated the Liberal Conservative Party headed by Sir Michael Cashin<sup>2</sup>.*

*Bill agreed with the opposition view that the Government was misrepresenting the very difficult financial position of the country, made worse by extensive borrowing to meet such expenses as the heavy cost of the railway and welfare expenditures.*

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<sup>1</sup>John Fenelon (1880-1934) was a Newfoundlander who attended St. Bonaventure's College, then studied law and was admitted to the Bar in London. He returned to Newfoundland where he was admitted to the Newfoundland Bar and he practised law for a number of years in St. John's, becoming a Bencher with the Law Society. He was the son of Ellen Kitchen and Maurice Fenelon (1834-1897) who was an Irish-born teacher, Superintendent of Catholic Schools, bookstore owner, politician and Member of the Legislative Council in Newfoundland. See "Fenelon, John Joseph" and "Fenelon, Maurice" *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 2, 1967 and R. Hibbs, ed., *Who's Who in and from Newfoundland*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (St. John's, Nfld.:R. Hibbs, 1927) 100.

<sup>2</sup>Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 94.

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*The fishery had declined in value, partly because of the price fixing regulations introduced in 1920 at Coaker's instigation. The 'able-bodied' relief projects were poorly thought out and badly supervised. There was also evidence of political favouritism, waste and corruption.<sup>3</sup>*

*The Prime Minister, Sir Richard Squires, was hoping to win this election based upon his government's efforts to "Put the Hum on the Humber" whereby a company partly owned by the Reid Newfoundland Company was helped to develop the resources of the Humber Valley. As part of this deal the Government of Newfoundland bought the unprofitable railway from the Reid's.*

*Bill Browne wanted to run in St. John's West for the opposition party, now led by Sir John Bennett. This was not possible, so he ran as a Government candidate in the three person district of Placentia Bay - St. Mary's Bay on the south-east coast of Newfoundland.. (To view a map of this area click [Here](#). This map is part of a Natural Resources Canada map of Newfoundland, Canada Gazetteer Atlas, Macmillan of Canada, 1980, 7-8. It is reproduced with the permission of the Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2001.)*

*The Government candidates were able to make recommendations as to how the Government's allocation of \$50,000.00 for public works should be spent. One of the opposition candidates, Billy Walsh<sup>4</sup>, advised people in these communities that the allocation was actually \$100,000.00 and even suggested how much of that money the various communities might request!<sup>5</sup> There was no shortage of suggestions for the Government candidates.*

*These diary entries give a sense of the arduous travel necessary to reach the many tiny coastal communities within the large riding. The candidates travelled by train, by horse drawn sleds, and they also had the use of a steamer because the western side of Placentia Bay and some of the islands could only be reached by boat.<sup>6</sup>*

*While much of this material is documented in my grandfather's autobiography, these diary entries add a sense of realism only seen in writings done at that time.*

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<sup>3</sup>Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 95.

<sup>4</sup>"Billy" William Joseph Walsh (1880-1948) was a politician, first elected in 1913 in the District of Placentia - St. Mary's and re-elected there in 1919, 1923 and 1924, defeated in Harbour Main and then elected in Placentia West in 1932. For much of this time he served as Minister of Agriculture and Mines. He travelled throughout Newfoundland as a salesman for the Singer Sewing Machine Company and, following his political career, became manager of a life insurance company. See "Walsh, William Joseph," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 5, 1994 and "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 19 October 1948: 6.

<sup>5</sup>Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 97,99.

<sup>6</sup>Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 97.

*Diary*

April 3, 1923. Argentia. Tuesday

We – Bonia<sup>7</sup>, Bindon<sup>8</sup> and Browne – the three Government candidates for the District of Placentia and St. Mary's opened our political campaign tonight at Argentia. The death yesterday of Mr. Collins<sup>9</sup> prevented us from attending and holding a meeting at Placentia.

Big Ned Houlihan acted as Chairman. Captain Bonia spoke first. He told how he was coming as Finance Minister with a big Proposition to be endorsed by them and he was able to tell why he joined Squires to put this thing through for the benefit of the fishermen. The audience was a little embarrassed. It seemed a little taken unprepared and surprised and was not as responsive at first as might be wished. When the Captain sat down someone called Three Cheers, which were given fairly readily.

Then Bindon spoke very well in a well-modulated, reasoned, argumentative manner

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas Bonia (c.1855-1926) of Placentia, Nfld. was a fisherman and a politician. He fished from his own boat for a number of years and, beginning in 1894, he ran the mail boat in Placentia Bay. Captain Bonia was elected in the District of Placentia Bay - St. Mary's Bay in 1900 and in 1904, retiring in 1908 at which time he became inspector of outport roads. He also served as a controller under the Prohibition Act. He was appointed Minister of Finance shortly before the election of 1923. See "Thomas Bonia," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 25 September 1926: 6 and "Bonia, Thomas," *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 96.

<sup>8</sup>James Bindon (1882-1938) was born in Flat Rock, Nfld., the son of John and Catherine Bindon. He moved to St. John's as a child where he attended St. Patrick's Hall School. Mr. Bindon worked for Royal Stores Ltd. as manager of several stores in the Placentia-St. Mary's region and in 1915 he established his own business which he operated in Jersey side and later in St. John's. He was defeated as a candidate in the election of 1923 but then ran successfully for the Liberal party in the District of St. Mary's in 1928. He served for a short time as Minister of Finance and Customs. In the 1932 riot at the House of Assembly Jim Bindon and Joey Smallwood escaped together by climbing through the Colonial Building's basement window. He later became a Customs employee. See "Bindon James," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 1, 1981 and "James Bindon," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 15 Nov. 1938: 10 and Tom Bindon, e-mail to the author, 19 Oct. 2001.

<sup>9</sup>James Collins (1837-1923) died April 2, 1923 at the age of eighty-six.. See *Newfoundland's Grand Banks, Project 21*, Transcription of 1921 Newfoundland census, Placentia, transcribed by Violet Moores, 18 September 2000 <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/NGB/C1921/M8035/803585.htm>> and Placentia Historical Society, Mount Carmel (Placentia) Cemetery Records.

demonstrating the benefits of the Humber Industry, after which there was nothing left for me to say except that I was making my first political speech and beginning my political career at Argentia. Besides I developed the Humber business a bit, with a little flowery language and a little oratory, which seemed to take well as they cheered vigorously.

Then the Captain closed the meeting telling a few of his good yarns about the pork and dough boys, how he had risen from an ordinary fisherman to the Minister of Finance and Customs. He was witty and when he sat down there were cheers for us and the Captain and cheers for the ladies given on the suggestion of the Captain after Bindon and I had exchanged slightly nervous glances.

I walked down over the ice to see Martin W.S. who could not get up to the meeting on account of his cold. Lot of colds in neighbourhood. All pleased with meeting which was satisfactory in every way.

Father Dee<sup>10</sup> was looking fine and was not neglected during the cheering.

We are staying at Jim Davis'<sup>11</sup> and expect to leave for Placentia at 6:45 a.m., now 12:30 p.m.

### *Diary*

April 4, 1923. Ship Cove.

We left Argentia at 6:45 and at Placentia we were welcomed most graciously by Joseph Nash. After some delay due to interviews between Captain G. O'Reilly and Captain Bonia, and Bindon and the Station Master, we went to the ferry and here the certain dispute (if it can properly be so-called) between Bonia and S. Kemp took place in the lee of a western boat which was building. Kemp is the most dependent man in the bay but he is as assertive, as proud, as foolish as if he were the most independent.

Then we crossed the gut and we met Pat Brennan - the Captain going on to see the

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<sup>10</sup>Adrian Dee (c. 1896-1951) was a priest who had been a classmate of Bill Browne's at St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's and the two had camped together at the Goulds in 1913. Born in St. John's, he studied for the priesthood at Holy Heart Seminary in Halifax. Father Dee was assigned to serve in Argentia early in his career and remained there until Argentia became the U.S. naval base. Father Dee gave considerable help to the people of Argentia in their move to the community of Freshwater. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 100 and "Freshwater P.P. Rev. Dee Dies," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 28 December 1951: 3 and Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, e-mail to the author, 24 October 2000.

<sup>11</sup>James Davis of Argentia was born in Fox Harbour, Nfld. September 1869. See *Newfoundland's Grand Banks, Project 21*, Argentia, transcribed by Violet Moores, 16 November 2000 <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/NGB/C1921/M8035/803590.html>>

friends of former days. Our good energetic friend Frank Murphy was in his store with some customers, too. The store was a fine big one with a little of everything, but there were no carpets on the floor. This is the third time I've been to Placentia, and there were flags flying – half mast, as the oldest inhabitant had died the previous day. After many visits, a handsome breakfast at Frank Murphy's, a few conversations, a few whispers aside, we left on two slides – one bearing most of the luggage and the other Captain Tom for our trip along to Branch. We did not go to Point Verde as we had left instructions that we should return to Placentia, if possible, tomorrow.

We went on to Little Barachois (Barasway) a cluster of a few houses left on the top of a hill standing high above the sea at the turn of the road.

An old man was one of the people we saw, and he had “bunked” for three years with Captain Tom.

“If there was a telephone here would we have any chance of getting it in the house?”

“Beg or ye would nar'n.<sup>12</sup>”

“I suppose there are good many after putting in for that.”

“No, you're the first.”

On to Big Barasway where they had the flags flying – four flags, as one was St. Patrick's Cross. It was a pleasing sight because the preparation was a sure indication that we should soon have something to eat. We had nothing to eat from 10 a.m. till 6 p.m. and we enjoyed a nice meal of ham and eggs, fresh eggs. Poor Bindon was so hungry that he sat on the poker without knowing it.

It was raining a little all the time and the men were afraid that Ship Cove River would be covered and this was a dangerous place where the sea met the river and threw up a barrier at the beach, making the river a lake that froze over; and, being in the valley, a narrow valley became impassable in the thaw.

We had a most successful meeting here in the kitchen of Mrs. Brennan's house where two little girls occasionally broke into sleepy coughing but where the men listened very attentively to us and I think we made a good impression.

I did not enjoy the drive on the open sleigh in the rain over the soft sidling<sup>13</sup> snow and I fear the weather did not agree with my tonsils nor with my headache which, please God, will go by morning. 10:30 p.m..

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### *Diary*

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<sup>12</sup>Narn or nar'n is a classic Newfoundland expression meaning not a single one. See “narn” *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 1982.

<sup>13</sup>Sideling, spelled here sidling, means steeply sloping ground. See “sideling,” *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 1982.

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April 5, 1923. St. Bride's. 10:30 p.m.

We left Ship Cove at about 8:30 a.m. leaving the flooded river as a barricade (we thought) against the other Party.

"A man's mind is a kingdom unto himself," I heard a woman say at Gooseberry, and she laughed.

I have enjoyed the trip today and feel fine, thank God. We had two meetings today, one at Patrick's Cove, and one at Cuslett. At Cuslett we were greeted with flags flying and firing of guns. The Cuslett people are a queer lot, some of them. They were anxious for a dance, it seemed, and badgered us for the price of a hall.<sup>14</sup>

The roads were bad, and we found it necessary to go along the paths where the slides had made it hard. The people are all intelligent – and very surprisingly bold in some places. Ed Brennan from Ship Cove came to Cuslett with us, Jim Verran as far as St. Bride's. The ice is moving off and, if the wind keeps favourable, we may be able to get our steamer at Branch.

We are in hopes that we can make a call at Point Lance where there are numbers who will vote for us. I have made a few additions to Squires policy during the past couple of days. These I will not put in writing as they may be evidence against me some day.

Beat Bindon at checkers.

Interviewed Father Ryan<sup>15</sup> with long hair and a hearty laugh and an elegant house.

### *Diary*

April 6, 1923

We addressed a meeting of the electors, three women and several children in Lundrigan's new house that was building and which served for a school. On the blackboard was chalked a good omen – "Messers B., B. and B., the three Government members". The building was an L shaped affair and the Captain, speaking from the corner, was invisible to the people on his right who were shut off from a sight of him by a small partition. The

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<sup>14</sup>Bill Browne's notes record that the cost for renting a hall during this campaign varied from \$5 to \$20 and the average cost of renting a schoolhouse was \$15.

<sup>15</sup>Francis J. Ryan (1885-1965) was ordained to the priesthood September 9, 1915 in St. John's having studied at St. Bonaventure's College, St. John's and Holy Heart Seminary, Halifax. He was the son of Samuel and Bridget Ryan. He served in Burin, St. Bride's, Petty Harbour, St. Joseph's, St. John's and St. Raphael's. Father Ryan became a monsignor. See "Almost 50 Years in Priesthood. Monsignor Ryan dies at 79," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 8 February 1965: 3 and "Yesterday's Ordination," *Daily News* [St. John's, Nfld.] 10 September 1915: 3.

meeting went off in good style, the chairman being a “cheer man” as well, interpolating the Captain’s remarks with an occasional “cheer the Captain”. Several of the men seemed shy at this but the boys cheered lustily.

It began to rain hard soon after and by the time we were ready to start, after interviewing several impolite people, it was raining considerably. One fellow asked me for 50 cents saying that he had got the same amount from my two colleagues. He was a liar. I should not like to call him typical. Our hostess, who was the wife of an ex-policeman, was the most practical person in the village. She was fresh-faced, thin, with a perpetual charming smile. Her husband was a dogmatic, sad and sorrowful sea lawyer with opinions as to who, why, when, and where. One man with a sick wife, seven children, one cow, and bad health asked me for my old clothes. Another old looking fellow, who had shared many a gallon of rum with my father, asked me for his old clothes.

It rained hard as we left and the Captain was sufficiently terrified to enter the last house on the way out and wait till the storm subsided. We spent a few moments in a miserable house where two miserable, dirty, pleasant-faced women knitted socks and a dirty, thin child scribbled on a slate. An old man rocked in the corner by the stove and his son sat on the similar seat opposite. We did not wait till the rain cleared, only until the rain slacked up, when we set off again.

I wore my overcoat and raincoat over that, but still I was not free from rain. The Captain looked a figure, so fat was he and sitting crouched on the sleigh. The going was not very good over the Branch country. At times there were deep gulches<sup>16</sup> of snow.

We arrived at Branch at 5:30. Met by committee who escorted us to our allotted houses. I was allotted to Mr. Power. Meeting in the hall at night. Three speeches. Andrew North Chairman. Then dance, Mr. Bindon leading dancers. We were shown library with great pride (pardonable). Then recitation.

Bed 11:30 p.m.

### *Diary*

April 7, 1923

Lines down St. Brides to Placentia. We are going to Point Lance. Much trouble over sleighs. Beautiful day. Wind NW. Ice moving off. Terribly bad road. Barren country. Steamers in sight. Bull, Cow and Calf<sup>17</sup>. (Bonia stayed at home).

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<sup>16</sup>Gulches are deep ruts in ice or snow. See “Gulch,” *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*.

<sup>17</sup>The Bull, Cow and Calf are three small islands near the coast. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 98.

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At Point Lance the chairman<sup>18</sup> said my Grandfather showed old people how to erect stages, Father showed how to cast cod seine, and I was the first candidate to cross the river<sup>19</sup>. Had to cross on ice. Treacherous. Deep river. Met by inhabitants. Drove to Post Office. Old fellow who knew Father. Frail with wit and loud voice. Speeches in schoolhouse. Ladies – fat, wearing rings, good-looking.

Off again. Re-crossed the river in style this time, someone holding on with a rope. Back to Branch. Tired. Roast duck for supper. Rest. Concert, speeches, dances. Went to Post Office and chatted. Home to bed.

*Diary*

April 8, 1923

Rosary in Church. Look out on Hill. No Ship. Great send off. Met S.S. Watchful. 3/4 way. St. Bride's. Priest. Cuslett – change horses. Patrick's Cove the night.

*Diary*

April 9, 1923

Patrick's Cove. Arose 4:45 a.m. Breakfast. Off again. Bad roads. Rain. Change horses Ship Cove and on again to Placentia. Lunch 2 p.m. Visited Magistrate O'Reilly. Point Verde – good sign - South East. Have supper 10 p.m. Murphy and O'Reilly. Bed 1:30.

*Diary*

April 10, 1923

Awoke 5 a.m. Ferry, train. Keats, Whitbourne, Peter Petipas. Good roads, deep snow.

Colinet. Dinner at house of gloom where woman had died. Meeting in school. Girl who, as a child, was taken away by the Fairies.

Harricott. Good-looking girl. Hard drive over the roads. Upsets.

Arrival at Salmonier. Night. Saw Mike Penney at Pit Prop Store. Telephone.

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<sup>18</sup>The Chairman of the meeting was Nick Careen who was considered the patriarch of the village. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 98 and 374.

<sup>19</sup>Bill Browne recounts this slightly differently in Browne *Eighty-Four Years* 98.



*Diary*

April 11, 1923

8 a.m. awoke. Meeting at which Penney attended and a few others. Feeling shaky but warmed up as it progressed. Saw Hanley – Warden of River. Ride on ice.

Arrival St. Joseph's. Nice operator. Lovely room in which we stayed.<sup>20</sup> Visited Father Enright<sup>21</sup> and Church. Meeting at night. Good crowds, fairly good feeling.

*Diary*

April 12, 1923

Sullivan<sup>22</sup> and Sinnott<sup>23</sup> arrived as we were leaving. Don Boland lost his bottle on

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<sup>20</sup>Bill Browne spent the night at McCormack's. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 100.

<sup>21</sup>John M. Enright (1886-1966) was born in Ireland and studied for the priesthood there, although he was ordained in Newfoundland. Father Enright was an assistant in Renewals for five years and then became parish priest at St. Joseph's, Salmonier where he served for more than forty-five years. See "Father Enright is Dead," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 23 June 1966: 3 and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 100.

<sup>22</sup>Michael Sullivan (1876-1929), born in Presque, Placentia Bay, was an engineer, surveyor, and pulpwood agent who became a long-serving Member of the Newfoundland House of Assembly. He was first elected in 1904, representing the Placentia - St. Mary's District. He was a Minister without Portfolio, Colonial Secretary and a member of the Railway Commission.

Michael Sullivan had been employed by the Reid Newfoundland Company as a civil engineer and surveyed a huge tract of land for the Anglo-Newfoundland Development Company, and then established his own business in the pulp and paper industry. He strongly believed in the development of Newfoundland's pulp and paper industry. During World War 1, Michael Sullivan was lieutenant-colonel in the Newfoundland Forestry Battalion working in Scotland.

He was further known as a survivor of the sinking of the S.S. Florizel in 1918.

Although Michael Sullivan was considerably older than Bill Browne, the two were cousins - Michael Sullivan's mother Selina was a half-sister of Bill's father Liberius Browne. See Sullivan, Michael S., *Dictionary of Newfoundland and Labrador Biography* and Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 2, 49, 105 and "The Passing of Mr. M. S. Sullivan," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 22 May 1929: 6 and "Sullivan, Michael S.," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, vol. 5, 1994 and J. R. Smallwood, ed., *The Book of Newfoundland*, vol. 1, (St. John's: Newfoundland Book Publisher's Ltd., 1937) 446.

<sup>23</sup>Edward Francis Sinnott (1864-1936) was a businessman and politician who was born in Placentia. He was employed in St. John's in the grocery and liquor business and had his own liquor

way to Riverhead; called at his house. Dinner at S. Fagan's. Good dinner of rabbit and other nice things. Peculiarly solemn family of long, fair-haired boys and skinny, misshapen girls who sat all around the various rooms of kitchen and parlour in a fashion resembling mourners at a wake. Perhaps this was how they celebrated Stephen's recent conversion from Toryism.

However we went on with a blaze of gas, stopping at a couple of houses where the tobacco scarcity was very noticeable. Meeting here.

St. Mary's. Spent night here. Meeting. Father O'Driscoll.<sup>24</sup>

### *Diary*

April 13.

Left St. Mary's.

Passed on to Gaskiers and Point La Haye off which two steamers originally assigned for our convenience were restrained by the law of God. The Daisy was stuck farther in than the Machekoff.

Meeting here in large schoolroom with one nice, rosy faced, Irish-looking girl. After the meeting Bindon tried to gain favour with the teacher by offering a prize of five dollars to the five brightest pupils at the next exam.

Dinner at an old ladies' place and here we exchanged sleighs for carriages and gained the company of Mr. Gibbons who accompanied us with his glowing face as far as St. Shotts when he and his lagging pony took a rest. It was he who first of all told us he never had received and never wished anything from any Government, and finished up by asking for the whole cheese.

Reached St. Vincent's at about 5: 30 p.m. and several flags were flying as we entered. Stayed at St. Croix's which is a fine house to stay at. Splendid table, buns and brown bread

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business when prohibition was introduced. He then returned to the sale of groceries in a partnership in the firm of Clancy and Company. He was elected to the House of Assembly as a member from Placentia -St. Mary's in 1919 and re-elected twice. From 1928 until 1934 he was a member of the Legislative Council. Mr. Sinnott was also a talented oarsman in the St. John's Regatta. See "Sinnott, Edward Francis," *Encyclopedia of Newfoundland and Labrador*, 1994 and "Obituary," *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 27 October 1936: 4.

<sup>24</sup>Father Stephen O'Driscoll (c. 1854-1936) was born in Mobile and served as a parish priest along the southern shore of Newfoundland for more than fifty years. See "Death of Aged Priest", *Evening Telegram* [St. John's, Nfld.] 1 October 1936: 14 and *Newfoundland's Grand Banks*, Mobile Newfoundland Cemetery grave stone information, transcribed by Richard and Roberta Sullivan, 19 February 2001 <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/NGB/Cemetery/mobile-cem-fer.html>>

etc. There people wanted the telegraph office. Meeting and dance. Ned Halloran.

*Diary*

April 14, 1923

Left St. Vincent's. for Peter's River across the beach. High clay cliffs on other side Holyrood Pond.

Middle Gut<sup>25</sup> first half, few more requests here. This is like St. Vincent's, a tough place. Crossing the river in a skiff. Gibbons' horse walked across in icy water. We met John Malloy and Hicks. Meeting here in school. Old Madeville sick.

Off over the hills to St. Shotts where we arrived at evening, notwithstanding Gibbons' pony's breakdown. Jim Bindon went off after three men with a gun. Met by crowd who brought us to houses in at Branch. There were only two souvenirs of wrecks in our place – two fine saloon chairs. This is the home of the wrecks, a very dangerous coast. Meeting in Malloy's house at night.

*Diary*

April 15, 1923

On to Trepassey. Fine ride – cold – over the moors. Jim Bindon had unfortunate adventure for his horse was unable to go. Billy Walsh ahead of us. Here we are at Trepassey and had to wait till 6 before we saw Father Wilson<sup>26</sup>. No meeting – too late tonight. Florrie. Sullivan and Sinnott arrived. Ed Martin.

*Diary*

April 16, 1923

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<sup>25</sup>Middle Gut is now called St. Stephen's. See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 100.

<sup>26</sup>Father E. J. Wilson (1884-1944) was the parish priest at Trepassey and, in this instance, spoke on behalf of the people requesting that the candidates recommend \$8,000.00 for the construction of a wharf. When Captain Bonia asked Father Wilson to "say a kind word for us," in support of their party, Father Wilson replied "I won't even do that." See Browne, *Eighty-Four Years* 102 and Larry Dohey, Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, e-mail to the author, 24 October 2000 and *Newfoundland's Grand Banks, Project 21*, Trepassey, transcribed by Jim Lane, <<http://www.chebucto.ns.ca/Heritage/NGB/C1921/M8034/803450.htm>>.

Meeting tonight. Mrs. Florrie also post mistress during day. Deaf Mrs. Martin. Saw Matt Sutton. Over to Portugal Cove and Biscay two meetings and then again tonight. Pretty successful.

*Diary*

April 17, 1923

We visited Daniel's Point. Others held meeting tonight. Pretty successful from all accounts.

*Diary*

April 18, 1923

We left this afternoon to join Watchful leaving Cabot behind and in ice. Stayed and rested all night.

*Diary*

April 19, 1923

Left at 5 a.m. for Merasheen and Red Island to huge relief.

*Diary*

April 20, 1923

Off for Baine Harbour and arrived there. Meeting at Rushoon amongst a wild man and finished with a nice meeting at Baine Harbour. On board again. Miss Fogarty gave us nice supper. Men from Fortune Bay walked in here for food. Selling venison and rabbits.

*Diary*

April 21, 1923

Left for Petit Forte and arrived at Little Paradise. Meeting here and at Big Paradise at night. Hilly country. Met Nicolas Flynn, W.P. Brown and a lot of old friends of my father.

*Diary*

April 22, 1923

Off to Southeast Bight where Aunt Lena belonged. Bad walk. Nice meeting. Old Martin Hunt and his wife Ellen showed us their respective complaints. Back over the ponds.

*Diary*

April 23, 1923

Nomination Day and here we are in Little Paradise, inactive, and becoming very peevish.

I had an altercation with the Captain this morning and I suppose it was I who started it by referring to a story that he tells occasionally at our political meetings. The story relates, according to our Captain, the chameleon attitude of the Opposition on the Fish Regulations.

They had been discussed and Cashin's party had spoken against them 'until one fine morning' as the Captain says 'when the sun shone bright, lo and behold you, I was coming from the Cathedral and I met a member of the Opposition and I said to him 'Is it true what I saw in the *Daily News* that the Fish Regulations went through the House last night?' 'Yes' says he. 'And did the Railway Bill go through too?' 'Yes' says he. You see the Opposition brought in the Railway Bill to give a million to the Reids, and the Government allowed it to go through and the Opposition allowed the Fish Regulations to go through. As the old woman used to say, it was a case of scratch my back and I'll scratch yours.

I have never envied the applause that this sally always evokes from the audience but I have consistently doubted the accuracy of the story. It was this doubt which I attempted to express to the Captain this morning, but it evidently displeased him, for he turned on me with the remark that I did not know any more about what I was speaking of than the cat and a few other nice remarks of a similar nature. He developed his abuse when I told him that I did not want to discuss it anymore and that he was unfair. He was evidently in a peevish mood and told me that my university training did me no more good than a girls' school and that when I'd get out in the world, some bruiser would twist my head off. He also said that he had heard of this (meaning my argumentative nature, I suppose) before, but he never believed it until now. I should be worse than Fox and I had not taken Squires' advice – not to get conceited.

I said nothing because the man was either already jealous of me or he was suffering from some complaint or other which made his disposition sour. Later he passed along the deck asking for the pilot and I told him he was on shore. The Captain passed without

speaking. Later we had a reconciliation and I think we have emerged from the squabble without leaving any scars.

We spent a bad day aboard and messages were coming along all the time.

There is a very pretty girl of fifteen aboard. She has luxuriant brown hair which she first wore up but since has worn it down. It makes her look very beautiful for she has large blue eyes, a straight nose, a mouth that indicates indigestion and her figure is inclined to be a little fat. She has worn a blue silk dress since I first saw her at Trepassey and it is now the worse for wear. Her disposition is good, and it is good that it is, for she is the only girl or woman here. It is awkward for her, but the crowd is not too bad. I think she is a clever person. Her name is Elsie Bolt and she comes from Tack's Beach.

At night we played poker and I lost \$10.00 and, after a feed of biscuits, went to bed at 1 a.m.

*Diary*

April 24, 1923

Still here in Paradise. Whoever called this Paradise did not call it very well.

Raining. Ice tight on land.

Should we go to Presque? Answer No.

*Bill Browne and the two other Government candidates in the District of Placentia Bay - St. Mary's Bay were defeated at the polls on election day although the Government was re-elected. Bill Browne was appointed Assistant Clerk for the House of Assembly.*