

pulpwood and hardwoods are left uncut. Foresters refer to these new procedures as "modified" clearcuts. Loggers say they prefer the new procedures because less effort is spent removing nonmerchantable timber.

A Third View

In this section we examine the basis for the residents' and foresters' views and provide our own interpretation of the condition and future of the region's forest.

A holistic examination of residents' complaints about overcutting and clearcutting reveals many reasons why they are upset. One is aesthetic. As even the foresters admit, large cutovers are distressing to look at. Residents consider them ugly and as evidence of forest "destruction." In Newfoundland, settlers clung to the coast and hunted fish, fur, and seals (Story 1969). They conducted little farming—less in the north than anywhere else (Omohundro 1994). The native forest was useful rather than an obstacle to progress, so the land was best that was covered with trees. By contrast, in much of North America the European settlers feared the untrammelled forest and looked upon cleared land as more civilized and beautiful (Nash 1983; Terrie 1993).

Some residents hope to compensate for the declining fishery by expanding tourism, but they have firsthand experience of mainland or European tourists expressing shock and disgust at the sight of clearcuts. Typical of such expressions was this letter from a visitor to the editor of a St. John's newspaper: "It is terrible to see...that the horizon is marked and destroyed by bulldozers, D8s, and feller bunchers." (Evening Telegram 1997)

Second, residents view the forest as a congeries of resources historically set aside for their use. Clearcuts impair their snaring, trapping, sightseeing, fishing, camping, and other recreational and subsistence uses (but hunting large game and some berrypicking is improved at cutovers). Commercial logging on Crown land competes with their collection of firewood and building materials. From the seventeenth century coastal residents had charters and legislation assuring them rights to free access to timber within three miles of the high tide (Munro 1978). This policy of an open-access "fisherman's commons" was formalized in the Crown Lands Act of 1930 when large commercial sawlog operations began to encroach upon residents' needs. The Newfoundland Forest Service, established in the 1960s, took over the fisherman's commons to arrest devastation from fires and overuse in many areas. However, the traditional right to enter the woods anywhere and cut a stick of wood for one's wharf or woodstove lives on in the rhetoric of many residents when they complain of Forestry regulations. "It's getting to the point where local citizens have to ask to go into the woods," lamented one resident. Foresters, who believe that without their management the Crown Lands would be destroyed in a short time, wryly label residents who operate by the old rules as "drive-by cutters."