

The cod adventure that passed away

An economically peripheral region as Greenland often finds that local areas will be dependent on a single industry.

Like that the situation was in many Greenlandic settlements after The Second World War. The Danish state was responsible for the transformation of the traditional hunting to fishery. It was immediately a great success, because at the same time in the early 1950s it happened that the cod stock was dramatically increased.

The cod adventure culminated in the 1960s. Along the west coast up to 250 foreign trawlers were fishing. Cod fishing off Greenland culminated in 1962 with a catch of more than 400,000 tons per year. The Greenland part of the cod catch was economically important for the country, although the Greenlandic catch was below 30,000 tons annually. From the late 1960s the cod catches decreased to completely disappear in 1992.

Also the small settlement Qornoq benefited from the large stocks of cod from the early 1950s. The Royal Greenland Trading Department (KGH) established a fish factory in 1953 in the settlement. Already in 1924 they have built a

big facility to dried cod there. A track made the transport of the fish more efficiently between the different buildings.

The cod adventure culminated in 1965 when 426 tons of fish was purchased to the factory in Qornoq. Then it started decreasing very fast. The income of many of the locals vanished, and as in other small settlements that were dependent on fishing for cod, migration out from the settlement started.

Already in 1972, Qornoq was abolished as a settlement. Today the houses are still well preserved. They serve as holiday cottages for the citizens of Nuuk.

As far back we know the story of the Inuits, we learn that the Greenland ancestors have had to move as a result of the evolution of the animals they hunted. In recent times, also the mining industry led to the abandonment of a settlement when a mineral deposit was emptied. As long as there is a complete dependence of only one industry activity the geographical mobility will be necessary to find a new basis for income.



The track for transporting of cod, Qornoq, July 2010