

Chapter 7: The Interwar Years

After the war ended the returning soldiers and the growing population needed jobs



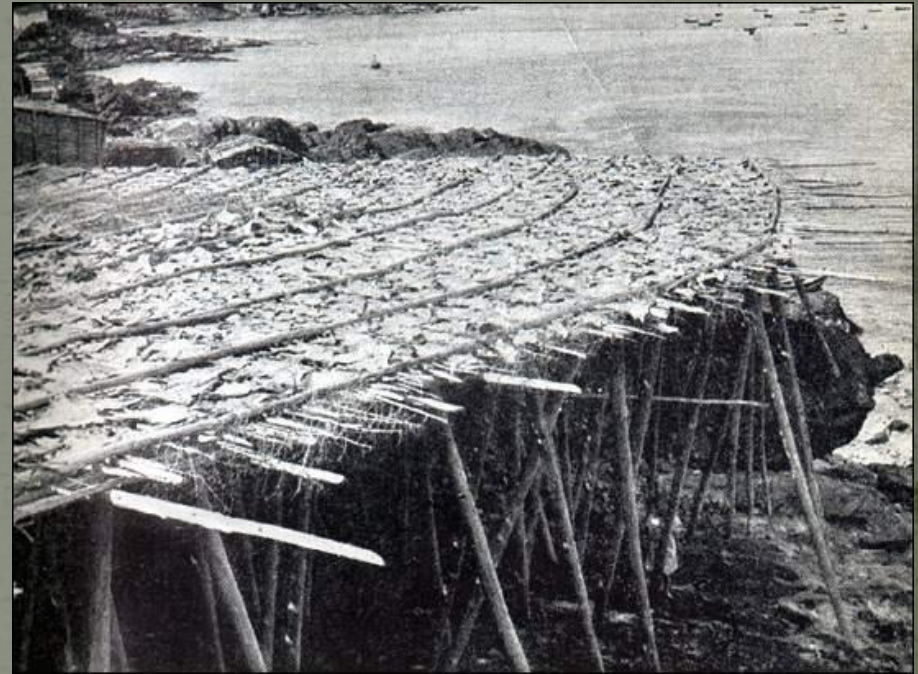
Many who could not find
jobs moved away to
Canada or the United
States



The fishery was still the main employer but after the war demand for salt fish decreased and the prices dropped



Newfoundland had depended on salt fish production for most of its exports throughout its history



When there was lots of
fish and prices were good
the economy was good



In years when fish was scarce and/or prices were low the economy suffered.



Depending on one product was therefore risky and government and business people felt that this situation must change



They decided they needed **economic diversification** – economic development that depends on a variety of industries rather than one industry



Government tried to
start industries in
production of explosives,
fertilizer and peat
processing



Some industries failed completely while others had different levels of success



Mines were developed in St. Lawrence and Buchan's and the forestry industry developed on the west coast and in Labrador



Government
concentrated on **land-
based industries** –
industries related to
agriculture, forestry and
mining



This caused people to
move away from the
shoreline and to settle
inland



Newfoundland and
Labrador experienced a
period of expansion as
new towns grew up in
the interior of the
country



This caused a big change
in the lifestyles of the
people that worked in
these industries



Mining

Most of the mining today
is in Labrador



During the 1800's most
of the mining in
Newfoundland was
copper and iron ore



Look at the timeline on
page 151

Buchan's Mine

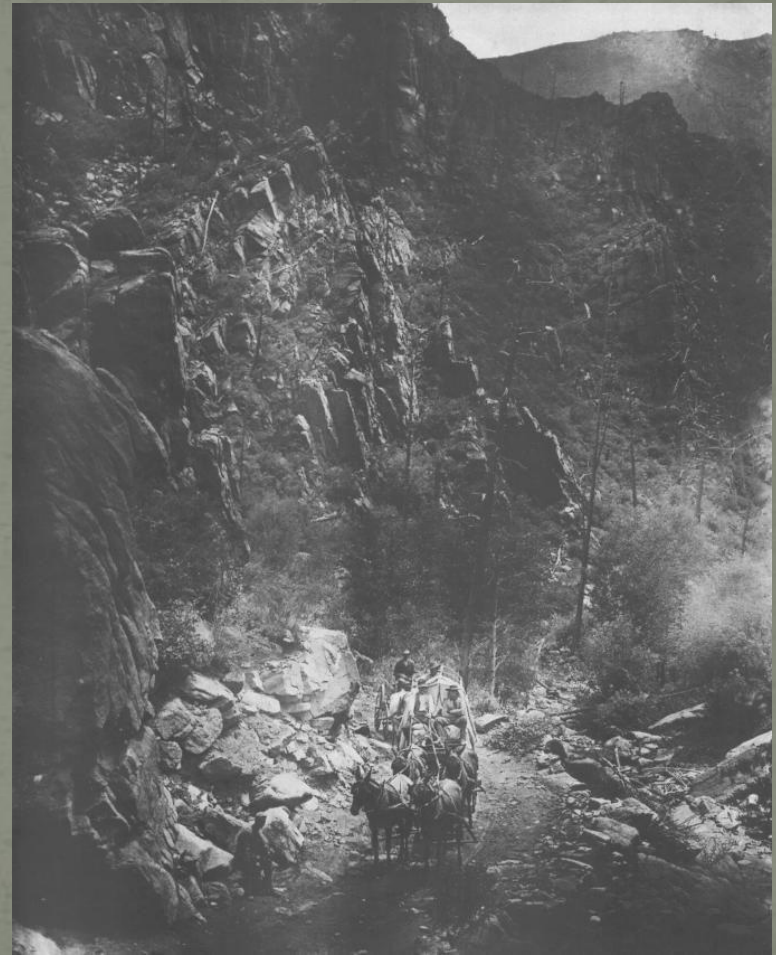
The mine at Buchan's
was discovered by
Mathew Mitchell, a
prospector of Mi'kmaw
and Innu descent



The ore at Buchans
consisted of zinc, lead,
copper, gold and silver



Although discovered in 1905 the mine did not begin production until 1927 because the technology to process the minerals had not been developed



The mining company
built a company town in
the wilderness away from
the ocean



Within 3 years it had a mine and processing mill, a school, a church, a hospital, a hydroelectric plant as well as bunkhouses and cottages as accommodations for the miners



It would have been one
of the most modern
towns in the dominion at
the time



St. Lawrence

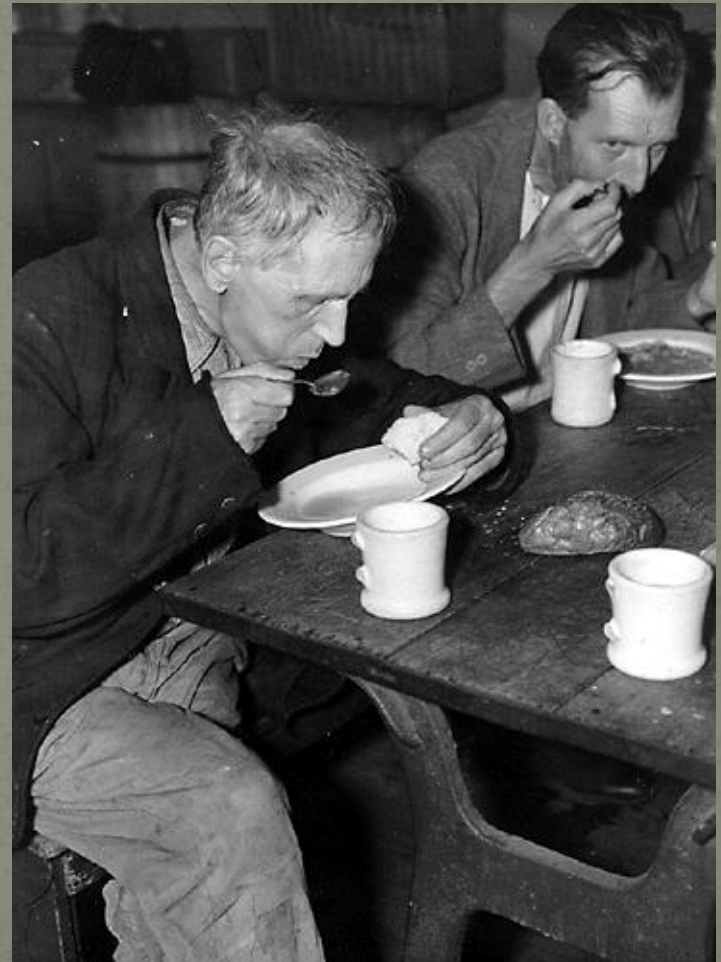
A fluorspar mine was developed in St. Lawrence in 1933.



St. Lawrence was a fishing town that had its fishing grounds destroyed by the tidal wave in 1929



Many people were living in poverty as the Great Depression had begun in 1929 as well



The mining company took advantage of the people's desperation and forced them to mine 2000 tons of fluorspar for free before they would begin to be paid

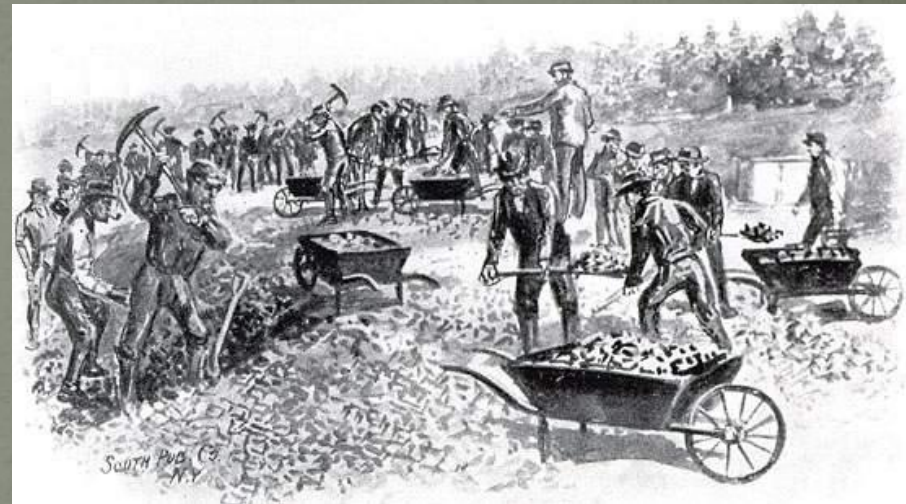


After that they were paid only \$0.15 per hour as compared to \$0.22 paid in Buchans and in Bell Island



"I think the best way for you to build the highest level of character is to work for me for the next 10 years at minimum wage."

The original mines were open pit but eventually shafts were sunk far underground



The working conditions were very poor with the air filled with dust and smoke as the shafts were not ventilated



The shafts often flooded
and the miners did not
have proper safety gear



Working in the mine did improve their standard of living but the poor conditions caused many health problems later in their lives



- Read “Working Underground” on page 154
- Study “Working at the Mines on page 155
- How do you think working conditions would differ today?

Forestry

Forestry was the first industry that moved people into the interior of the island in a big way



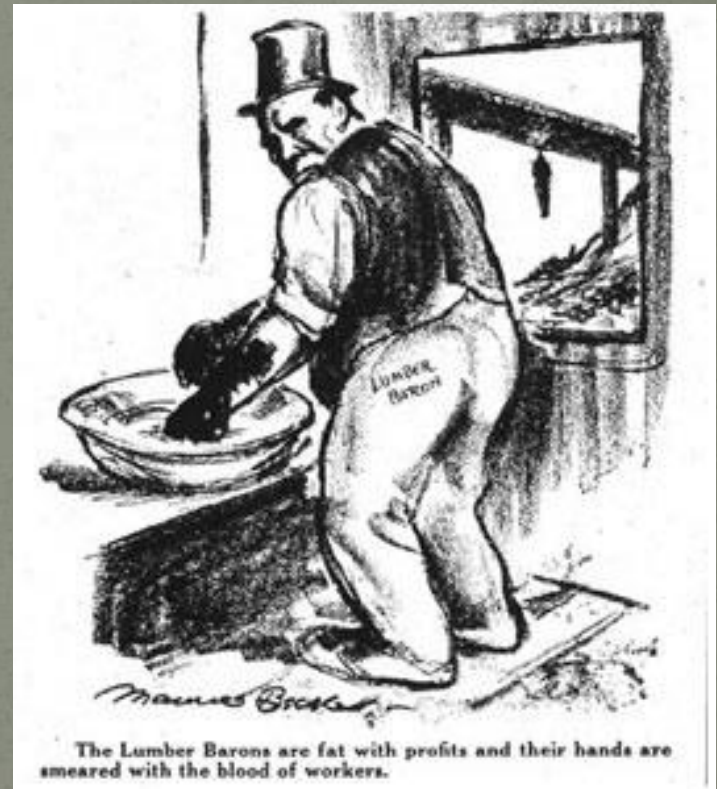
Between 1890 and 1900
200 sawmills were
developed. By the 1920's
many of them were
closed because of the
over cutting of suitable
trees



There was a strong demand for newsprint worldwide so a pulp and paper mill was opened in Grand Falls in 1909 and another in Corner Brook in 1925



Many families gave up the unpredictable life of fishing and decided to take jobs as loggers or production workers for a regular paycheck



Some Mi'kmaq worked
as loggers as fur prices
were very low during the
1920's and 1930's



Glenwood and Badger
became logging towns
and Bishop Falls and
Deer Lake had
hydroelectric plants



Bishop Falls also had a pulp plant that operated from 1911 to 1954. Wood pulp was pumped to Grand

Bishop Falls also had a pulp plant that operated from 1911 to 1954. Wood pulp was pumped to Grand Falls through a pipe and a flume.



Since Grand Falls was not a port the town of Botwood became the shipping center for the Grand Falls mill



By the 1930's the export value of pulp and paper was bigger than the value of fish exports



People in Grand Falls and Corner Brook lived comfortably through the Great Depression and the following years with steady jobs and income and a modern town in which to live.



This was far different
than the fishermen's lives
during the Depression



Labrador

In Labrador during the early 1900's fur prices were strong and forestry provided some jobs.



The Innu suffered
because the bigger
population was
destroying much of the
game that they
depended on for food



In 1902 Canada protested
when Newfoundland
gave a forestry company
permission to cut wood
in the interior of
Labrador



Canada said
Newfoundland owned
only a thin strip of land
along the coast



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THE DOMINION OF CANADA AND THE
COLONY OF NEWFOUNDLAND IN THE
LABRADOR PENINSULA

BETWEEN

THE DOMINION OF CANADA of the one part

AND

THE COLONY OF NEWFOUNDLAND of the other part.

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OF

JOINT APPENDIX

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CASE of the DOMINION OF CANADA.
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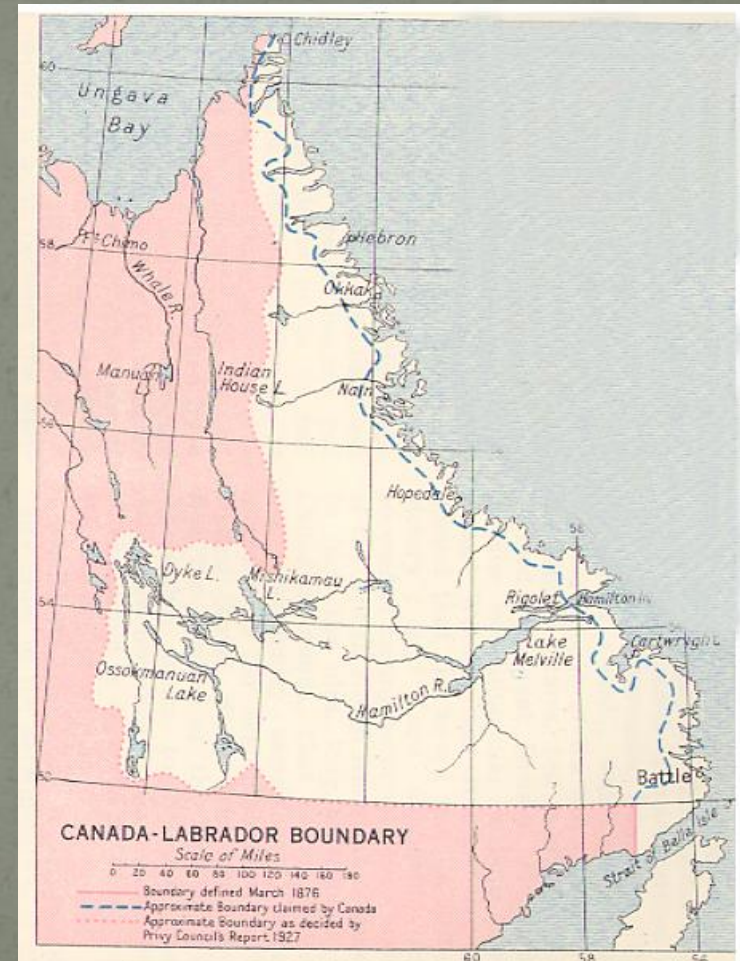
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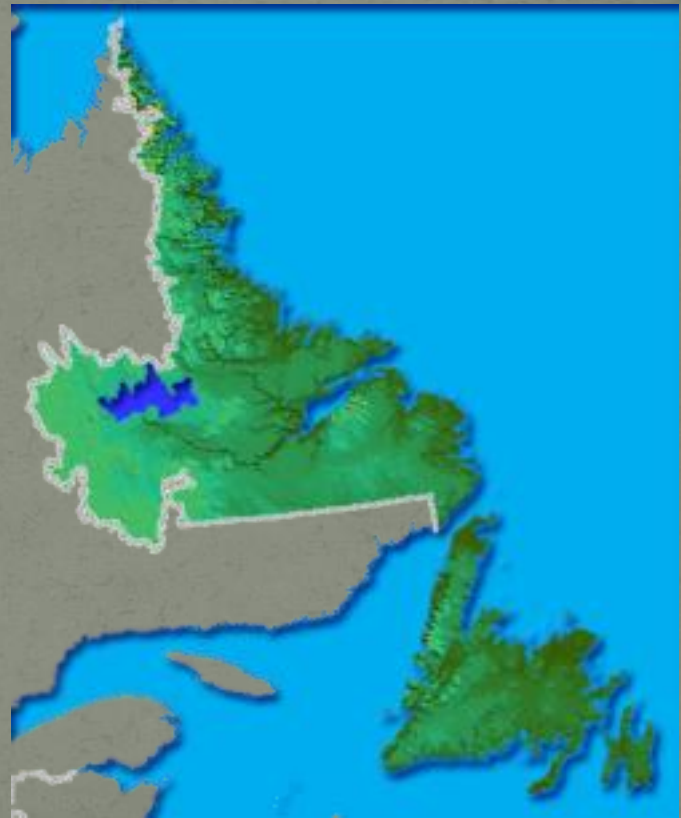
In 1907 the dispute was
put before the highest
court in England



In 1927 the court gave
Newfoundland the coast
line and all the land that
had rivers flowing to the
Atlantic Ocean



The land grant was
actually twice as big as
the island portion of the
province



When Newfoundland gained control of Labrador it led to some development in Labrador, mostly in forestry.

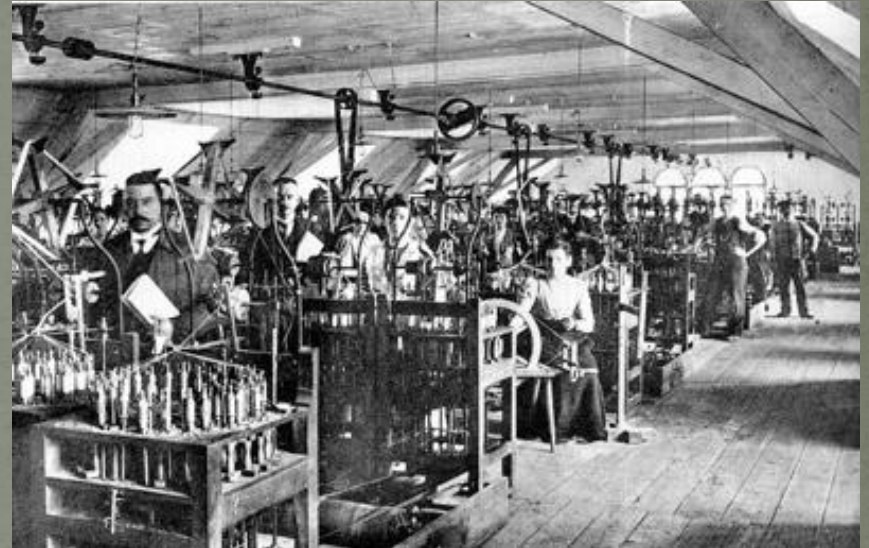


Read “Logging in
Labrador” on page 160

Why do you think people
put up with such terrible
living conditions?

Family Life and Women's Roles

When men were hired in industrial jobs lifestyles changed dramatically



Steady wages gave the whole family a better standard of living



Men might be away at
lumber camps for
months or working shift
work which meant
women must take a
bigger role in raising the
family



Subsistence farming and living under the truck system were no longer factors in their lives



Women did not have to
help with the making of
fish which took so much
time for fishing families



Some women left small towns and went to St. John's, Canada or the U. S. to become domestic servants



Disasters and Crises

1929 Tidal Wave

On November 18th, 1929 an earthquake on the Grand Banks caused a tsunami which hit 40 communities on the South Coast



Waves as high as 15
meters destroyed
buildings and boats and
killed 27 people



People from all over
Newfoundland and other
parts of the British
Empire donated money
to help those affected



The next few years were bad ones in the fishery and many people believed that it was because of the damage done to the ocean floor



Great Depression

The **Great Depression**, a major downturn in the economy, began in 1929 and affected the economy all over the world



- Newfoundland was hit very hard because of a poor fishery that included low prices.



- Between 1929 and 1932 the value of the fishery fell from 16 million dollars to 6 million dollars



The money government was receiving also declined and the public debt grew to 100 million dollars from money borrowed to finance the railway and the war effort



Government could no longer borrow money to help people and many people had to turn to social assistance (known as “the dole”) to survive.



Being on the dole was considered a disgrace and the amount of money they received was inadequate.



A family of 4 would get
\$7.70 a month whereas a
family of 10 would get
\$17.00 a month



In some ways rural
Newfoundland was
better off than many
places because people
could hunt and fish for
food as well as grow their
own vegetables



- Look at the chart on page 164
- How does this compare to your diet?

- Read “Coping with the Great Depression” on page 165
- What did he mean when he said “we managed nicely”?

- Read Sir Richard Squires on page 166 and complete the following
-
- Write his name, place of birth and date of birth and death
- Choose 4-6 events related to Sir Richard Squires's work and list the events in a chronological timeline.

St. John's Riot of 1932

People became desperate during the Great Depression. Many people were hungry and did not have enough money to survive



There was a riot in
Carbonear where a group
of men had a meeting to
ask for a raise in the
amount of dole



People sometimes broke
into merchant's stores
out of desperation to get
food for their families



- In 1932 the government was desperate for money and decided to raise duties on imported goods. Since most of Newfoundland's basic food items were imported this drove up the cost of living



They also laid off
government workers to
save money which added
to the number of people
unemployed



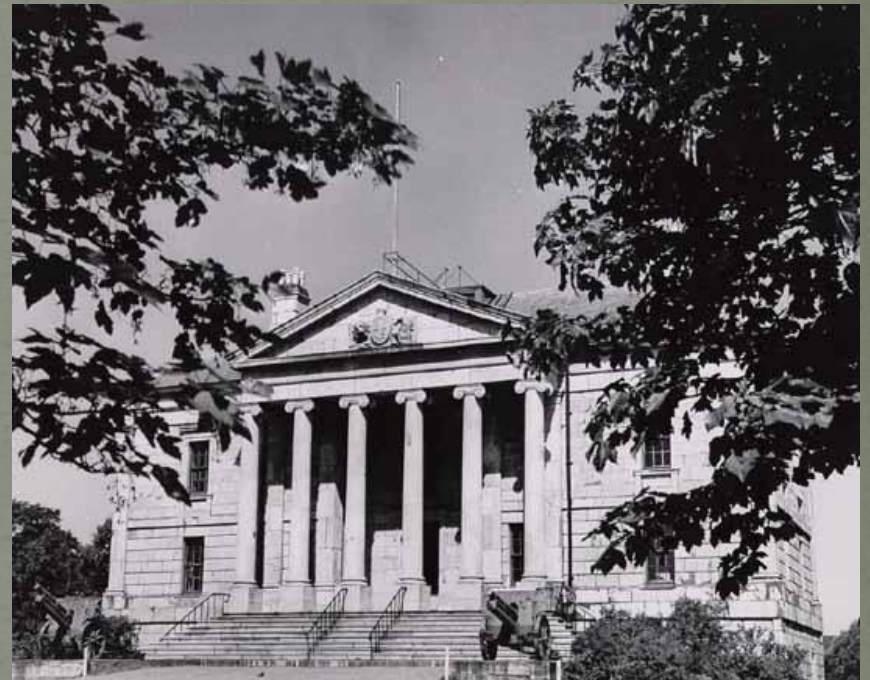
Prime Minister Richard Squires was accused of paying himself \$5000 a year from money meant for war veterans and widows



The Colonial Building
was looted and much of
the furniture was
destroyed or burnt in a
bonfire outside the
building



Richard Squires was
hidden inside and later
escaped through a side
door



- Read “Mob Violence in St. John’s” on page 168
- Do you think this news story is biased?
- What does this say about newspapers at the time?

Commission of Government

After the St. John's Riot
Richard Squires
dissolved his government
and called an election for
June 11, 1932



The United
Newfoundland Party led
by Frederick Alderdice
won 25 of the 27 seats



The new government was heavily in debt and was spending two-thirds of all its revenue on paying the interest on the debt



The British government gave Newfoundland a loan to pay that year's interest on condition they would allow a royal commission to study the public affairs of Newfoundland



The Amulree report
concluded that the
political leaders in
Newfoundland were
incompetent and they
had caused
Newfoundland's
financial problems



They suggested that
Newfoundland suspend
responsible government
and be run by a group of
commissioners



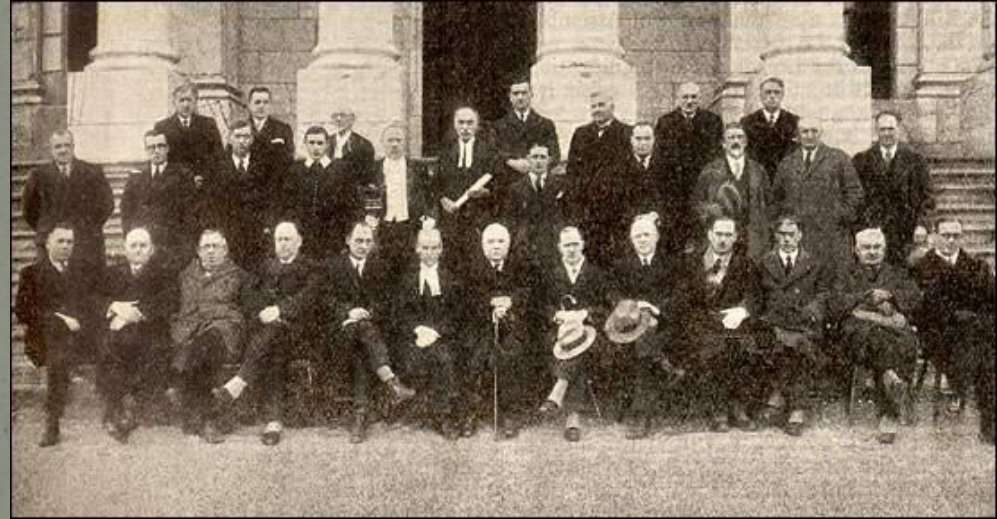
This idea was voted on by
the legislature on
December 2nd, 1933 and
Newfoundland chose to
give up its right to
responsible government



The people of the province were not given the chance to vote on the proposal but there was very little opposition

Why do you think this was so?

Newfoundland and
Labrador became the
only self-governing
dominion to voluntarily
give up Responsible
Government



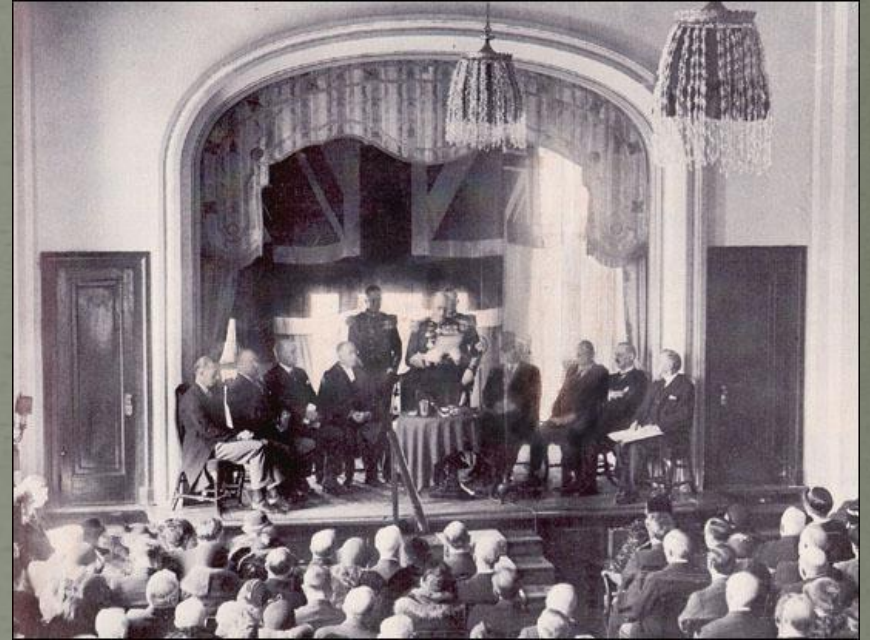
- Read the two excerpts on page 171

Why do you think the two reports are so different?

The chart you have been
given illustrates the
cause and effects that led
up to Commission of
Government

Commission of Government Policies

The Commission of Government was made up of three commissioners from Newfoundland, three from Britain and was led by a British Governor



The commission was not democratic, did not have to involve the Newfoundland population in any decisions and was responsible to the Dominion Office in Britain



The commission tried to improve the situation in Newfoundland by improving education, health care and law enforcement and tried to get more people involved in agriculture



Land Settlement Scheme

The idea behind the land settlement scheme was to take families on public relief and place them on homesteads so they could feed themselves and make at least a partial living



Each family had to have an adult male who must work on community projects and clear land



Children attended school and helped on the farms and were taught such things as carpentry, cooking, gardening, running a dairy and nature study



the experiment with land settlement was very expensive and did not work for several reasons

- Many settlers were from the city and were not used to farming
- Many settlers felt isolated and lonely living in the wilderness
- People did not like the fact that supervisors were continually bossing them around

The land development
scheme was later
abandoned



Education

Before Commission of
Government the
Newfoundland
government had
established a teacher
training school at
Memorial University
College



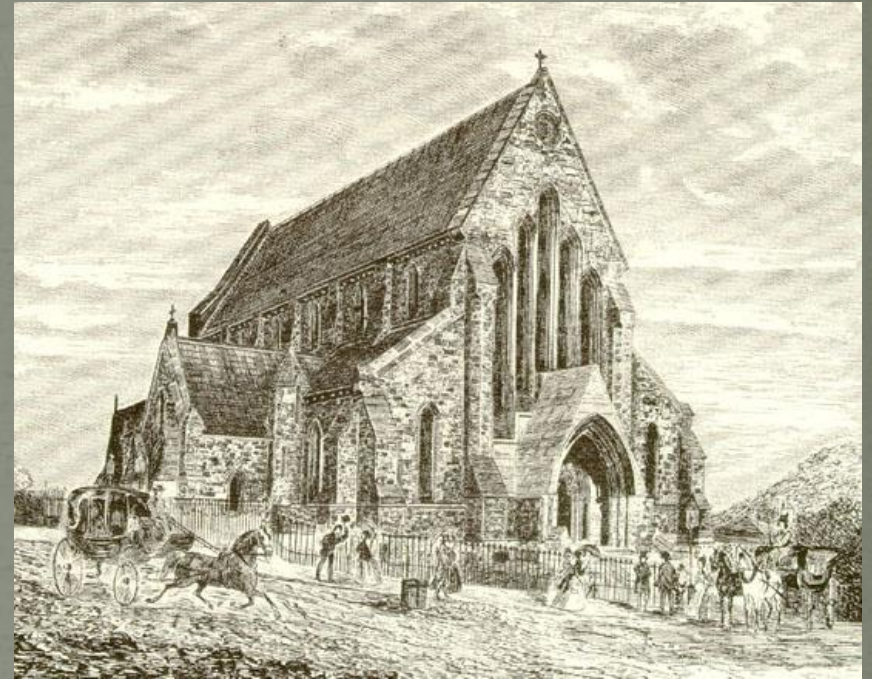
The schools were all controlled by the churches and the commission felt that this was causing problems with untrained teachers and poorly equipped schools



They felt education was
needed for
Newfoundland to
become a self supporting
and prosperous place



They tried to get rid of the denominational education system but met with too much opposition from the churches



In 1943 education was
made free and
compulsory



By 1949 the number of schools had doubled and there was a new more modern curriculum



Urban schools were generally large and well equipped whereas rural communities often had one room schools where all the grades were in one room with one teacher



Wrens" on page 178 and "Violet
Cherrington" page 179.

How were the schools
different from each
other?

How were they different
than your school?

Health Care

During the 1920's the provincial government financed only two hospitals, the General Hospital and the Mental Hospital in St. John's



Other hospitals were financed by churches, private companies in company towns or charitable organizations like the International Grenfell Association



An organization called the Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association (NONIA) was formed in the 1920's to improve health care in rural Newfoundland



This organization raised money to pay the salaries of British nurses/midwives who would be located in outport communities



Money was raised by having outport women knit clothing which was sold in a store on Water Street. This tradition continues today



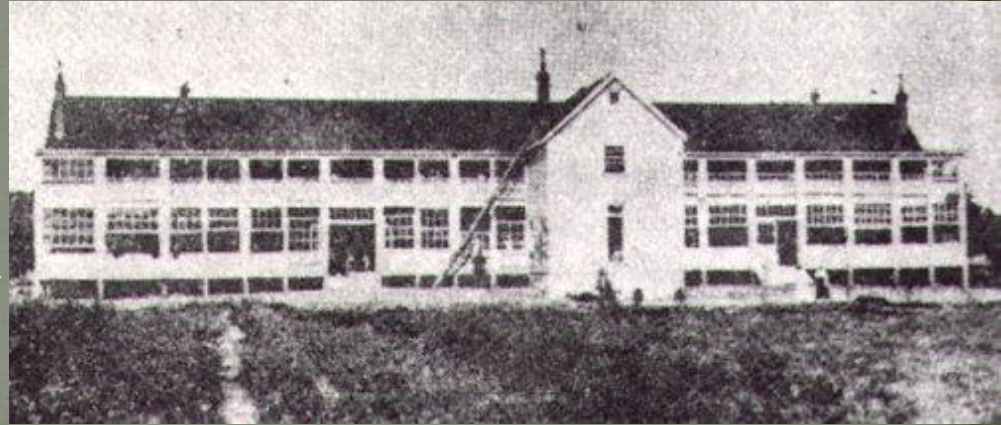
The Squires government planned to try to improve health care but the extreme debt and the onset of the Great Depression spoiled their plans



The Commission of Government took over responsibility for health care and was faced with major problems



Many people (7% of the population) had tuberculosis and many other people had vitamin deficiency diseases such as beri-beri.



Many outposts were small and isolated and could only be reached by boat making it difficult to provide health care



The Commission of
Government set up a
Department of Public
Health and Welfare that
built 12 “cottage
hospitals” by 1944



A hospital ship, the Lady Anderson, was bought to provide health services to the southwest coast where communities were isolated and small and could not support a hospital



The Grenfell Association
provided health services
in Northern
Newfoundland and
Labrador and the rural
nurses were expanded
from 8 to 54



Read “Looking Back” on
page 182

