

3/31/2011

## Chapter 7: The Interwar Years

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



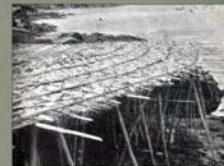
Many who could not find jobs moved away to Canada or the United States



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'kmaq and Innu descent



The ore at Buchan's 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



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

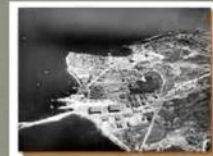


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Falls also had a pulp plant that operated from 1911 to 1954. Wood pulp was pumped to Grand Falls through a pipe and a flume.



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





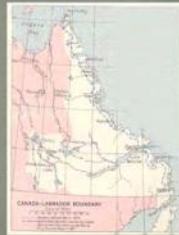
Canada said  
Newfoundland owned  
only a thin strip of land  
along the coast



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 18<sup>th</sup>, 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 2<sup>nd</sup>, 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



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



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 outports 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

