TOPIC 5.4

The Amulree Report

Royal Commissions are appointed by federal or provincial governments to investigate specific issues. How does this process benefit citizens?

Frequently Royal Commissions are headed by judges. Why might this be the case?

Turning to Britain

Newfoundland's financial problems, high unemployment, and poverty during the Great Depression* were not unique. Countries worldwide faced the same difficulties, and those that relied on the export of primary products were often the hardest hit.* The end of the Squires scandal-filled administration in 1932 did nothing to improve the country's financial situation. By 1933, Newfoundland was on the verge of bankruptcy. When Squires' successor, Prime Minister Frederick Alderdice, announced that Newfoundland would have to partially default on its debts, the British government reacted with alarm. Driven by larger global concerns, it told Alderdice that this was unacceptable. A default would have a negative impact on the financial markets and on the credit of Canada and the other British dominions, and set a dangerous precedent.

To prevent Newfoundland from defaulting on its debt, Britain and Canada paid two-thirds of the country's interest payment for January 1, 1933. This payment was made on condition that the Newfoundland government accept the appointment of a Royal Commission to examine the country's future. Newfoundland also had to promise to support the Commission's recommendations in the Legislature.

5.47 Members of the Newfoundland Royal Commission, 1933

Lord Amulree, c. 1933
Lord Amulree was the British representative and chairman of the Royal Commission.

Charles A. Magrath, c. 1907–13
Magrath, a banker, was the Canadian representative on the Commission.

Sir William E. Stavert
was the Newfoundland representative, although he was actually a banker from Canada. (No Newfoundlanders or Labradorians served on the Commission.) Stavert also was a financial advisor to the Newfoundland government in 1932.

The Newfoundland Royal Commission 1933

On February 17, 1933, an Imperial Royal Commission was appointed by the British government "to examine into the future of Newfoundland and, in particular, to report on the financial situation and prospects therein." This effectively put Newfoundland's future into the hands of three non-Newfoundlanders – a British peer, Lord Amulree, and two Canadian bankers (See fig. 5.47.) The commissioners held 100 formal hearings and conducted 260 interviews in St. John's and across the island.** They also gathered evidence through written testimony and informal visits to people in their homes and workplaces. In their final report, known as the Amulree Report, the commissioners noted: "It was our special object at every place we visited to see and talk with fishermen and workpeople in their natural setting, as well as merchants, doctors, clergymen and others …" The commissioners ended their hearings in July 1933 and published their report three months later.

While the Commission was conducting its research, officials in London were having their own discussions on the Newfoundland crisis on the other side of the Atlantic.

*Although the effects of the Great Depression were felt worldwide for several years, the hard times in Newfoundland and Labrador lasted a full decade.

**The commissioners did not travel to the Northern Peninsula or to Labrador, but they collected evidence from these areas.

They produced their own plan for Newfoundland, which Lord Amulree was expected to recommend. Newfoundland's public debt would be rescheduled at a lower rate of interest and guaranteed by the British government. This was essentially a disguised default, but would satisfy bondholders and prevent panic in the global markets. However, financial intervention and assistance of this type were incompatible with responsible government. Thus Newfoundland would have to agree to give up that system of government temporarily, and allow Britain to administer the country through an appointed commission.

This became the central recommendation of the Newfoundland Royal Commission, whose report was published in October 1933. The Commission's report argued that Newfoundland's financial crisis was the result of government mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption, and financial irresponsibility. It described the average Newfoundlander as "simple-minded" and easily exploited by corrupt politicians. According to the Report, the people had lost faith in their political leaders and in the system of responsible government. They wanted assistance from Britain, and they wanted change.

Citing the political corruption of successive Newfoundland governments, the Amulree Report called for the temporary suspension of responsible government and tighter British controls through the establishment of a Commission of Government. The Commission of Government would consist of six commissioners (three from Britain and three from Newfoundland) and would be led by a British Governor answerable to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in London. If this was established, Britain would guarantee and reschedule Newfoundland's debt, which was still to be paid by the Newfoundland government.

The Amulree Report was well-received by the press and most members of the public at the time. At the British government's request, Alderdice did not hold an election or a referendum on the issue. Instead it was brought to the legislature in November, where an address to the Crown was passed asking for the suspension of the constitution. In February 1934 the Commission of Government took office.

Britain to Govern Newfoundland; First Dominion to Lose Status

Reverts to the Rank of a Crown Colony During Financial Crisis —Royal Commission Reports 'Desperate Condition'— Debts Will Be Funded by London.

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Nov. 21.—Newfoundland will lose her status as a self-governing dominion for a time under sweeping emergency measures which the government submitted to the House of Commons today.

The proposals were made on the recommendation of a Royal Commission of Inquiry, headed by Lord Amulree, which found financial and political conditions in Newfoundland "desperate" and the islanders facing utter ruin. This is the first time in the history of the British Empire that any dominion has had to hand its sovereignty back to the mother country.

Strictly speaking, Britain cannot force any dominion to surrender its self-government, but a formal request for British help is expected to come in a few days from Premier Frederick C. Alderdice and the Newfoundland Government.

Direct British rule in the island is expected to last until its affairs have been pulled out of the morass in which the commission found them. The colony will be ruled in the next few years or longer by a British Governor assisted by a commission of three Britons and three Newfoundlanders. Their immediate task will be to reduce the island's debt burden and the first move, announced today, is the conversion of the existing Newfoundland obligations into a 3 per cent sterling issue redeemable in ten years.

The report of the commission of inquiry constitutes a scathing indictment of financial mismanagement and political corruption in Newfoundland ever since the war. It declares that Newfoundland has been living hopelessly beyond her means and that her scattered fishing communities have been demoralized by a vicious credit system under which they have become virtual serfs of the merchants of St. John's.

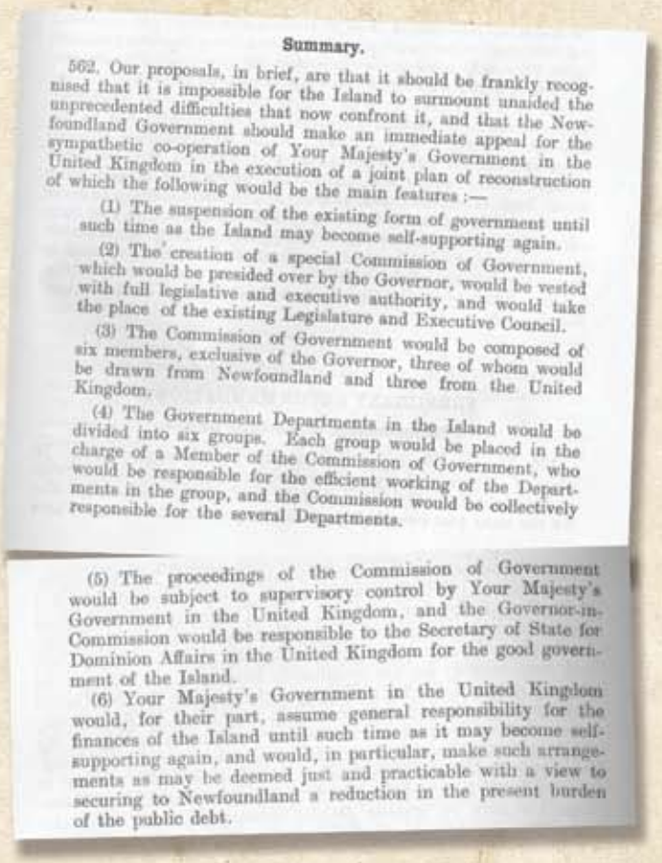
Moreover, the people have been victimized by politicians, according to the report, and by "a continuing process of greed, graft and corruption which has left few classes of the community untouched by its insidious influence."

Among the recommendations

Continued on Page Fifteen

The New York Times
Published: November 22, 1933
Copyright © The New York Times

5.48 Excerpt from *The New York Times*, Nov. 22, 1933



Summary.

562. Our proposals, in brief, are that it should be frankly recognised that it is impossible for the Island to surmount unaided the unprecedented difficulties that now confront it, and that the Newfoundland Government should make an immediate appeal for the sympathetic co-operation of Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom in the execution of a joint plan of reconstruction of which the following would be the main features :—

(1) The suspension of the existing form of government until such time as the Island may become self-supporting again.

(2) The creation of a special Commission of Government, which would be presided over by the Governor, would be vested with full legislative and executive authority, and would take the place of the existing Legislature and Executive Council.

(3) The Commission of Government would be composed of six members, exclusive of the Governor, three of whom would be drawn from Newfoundland and three from the United Kingdom.

(4) The Government Departments in the Island would be divided into six groups. Each group would be placed in the charge of a Member of the Commission of Government, who would be responsible for the efficient working of the Departments in the group, and the Commission would be collectively responsible for the several Departments.

(5) The proceedings of the Commission of Government would be subject to supervisory control by Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom, and the Governor-in-Commission would be responsible to the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs in the United Kingdom for the good government of the Island.

(6) Your Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom would, for their part, assume general responsibility for the finances of the Island until such time as it may become self-supporting again, and would, in particular, make such arrangements as may be deemed just and practicable with a view to securing to Newfoundland a reduction in the present burden of the public debt.

5.49 Summary from the Amulree Report for a "joint plan of reconstruction"

Questions:

1. Why was a Royal Commission appointed in Newfoundland in 1933?
2. How did the Commission gather information? Was this an effective approach?
3. What was the main recommendation of the Amulree Report? What else could the Royal Commission have recommended as a solution to Newfoundland's problems?

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING
PERSPECTIVE

–Was the Amulree Report objective?–

The Amulree Report of 1933 presented a version of Newfoundland and Labrador's history that has influenced future generations' understanding of events.

The report used Newfoundland's political history to justify the suspension of responsible government and the establishment of the Commission of Government. It did this by emphasizing widespread corruption and inefficiency in Newfoundland politics. Because of the official nature of the document, its narrative of our history remained relatively unchallenged for decades. However, it is important to keep in mind that the report was not written as an unbiased text.

When reading and interpreting a historical document, it is crucial to keep in mind the following factors:

1) Authorship: Who wrote the document and for what audience? Was the author qualified to comment on what he or she wrote about? What was the author's purpose or agenda? Is there a conflict of interest that might prejudice the portrayal of the content?

2) Context: What were the social, political, and economic circumstances of the time in which the document was written?

3) Information: Did the author of the report have access to accurate information from a variety of sources? Is the report consistent with other accounts of the time?

Today most historians agree that the Amulree Report's historical analysis and its conclusions about the financial crisis in Newfoundland and Labrador were both flawed: its criticisms of politicians and of the political system here were unfair and exaggerated; it did not give enough credit to the impact of the First World War and the Great Depression on Newfoundland and Labrador's financial situation; and the creators of the report had a conflict of interest in that Britain did not want to consider Newfoundland's default* as a serious option.

*Of course, in the end, Britain did choose default for Newfoundland's debt – but that default was disguised in the suspension of responsible government.

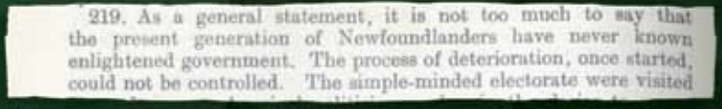
5.50 Excerpts from the Amulree Report

(1) The Island is in extreme financial difficulties. These have been intensified by the world depression, but they are due primarily to persistent extravagance and neglect of proper financial principles on the part of successive Governments during the years 1920-31.

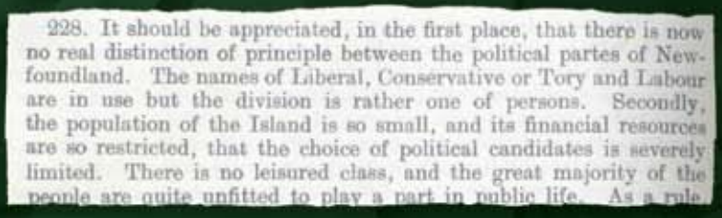
210. Shrewd and suspicious in their business dealings, the people exhibit a child-like simplicity when confronted with matters outside their own immediate horizon. This simplicity political candidates have not been slow to exploit. There is no system of compulsory

"The characterizations of our past that the Royal Commission members heard from Newfoundlanders were accepted as true, since they were useful in justifying the political recommendations the British had in mind. The false objectivity of outsiders and the official nature of the Royal Commission lent credence to these interpretations, raising them to the status of scientific truth – and over the next six decades many authors have uncritically accepted these conclusions about the nature of Newfoundland's economy and society."

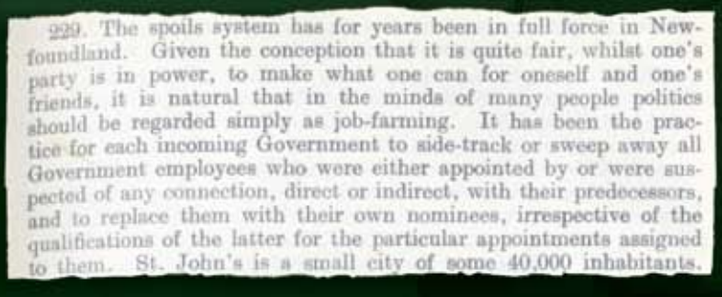
– Jeff Webb, historian



219. As a general statement, it is not too much to say that the present generation of Newfoundlanders have never known enlightened government. The process of deterioration, once started, could not be controlled. The simple-minded electorate were visited



228. It should be appreciated, in the first place, that there is now no real distinction of principle between the political partes of Newfoundland. The names of Liberal, Conservative or Tory and Labour are in use but the division is rather one of persons. Secondly, the population of the Island is so small, and its financial resources are so restricted, that the choice of political candidates is severely limited. There is no leisured class, and the great majority of the people are quite unfitted to play a part in public life. As a rule



229. The spoils system has for years been in full force in Newfoundland. Given the conception that it is quite fair, whilst one's party is in power, to make what one can for oneself and one's friends, it is natural that in the minds of many people politics should be regarded simply as job-farming. It has been the practice for each incoming Government to side-track or sweep away all Government employees who were either appointed by or were suspected of any connection, direct or indirect, with their predecessors, and to replace them with their own nominees, irrespective of the qualifications of the latter for the particular appointments assigned to them. St. John's is a small city of some 40,000 inhabitants.

Questions:

1. What evidence is there that the Amulree Report was biased?
2. Why was the Amulree Report so easily accepted?
3. What alternatives to the establishment of Commission of Government were suggested by Charles Magrath? Which alternative would most benefit Newfoundland?

DID NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR HAVE ANY OTHER OPTIONS?

Newfoundland's strongest defender on the Commission was actually the Canadian nominee, Charles A. Magrath. He felt there were other options for the Newfoundland Government besides giving up responsible government. He argued that the banks were forcing Newfoundland to pay interest at rates that were excessive during a global economic depression and supported Alderdice's original proposal for default, which would have decreased Newfoundland's interest rates to three per cent. However, the British government refused to let Newfoundland default on its debt.

Magrath criticized the Royal Commission for its faulty analysis of Newfoundland's financial crisis and suggested that Newfoundland needed practical financial assistance which could be provided in two ways: 1) Britain could cancel Newfoundland's war debt – something that had been done for several European nations in the aftermath of the First World War; and 2) Canada could purchase Labrador, on condition that Newfoundland could re-purchase the territory in the future. However, neither of these solutions was seriously considered.

Believing that Newfoundland was eventually going to join confederation, Magrath also advocated for increased Canadian activity in Newfoundland. However, many Canadian politicians, including Prime Minister R.B. Bennett, were hesitant to assist Newfoundland when much of Canada was in similar economic distress. Although the lack of Canadian financial assistance weakened Magrath's position on the Commission, he continued to defend the best interests of Newfoundland (with a view to confederation) until the end.

TOPIC 5.5

Commission of Government

What is the best system of government?

Under what circumstances do you think a government should be replaced?

5.51 Inauguration of the Commission of Government, Feb. 16, 1934
Governor David Murray Anderson speaks at the ceremony which was held at the Newfoundland Hotel in St. John's. As Governor, Anderson served as the Chairman of the Commission in 1934. The other members of the 1934 Commission were Sir John Hope Simpson (Britain), Natural Resources; Thomas Lodge (Britain), Public Utilities; E.N.R. Trentham (Britain), Finance; Frederick C. Alderdice (Newfoundland), Home Affairs and Education; William R. Howley (Newfoundland), Justice; and John C. Puddester (Newfoundland), Public Health and Welfare.

Introduction

In February 1934, responsible government in Newfoundland was replaced by a Commission of Government. The Commission consisted of seven men appointed by the British government: the governor, who was also chairman of the Commission, three British* appointees, and three Newfoundland appointees. The six commissioners voted on government measures and the governor signed them into law. The British government could not initiate legislation in Newfoundland, but the Commission needed permission from the Dominions Office for any of its major policies.

The Commission governed Newfoundland for 15 years, from 1934 until Newfoundland's Confederation with Canada in 1949. During that period, it initiated a number of reforms in order to balance the budget, decrease unemployment, and improve the health and well-being of Newfoundlanders. Although it did make some reforms within the fishery, the Commission's ability to carry out economic initiatives during the 1930s was limited because the world was still in the grips of the Great Depression and the colony's resource industries depended on global markets. As well the government

*The British commissioners were appointed to the senior departments that had the greatest relevance to reviving the economy and balancing the budget.

was restricted in its spending by the British Treasury. Thus, the Commission devoted most of its energies to social reforms, especially in the areas of education, public health, welfare, and law enforcement.

As with its economic reforms, the Commission's social reforms were hampered by a chronic lack of funds until the Second World War improved Newfoundland and Labrador's economy. Assessments of the Commission's achievements vary. As historian Peter Neary notes: "Like much else in history, the Commission of Government is perhaps best known by what its enemies and heirs, often one and the same, have had to say about it. Those who first governed Newfoundland after Confederation had a vested interest in spreading the notion that 1949 was the Year One, and that all good things began with their accession to power."

5.52 Bonavista Cold Storage, post-1939
Bonavista Cold Storage Company, opened in 1939, is the oldest surviving fish plant on the island.

5.53 Codfish on a trawler off the Grand Banks, 1949
Trawlers were another development in the fishery in the late 1940s.

Reforms in the Fishery

Part of the Commission of Government's larger plan for the rehabilitation of Newfoundland and Labrador was "a scheme for the reorganization of the fishery." Although the Amulree Report had suggested the truck system was the cause of many of the problems with the fisheries, it had offered no suggestions on how to abolish it. Instead, the report called for greater government intervention in the fishery. Its recommendations included having the government establish schooner bases and bait depots at strategic points, such as Bay Bulls and Bay of Islands, and studying ways to establish a local canning industry that could market cod fillets, cod tongues, smoked haddock, lobsters, capelin, salmon, and other local fish products.

Based on this, the Commission of Government looked for ways to increase centralization and efficiency in the fishery. In 1936 it established the Newfoundland Fisheries Board, which set the framework for future government involvement in the industry. The Board had three main functions: 1) to reform the saltfish marketing system; 2) to regulate and enforce fisheries laws; and 3) to oversee scientific research. It also established bait freezing plants around the country and a bait service in which a motorized vessel, the *Malakoff*, delivered frozen bait to fishers for the hook-and-line fishery.

During the Second World War, the Commission of Government saw another opportunity for the fishery with the arrival of quick-freezing technology that created a demand for frozen fish, especially in the United States. To enable Newfoundland to participate in this market, the government provided loans for the construction and operation of frozen-fish plants across the island. By 1946, there were 14 such plants in operation. Companies that operated these plants also began to use offshore trawlers after the war; in the coming years, these powerful vessels increasingly replaced schooners on the banks.

5.54 A group of school and pre-school children at Haystack, 1942

5.55 A group of children in Conche, c. 1940s

5.56 A Methodist school in the Gulch, c. 1940
Dozens of schools closed in Newfoundland and Labrador during the Great Depression. Those that remained open were in a general state of disrepair, prompting the Commission of Government to build new schools and improve existing ones. However, these efforts were hampered by a limited budget.

Education Reforms

The education system was already in very poor condition when the Commission of Government took over in 1934. Teachers were underpaid and poorly trained, the school curriculum was out of date, schools were dilapidated and lacked basic supplies, and school enrolment was low. In 1935, the Commission of Government initiated a series of reforms* designed to address these issues, including: 1) improving the quality of instruction; 2) improving the quality of the curriculum; 3) improving school facilities; and 4) increasing school attendance.

Educational reconstruction during the Commission of Government period was slow, however, due to limited financial resources, the need to increase teacher's salaries before other reforms, and the poor condition of educational facilities which the government inherited in 1934.

*The government also hoped to replace the denominational school system with a secular system, but opposition from the churches prevented such reform.

Improvements in Instruction:

- Returned teachers' salaries to their pre-Depression level. (Teachers were paid reduced salaries during the Depression because of the Newfoundland government's financial difficulties.)
- Encouraged teacher training by reopening the teachers' school at Memorial University College and establishing a summer school program.

Improvements in Curriculum:

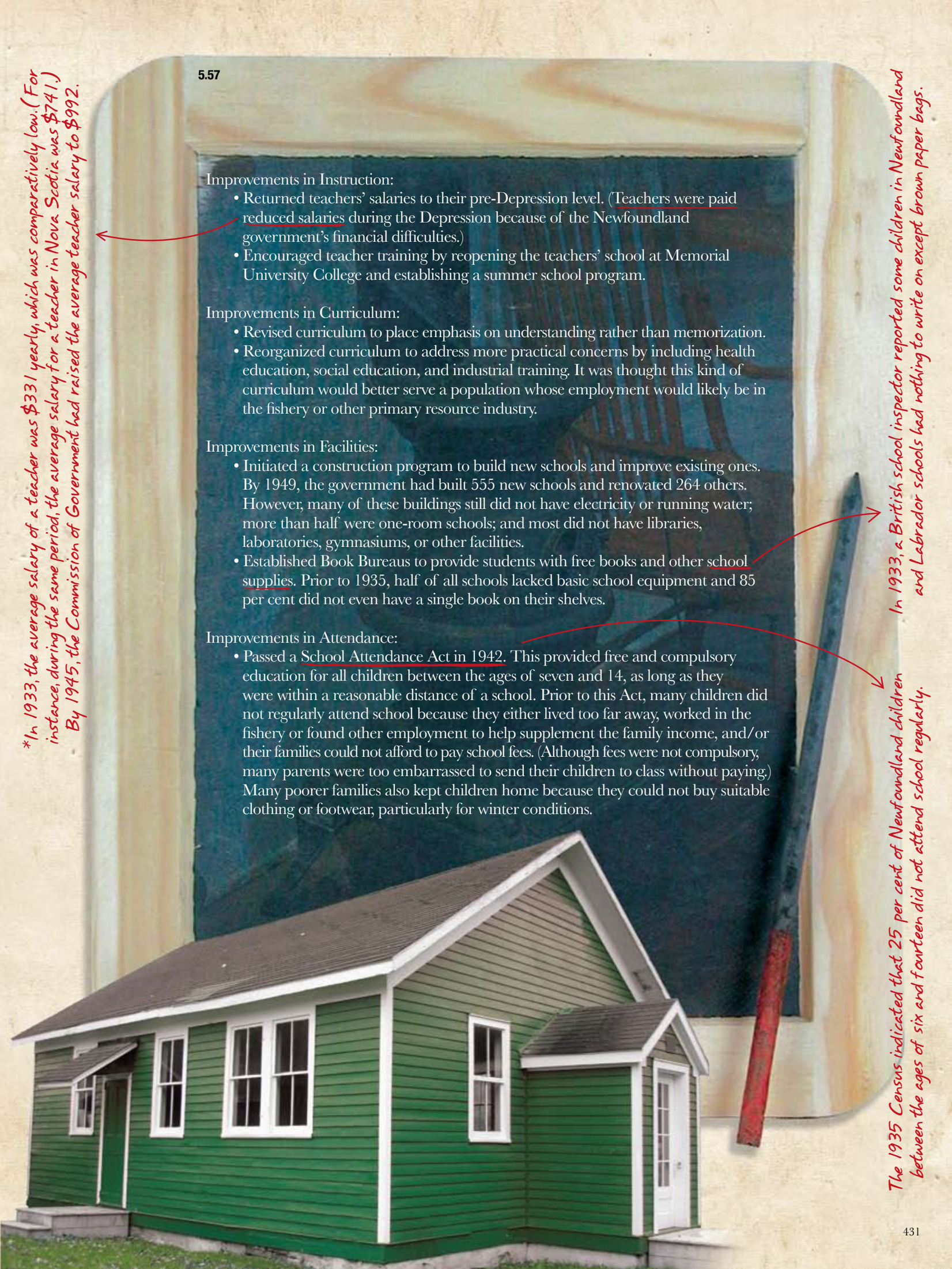
- Revised curriculum to place emphasis on understanding rather than memorization.
- Reorganized curriculum to address more practical concerns by including health education, social education, and industrial training. It was thought this kind of curriculum would better serve a population whose employment would likely be in the fishery or other primary resource industry.

Improvements in Facilities:

- Initiated a construction program to build new schools and improve existing ones. By 1949, the government had built 555 new schools and renovated 264 others. However, many of these buildings still did not have electricity or running water; more than half were one-room schools; and most did not have libraries, laboratories, gymnasiums, or other facilities.
- Established Book Bureaus to provide students with free books and other school supplies. Prior to 1935, half of all schools lacked basic school equipment and 85 per cent did not even have a single book on their shelves.

Improvements in Attendance:

- Passed a School Attendance Act in 1942. This provided free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of seven and 14, as long as they were within a reasonable distance of a school. Prior to this Act, many children did not regularly attend school because they either lived too far away, worked in the fishery or found other employment to help supplement the family income, and/or their families could not afford to pay school fees. (Although fees were not compulsory, many parents were too embarrassed to send their children to class without paying.) Many poorer families also kept children home because they could not buy suitable clothing or footwear, particularly for winter conditions.



*In 1933, the average salary of a teacher was $331 yearly, which was comparatively low. (For instance, during the same period, the average salary for a teacher in Nova Scotia was $741.) By 1945, the Commission of Government had raised the average teacher salary to $992.

In 1933, a British school inspector reported some children in Newfoundland and Labrador schools had nothing to write on except brown paper bags.

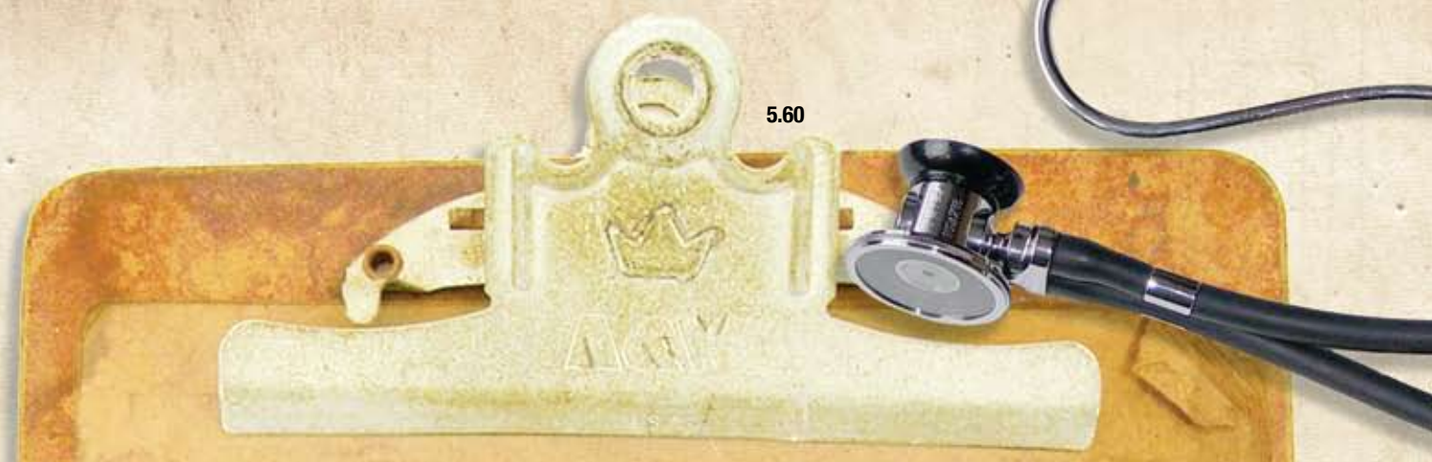
The 1935 Census indicated that 25 per cent of Newfoundland children between the ages of six and fourteen did not attend school regularly.

5.58 Patients on the women's ward, Bonavista Cottage Hospital, c. 1947
The Bonavista Cottage Hospital opened in July 1940. A typical cottage hospital employed one or two physicians, a small staff of nurses, and had a bed capacity of between 10 and 30.

5.59 An operating room (possibly in the Military Hospital in St. John's), c. 1942
Following the Second World War, American and Canadian Armed Forces turned many of their military hospitals in Newfoundland and Labrador over to the Commission of Government for civilian use.

Public Health Reforms

The poverty that came with the Depression compromised the health of many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Without enough money to heat their homes or buy enough food to maintain a healthy diet, many people had become susceptible to nutritional diseases like beriberi and contagious diseases like pneumonia and tuberculosis. At the same time, there were not enough doctors, nurses, or hospital facilities to treat the population. The Commission of Government took several measures to address this situation. In fact, some of its most progressive policies were in the area of public health. These included initiatives to increase medical personnel and medical facilities, particularly in rural areas; improve the detection and treatment of tuberculosis; advance child health; and promote dietary reform.



Initiatives Related to Medical Personnel and Facilities

- Increased the number of doctors and nurses within the country. The public health division of the Department of Public Health and Welfare appointed two permanent medical officers to provide curative and preventive medicine and oversee a nursing staff in St. John's. In rural areas, the government hired doctors as full-time employees. It also took over the nursing services of Newfoundland Outport Nursing and Industrial Association (NONIA),* hired nurses to fill vacancies, and opened centres that had not previously been served by a doctor or a nurse.
- Improved Medical Training. The government supported specialized training for medical personnel by encouraging medical and nursing leaders to attend North American conferences on health care and securing financial support through the Rockefeller Foundation to send nurses to advanced nursing courses in Canada and the United States.
- Increased health care facilities for people in rural areas. The Commission of Government increased the number of nursing stations in rural areas and established several cottage hospitals. By 1942 the government had established 13 **cottage hospitals** across the island, in such communities as Markland, Argentia, and Bonne Bay. In 1935, the government also created a 'floating hospital' – the MV *Lady Anderson* – in order to reach the more isolated communities on the south coast of the island between Fortune Bay and Port aux Basques. The medical staff on board treated the sick, provided immunizations against contagious diseases, and conducted public health work.

Initiatives to Fight Tuberculosis:

- Expanded the tuberculosis sanatorium in St. John's and built a sanatorium in Corner Brook.
- Established the Avalon Health Unit as a means to increase detection of the disease. The Avalon Health Unit was based in Harbour Grace but travelled throughout the Avalon Peninsula, taking X-rays of the population and isolating diagnosed cases.
- Launched the *Christmas Seal*, a ship with medical facilities, to increase detection of tuberculosis and establish preventive measures against the disease.

Improvements in Child Health:

- Initiated a school health program. To improve school children's diets, the government distributed milk, coco-malt, cod liver oil, and whole-meal buns in schools. The school health program also provided immunizations against diphtheria, typhoid, and smallpox, and public health initiatives. These included providing teachers with health manuals and establishing the Junior Red Cross to instruct children in first aid, the prevention of accidents, and good health in general.
- Created a Child Welfare Clinic in St. John's.
- Established a Child Welfare Division within the Department of Public Health and Welfare and passed important child welfare legislation. This included the Adoption Act of 1940, which formalized the adoption process, and the Welfare of Children Act** of 1944.

Dietary Reform:

- Improved the nutritional value of dole rations. To enhance the traditional Newfoundland diet of saltfish, salt beef, white flour, tea, and molasses on which many families lived, the government included vitamin-rich brown flour in its dole rations by the end of 1934. However, malnutrition rates remained high throughout the period, and there was significant public backlash about the "dole flour."

*In addition to providing affordable medical services to the public, hospital employees offered public health education and midwifery training.

*Communities still had to contribute 75 per cent of the nurse's salary.

**The Welfare of Children Act allowed for the Division of Child Welfare to assist single mothers and care for abused, neglected, and homeless children.

5.61 The Commission of Government hoped that agricultural development might provide alternative employment for Newfoundlanders.
The Commission established a demonstration farm and agricultural school near St. John's in the mid-1930s to help educate future farmers.

The Daily News

JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, SATURDAY, JULY 1

No Dole For Men Refusing Opportunities To Work

Receipts Higher and Expenditure Lower In June Than Previously Estimated — Companies Will Have to Furnish Audited Balance Sheets—Bounty on Shipbuilding May Be Discontinued

(Press Communique)

The thirty-third meeting of Commission of Government was held in the Colonial Building on Friday, July 13th, at 10.15 a.m.

His Excellency the Governor presided.

The following Commissioners were present:

The Honourable Commissioner for Natural Resources.

The Honourable Commissioner for

authority to the Courts concerned to fix the instalments by which decreed debts must be paid, in cases in which it is impossible for the Judgment Debtor to pay the whole amount at once.

(b) An Act to Amend Chapter 83 of the Consolidated Statutes of Newfoundland (Third Series) entitled "The Judicature Act". This is a corollary to the foregoing Act, and provides that Magistrates shall have jurisdiction to deal with cases involving liquidated amounts to the extent of $200, thus avoiding the infliction of unnecessary expense upon debtors through what at present is really an abuse of the process of the Supreme Court. If the Plaintiff can satisfy

5.62 From *The Daily News*, July 13, 1934

"However low the scale may appear in English eyes, it is too near the average standard of existence in Newfoundland, for the Government to make idleness more attractive than work."

– 1936 comment from Government House in St. John's to the Dominion Office on why the dole rations should not be increased

Welfare Measures

The Commission of Government's welfare division and programs were influenced by the Amulree Report's analysis of what needed to be done to improve the living conditions of people in Newfoundland. However, the Amulree Report had underestimated the colony's complex economic weaknesses and overestimated the ability of Newfoundlanders to subsidize their incomes – particularly through agriculture. Using this interpretation of the situation, the Commission's welfare division assumed that people were poor because they lacked the initiative to work. As a result, the welfare division focused many of its efforts on ensuring its welfare measures were not abused by the poor, rather than on increasing its spending on welfare measures that would actually help people improve their living conditions. The welfare measures that were managed by the Commission consisted largely of public works initiatives and income transfers.

Public Works Initiatives:

- Established make-work projects for the unemployed. These had limited success, especially in the outports, as construction projects such as road building occurred during the spring and summer months when the labour force was already engaged in the fisheries or in other primary resource occupations.
- Encouraged agricultural development. The Commission of Government hoped that agricultural development would reduce people's dependence on public relief. As had been suggested in the Amulree Report, it offered cash bonuses for land clearing and cultivation, established a Demonstration Farm and Agricultural School near St. John's to train future farmers, and distributed livestock to promote animal husbandry. The Commission also initiated the Land Settlement Program*, which attempted to establish several new agriculture-based communities. (For more on these communities, see page 436).

Income Transfers:

- Provided indirect income transfers. Indirect income transfer was mostly tariff adjustments. For instance, the government lowered its duties on food (especially wholemeal flour and fresh fruit) and clothing, so that these essentials would be more affordable for people. It also permitted equipment for fishers, farmers, and loggers to enter the country duty-free.
- Provided direct income transfers. These included old-age pensions, able-bodied relief (the dole), and allowances for the "Permanent Poor" – widows, orphans, the aged, the sick, and the disabled. In many ways, these relief measures were more conservative than the programs of previous governments. There was no increase in the amounts that people received, and the Commission increased the supervision of these programs.** According to historian Terry Bishop-Stirling, "the benefits they [the Commission of Government] offered were far from generous; they cannot even be considered subsistence allowances."

*Similar land settlement programs had been initiated throughout Canada, the United States, Europe, and Britain in order to relieve the high unemployment caused by the Great Depression.

**People had to apply for benefits and prove that they were in need; then the government examined each applicant individually and decided whether or not he or she deserved assistance.

THE DOLE UNDER THE COMMISSION OF GOVERNMENT

Able-bodied relief, or the dole, was the most common form of government assistance during the Great Depression. Through this program, the government provided vouchers with which people could purchase food and other necessities from a specified list. Relief allowances depended on the size of a family, but the average allowance was small because officials felt that if allowances were satisfactory it would be difficult to get people off the dole. The government wanted public relief to be an unpleasant experience that people would struggle to avoid. Historians have argued that this reflected the government's interest in disciplining or punishing the needy for not being able to support themselves.

5.63 Scale of relief allowances, 1935

Number of Persons in Family	Cost of Monthly Food Order
1	$2.00
2	$4.00
3	$5.85
4	$7.70
5	$9.50
6	$11.20
7	$13.00
8	$14.75
9	$16.00
10	$17.50

CASE STUDY

The Commission of Government's Land Settlement Program

5.64 Brown's Arm, 1939

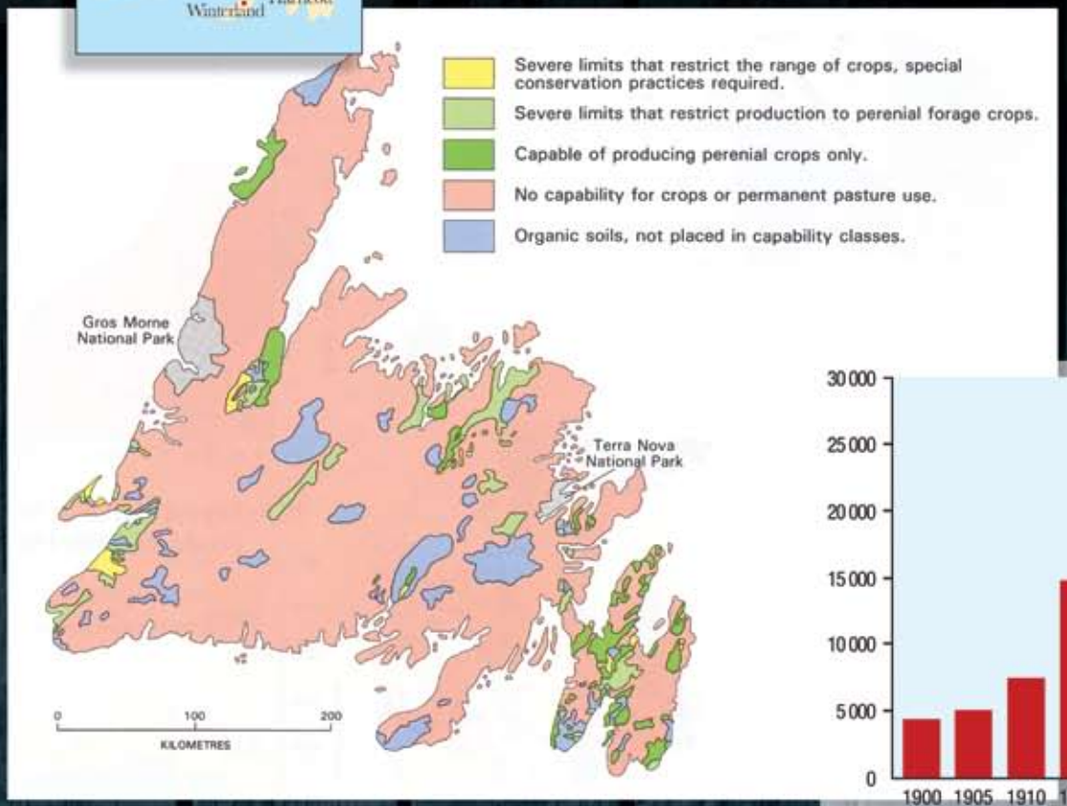
5.65 Farmer with horse-drawn plough, Harricott

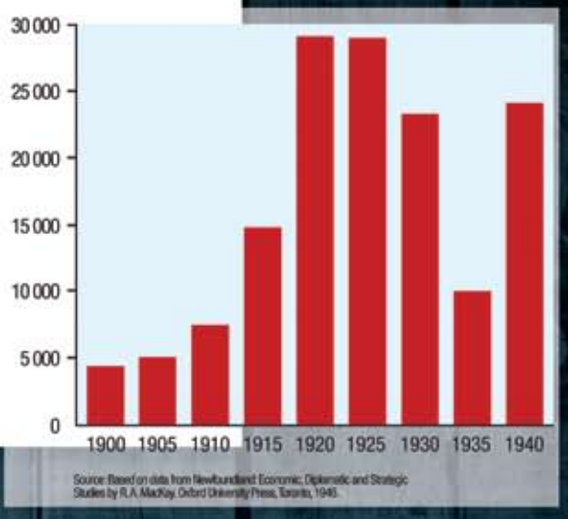
As part of its overall efforts to diversify the economy and to deal with the problems of high unemployment, the Commission of Government established a Land Settlement Program in 1934.

UNDER THIS PROGRAM, THE GOVERNMENT HELPED FAMILIES establish farms, raise livestock, and build rural communities. The Commission loaned successful applicants two years-worth of relief money to start the project, with the hopes that all families would become self-sufficient and be able to pay back the loan. Since the government intended this program to provide work for the unemployed, it only accepted applications from families on able-bodied relief who had at least one adult male capable of performing physical labour.

5.66 Communities created by the Land Settlement Program

5.67 Soil capabilities for agriculture





5.68 Agricultural export values (five-year averages in dollars)
(right) Farming did not evolve to become a significant part of the economy under the Commission of Government. For instance, the number of farmers recorded in 1935 was only 5.5 per cent of the total work force. Likewise, agricultural exports were fairly insignificant. In 1935, agricultural exports were worth less than $10 000, while forestry exports were worth over $14 million.

The government also provided families with a cottage, furniture, supplies, and clothing. In return, residents cultivated the land and worked together on community projects. The program emphasized cooperation and also attempted to dissolve denominational ties by establishing non-denominational schools. In the beginning, and especially in the cases of Markland and Harricott, it was also a social experiment in which the Commission of Government attempted to reform the character of rural Newfoundlanders.

In total, the Commission relocated 365 families and created eight communities: Markland, Harricott, Lourdes, Brown's Arm, Midland, Sandringham, Winterland, and Point au Mal. Although Sandringham and Winterland both prospered as farming communities (and are still vibrant communities today), the program failed as a rural development policy overall. It lacked adequate planning, was poorly administered, and was plagued by social tensions and financial difficulties. Many of the farmers involved in these programs eventually took wage-paying jobs on military bases during the Second World War or in forestry-related operations at Corner Brook and Grand Falls. By the late 1930s, the cost of maintaining the settlements had become too high and the government abandoned the scheme.

Questions:

1. Why was the Land Settlement Program established? How were applicants selected?
2. What were the perceived benefits of the Land Settlement Program?
3. In 2007, agriculture accounted for 0.6 per cent of the total Newfoundland and Labrador employment by industry. What factors might explain why this is the case?

5.69 Newfoundland Ranger, Constable Danny Corcoran, 1935
This constable gave his life in the line of duty. While posted at White Bay, he became lost in the wilderness for 17 days and was badly frostbitten. He died just over a week after he was found.

5.70 Rangers were often the only liaison between a community and their central government.
This was especially true for many of the isolated communities in Labrador. Here a Newfoundland Ranger poses with some people from North West River, c. 1940s.

*The Force was modeled upon the Royal Canadian Mounted Police which provided policing services throughout northern Canada.

Law Enforcement

The Commission of Government realized that law enforcement in the mid-1930s was sparse and inadequate. The colony's only police force, the Newfoundland Constabulary, consisted of approximately 170 officers, half of which served on the Avalon Peninsula. To improve this situation, the Commission of Government reorganized law enforcement in Newfoundland and Labrador. First, it changed the Newfoundland Constabulary into an urban police force and restricted it to more heavily populated areas – St. John's, the Avalon Peninsula, Corner Brook, and Grand Falls. Then in 1935, it created the Newfoundland Ranger Force* (NRF) to provide policing and government services to the outports. The Rangers replaced most of the Newfoundland Constabulary officers who had been stationed there, and for 15 years they provided a vital link between people living in rural communities and the central government in St. John's.

Although Rangers were told that their primary duty was to patrol and police the districts, police work was actually only a small part of their responsibilities. In reality, the Rangers functioned as an administrative extension of the central government. During the first five years of

"… the Newfoundland Rangers are a sort of super-police force which does a great deal of useful administrative and protective work in remote parts of the country."

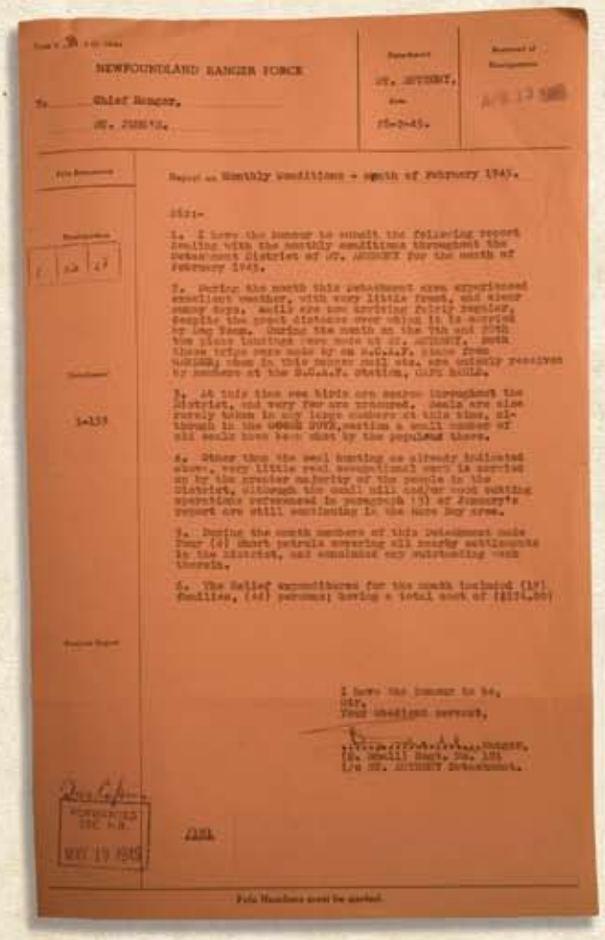
– St. John's *The Evening Telegram*, July 15, 1939

*Technically the Rangers worked directly under the Department of Natural Resources, but they performed a wide variety of duties for all government departments.

the Commission of Government (1934-39), the Rangers spent most of their time doing tasks such as investigating relief applicants, distributing relief, and supervising relief projects – duties associated with the Department of Public Health and Welfare.* In 1937, the Rangers also were given the duties of District Officers, which further increased their administrative function.

The Rangers patrolled their districts every month and submitted four kinds of reports to the government based on the information they gathered: 1) Crime 2) Patrol 3) General Conditions, and 4) Miscellaneous. These reports detailed all activities in the communities. They noted the social and economic conditions in each settlement, including the number of people on public relief, the amount of money spent on relief, and the condition of the population in general. They provided information about the fisheries and stated other areas where men were finding employment. These reports provided the Commission with essential information on all activities in rural areas.

The Ranger's duties sometimes increased according to changes in government policy and global events. During the Second World War, the Rangers became responsible for: enforcing rations and black-out orders; patrolling for enemy submarines and aircraft; arresting military deserters; issuing national registration cards; and recruiting volunteers for the Armed Forces. After the war, the Rangers surveyed their districts about the popularity of the Commission of Government in the outports. They also gathered information on people's attitudes towards the return of responsible government and confederation with Canada. After Confederation, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) gradually assumed the roles of the Rangers in the outports and the Newfoundland Ranger force was disbanded in 1950.


NEWFOUNDLAND RANGER FORCE

5.71 A Newfoundland Ranger report from the St. Anthony detachment, February 1945

5.72 Duties of the Newfoundland Rangers

Department	Duties of Ranger
Natural Resources	• Inspect logging camps and conditions • Enforce game laws • Issue small game and sport-fishing licences • Enforce salmon, herring, and lobster regulations • Organize forest fire fighting
Public Health and Welfare	• Issue public relief payments • Arrange for medical treatment of patients • Escort mental health patients to St. John's
Justice	• Enforce criminal law and all statutes of Newfoundland • Investigate accidental/sudden deaths • Investigate fires • Escort prisoners • Act as deputy sheriffs in designated areas
Finance	• Collect customs duties and licence fees • Inspect weights and measures
Home Affairs and Education	• Act as truant officers • Inspect schools
Public Utilities	• Supervise construction and maintenance of roads, bridges, wharves, government buildings, and breakwaters • Issue driver's licences • Act as wreck commissioners

Questions:

1. In which areas did the Commission of Government initiate reforms? Create a chart in which you give the five areas, and list the main reforms the Commission of Government hoped to initiate.
2. In which of these areas was the government most successful? Explain.
3. Overall, how effective was the Commission of Government in governing Newfoundland and improving the lives of Newfoundlanders? Explain.

TOPIC 5.6

Second World War

During the Second World War, American culture was shared with Newfoundland and Labrador through radio and recreation events. How is culture shared between countries today?

Many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians serve in the armed forces today. What are the main roles carried out by the armed forces?

THE DAILY NEWS

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 1939 — Price: Two Cents — No. 199

Britain, France Declare War On Germany

PATRIOTIC MEN and WOMEN

You are asked to show your loyalty to King and Country by taking part in to-day's Patriotic Labor Parade.

Ribbons for sale by members of the Committee.

Hitler Failed Reply British Ultimatum

London Hears Announcement Of War With Complete Calm

5.73 *The Daily News*, Sept. 4, 1939

Introduction

Britain's declaration of war against Germany on September 3, 1939 automatically drew Newfoundland and Labrador into the hostilities. Although many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were eager to enlist for military service, Newfoundland did not have its own armed forces in 1939. Both the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and the Royal Naval Reserve had disbanded by the early 1920s, and the colony's struggling economy had prevented it from establishing another military force. Unable to bear the enormous expense of raising and equipping an overseas force, the Commission of Government encouraged volunteers from Newfoundland and from Labrador to join British, Canadian, and other Allied Armed Forces.

Contributions

During the course of the war, approximately 22 000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians served overseas. Thousands more offered, but failed to meet eligibility requirements. This was a significant contribution from a small British colony with a population of only 300 000. These volunteers from Newfoundland and Labrador served on land, at sea, and in the air. They fought in Britain, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, North Africa, and other parts of the world. The Royal Navy attracted more volunteers than any other single branch of the armed forces, but significant numbers also joined Britain's Royal Artillery and Royal Air Force. Many joined other allied forces – especially the Canadian units, which recruited 1160 men from Newfoundland and Labrador.

5.74 John Parsons, Royal Navy, c. 1940s
During the Second World War, many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, such as John Parsons of Greenspond, enlisted in the Royal Navy. Based on their performance, Winston Churchill called Newfoundlanders "the hardiest and most skillful boatmen in rough seas who exist."

5.75 RCAF-WD recruits in St. John's, Sept. 24, 1942
More than 500 Newfoundland and Labrador women joined the Canadian Armed Forces, serving in the Royal Canadian Air Force's Women's Division (RCAF-WD), the Canadian Women's Auxiliary Air Force, the Canadian Women's Army Corps, and the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service. Women who enlisted helped to close the gap in gender inequality, but also faced considerable discrimination. They earned lower wages than their male counterparts, could not receive allowances for dependent husbands, and had to work in non-combatant roles away from the front lines.

5.76 Newfoundland and Labrador enlistees, c. 1940
Joseph Kearney (left) and John Pike, two soldiers from Newfoundland and Labrador who joined the Royal Artillery during the Second World War.

Other Newfoundlanders and Labradorians contributed to the war effort in non-combat roles. About 10 000 residents, for example, served in the Merchant Marine, crewing vessels carrying food, equipment, and personnel across the North Atlantic to Britain and other allies. It was dangerous work – German **U-boats** sank an average of 33 Allied merchant vessels each week during the peak of hostilities. The Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit (NOFU) also sent about 3600 loggers to the United Kingdom. These men helped to satisfy Britain's wartime demand for timber products.

Back in Newfoundland and Labrador, some residents joined the home defence force created by the Commission of Government. Originally known as the Newfoundland Militia, it became the Newfoundland Regiment in 1943. Others contributed to the war effort through charitable organizations such as the Women's Patriotic Association (WPA), the Newfoundland Patriotic Association (NPA), and the Red Cross. Individuals also sent clothes, food, and other material comforts to soldiers serving overseas. Still others provided medical care to injured troops, visited bereaved family members, or raised money to support the war effort in general.

5.77 An ad for war bonds from *The Daily News*, June 22, 1940

5.78 Newfoundland and Labrador as a "stepping stone to North America"

Foreign Military Bases in Newfoundland and Labrador

During the Second World War Canadian and American armed forces built and staffed military bases throughout the colony. This was important because of Newfoundland and Labrador's strategic location. Known as a "stepping stone to North America," the island was closer to Europe than any other part of North America. An occupation by German forces would give easy access to both Canada and the United States; thus its security was critical to the defence of North America. Yet the colony did not have any military bases to repel an enemy attack at the start of hostilities, nor could it afford to build any.

Canada decided in September 1939 to take over the defence of Newfoundland and Labrador. It spent approximately $65 million in the coming years to establish air bases at Torbay and Goose Bay, expand existing airports at Gander and Botwood, build a naval base at St. John's, and open a ship repair facility at nearby Bay Bulls. It sent tens of thousands of troops to Newfoundland and Labrador – from 1943 to 1945, for example, as many as 16 000 Canadian servicemen and women were stationed in the colony at any one time.

"… the integrity of Newfoundland and Labrador is essential to the security of Canada."

– Prime Minister Mackenzie King, Sept. 8, 1939

5.79 A heavy bomber hangar under construction, Goose Bay, 1953
The construction and ongoing maintenance of the base at Goose Bay provided many with a source of cash employment.

All bases played important roles during the war. Fighter squadrons and bombers based at Torbay and Botwood patrolled the North Atlantic searching for U-boats. Goose Bay and Gander became vital refuelling stations for aircraft leaving America for Britain, and also aided in coastal defence. The Canadian naval base at St. John's was home to military escort vessels that protected convoy lanes.

5.80 Second World War vessels J334 and J317 in St. John's Harbour, c. 1942

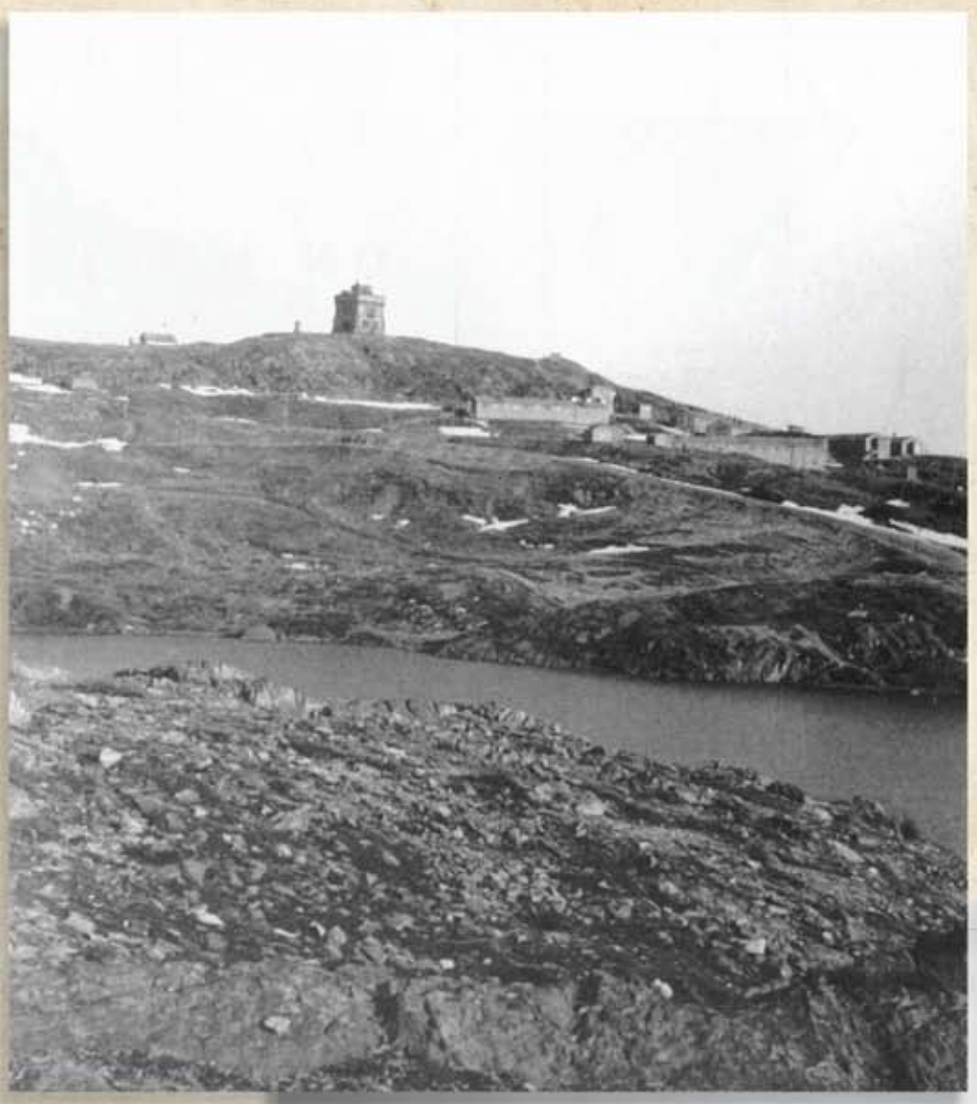
5.81 Airman and infantrymen at RCAF Station, Gander, 1943
In the background is a Hawker Hurricane XII aircraft.

MILITARIZING THE WILDERNESS

Of all the foreign bases built in Newfoundland and Labrador, the Goose Bay airfield probably had the largest impact on the people and environment around it. Unpopulated wilderness at the start of the war, Goose Bay became the largest airfield in the Western Hemisphere in 1943 – able to accommodate 3000 civilian workers and 5000 military personnel.

The construction of the base attracted hundreds of Labradorians who were looking for work. Although a source of much-needed employment, the base also eroded local lifestyles. For many, year-round salaried work replaced traditional season-based activities, such as trapping in the winter and fishing in the summer. In addition, as Labradorians came into contact with Canadian and American servicemen, they were exposed to North American culture. In some cases, this influenced such things as residents' recreational choices and diet. Many children, for example, began to ask for canned spaghetti, macaroni and cheese, and other North American processed foods instead of game meat and other traditional foods.

5.82 American music, food, and other goods became more common here with the establishment of the American military bases.



5.83 United States Army installation atop Signal Hill, St. John's, c. 1941-1945
The American encampment on Signal Hill consisted of heavy cannons to repel naval assaults and large guns for use against enemy aircraft.

5.84 American base Fort Pepperrell, St. John's, c. 1942-1945

The United States also built military bases and stationed troops in the colony. It signed a Leased Bases Agreement with Britain on March 27, 1941, giving it permission to build bases in eight British colonies, including Newfoundland and Labrador. Under the agreement, America leased these areas for a period of 99 years. In return, the United States gave Britain 50 of its naval destroyers. During the next four years, the United States spent more than $100 million to build an army base at St. John's (known as Fort Pepperrell), an air base at Stephenville (known as Harmon Field), a naval air station at Argentia, and an army base in the neighbouring village of Marquise (known as Fort McAndrew). It also built a series of radar sites, radio transmitters, repeater stations, and other small installations across the country. By the end of the war, more than 100 000 American troops had served in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The establishment of foreign military bases and influx of tens of thousands of North American troops triggered a series of rapid economic, social, and political changes in Newfoundland and Labrador. Some were positive; some were negative. Many would have far-reaching implications for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Economic Impacts

The war brought a sudden injection of economic prosperity to the colony. The combined spending of $165 million by Canada and the United States to build military bases sparked a construction boom that employed thousands of local residents in both Newfoundland and Labrador. By the end of 1942, approximately 20 000 men and women were working at the bases. More than 7000 others were earning salaries as military enlistees. In a colony where the credit (or truck) system had operated for centuries, the war allowed many people to earn cash wages for the first time in their lives. The poverty so widespread before the war was greatly reduced.

Local businesses and industries prospered greatly from the war. Building suppliers, construction companies, and a host of tradesmen and labourers were involved in constructing bases, roads and railways, and port facilities. American and Canadian troops spent heavily at local restaurants and stores. Dairy farmers also experienced increased demand for milk and other products. The colony's lumber companies sold significant volumes of timber to base contractors, and wartime demand for fish drove up the price of cod on the international market.

Wartime prosperity caused government revenue to increase dramatically. After reporting a series of deficits in the 1930s – including two $4-million deficits in the 1938-39 and 1939-40 fiscal years – the country enjoyed a series of surpluses totaling a combined $28 million by the end of the 1945-1946 fiscal year. With so much money in the public purse, the Commission of Government increased spending on education, health care, transportation, housing, and other social services.

Not all changes, however, were positive. Mining and pulp and paper companies experienced temporary labour shortages as workers left to accept higher paying jobs at the bases. To help remedy this, the Commission of Government asked the Americans and Canadians to keep pay rates low for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Government officials also feared that if local workers earned extremely high wages during the war, they would expect the same wages when the war was over – which local industries would likely not be able to afford.

Wartime also drove up the cost of many foodstuffs and goods, increasing the cost of living in Newfoundland and Labrador by about 58 per cent. The price of a dozen eggs, for example, almost tripled from 50 cents to $1.37. Although high employment rates and increased wages tended to offset difficulties caused by inflation, residents on fixed incomes, such as the wives of recruits serving overseas, found it difficult to afford the rising cost of living.

5.85 Construction workers, c. 1941
Workers help construct a dock at the American air naval base in Argentia. About 4000 labourers from Newfoundland and Labrador were employed on the base at any one time during construction.

5.86

5.87

Excerpts from *Paradise Cafe*

Paradise Cafe was written by a group of students from Robert Leckie Intermediate School in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in 1990. It is based on the changes that occurred in the community over time with the construction of the Goose Bay Air Base in the 1940s, the pullout of the American operations in the 1970s, and beyond.

Gladys: Jim, if we don't build on promises and hopes then what can we ever build on?

(The Paradise Cafe sign shines on the drawn stage curtains. The Real Estate Man enters with a free-standing tripod, a "For sale" sign and hammer and nails. He sets the tripod down and begins to nail the sign up. Gladys enters to watch.)

Gladys: This place has such memories. It's a shame we have to part with it. I was here the day it opened … I can't believe I'm here now, selling it … if it could talk, what stories it would tell…

Gladys: Yeah, Clarice married a serviceman too, but she went back to the States with hers. Me and Jim, we stayed here. He likes it here. I went on working at the cafe for the first few years, while Jim was still in the Air Force. Then when he got out, we collected our pennies and put them together for a small down payment on the little place. It was hard work to make a go of it…

Gladys: But the 70's now, they brought a different kind of problem… At first, times seemed promising enough. The military weren't building so much anymore, but they were employing a lot of people. And there was a feeling of growth … Little Happy Valley was not just a construction camp built up around the base. It was beginning to be a real little community, in its own right. It has schools, churches, and its own hospital, a small library…

Those were the Linerboard Days. Oh, yes, Joey had big plans for us.

(Lights come up on the cafe. Gladys is seated at a table, sketching renovations. Jim carries in a step ladder and begins to work.)

Jim: Before you get too carried away with your renovations now, what're you gonna do if the military really do pull out, like some people say they will? And what if the government doesn't come through with the bucks for the Linerboard operation? What're you gonna do if you got the window out and one wall torn up and the Labrador winter whistlin' through? Maybe you shouldn't build on promises and hopes…

Gladys: Jim, if we don't build on promises and hopes, then what are we ever going to build on?

(Jim gets up from the table. He climbs his ladder at the back of the stage and begins to nail a board as if to make a new window frame. He is interrupted by an audio announcement.)

Jim: *(voice over, on tape)* The American Air Force announced today that it will be pulling out of its Goose Bay operations in June of this year. The news is no surprise, as it had been rumoured for some time … (Volume fades in and out) Premier Frank Moores announced today that the Labrador Linerboard will close down its operation on …

(As the Audio announcement fades, Jim nails a board diagonally across the window he was fixing …)

5.88 Workmen at Goose Bay

Experiencing The Arts

Now you are ready to write your scene. Remember to include any necessary stage directions for your "performers", as well as suggestions for props, backdrops, etc.

5.89 Knights of Columbus Hostel fire, St. John's, Dec. 12, 1942

5.90 Interior view of the Knights of Columbus Hostel, St. John's, c. 1940-42
Until it was destroyed by fire in 1942, the Knights of Columbus Hostel in St. John's was a popular recreation facility for service personnel during the Second World War.

5.91 Enlistment and deaths of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians in the Second World War

Branches	Number Enlisted	Fatalities
Merchant Marine	5000	266
Newfoundland Overseas Forestry Unit	3596	34
British Royal Navy	3419	352
British Army	2343	83
Canadian Forces	1684	120
Royal Newfoundland Regiment	1668	30
British Royal Air Force	713	139
Other Forces (e.g., American Army)	unknown	4

Social Impacts

Newfoundland and Labrador society experienced both direct and indirect consequences of the Second World War. Many families were directly impacted by the loss of family members who died while fighting overseas. Over 1000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians lost their lives as enlisted personnel during the Second War World. Others were killed on home soil by direct acts of war. These include those who were among the 136 lost when a German U-boat sank the SS *Caribou*, the Sydney to Port aux Basques passenger ferry, on October 14, 1942 and the more than 60 men who were killed when German U-boats attacked Bell Island twice in 1942, sinking four ore carriers.

The Second World War had a major cultural impact on Newfoundland and Labrador society. Local residents came into contact with thousands of Canadian and American troops and were thus more directly exposed to North American entertainment and consumer goods. American radio played on local airwaves, styles of dress changed, and standards of living generally improved. Civilians and military personnel mixed at dances, sporting events,* movie nights, and other social events. Relationships with local residents were generally good. A considerable number of American servicemen married Newfoundland women. These interactions and exchanges helped integrate the local society into the larger North American culture.

Foreign military bases also were the means by which the colony gained a significant amount of social capital. Both the Canadians and Americans invested millions of dollars in state-of-the-art hospitals, airports, roads, telecommunications systems, sewage systems, living quarters, and other infrastructure. When the bases closed, the local community inherited much of this at virtually no economic cost. Canada, for example, sold its 100-bed hospital at Botwood to the Commission of Government for just $1 in 1946. The building served as a cottage hospital until it closed in 1989. Many other facilities built during the Second World War are still in use today, including airports at Stephenville, Gander, Torbay (today the St. John's International Airport), and Goose Bay.

*Bell Island is one of the few locations in North America that German forces directly attacked during the Second World War.

*Local civilians and visiting troops competed against each other in hockey games, baseball games, boxing matches, and at the annual St. John's Regatta.

5.92 Airports established, used, or refurbished during the Second World War

5.93 *Posted to Newfie*, Paul Goranson (1942)
Military personnel were a common sight in Newfoundland and Labrador during the Second World War as depicted in this painting by Paul Goranson, a commissioned war artist for the Royal Canadian Air Force.

5.94 An unidentified soldier of the United States Army
posing with a 40 mm Bofors Anti-Aircraft gun, Hill O' Chips, St. John's, c. 1941-45

Some frictions did emerge between residents and visiting military personnel. The Newfoundland government expropriated private properties needed by the forces. Government officials compensated all dislocated property owners with money, but many felt their payments did not cover the emotional and economic costs of moving. The daily presence of foreign military personnel also created some problems for residents and civil authorities. Some communities were overwhelmed with the vast numbers of enlisted men who were sometimes unruly and disorderly. However, military authorities challenged the rights of local authorities to arrest and prosecute enlisted men under civilian law. An increase in sexually transmitted diseases, drunkenness, brawling in public places, motor vehicle accidents, and the poaching of fish and wildlife represent some negative influences.

Nonetheless, the war period was generally a time of prosperity in Newfoundland and Labrador. Exposure to a more affluent and materialistic North American culture began to change expectations and values. Employment rates were high and many families became accustomed to a quality of living they could not afford just a few years earlier. Wartime prosperity produced social and economic changes which soon led to the demand for political change.

5.95 German submarine
This submarine is possibly the German U-boat (U-190) that was surrendered to Canadian corvettes off Cape Race, Newfoundland on May 11, 1945. It was escorted into Bay Bulls and later sailed into St. John's Harbour with the White Ensign of the Royal Navy flying.

Political Impacts

By 1945, Newfoundland was financially self-supporting. Employment was much higher than before the war, the government was reporting successive surpluses, and even made a series of interest-free loans to Great Britain. Many people believed the tremendous economic hardships of the pre-war years, which had culminated in the loss of responsible government, were past. As the colony's 1933 arrangement with Britain was that the Commission of Government would last until Newfoundland was once again self-supporting, a debate soon emerged over which form of government Newfoundland should adopt.

Many people supported a return to responsible government, but others feared this would again lead to economic ruin. They argued the colony's current prosperity would not last and believed that a union with Canada – and its stable economy – was a more sensible choice. The war had done much to strengthen Newfoundland's ties with Canada. After the war began, for example, growing numbers of workers regularly left the country for seasonal or temporary jobs in Canada. Trade between the country and Canada was also increasing. Immediately before the war, Newfoundland imported 37 per cent of its goods from Canada. This had jumped to 61 per cent by 1945.

Moreover, Canadian officials grew increasingly receptive to confederation during the war, as it became apparent that Newfoundland and Labrador was of significant economic and strategic value to Canada. Some Canadian officials even feared the country would join the United States and become "another Alaska" on its east coast. By helping to integrate Newfoundland and Labrador into North American society and economy, the Second World War also helped to bring about one of the most profound and far-reaching political changes in the colony's history – union with Canada.

Questions:

1. How did exposure to North American culture during the war impact Newfoundland and Labrador lifestyles?

2. What armed forces and other organizations did volunteers from Newfoundland and Labrador join during the Second World War? Why might so many men have joined the Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, and other mercantile marines?

3. The forerunner of what is now St. John's International Airport was built by the Canadian military during the Second World War. What other buildings built during the war are still in use today? How have their purposes changed since the war?

4. Why did American and Canadian military forces decide to build military bases in Newfoundland and Labrador during the Second World War?

5. How did the Second World War change the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador? How did it change Newfoundland and Labrador politics?