


Unit 3 – Chapter 7
Pages 148 - 182

THE INTERWAR YEARS




Key Terms

- Economic Diversification – economic development that depends on a variety of industries rather than one industry
 - Prior to WWI, NL depended entirely on the fishery. However by 1915, this fishery-based economy was struggling to support a growing population
 - Developments in Mining, Forestry, and Agriculture helped to diversify the economy
- 




Key Terms

- Land-based Industry – resources of the land. End of WWI governments had to create new job opportunities and industries to employ growing population. They turned to resources of the land (mining, forestry, agriculture). This change caused people to move from the shoreline and to settle inland. Thus new towns grew up in the interior
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Key Terms

- Great Depression
 - 1930's referred to as the 'dirty thirties' because of economic hardship suffered by people worldwide
 - Period of economic collapse
 - Decrease in imports and exports in NL
 - Debt \$100 million
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Key Terms

- Commission of Government
 - 1934 NL government changed from elected Responsible government to an appointed commission
 - People were no longer able to vote for own leaders
 - In exchange for self-rule, Britain took responsibility for the NL debt and for paying for education, health and welfare
 - Three Newfoundlanders were appointed to commission, no women, and no representation from Labrador




Activities

- Complete the Handout on Land-Based Industries
- 




Disaster and Crisis

- Government and business make effort to increase employment and reduce poverty with development of Land-based Industries
 - Unexpected natural disaster and political and economic crisis make prosperity and progress impossible
 - These occurred in the form of
 - The 1929 Tidal Wave
 - The Great Depression – 1930's
 - The St. John's Riot of 1932
- 



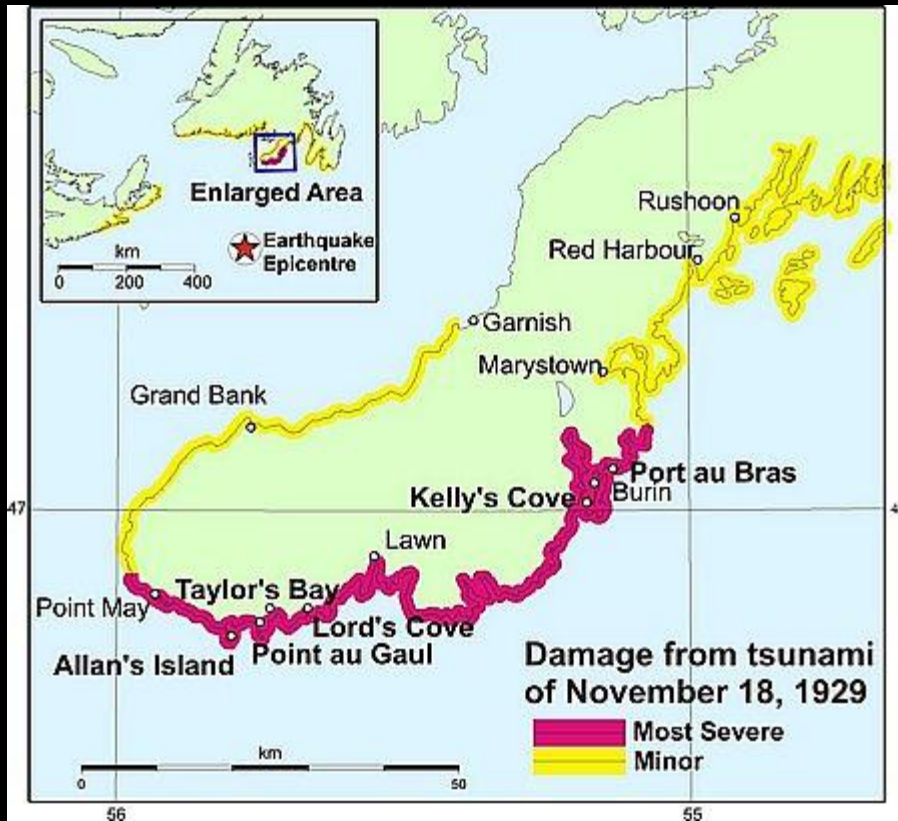
The 1929 Tidal Wave

- What were the effects of the 1929 tidal wave (tsunami) on southern Burin Peninsula communities ?
 - What was the response of people in these communities and people elsewhere to the disaster?
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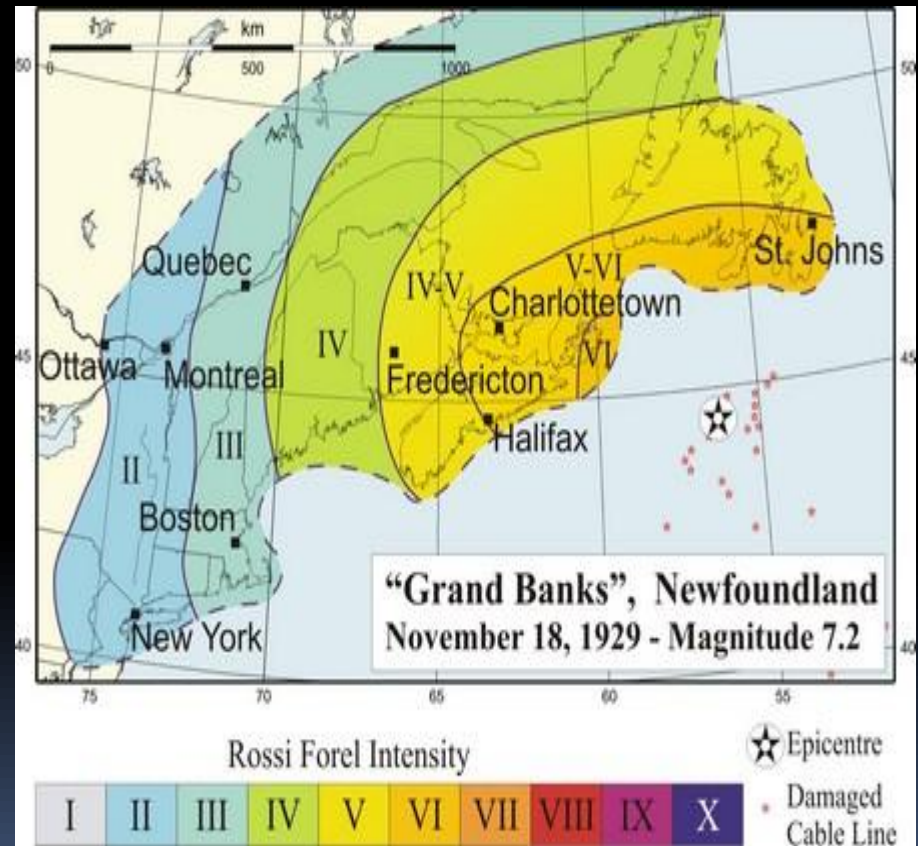


Background

- On 18 November 1929 a tsunami strikes Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula and caused considerable loss of life and property.
- Giant waves hit the coast at 40 km/hr, flooding dozens of communities and washing entire homes out to sea.
- The disaster killed 27 people and left hundreds more homeless or destitute. It was the most destructive earthquake-related event in Newfoundland and Labrador's history



*Extent of damage from the 1929 tsunami on Burin Peninsula, Newfoundland (modified from Whan, 1994). Village names in **bold** indicate where lives were lost.*



Pictures



27* Dead in Newfoundland Tidal Wave

Wireless Report Brings News Of Great Disaster

Women and Children Among Drowned—Building Swept
Away—Communication Cut Off — Steamer Daisy
Rendering Assistance



ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND
VOL. 20. NO. 19.

Known Dead Total Twenty-Seven

Tidal Wave Sweeps
East Coast R...

GOV'T TAKE PROMPT
RELIEF MEASURES

NOVA SCOTIA FEELS SHOCK SEVERELY; BUT LITTLE DAMAGE

As To Exact Location of
... Theory That fe
... ment of Earth
... Serious
... To

Nova Scotia Shaken
By Earthquake Shock;
But Little Damage

Experts U
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EARTHQUAKE AS RECORDED IN TORONTO

... the Atlantic coast earthquake, between Newfoundland and Labrador, and north east of Nova Scotia, was
... recorded by the Toronto seismograph, it shows above. It was the heaviest ever recorded in that district. The
... distance above a recording of 2 millimeters.

... at the time
... and it was the
... accompanied by
... 2000 miles with
... a small boat.




Effects

- Tsunami moved at speed of 100km/h
 - Three main waves measuring 7-15 meters high rushed into towns along the coast
 - Waves destroyed schools, homes, and vessels and swept people into sea
 - Over 40 communities affected
 - Poor fish catches in years to follow attributed to damage to ocean floor by tidal wave
- 



Response


- A relief ship arrived at the Burin Peninsula the following day carrying medical equipment, food, clothes, and other supplies.
 - Public donations poured in from across the country, and within weeks amounted to \$250,000.
 - Canada, the United States, and Britain also gave money and aid
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Response

- Prime Minister Sir Richard Squires dispatched the steamer *SS Meigle* to the Burin Peninsula with a cargo of medical supplies and personnel, government officials, food, clothing, construction materials, and other goods.
- South Coast Disaster Committee established to coordinate fundraising and other relief efforts. Within weeks of its formation, the committee had collected \$100,000 from St. John's and \$90,000 from Corner Brook, Grand Falls, and smaller settlements across the country




Response

- Despite relief efforts, the following decade was a time of tremendous economic hardship for many communities along the Burin Peninsula
 - Show Video
- 




The Great Depression

- What was the Great Depression?
 - What conditions brought on the Great Depression?
 - What impact did the Great Depression have on working-class of NL
 - How effective were government attempts to deal with the Great Depression?
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Definition

- The Great Depression was a worldwide economic downturn that began in the fall of 1929 and did not end in many places until the Second World War.
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What Caused it?

- It was triggered in large part by a sudden crash of the American stock market on October 29, a day widely known as Black Tuesday.
 - Spending during the First World War had resulted in a large national debt, as did the costs of maintaining the Newfoundland Railway. The government also borrowed heavily throughout the 1920s to meet its expenses and a post-war slump in world trade further exacerbated the situation.
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Impacts

- **Widespread Unemployment**
 - Fish prices declined; *the price of a quintal (112 pounds) of dried cod fell from \$9.00 to \$4.53.*
 - businesses forced to lay-off employees
- **“The Dole” (a type of social assistance)**
 - Thousands out of work forced to go on government relief
 - Amount family received depended on number of family members
 - Family of 4 received \$7.70 a month; family of 10, \$17.00, not enough to feed most families
 - “going on the dole” was considered a disgrace
 - It is recorded that 60,000 Newfoundlanders were on able-bodied relief during the depression





Rations from NL Rangers Website





Impacts

- Growing discontent
 - Harsh conditions of depression drove some people to unruly behaviour through frustration and anger
 - Residents in some communities broke into stores for food, (food riots) broke into government offices and organized demonstrations
 - People would enter stores and demand basic necessities such as flour and sugar. Many people resorted to poaching of wildlife in order to feed themselves and their families. Horse meat and salmon became common meals in rural Newfoundland and may have helped people survive the depression.

St. John's Riot of 1932

- Event marked by anger and violence
- People frustrated because of economic circumstances and allegations of government misuse and abuse of funds
- Allegations of corruption were levied against the government of Sir Richard Squires
 - Couldn't live on amount of dole
 - Squandering tax money
 - Paying himself from public funds



April 5, 1932

- Public demonstration outside the Colonial Building in St. John's escalated into a riot numbering 10,000 people.
- Police ordered to clear area
- Protesters storm building and riot ensued
- Several people injured, two police officers hospitalized, and building ransacked
- Prime Minister Sir Richard Squires escaped from the building with a police escort, but was voted out of office in an ensuing election



Activity

- Read Pages 162-183 and note:
- The conditions and events that led to the loss of Responsible Government
- Take a position as to whether the Commission of Government should have been established
- Describe the impact of the loss of Responsible government on Newfoundland society
- Explain whether or not the policies of the Commission of Government had a positive influence on Newfoundland and Labrador from 1934 to 1949.




Page 169 - 173



COMMISSION OF GOVERNMENT



The Facts

- Rather than step down after riot, Sir Richard Squires calls general election for June 11, 1932
 - Party wins only 2 of 27 seats and Frederick Alderdice of United Newfoundland Party is elected Prime Minister
 - He now has to:
 - Run a potentially bankrupt country
 - Pay the interest on countries debt, requiring almost 2/3 of countries revenue
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The Facts


- Newfoundland considers defaulting on loans, but British government won't allow it
- They give the new government a loan in return for an agreement to appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate NL affaires
- Report published by Lord Amulree, head of commission, on Oct. 4th, 1933

Amulree Report

- Report finds local leaders incompetent and their irresponsibility has led to NL present situation
- Recommends the suspension of self-government until country was self-supporting
- This was approved by House of Assembly on December 2, 1933 resulting in end of Responsible Government and the beginning of Commission of Government

Impact

- The people's consent was not asked for, and there was very little opposition . In effect the government voted itself out of existence
- 79 years after winning a hard fought battle for responsible government, Newfoundland returned control of country to Britain in return for financial assistance
- The Commission of Government appointed by Britain was led by a British governor, three British representatives, and three Newfoundland representatives
- It would remain in effect for 15 years




Pg. 174 - 183

COMMISSION POLICIES



Commission of Government


- Broken down into six basic departments:
 - Finance,
 - Natural resources,
 - Health and Welfare,
 - Justice, Public Utilities, and
 - Home Affairs & Education
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The Newfoundland Ranger Force

- created after the Commission of Government took over the government of Newfoundland
- The Rangers had a similar format to the RCMP
- Rangers were paid highly for their duties (http://www.ascension.k12.nf.ca/curriculum/social/nf_rangers/newfound.htm) by the standards of the day
- may have caused some problems with the Rangers living in the communities where poverty and hunger were high



Activity

- Read Pages 176-183 and answer the following questions
 - Identify the main initiatives that Commission of Government undertook to improve conditions in NL.
 - Describe the Commission of Government strategy to improve agriculture.
 - What were educational conditions like during this period as compared to today
 - Explain why good health care services were a challenge for the Commission of Government.
 - Describe the role of NONIA and Grenfell Health in improving the quality of health in outport NL
- 

Commission Policies

- The commission was answerable to Dominion office in London
- Had authority to act without consent of people of NL
- NL's were unable to vote for their leaders and had no control over taxation, spending of public money, or enactment of laws
- Was not a democratic government
- However it did try to respond to the needs of NL's

Commission Policies

- Land Settlement Scheme
 - Designed to create farming communities and settle unemployment on the land
 - Implemented in Markland in 1932 7 other communities
 - To qualify, families had to have: 1 adult male working, receiving government relief
- 1934 – 1942, 365 families relocated
- Was expensive and controversial
- Did not take into account the emotional impact, loneliness of living in isolated areas
- Considered to be more of a labour camp than a community

Commission Policies

- Education
 - Commission wanted more control over education (ie. More trained teachers, well-equipped schools)
 - 1943 – free and compulsory education introduced
 - 1949 – number of schools doubled
- New curriculum with emphasis on health, social education and industrial training

Commission Policies

- Health
 - Main priorities were to fight disease, improve childhood immunization and provide diet supplements
 - Set up Dept. of Health and Welfare and a network of Cottage Hospitals throughout the country
- Floating hospital ship served many outport communities
- Rural District Nursing Service expanded from 8 to 54 nurses

Commission Policies

- Law Enforcement
 - Ranger Force established in 1935
 - Replaced by RCMP in 1950
 - Responsible for all policing outside the city of St. John's