KINDRED COUNTRIES: CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND BEFORE CONFEDERATION

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CHA HISTORICAL BOOKLET NO. 52

SHC
Series Editors: Terry Cook  
(National Archives of Canada)

Gabrielle Blais  
(National Archives of Canada)

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OTTAWA, 1994

**Front Cover:** Photograph of a postcard showing the Reid Newfoundland Company Ferry *Bruce*, with a postal cancellation reading Sydney, N.S. 1907. Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada, POS 2269.

**Back Cover:** Cartoon by Alton Lang showing the differential treatment of Newfoundland and Canadian mail bags in the Newfoundland Post Office at North Sydney, N.S. Courtesy of G.R. McGuire, formally of the National Postal Museum, and reprinted from Malcolm MacLeod, *Nearer Than Neighbours* (St. John's, 1982).
Malcolm MacLeod was born in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, grew up at Halifax, and graduated from Dalhousie, Toronto, and the University of Ottawa (Ph.D., 1974). He is Professor of History at Memorial University of Newfoundland, where he also served as Deputy Director, Office of Research, and is a past president of the Newfoundland Historical Society.

Many of his previous scholarly works have probed and elaborated various aspects of the Newfoundland-Canada connection. In addition to articles in Acadiensis and Newfoundland Quarterly, these include Nearer Than Neighbours (St. John’s, 1982), Peace of the Continent (St. John’s 1986), and A Bridge Built Halfway: A History of Memorial University College, 1925-1950 (Montreal, 1990).
Kindred Countries:
Newfoundland and Canada before confederation

In 1948 the people of Newfoundland voted for union with Canada. Although this was an important break with the past, it was not really a surprising decision, for a multiplication and strengthening of links between the two countries had been underway since the late 1800's. Social relationships included interchange of people, significant links between churches and other organizations, and a growing tendency for Newfoundland to follow patterns copied from the mainland. In the Newfoundland economy, Canadian interests were powerful in transportation and mining, and dominated banking. From before 1900 Canada's dollar was the currency of Newfoundland. Politically, Newfoundland and mainland governments often exhibited intimate cooperation and even went so far as entering into several permanent arrangements for joint administration of sensitive functions. In all spheres, Newfoundland's ties were particularly numerous and tight with the closest part of Canada, the Maritime provinces. Thus a web of shared experience and joint undertakings already bound the two communities closely together, when Newfoundland voters were asked in 1948 to choose a course for the future.

1. Social Interchange

One aspect of Newfoundland's social connection to Canada was the interchange of people. As Newfoundland entered the twentieth century, only a minuscule portion of its population had North American origins, which descended from Micmac, Acadian, and Highland Scots settlers who had migrated from Nova Scotia between 1750 and 1860. Migrations in the opposite direction, however, became common from the 1880's on, and still persist.

Nova Scotia was the first major destination for emigrants from Newfoundland. In 1881 there were just 500 Newfoundlanders in Cape Breton, but by 1921, the total had jumped to 7500. At that stage the Newfoundland-born constituted 11 per cent of the people of Sydney. Newfoundland workers were also prominent in marine occupations throughout the province. When four Lunenburg schooners were lost in a 1927 gale, nearly one-quarter of 88 fatalities were Newfoundlanders. In addition to Nova Scotia, other important destinations for out-migrating Newfoundlanders were New England, later central Canada, later still the Canadian west.
In many cases migrants’ experience was seasonal, with workers keeping a residence, sometimes a family, back home in Newfoundland, and returning themselves periodically. This pattern was assisted by Canadian immigration policy, which until the 1920’s treated native-born Newfoundlanders the same as Canadians. Thereafter, however, Ottawa began applying the same regulations to Newfoundlanders that foreign entrants had to meet (for example, concerning health and possession of minimum funds). Newfoundlanders nevertheless continued passing back and forth in large numbers. During most of the 1890-1930 period, the flow of Newfoundlanders into Canada ranged between 800 and 2000 per year. When the Second World War created an urgent need for additional labour in Canada, Ottawa and St. John’s negotiated an arrangement whereby large-scale employers recruited sizeable groups. Newfoundland immigration shot up to over 4000 in the peak year of 1945.

In the pre-Confederation dispersion of Newfoundlanders, Canada always drew more immigrants than did the United States.

**Table 1**

NEWFOUNDLAND-BORN RESIDENTS OF

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>United States</th>
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<tr>
<td>1910/11</td>
<td>15,469</td>
<td>5,080</td>
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<tr>
<td>1920/21</td>
<td>23,103</td>
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<tr>
<td>1930/31</td>
<td>26,410</td>
<td>23,980</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940/41</td>
<td>25,837</td>
<td>21,370</td>
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These figures represent a sizeable portion of Newfoundland’s total population. The 1930-31 census in the two larger countries found that their total population of Newfoundlanders was equal to 18 per cent of the number of people in Newfoundland itself.

The large number of expatriate Newfoundlanders living in Canada created numerous human bonds between the two countries - bonds of experience and familiarity, reinforced by correspondence and visits. In 1948 Newfoundland’s pro-Confederation leaders sent a representative seeking testimonials from those living (stranded?) abroad. “We were able to publish the names of many mainland Newfoundlanders who thought Canada was the cat’s pyjamas,” remembered Harold Horwood. “Any who thought it was the sinkhole of the universe were simply ignored.”
By the mid-century, how common were these out-of-country family connections for Newfoundlanders? In a random sample of 120 (mainly middle class) students at Memorial University College, 95 per cent reported having had close relatives abroad while they were growing up in Newfoundland during 1910-45 (46 per cent of these relatives being in the United States, 37 per cent in Canada, 12 per cent in Britain). These statistics reflected youth being continually forced away from home, generation after generation. As Newfoundland’s experience paralleled what was happening in the Maritime provinces in those same years, it seems clear the same forces were at work across the whole of the area now called Canada’s Atlantic region, ignoring the international boundary which then ran through (but did not divide) it.

Many of Newfoundland’s social institutions also had links to the mainland. Among the major churches, Methodists had the strongest connection, ever since the Newfoundland conference became one of several units in the Methodist Church of Canada in the 1870’s. At the other end of the social scale, the Church of England, imperialistic and British in general orientation, nevertheless developed as part of the church in the new world. From the 1780’s Newfoundland was part of the Anglican diocese of Nova Scotia. Later the separation of Newfoundland from ecclesiastical administrative control by Halifax was deliberately orchestrated to coincide with, and thus be balanced by, the separation of Toronto from Quebec. In 1918 when a Newfoundland native was made Bishop for the first time, the consecration was performed in St. John’s by the Archbishop of Nova Scotia, assisted by the Bishops of Quebec, Montreal, and Ottawa.

While maintaining strong links with Ireland, the Roman Catholic Church in Newfoundland also became thoroughly involved in Canadian affairs. From the 1870’s, the apostolic delegate named to Canada (and residing in Ottawa) was also responsible for Newfoundland. There were frequent interchanges of personnel between the church in Newfoundland and on the mainland, particularly because the western part of the island was until 1900 under the control of authorities in Quebec or Nova Scotia rather than St. John’s. The Newfoundland church joined with full combatant status in the struggle over formulating an Atlantic Catholic position on the 1920’s proposal to have one federated university at Halifax for the whole region. “Newfoundland might have to put this proposition through for us,” Father J.J. Tompkins wrote from Antigonish, to Archbishop E.P. Roche of St. John’s. (Roche and Tompkins both favoured university federation, but the
official position of regional Catholicism, protecting the interests of established institutions like St. Francis Xavier University, was opposed.) When Roche celebrated his silver jubilee (1940), there were three visiting celebrants - the papal delegate to Canada and Newfoundland, and two representatives from Halifax, one for the Archbishop, the other for Holy Heart Seminary which had taken on the task of training a large proportion of Newfoundland priests.

Smaller Christian organizations also represented more Canadian and North American, than British or European connections. In the 1920's, Newfoundland's Presbyterian school board received small infusions of funds from the Presbyterian Church of Canada. "This money, though coming from Canada," notes the annual report of Presbyterian schools, "is really given by St. John's, which sends its money to the central Board at Halifax for distribution." Even the Salvation Army - crowning proof that Victorian England was capable of great enthusiasm and sincerity - appeared in Newfoundland under Canadian rather than British auspices. Its first meetings were organized, during a prolonged visit home, by a young woman from Portugal Cove who had moved to Toronto and become a Salvationist leader there.

Many other organizations also helped fix Newfoundland in the embrace of the Canadian mainland, including the Knights of Columbus, the Royal Society of Canada, and the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association. Rotary was inaugurated in Newfoundland in 1921 with assistance from the Halifax Club. The Loyal Orange Association spread into Newfoundland from Prince Edward Island(1863) and caught on fast; by 1920 Newfoundland ranked third across British America, after Ontario and Saskatchewan, in the number of lodges. From its inception in 1918, the Maritimes division of the Canadian National Institute for the Blind(CNIB) included a branch in Newfoundland. "To help the Adult Blind of the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland became self-supporting," proclaimed the printed letterhead of a 1928 drive, for which one-quarter of sixteen well-known patrons were from Newfoundland. In 1933 St. John's separated from Halifax control, and thereafter the Newfoundland and Labrador division was one of the CNIB's main constituent parts.

For a long time Newfoundland institutions were more aware of developments in Britain than in foreign jurisdictions, and were likely to copy patterns from that source. Later, it became Canadian models of which
Newfoundlanders were the more conscious. One good example of the change is Newfoundland's arrangements for handling mental health problems. Throughout the nineteenth century, treatment of persons with mental and nervous disorders, and management of the asylum that was established at St. John's, were modeled on British practice. In 1911, when a thorough examination of the hospital was needed, an English asylum superintendent was commissioned to do a report, this being in accord with long-established tendencies. During the next decade, however, there was a change. In 1920-21 government once again investigated the mental hospital. This time an official was commissioned first to visit hospitals in Canada; his report was most directly influenced by Canadian thinking, and by then institutions at Whitby, Ontario, and Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, had become the models to emulate. When insulin shock therapy was introduced in the 1930's, the superintendent took guidance from the New Brunswick hospital at Saint John, and it was from there that nurse Kathleen Fraser in 1938 smuggled malarial blood into Newfoundland (the test tube strapped to her body) to introduce fever therapy.

Educational influences reaching into Newfoundland from abroad revealed the same shift from British to chiefly Canadian models. (Coordination with jurisdictions in the Maritimes - in elementary curriculum and school-leaving standards - will be described below.) By the time Memorial University was founded as a two-year junior college in 1925, a Canadian-leaning era in Newfoundland higher education was well established (see Table 2). It is therefore not surprising to find that Memorial's most important foreign affiliations in its first quarter-century were with institutions in Canada. Almost all the scholarships for further study were to universities in the Maritimes. A Memorial representative joined those from six mainland institutions in helping to govern Nova Scotia Technical College. Among pre-1949 graduates who completed degrees by study abroad, 82 per cent went to Canada, 10 per cent to the United States, and 8 per cent to Britain.
Table 2
LOCATIONS OF FOREIGN SCHOOLING
OF NEWFOUNDLANDERS WHO
STUDIED/TRAINED ABROAD, 1870-1950 (Percentages)

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<tbody>
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<td>Great Britain</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>Canada</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
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Interchange of population and institutional influences must not blind us to the fact of some important differences in lifestyle between Canada and Newfoundland in pre-Confederation times. Standards of health were much lower in Newfoundland, where around 1940 the death rate from bronchitis/pneumonia was two times, and from tuberculosis over three times, as high as in Canada. Some of Newfoundland's public rituals were also quite distinct. After the First World War, July 1st became a national day of mourning, in order to mark the tragic heroism of the Newfoundland Regiment at Beaumont-Hamel. In Canada, ironically, it was an opposite kind of day, celebration of the original 1867 Confederation from which Newfoundland for so long stayed clear. Only in Newfoundland were there public holidays for March 17th (St. Patrick's Day, Irish Catholic) and July 12th (Orangemen's Day, Irish Protestant).

Yet, there were also important basic similarities between life styles in Newfoundland and eastern Canada. Both had roughly similar mixtures of rural and urban communities. By 1950 Newfoundland was 43 per cent urban, the same as New Brunswick (compared with 55 per cent in Nova Scotia, and 62 per cent in Canada). Newfoundland's literacy rate had risen from about 70 per cent in the 1890's - when the Maritimes were at 87 per cent - to an equal standard of 90 per cent. The most popular styles of houses, which had dominated Newfoundland architecture since the 1800's, represented diffusion from the mainland of a common Atlantic Canada-New England building tradition. With the number of foreign-born never more than 2 per cent of the total population after 1900, Newfoundland society had achieved great stability. In the Maritimes, original population groups were similarly well-rooted and outside influx was also limited.
Intellectual currents also linked the two countries. From 1908 on, the principal contents of the Newfoundland Teachers Association Journal was the current issue of Canadian Teacher, carried in its entirety as an insert. The Family Herald of Montreal and Eaton's mail order catalogue both achieved wide circulation in Newfoundland in the 1920's, while E.J. Pratt at his Toronto base did not find that his Newfoundland upbringing and saltwater subject-matter hindered his widespread acceptance as Canada's national poet.

It is hard to know what to make of all these links between Newfoundland and Canadian peoples, institutions, and lifestyles. By the early 1900's Newfoundland had developed into a society that was quite distinct and self-reliant without, naturally, being completely self-contained. Its external connections showed that Canada had in many respects replaced Britain in the role of mother country. It was now Canada which set standards for many endeavours, accepted surplus population, and provided national networks in which Newfoundland organizations increasingly found their niche.

2. Economic Links

For a long time the most important of Newfoundland's primary industries - the fishery - experienced relatively little Canadian influence. Then the clatter of internal combustion engines spread through the inshore sector during the 1920's and '30's. Newfoundland became dependent upon foreign sources for motors, spare parts, and petroleum products, and Canada was the main supplier. The most popular engine was the single-cylinder "Acadia," manufactured in Bridgewater, Nova Scotia, by a company which had a branch office and repair facility in St. John's (from 1912), and which in some years sold nearly 60 per cent of its entire production in Newfoundland. Almost all of the petroleum that supplied Newfoundland's needs was refined at Saint John or Halifax.

In mining, Canadian prospectors and promoters sparked key developments. The copper boom of the 1870's was triggered by discoveries made in Notre Dame Bay by the Maritimes prospector, Smith McKay. Iron mining (from 1895), at Bell Island, Conception Bay was the Newfoundland enterprise most closely integrated with industrial needs in Canada. Two Nova Scotia firms undertook to supply ore for a big steel mill on Cape Breton Island. Cultural and social conditions in Conception Bay were
transformed by this Canadian operation. Surplus population from overcrowded fishing districts gathered at Wabana, the company town on Bell Island, which briefly became Newfoundland’s second largest city. Canadian mine managers became a weighty presence in Newfoundland business and political circles. Thus Canadian mining corporations contributed importantly to the diversification of Newfoundland’s economy, but also to its underdevelopment - first signing a 1921 agreement to construct an iron smelter, then consistently refusing to honour this pledge. When the Newfoundland government tried to enforce it by imposing the export charges which were a guarantee in the deal, the companies backed up their refusal to pay by closing the mines (five times in 1922-27).

Meanwhile, the exploitation of Bell Island iron had a profound impact in Cape Breton. “Nature seems to have intended” that the two islands should be linked together, thought J.R. Bennett (Newfoundland Colonial Secretary, 1926), “as one has the iron and the other has the coal, the one being the complement of the other.” Soon Sydney was one of Canada’s major centres of heavy industry. During the period 1900-50, about one-third of Canada’s requirements for steel were met there, thanks to Newfoundland ores.

The other great diversification in Newfoundland’s economy which occurred in the early twentieth century was the manufacture of pulp and paper, intricately associated with a great increase in logging operations. Two Canadian factors - entrepreneurs (especially in the Humber River watershed) and regulatory example - had powerfully helped to shape the development of Newfoundland sawmilling in the 1800’s. Around 1900 more distant outsiders began to compete. British businessman Lewis Miller arrived with several dozen Swedish and Scots lumberpeople, hired hundreds of others and had high hopes, but stayed only long enough to leave both his names in the Exploits Valley (Lewisporte, Millertown). He was bought out by Harry Crowe of Nova Scotia, who proved more durable and was prominent in the colony for a quarter-century as a leading businessman and proponent of confederation.

The Canadian lumber firm with the greatest impact, constitutionally, was the Grand River Pulp and Lumber Company (GRPL), which negotiated cutting rights along valuable stretches of the Hamilton River in Labrador. Quebec objected to these Newfoundland leases. Both governments wanted royalty payments. Eventually growing tired of arresting each other’s timber rangers, they agreed to submit the whole boundary question to binding
arbitration. Lawyers then covered with their arguments almost as much paper as was ever made from pulpwood shipped out of Labrador. In 1927, the Judicial Committee of the British Privy Council awarded Newfoundland even more of the territory in dispute than it had made a case for.

After the lumberers came huge paper-making operations, at Grand Falls (1910) and Corner Brook (1925), both projects controlled by British capital. In this industry, Newfoundland seemed still the outpost of a European, rather than a continental economy. Yet, although British entrepreneurs energized these developments, there were, nevertheless, important Canadian elements in the Newfoundland pulp and paper industry. A cadre of experienced papermakers from Canada was imported to run the big machines at Grand Falls. By the mid-1920’s the logging workforce proved insufficient for the increased demand. W.I. Bishop, the Montreal engineering firm which had a contract to produce 125,000 cords annually during Corner Brook’s first six years, often employed 20 per cent or more non-Newfoundlanders (chiefly from Cape Breton and Quebec). The Newfoundland paper industry’s links with Canada were strengthened in 1927, when International Paper Company of New York bought out Corner Brook’s previous proprietors. The Newfoundland operation joined a network of International subsidiaries spread across eastern Canada: Gatineau, Trois-Rivières, Dalhousie (NB). The branch plant had become as significant in Newfoundland as on the mainland. In the 1930’s, the International group of companies implemented a sales allocation scheme to share available newsprint contracts. This was the origin behind anti-management rumours floating around Newfoundland that short time and layoffs at Corner Brook came from deliberate decisions to transfer orders - which the Newfoundland operation could have filled - to less efficient plants in Canada.

In manufacturing other than pulp and paper, there was negligible foreign investment. In construction, Newfoundland business and labour easily supplied normal requirements; when large-scale projects were undertaken, however, outside operators were often involved. The biggest project of all - the trans-island railroad - was entrusted to an experienced builder from the Canadian Pacific Railway system. R.G. Reid arrived from the mainland in 1890, already 6.5 times a millionaire. Over the next several decades, the syndicate of interlocking and self-succeeding firms, which he and his sons and colleagues organized, became a major dynasty in the country’s economic life. “One of our most substantial Canadian citizens,”
wrote CPR President Shaughnessy in 1897, of this talented Scots migrant, who had become the leading personification of Canadian business imperialism reaching towards Newfoundland. By 1900 the Reid conglomerate sprawled across the country’s whole economy, dominating several sectors with its huge land holdings, railway, steamships, ferry service to Canada, ownership of the St. John’s Light and Power Company, the street railway in the capital, and operation of Newfoundland’s only drydock. Prime Minister Robert Bond had good reason to worry that Newfoundland was on the way to becoming a company colony, before his government’s hostility (and Reid mismanagement) triggered the breakup of that empire.

The final economic sector, services, experienced very pronounced Canadian influences. There was an overwhelming Canadian presence in banking, dating from 1894 when both of Newfoundland’s commercial banks collapsed on the same dark December day. The Bank of Nova Scotia, Bank of Montreal, Canadian Bank of Commerce, and Merchant’s Bank of Halifax (later the Royal Bank) quickly initiated Newfoundland operations. Except for the Newfoundland Government Savings Bank - which did not issue money, extend credit or accept cheques - this foursome from then on monopolized the function which is the strategic flywheel on economic engines.

The Canadian banks spread branches across the country - nearly four dozen by 1919 - which were the first regular banks ever available outside St. John’s (see map). The savings accounts of Newfoundland depositors were usually used to finance loans, and therefore industrial or other development, elsewhere. During 1935-38, for example, the ratio of deposits to loans was 4.5:1 (similar to the proportion in the Maritimes). This imbalance in their eastern operations permitted the banks to lend out, through their branches in central and western Canada, much greater sums than they took in locally. Newfoundland did not have to belong to Confederation in order to carry part of the burden of Canadian unity.

These financial institutions held a good measure of general and political influence over the affairs of Newfoundland. The Bank of Montreal became the government’s banker, and a diplomatic conduit to Montreal/Ottawa. Newfoundland opinion was ambivalent. “Bunch of Shylocks,” Prime Minister Richard Squires publicly accused in 1921. Just four years later, however, the administration of another prime minister took steps to remove some of the burden of taxation - termed excessive - which
the banks were carrying. "The splendid banking institutions in our midst must be fairly treated," orated Governor William Allardyce in the Speech from the Throne. No doubt it all depended on how large, or how unlikely, was the loan being negotiated at the time.

Along with thorough penetration by the Canadian financial industry came Canadian money. When Canadian banks began circulating their notes from St. John’s at the end of 1894, Newfoundland legislators rushed through a law making the Canadian and Newfoundland currencies equal and convertible. Thereafter, in the realm of paper money, Canadian currency pretty well drove out the other and was the major medium of exchange from the 1890's, even though it was not actually legal tender under $5.00 until 1931. "Newfoundland currency." Justice Minister L.E. Emerson explained to the Imperial Economic Conference in 1932, "is at present for practical purposes Canadian currency." This situation made Newfoundland unique among the countries of the world, to have the value of its money determined by a foreign government that had no responsibility for - and no particular reason to have any interest in - the welfare of Newfoundlanders. The sway of Canada's dollar in Newfoundland, for a full half-century prior to political union, is the clearest of all indications that Newfoundland was firmly within Canada’s sphere of influence.

Another service industry in which there was an important degree of Canadian participation was transportation. On 19 September 1897, a regular ferry service to North Sydney was inaugurated, which made the trans-island Newfoundland Railway a de facto eastern extension of Canada’s Intercolonial Railroad (later part of the CNR). R.G. Reid, Jr., crossed the strait on the newly-built SS BRUCE and was met at North Sydney - as a band boomed in the background and bunting waved in the street - by Canada's Minister of Railways and Canals. A banquet hosted by the North Sydney Board of Trade toasted the linking of hands across Cabot Strait. From then on Canadian goods, ideas, newspapers, and experts passed easily into Newfoundland, while out-migrants found Nova Scotia now to be much closer than Boston. In subsequent decades, there followed such a reorientation of the colony's interests and outlook that 19 September 1897 may well be the most important single date in Newfoundland affairs of the past century.

From 1900 to the mid-1920's, the Reid Company (before it was taken over by government) operated not just the railway and ferry to Cape Breton, but the colony's steamship services as well. The Canadian government gave
transport to, from and within Newfoundland some modest assistance. In the peak year, 1915, Ottawa classified two of the subsidized Newfoundland routes as “foreign,” two others as “local.” It apparently made no difference to Ottawa bureaucrats that Newfoundland outports were not in Canada; they seemed “local” enough. Here again the Canada/Newfoundland border was overlooked in a friendly, mutually beneficial manner.

In the emerging question of air connections, Newfoundland and Canada cooperated closely. In the early 1930’s, the Royal Canadian Air Force surveyed the western part of the island for good airfield sites, jointly presenting its report to both governments. St. John’s agreed to consult Canada on major policy decisions. Ottawa controlled the new airport at Gander during the Second World War. It was easy for all to accept that the principal civilian carrier would be publicly-owned Trans-Canada Airlines (TCA, now Air Canada). The regular TCA schedule, which in the pioneering days of the air business had been extended along the Moncton-Halifax-Sydney path, was further lengthened during 1942 to terminate first at Gander and then at Torbay field near St. John’s, once the concrete had sufficiently hardened on the new RCAF field there.

Trade patterns showed a much weaker connection than did transportation. From studying the records of Newfoundland exports, one would be hardly aware that Canada existed in the world. In imports to Newfoundland, however, things were different (see table3). Steadily through 1900-49, Canada increased its share of goods landed in Newfoundland, from one-third to just over one-half. Generally speaking, it was British goods which these Canadian products elbowed aside, while the American share remained the same.

| Table 3 | NEWFOUNDLAND TRADE 1900-49 |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                | Share of exports (%) | Share of imports (%) |
|                | CAN | UK | US | OTHER | CAN | UK | US | OTHER |
| 1911-15        |     |    |    |       | 34  | 25 | 37 |  4   |
| 1927-28        |  8  | 23 | 29 | 40    | 44  | 18 | 38 |  -   |
| 1936           |  9  | 40 | 21 | 30    | 37  | 25 | 30 |  8   |
| 1941           |  9  | 38 | 24 | 29    | 37  | 22 | 33 |  8   |
| 1948           | 14  | 17 | 35 | 35    | 52  |  6 | 38 |  4   |
Thus in transportation, banking, and economic activities generally, strong links developed between the two countries. Moreover, the economies of Newfoundland and the closest part of Canada came more and more to resemble each other. Table 4 shows that over the whole period 1880-1940, economic growth was greater in Newfoundland than in the Maritimes. (Newfoundland was falling behind until about 1914, then surged strongly as development continued there while stagnation and some de-industrialization struck the Maritimes). As a result, while Newfoundland’s per capita production in the 1880’s was only 54 per cent of the Maritimes, by 1939 it had improved to 63 per cent. More strikingly, the two areas developed nearly identical economic structures. To about the same degree, by 1951, workers in both the Maritimes and Newfoundland had been drawn from the primary to the secondary sector, and especially into the range of employments most characteristic of modern development, services.

Table 4
NEWFOUNDLAND AND THE MARITIMES,
ECONOMIC INDICATORS, 1880-1950

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<th>1880-1994</th>
<th>1910-1911</th>
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<th>1951</th>
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<td></td>
<td>NF Mar</td>
<td>NF Mar</td>
<td>NF Mar</td>
<td>NF Mar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual per capita value of goods production ($1939)</td>
<td>72 133</td>
<td>106 237</td>
<td>160 252</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growth since 1880’s (%)</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>47 78</td>
<td>122 89</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>% of workforce in:</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>primary industries</td>
<td>85 49</td>
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<tr>
<td>service industries</td>
<td>3 28</td>
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<td>45 49</td>
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Why did they become so much alike? Partly, it was in response to outreach from Canada. More importantly, Newfoundland’s affairs were shaped by the same influences - wherever they might originate - that moulded the Maritimes, often after a little delay. All the Atlantic jurisdictions came increasingly under the sway of powerful economic forces based outside the region. For the Maritimes, these forces emanated, in order of significance, from central Canada, the United States, and Britain. In Newfoundland in the 20th century, precisely the same tendencies applied. The strongest economic influences of 1890-1940 recognized little or no distinction between Canada and Newfoundland, while doing much to pull them together.
3. Political Connection

Official dealings between Newfoundland and Canadian governments were of two distinct kinds. On the one hand, there was hard bargaining over quarrelsome issues such as inevitably arise between neighbouring states. Major sore points in Newfoundland-Canada diplomacy during 1890-1949 concerned tariffs (between each other and with the United States); access to bait supplies; immigration and deportation matters; rival territorial ambitions in St. Pierre and especially Labrador; and Ottawa's hard-headed refusal to continue a subsidy to the Cabot Strait ferry after 1924. These well-publicized disputes have misled some commentators into overlooking the second type of intercourse they enjoyed: numerous affairs marked by close cooperation, a leader-client or model-copier relationship, even joint or shared administration of important services.

Mainland and Newfoundland authorities often gave special assistance to each other. From the 1860's on, Canadian government geologists were intimately involved in exploring the potential of Newfoundland. Cooperation reached a point where the new federal government, fearing expenses for Newfoundland could improperly sneak into its budget, refused permission for geological service personnel to even visit the island. But red tape becomes elastic with age. Within a few years Newfoundland's geological director - originally seconded from Canada - was again sending samples to the mainland for analysis, having maps drawn there, and sending Canadian visitors out on fieldwork.

In 1901, Prime Minister Bond expressed thanks for Canada's "kindness in placing two of your postal officials at our service for a little while." Such "kindnesses," too common to be much remarked, from about that time dot the history of most Ottawa departments, especially those concerned with forestry, fisheries, any kind of research, customs, post office, and justice - and Newfoundland depended more on Canada than on other friendly jurisdictions. Examples of the smaller country reciprocating assistance include Newfoundland permitting mainland authorities to recruit Newfoundland sailors into the Royal Canadian Navy Patrol Service during the First World War, and to establish an anti-submarine watch at the Strait of Belle Isle, for which Newfoundland received Ottawa's official thanks at the end of the war.

Close bonds were revealed whenever disaster struck - for example,
quick responses from Canada after the 1892 St. John’s fire and Newfoundland’s 1914 sealing tragedies. Newfoundland’s relief effort at the time of the 1917 Halifax explosion show the two nations were closer than ordinary neighbours. St. John’s first contribution - $50,000 plus twenty-six boxes of window glass - was relatively more generous than many of the contributions from within Canada (for example, only $100,000 from golden Ontario). In the debris of the explosion there surfaced several groups of Newfoundlanders who in that era, three decades before Confederation, were already gravitating to Halifax as the chief capital of the region to which Newfoundland obviously belonged. These included students at Dalhousie University, members of the Newfoundland Royal Navy Reserve stationed at Halifax for “home” service, and pupils at Halifax schools for the deaf and the blind. Among outside jurisdictions only Newfoundland sent its own rescue/repatriation mission right into the ruins (Minister of Militia J.R. Bennett). The response to the Halifax tragedy demonstrated Newfoundland’s mature self-reliance, and its strong links with Nova Scotia. Did Atlantic regionalism create ties that were as strong as Canadian nationhood? Stronger?

Meanwhile, there had occurred some highly intimate interlocking of Newfoundland and Canadian regimes: programmes jointly administered, with intrusion of one country’s institutions into the other’s territory. They shared the building of lighthouses to ring the coast of Newfoundland, until by 1914 Canada operated 11 of 112 stations there. Services that Canada provided were clustered at the three extremities of the island which were of greatest interest to Canadian shipping (see map), but were naturally used by Newfoundland mariners as well. The meteorological service was another arm of Canadian federal bureaucracy to penetrate pre-Confederation Newfoundland. By 1905, when the Canadian system comprised a telegraphically-connected network of three dozen stations, Newfoundland with two was already as well covered as were Manitoba and New Brunswick.

Examples of the opposite tendency – Newfoundland institutions invading Canada – include a lands/fisheries/customs office established at Sept-Iles in 1933, superintending air traffic into Labrador, and the Newfoundland postal sorting station at North Sydney from 1906 on. This installation not only master-minded the exchange of mails, but had consular and diplomatic significance as well. It was headed up by a postal superintendent who, as a commissioner of the Newfoundland Supreme
Court, could swear Newfoundland oaths and perform Newfoundland marriages on the mainland side of Cabot Strait.

In the field of education there were numerous official links between the two countries. Here the special arrangements into which Newfoundland entered were not with Canadian federal, but with provincial and institutional authorities in the Maritimes. An early example is specialized educational services for the handicapped, organized on a regional basis which included Newfoundland. From the 1890’s, the Newfoundland legislature voted annual contributions to special schools for the blind and the deaf in Nova Scotia, guaranteeing places for a number of Newfoundland children. An official Newfoundland representative joined the governing body of each institution. It was natural for Newfoundland to become thoroughly caught up in the 1920’s movement for federation of universities in the Maritimes. Although the movement did not achieve its main aim, it did produce a Newfoundland junior college feeding its students into the programmes of established Maritimes universities, and a regional Central Advisory Committee on Higher Education. From 1924 on, this committee provided an annual forum for department of education and university representatives from all four jurisdictions to meet and discuss approaches to common problems. From it evolved (1930-32) the “Common Examining Board of the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland” which set and marked final high school examinations, thus treating the young people of New Brunswick, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island as a single population. This was the outstanding example of pre-Confederation Newfoundland and Canadian authorities joining, on a fully equal basis, to share an important political/administrative task.

The most profound and far-reaching intrusion of Canadian institutions into Newfoundland political life occurred in the early 1930’s. It was not provincial or federal authorities, but Canadian big business which, seeing its interests threatened by the collapse of Newfoundland’s public finance, seized control of important levers in the country’s public affairs. In 1931 the four Canadian banks formed a syndicate and extended loans which kept the Newfoundland government lurching along in solvency for six months at a time, but only at the price of quasi-colonial conditions which brought outsiders into influential policy-making positions. According to political scientist Valerie Summers, “By 1931 the institutional framework of politics” in Newfoundland “had become little more than a rubber stamp protecting the interests of Canadian banks.... In many ways the end of responsible
government occurred in December 1931, not in 1934”. The power of Canadian economic imperialism in Newfoundland was made starkly manifest when central Canadian banking and resource corporations dictated constitutional change. Yet after the undemocratic Commission of Government was installed in 1934, it was not Ottawa but London which took on the burden of helping mend the pieces of a broken state.

Canadian influence in Newfoundland affairs continued growing through the 1930’s and ‘40’s. One might have thought installation of the Commission of Government - half its personnel actually British, with Newfoundland’s self-government lapsing back to colonial status dependent upon London - would have reversed the historic transfer from old to new world models. The transfer was perhaps slowed for a time, but not stopped or reversed. This point needs some elaboration, because the power of British example at this period has sometimes been exaggerated.

The Commission of Government (1934-49) certainly put the British in charge. It was a frustrating era in which the pettiest administrative detail could not be finalized without reference to England. Under this regime British influence sometimes predominated. Newfoundland’s customs department was thoroughly overhauled in 1934, by two experts borrowed from London. Another British expert reorganized the post office, and did a good job too, raising wages while still saving $15,000 per year. Civil service recruitment and pensions, and wartime state security procedures, directly copied British models. Acceptance of Canada as the usual outside source for patterning Newfoundland reforms, however, persisted. Three examples will be offered.

Although the 1933 Royal Commission on Newfoundland (the Amulree Commission) discovered serious deficiencies in the Newfoundland educational system, readers of the report were not to worry, for “arrangements have already been made for an educationalist of repute and experience to visit Newfoundland and advise...” In due course there appeared from England a just-retired Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools, who recommended everything should be thoroughly made over in the image of England. Many of those superintending the various school systems, who had always thought themselves educators “of repute and experience” before this interloper came on the scene, resented the arrogance, and resisted the acceptance, of this advice. They cleverly made Alfred Hunter, Professor of Literature at Memorial University College, their
champion. This transplanted Briton shredded the visitor’s shallow observations. The elitism of the English system was not fit for emulation, but a “condition to be ashamed of.” The alleged foreign expert failed to appreciate Newfoundland’s “continental affiliations.”

Decisions taken in 1934-36 confirmed the country’s North American leanings. The English system of tests at age 11-12 to determine the whole future course of a child’s education was not seriously considered. A high-powered committee to recommend revision of the curriculum was named. The outstanding influence on its report was recent issues of the Nova Scotia Journal of Education, which contained the full report of a similar committee in that province. Major sections of Newfoundland’s new curriculum in 1935 were identical in wording to the mainland document, except “Newfoundland” had been substituted for “Nova Scotia.”

The Commission made its next expert a Columbia University-trained Maritimer who was Professor of Education at Mount Allison. Appointed Secretary (deputy minister) of Education to preside over the de-denominationalisation of Newfoundland schools, Lloyd Shaw was utterly defeated when he tried to move in that direction. Other initiatives succeeded. Shaw arranged for the PEI Director of the Canadian Junior Red Cross to spend September-October 1936 touring Newfoundland schools. She implanted Canadian programmes, forms of organization, and literature in a movement that within three years swelled to embrace 60 per cent of eligible children. Through the 1940’s Newfoundland schooling coasted along undeflected by British reform efforts, the churches in full control according to the ancient tradition, and in close collaboration and emulation with more recent systems in the Maritime provinces.

Another example of the quick casting off of British in favour of Canadian leadership is seen in the development of co-operatives. First, a representative from the Plunkett Foundation of co-operative studies in London made a report, and then a Scots expert was imported. Neither was a notable success. The Commission then looked in the Canadian direction. The modest advance experienced in energizing co-operatives, in the late 1930’s, resulted from utilization of principles and personnel from eastern Canada’s “Antigonish movement.”

A third innovation of the mid-1930’s, sometimes mistakenly offered as an example of Commission of Government following a British model, was
creation of the Newfoundland Ranger Force. The formative influence has been said to be the "district commissioner" concept of the British colonial service. The actual impulse was not so foreign. Given responsibility for organizing a new body of game wardens as promoted in the Amulree Report, the Commissioner of Natural Resources visited Ottawa in 1934 to secure the loan of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police officer, Sergeant-Major Fred Anderton, to take charge of training. Whereas the earlier established Newfoundland police had uniforms patterned on the Royal Irish Constabulary, the Rangers' outfits closely resembled the RCMP. In 1936 Anderton resigned his Canadian commission to become Chief Ranger, and when he retired three years later, he chose as successor another serving Mountie directly from Ottawa. Through the 1940's, the force continued to look to North America for professional assistance, with men sometimes sent, two at a time, to RCMP courses at Ottawa or Regina.

The Second World War promoted the closest integration to date of the Newfoundland and Canadian regimes. Now in addition to lighthouses, meteorology, transportation, educational standards, police partnerships, money and banking, and business and cultural influence generally, Canadian decision-makers appeared in many other aspects of life in the colony, backed by armed force - but countered by powerful old influences from Britain and the new, thrusting military presence of the United States. Canada, nevertheless, assumed the leading responsibility for Newfoundland's defence, which permitted Canadian authorities often to act as if they were in their own country. Ottawa took overall control of aviation and trade; Newfoundland was so thoroughly under this sway that Canadian controllers regulated essential commodities and services - wheat, sugar, shipping - an effectively in St. John's as at Vancouver. A very significant derogation of sovereignty came when the Newfoundland militia was absorbed into Canadian military command.

With the restoration of peace, Newfoundland continued outside the Canadian Confederation for a few more years, while the country continued gravitating towards Mainland patterns of administration. General approach, key concepts and many detailed regulations concerning labour policy, foreign exchange controls, veterans' benefits, civil re-establishment, and many other matters were all handled in Newfoundland precisely as they were in Canada, with frequent exchange of officials between the two capitals. The fact that all proposals were voluminously reported to Whitehall, which had to approve them, must not obscure the fact that
Newfoundland's re-alignment with North America, so well-established by the 1930's, continued and even accelerated during the neo-colonial Commission of Government period.

The political record thus confirms that Newfoundland and Canada were much nearer than neighbours. With Newfoundland post offices in Canada, Canadian forecasters giving sunshine to Stephenville, sleet to St. John's, and high school pupils of both countries taking a common examination marked by each other's teachers, it is clear the rancour sometimes marking official exchanges co-existed with the most friendly, even family-style arrangements in daily affairs. The frustrating tangle into which many of the two countries' mutual diplomatic dealings landed can certainly be exaggerated. As Newfoundland officials reported in 1932-33 when trying to edge into Canadian trade talks: "Understanding Newfoundland in practice is considered synonymous with Canada... Newfoundland's interests... would be so identical with those of Canada that it would make it extremely easy for us to work in close cooperation."

4. **Confederation in Context**

During 1946-48, democratic politics were re-established in Newfoundland, with attention focused upon the country's constitutional future. This issue was decided after a hotly-contested campaign, when 52 per cent of the voters favoured Confederation with Canada. Some of the best writing on Newfoundland in recent years was dealt with this situation and outcome. Three reasons have been proposed to explain why Newfoundland joined Canada.

One important cause is said to have been British policy. From the mid-war years, the government in London decided to steer Newfoundland into Confederation, and skillfully manipulated events to this end. Secondly, the Canadian government abandoned its longstanding indifference towards the question and came to favour union with Newfoundland, while being careful to never say so publicly. Thirdly, a ginger group of Newfoundland politicians, led by an ebullient Joey Smallwood, so strongly argued the advantages of Confederation that a majority of the people were convinced.

Although each of these factors was undoubtedly significant, even taken together they seem somewhat unhistorical, because inadequately related to the previous development of numerous links between Newfoundland and
Canada, as outlined in this booklet. The Confederation issue is often discussed as if the two countries were obliviously separate solitudes approaching each other for the first time in the late 1940's, as if the union movement swelled and triumphed in hardly any time at all. Yet Confederation is better understood when viewed in a long-term context. Canadian connections of numerous kinds were common and influential in the life, work, and government of Newfoundlanders for two or three generations before the National Convention got busy shaping the future.

This does not mean that the eventual adherence to Canadian Confederation was any more inevitable for Newfoundland than for Prince Edward Island or Bermuda, or that the course events actually followed was beneficial. Nor can direct links be established between particular areas or concentrations of Canadian influence in the island, and the pro-Confederation vote in 1948, although it is tempting to try. The southwest corner of Newfoundland (Burgeo-LaPoile) had, for example, long-established commercial links with Nova Scotia and included the terminus of the daily rail and passenger ferry from North Sydney which facilitated every kind of connection with Canada. Here, the majority favouring Confederation was largest in all of Newfoundland: 89 per cent. Conversely, in the district which included Bell Island, where Canadian mining capital had been a mainstay of the economy since the 1890's, the majority against Confederation was almost as large: 83 per cent. This underlines that the reasons people vote as they do is a complicated amalgam of sectarian, regional, class, and other factors. For Newfoundland in 1948, the point to stress is that the Confederation question did not concern some exotic, unknown land, but rather a kindred country with which multiple links already existed, some of them as powerful and intimate as the Canadian dollars shoppers carried in their handbags.

5. Conclusion

For a full century since the 1890's, Newfoundland and mainland Canada have become progressively more integrated, as shared geography led to shared experience and common interests. Moving towards each other, and travelling together, they passed certain milestones. Establishment of a permanent transportation link in 1897 allowed a much easier exchange of influences and people. Exploitation of Newfoundland iron ore sustained Nova Scotia’s major manufacturing industry for several decades. Newfoundland officially adhered to Atlantic regional arrangements for
education of the blind, the deaf, engineers, physicians, and dentists, and (after 1930) for setting school-leaving standards. It took Canada’s development of the welfare state (pensions, unemployment insurance, family allowances) to contribute, by the late 1940’s, the final ingredient or attraction that was apparently essential to make the idea of union palatable enough to be sold to a bare majority in Newfoundland.

Integration of Newfoundland and the Mainland continued after Confederation. Construction of the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway brought socio-economic transformation to Newfoundland’s remotest hinterland, while signalling as well Canada’s subservience to American economic hegemony. In the 1970’s, Ottawa’s extension of unemployment insurance coverage to seasonal workers, and adoption of the 200-mile limit seaward, benefitted many parts of Canada, but especially Newfoundland. More recently, entrenchment of equalization in Canada’s repatriated constitution ensured a Canadian standard of public services in all four Atlantic provinces.

The union arrangement decided upon in 1948-49 was an extremely important step in this lengthy, on-going chronology of Newfoundland’s integration with Canada. It was not the last step, nor the first, and did not much affect Newfoundland’s various links with the rest of the Atlantic region, already well-established. Confederation when it came was therefore no sudden, postwar phenomenon. Since the late 1800s Newfoundland has been going through a process whereby it accepted, and promoted, the pull of continental connections.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

The best introduction to Newfoundland in the first half of the twentieth century is S.J.R. Noel, Politics in Newfoundland (Toronto, 1971). More detailed and thoughtful for part of the period - while largely focused on political, constitutional and administrative matters - is Peter Neary's Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949 (Montreal, 1988). Susan McCorquodale's doctoral dissertation at Queen's University (1973), "Public Administration in Newfoundland During the Period of the Commission of Government: A Question of Political Development" fills some important gaps in the published literature. The pre-1934 period is now the one most in need of further investigation.

R.A. MacKay, Newfoundland: Economic, Diplomatic and Strategic Studies (Toronto, 1946), and the tenth booklet in this series (G.O. Rothney's Newfoundland: A History. 1964), are both dated, but still worth consulting. More important and more recent scholarship, with greater notice of economic and social conditions, is contained in three collections. Atlantic Canada and Confederation: Essays in Canadian Political Economy (Toronto, 1983) valuably assembles insightful and challenging papers, originally published in Acadiensis or elsewhere, from David Alexander's too-brief career. A number of scholars contributed to Newfoundland in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Jim Hiller and Peter Neary, eds., (Toronto, 1980), and Twentieth Century Newfoundland: Explorations, same editors (St. John's, 1994) - which do not, however, include the Canadian connection among key themes in Newfoundland historiography.

prosperity await similarly comprehensive treatment of investment, mining, construction, retail, banking and other sectors.


Patricia Thornton sets a good example of treating Newfoundland as part of the Atlantic region in “The Problem of Out-Migration from Atlantic Canada, 1971-1921F: A New look”, Acadiensis (Autumn 1985). The several authors in P. Buckner and J. Reid, eds., The Atlantic Region to Confederation (Toronto, 1994), skillfully detect overlap and connection, as well as distance and difference, when considering Newfoundland alongside the Maritimes from the 1600’s to the 1850’s. The companion volume, however – E. Forbes and D. Muise, eds., The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation (Toronto, 1993) – unwisely takes a region-denying approach which resolutely avoids noticing how similar or how linked Newfoundland and the Maritime provinces became in the 1867-1949 period. “Off to Sydney: Newfoundlanders Emigrate to Industrial Cape Breton, 1890-1914,” Acadiensis (Spring 1988), by Ron Crawley, emphasizes how unimportant was the international border separating the two countries, a point further considered in masterful articles by Peter Neary: “Canadian Immigration Policy and the Newfoundlanders, 1912-1939,” and “Canada and the Newfoundland Labour Market, 1939-1949,” in Acadiensis (Spring 1982) and Canadian Historical Review (December 1981).

David Alexander’s provocative article, “Economic Growth in the Atlantic Region, 1880-1940,” first called upon scholars to “bridge the Cabot Strait.” While it might not be accurate in all respects – proposing that
Newfoundland was more prosperous in the 1930’s than previously runs counter to the usual understanding – the essay presents convincing proof that the big island followed all the same trends that swayed the Maritimes. Valerie Summers mixes an exciting blend of Newfoundland/Canada and economic/political ingredients in her 1987 doctoral dissertation at Carleton University, “The Politics of Underdevelopment: Resource Policy and Regime Change in Newfoundland,” and expresses a major truth about Canadian business imperialism in the first words of the title of a subsequent essay: “Canadian Parasite Elites and Regime Change in Newfoundland, 1929-1934,” Proceedings of the Atlantic Provinces Political Studies Association (October 1989).

At the Canada-Newfoundland political interface, many essential records have been published in Paul Bridle, ed., Documents on Relations between Canada and Newfoundland, 1935-1949, 2 vols. (Ottawa, 1974-1984). The intimacy of many arrangements between the two countries is briefly offered in my books: Nearer Than Neighbours: Newfoundland and Canada Before Confederation (St. John’s, 1982), and Peace of the Continent: The Impact of Second World War Canadian and American Bases in Newfoundland (St. John’s, 1986); and more substantially in “Subsidized Steamers to a Foreign Country: Canada and Newfoundland, 1892-1949,” Acadiensis (Spring 1985). Another interesting slice of the two country’s administrative symbiosis is presented in G.R.McGuire, “The Newfoundland Post Office Mail Assorting Office,” Newfoundland Quarterly (1982).

The confederation issue has been well aired: in Neary’s work; in J.R. Smallwood’s I Chose Canada (Toronto, 1973), the most articulate and polished autobiography ever produced by a Canadian provincial leader; in the other Smallwood biographies by Richard Gwyn, The Unlikely Revolutionary (Toronto, 1972), and Harold Horwood, Joey (Toronto, 1989); in Bren Walsh, More Than a Poor Majority: The Story of Newfoundland’s Confederation with Canada (St. John’s, 1985), and in William C. Gilmore, “Law, Constitutional Convention, and the Union of Newfoundland and Canada,” Acadiensis (Spring 1989).

situation which is well interpreted, with a good awareness of on-going trends, by Ian Stewart in his "The Revolution of 1940 in Newfoundland" (M.A. Thesis, MUN, 1974). Kathryn E. Hayman, The Origins and Function of the Canadian High Commission in Newfoundland, 1941-49" (M.A. Thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1979) adds further depth about that momentous decade, although the context is sometimes shaky. The first full-length, scholarly monograph which satisfactorily shifts twentieth-century Newfoundland from British imperial into North American history, where it belongs, is David MacKenzie's *Inside the Atlantic Triangle: Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation, 1939-1949* (Toronto, 1986).