

## Twentieth Century Newfoundland Politics: Some Recent Literature

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those goals. William Pitt was clearly important, but not to the extent previously portrayed in most historical writing. Following the ascension of George III and the promotion of Lord Bute, Pitt's views hardened over the terms for peace with France. After five months of acrimonious debate, Pitt resigned, but the war continued. Middleton ends his study here, but includes an appendix which details the historiography of William Pitt since the 18th century and reveals his own presuppositions in creating this superb account.

As modern communications have allowed the world to grow smaller, a cross-fertilization between European and North American historians has provided new stress on the links and similarities in human experience on two continents. The influence of the hereditarian interpretation has worked in a different way in history than in psychology. In history, recent work has only shifted the balance of interpretation in one direction, but without obliterating arguments for the distinctiveness of some elements in the Canadian past. As social history has matured, it has come to assume the larger intellectual world view once associated with the military historians of the colonial period. The time appears ripe for a new synthesis that will unite these diverse strains into an integrated history of New France.

TERRY CROWLEY

### Twentieth Century Newfoundland Politics: Some Recent Literature

WHILE THERE ARE MORE SCHOLARS AT work in the field of Newfoundland history than was once the case, their number is not large. For one of the group to attempt a review article is perhaps foolhardy, and throughout the preparation of this piece I have been reminded of the words of D.W. Prowse as he embarked on the section of his history dealing with Newfoundland in his own time. It was the most difficult part of his subject, he wrote, for "whilst endeavouring to write a true history of the period, I have had also to walk, like Agag before Saul, delicately, in order to avoid offence".<sup>1</sup> He went on to deliver an opinionated account of the later 19th century which reflected accurately his Liberal and nationalist views. Tact did not prove to be his strong suit.

Prowse was an admirer of Robert Bond, premier from 1900 to 1909, who placed great importance on — some might say was obsessed by — Newfoundland's

<sup>1</sup> D.W. Prowse, *A History of Newfoundland from the English, Colonial and Foreign Records* (London, 1895), pp. 481-2.

status within the British Empire. It was Bond who asserted the colony's right to negotiate an independent reciprocity treaty with the USA, and who had the temerity to wage a tariff war against Canada and to harass American fishing vessels in Newfoundland waters. His assertiveness came to little in the end, but the record of his activities proved of considerable importance to lawyers retained by the provincial government to put together Newfoundland's case for control of offshore seabed resources. Like the Labrador boundary case (1927),<sup>2</sup> the offshore litigation generated a substantial amount of historical research. The Newfoundland government alone compiled ten volumes of documents to support the factum submitted to the Newfoundland Court of Appeal in 1982, and the factum itself consisted largely of "A Summary of Significant Events in the Evolution of Newfoundland's Separate International Personality" between 1855, when the colony instituted responsible government, and 1949.<sup>3</sup> One of the province's major arguments was that prior to confederation Newfoundland possessed sufficient status in international law "to be directly endowed with all the rights attributed by international law to a coastal state in the seabed and subsoil adjacent to its coasts", and one of the lawyers involved, William C. Gilmore, has now summarised a large chunk of this material in *Newfoundland and Dominion Status. The External Affairs Competence and International Law Status of Newfoundland, 1855-1934* (Toronto, Carswell, 1988).

In the first section, Gilmore argues that prior to 1914 Newfoundland was on the same footing as the other future dominions with reference to foreign affairs and the treaty-making power, and that general developments towards autonomy were "due in no small part to the efforts of successive Newfoundland governments" (p.44). During the first world war the colony's prime minister was a member of the Imperial War Cabinet, but once the fighting was over the colony's status seemed to slip. It was denied separate representation in the delegation to the peace conference, did not sign the treaty, and was not named to the League of Nations, though entitled to apply for admission. Gilmore shows that Newfoundland was excluded from full participation in 1919 as a result of diplomatic rather than legal factors, and holds that its status was unchanged.<sup>4</sup> But these events marked the start of some controversy over the country's status. Because it never joined the League and was content to leave its external affairs in the hands of the

2 For a good summary, see Richard Budgel and Michael Staveley, *The Labrador Boundary* (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 1987).

3 *In the Matter of Section 6 of The Judicature Act, RSN 1970 c. 187, as amended. And in the Matter of a Reference by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council concerning the Mineral and other Natural Resources of the Continental Shelf appurtenant to the Province of Newfoundland. Factum of the Attorney General of Newfoundland.* Three parts, 1982.

4 For an extended discussion, see W.C. Gilmore, "Newfoundland and the Paris Peace Conference, 1919", *British Journal of Canadian Studies*, 1, 2 (1986), pp. 282-301.

British government, some came to believe that Newfoundland's status was lesser than that of the other dominions. Gilmore emphasises that Newfoundland was covered by the Balfour Declaration (1926) and the Statute of Westminster (1931), and argues that its lack of international activity did not create a juridically significant distinction between itself and other dominions. He thinks that Newfoundland in fact satisfied the "highly elastic" criteria for statehood at least until 1934. The prickly question of the country's status under Commission of Government he has left for a future publication. The province argued in its factum that the institution of Commission government did not deprive Newfoundland of its status as an international person, a position with which the province's Court of Appeal was prepared to agree, but not the Supreme Court of Canada.<sup>5</sup>

Gilmore has made a useful contribution to the literature on the evolution of dominion status, and his book is the only work in existence on Newfoundland's constitutional history. As such it is a work of value and significance, no matter that there is no field so much out of fashion as constitutional history, apparently abandoned to the lawyers — and *Newfoundland and Dominion Status* is very much a lawyer's book. Gilmore is concerned to define as much as he is to explain, and his questions and themes are not those of the historian. His question is, "What was Newfoundland's precise status in 1933?" Ours would probably be, "Why was Newfoundland bankrupt in 1933?" None of the books under review here provides a direct answer to the latter question, but of direct relevance is the late Ian McDonald's *"To Each His Own": W.F. Coaker and the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland Politics, 1908-1925* (St. John's, Institute for Social and Economic Research, 1987). An edited and abridged version of McDonald's 1971 London University Ph.D. thesis, this work focuses closely on the colony's political world from the founding of the FPU in 1908 to the end of its political activity and Coaker's retirement as president. The latter is presented very much as the tragic hero, and his opponents receive less than sympathetic treatment. Nevertheless, this is the fullest available account of the FPU to date, and it is an indispensable companion volume to S.J.R. Noel's *Politics in Newfoundland* (Toronto, 1971), which remains the standard work on the period. Particularly valuable are McDonald's accounts of the politics of the first world war and after,<sup>6</sup> and of Coaker's attempt, when Minister of Marine and Fisheries

5 W.C. Gilmore, "Newfoundland Offshore Mineral Rights", *Marine Policy*, 7 (1983), pp. 175-96; and "The Newfoundland Continental Shelf Dispute in the Supreme Court of Canada", *Marine Policy*, 8 (1984), pp. 323-9; "Aspects of United Kingdom Treaty Practice with respect to Newfoundland, 1926-1934", *Canadian Yearbook of International Law*, XXIV (1986), pp. 213-46.

6 Other recent works on the first world war period are P.R. O'Brien, "The Newfoundland Patriotic Association: the Administration of the War Effort, 1914-1918", M.A. thesis, Memorial

after 1919, to reform the fishery by government regulation. Coaker's remarkable crusade challenged the colony's mercantile elite and the churches, those twin conservative pillars of the status quo. He fought for social, political and economic reform in the interests of rural workers, but found himself checked by regionalism, sectarianism, the lack of political experience of both himself and his followers, and a severe post-war recession that vitiated any attempt to persuade the fish merchants to set their house in order. McDonald's discussion of the FPU's failure illuminates our understanding of the wider problems that racked the country as it lurched towards bankruptcy, and a crisis that prompted the elite to cry *nostra culpa*, and welcome the suspension of responsible government — a welcome in which Coaker joined.<sup>7</sup>

Peter Neary's important new book, *Newfoundland in the North Atlantic World, 1929-1949* (Kingston and Montreal, McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988) begins in the last years of the country's independence. Neary's purpose at this point, however, is not so much to explain Newfoundland's collapse as to account for the institution of Commission of Government, the "noble experiment" (p. 74) which is his subject. Thus his main contribution to our knowledge of the 1929-34 period, and a valuable one, is his account of the making of the 1933 royal commission report. This shows quite clearly that the royal commission "acted virtually as an extension of the normal Whitehall government machinery" (p. 41), in that its central recommendations with reference to the conversion of the Newfoundland debt and the suspension of responsible government had their origins with British officialdom. The commission's job was to provide the justifications and sell the policy to the Newfoundlanders. Neary then turns to the Commission of Government, concerned that its period in office (1934-1949) be studied for itself, and not merely as a prelude to the drama of confederation. This is entirely proper, particularly as the Commission has, on the whole, received a bad press. It deserves fair assessment.

The Commission period falls roughly into three sections — 1934-39, when the new government had to face the problems posed by the Depression; 1939-45,

University, 1982; and C.A. Sharpe, "The 'Race of Honour': An Analysis of Enlistments and Casualties in the Armed Forces of Newfoundland, 1914-1918", *Newfoundland Studies*, 4, 1 (1988), pp. 27-56.

7 On the FPU, see also Barbara Neis, "A Sociological Analysis of the Factors Responsible for the Regional Distribution of the Fishermen's Protective Union in Newfoundland", M.A. thesis, Memorial University, 1980; and R.H. Cuff, comp. and ed., *A Coaker Anthology* (St. John's, Creative Publishers, 1986). Two reprints are also valuable: W.F. Coaker, ed., *Twenty Years of the Fishermen's Protective Union of Newfoundland from 1909 — 1929...* (1930, reprinted St. John's, Creative Publishers, 1984); more difficult to find is *Past, Present and Future. Being a Series of Articles Contributed to the Fishermen's Advocate, 1932, by Sir W.F. Coaker, K.B.E., together with Notes of a Trip to Greece, 1932, and a Foreword by J.H. Scammell* (Port Union, 1932; reprinted privately, n.d.).

when it presided over the diplomatic problems and economic prosperity brought by the war; and 1945-49 when, as a caretaker administration, it held the fort during the constitutional debates and the process of union with Canada. Neary's detailed treatment of the first period shows how limited was the Commission's freedom of action. The British government asserted firm control over policy and finances, and made it clear that it wanted as little trouble as possible. This attitude made it impossible for the Commission effectively to challenge entrenched local interests, thus blunting the effort to reform both the educational system and the fisheries. Neary shows there were significant achievements in some areas, but the caution and conservatism inherent in the system conflicted with an appreciation that if Newfoundland was to have a chance of becoming permanently self-supporting again, more radical reform was needed. Ambitious long-term reconstruction plans were proposed in 1936 and more importantly in 1938-9 (by J.H. Gorvin), but neither was implemented; and if either had been, the Dominions Office would no doubt have had to face the fury of a local elite which had seen in the Commission system the guarantee of its safety.

The outbreak of war saved the Commission and the Dominions Office from the necessity of finding a solution to fundamental problems which they, like the pre-1934 responsible governments, had failed to solve. War brought Canadian and American bases and garrisons, a military occupation which created a dramatic if artificial prosperity. It is with the outbreak of hostilities that David MacKenzie begins *Inside the North Atlantic Triangle: Canada and the Entrance of Newfoundland into Confederation, 1939-1945* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1986). Though Neary curiously omits this book from his bibliography, it is essential reading. MacKenzie, being primarily concerned with Canadian policy, relies mainly on Canadian sources. Neary is primarily concerned with British policy, and therefore relies mainly on British and Newfoundland government records. In this way the two books, both of which cover much of the same ground, provide complementary perspectives, though Neary necessarily has the wider focus. Both authors, for instance, discuss the establishment of Canadian and American bases, the Goose Bay agreement and the problems of command. Both discuss at length the evolution of policy towards Newfoundland's post-war future.

In Newfoundland this remains a sensitive subject. An older generation still debates the events of 40 years ago, and many of its members retain a sense of affront and outrage at what occurred. Ray Guy touched on this nerve in a column written in the early 1970s, "A conversation with an older person who passed away in August 1943, out Home" — that is, Arnold's Cove, Placentia Bay.<sup>8</sup> "Did Billy last long?" asks the deceased.

8 Ray Guy, *You May Know Them As Sea Urchins, Ma'am* (St. John's, 1975), pp. 22-3.

Oh, yes, sir. He rallied after that and he was great and smart and only passed away, I think it was, the year before...no, in the summer...two years before Confederation. They put his pipe and a bottle of rum in the box along with him.

Eh, my son?

His pipe, sir and a bottle....

Confederation?

Yes, Confederation. Joined to Canada, it was in 1949. April Fool's Day. You know, upalong, Canada. We were joined on.

The Commission done it.

I don't think so, sir, altogether....

Then how many was there killed?

So far as I know sir, there was no one killed. There was only a lot of talk all the time, and swearing. When it came about they put the flag down to half-mast but there was no one killed.

No one?

No, sir. No one...so far as I know.

No one.

It is a sensitivity which was dramatically demonstrated when Phillip McCann, better known as an historian of education, gave a lecture to the Newfoundland Historical Society in 1983 entitled "Confederation Revisited: New Light on British Policy". McCann had been at work in the Public Record Office, and was the first scholar to present some of the contents of the newly available 1940s files. He outlined the evolution of British policy, and concluded that J.R. Smallwood's campaigns had to be seen as part of a larger whole. This was fair enough, but McCann went further and asserted that, as anticonfederates had long suspected, there had been a plot of a sort in that "Confederation was engineered by the British, almost entirely in secret and largely by the Treasury. Newfoundland — and Labrador in particular — were used as pawns in a deal with the Canadians". Smallwood was present at the lecture, flanked by a brace of veterans from the confederation wars. At the end, the chairman invited him to comment, and the Only Living Father rose up in wrath. I cannot, he said, "for a moment accept [McCann's] very naive, unscholarly inference, implications and hints that Britain engineered Newfoundland into Confederation". It was a "cockeyed

story, this silly, stupid story...the last word in idiocy". "Confederation was engineered by 52 Newfoundlanders out of every 100.... I thought that was a pretty good job of engineering. I had a little to do with persuading them to do it. The British Government had nothing to do with persuading them, the Canadian Government had nothing to do with it". And then, the lowest blow of all, Smallwood informed McCann that he couldn't hope to understand since he had only been in Newfoundland for 16 years.<sup>9</sup>

While McCann's conclusion was overstated, what really upset Smallwood was the challenge to the confederate orthodoxy which he himself had created. In this version, Smallwood reads about the forthcoming National Convention in a Montreal newspaper, becomes a born-again confederate, returns to Newfoundland and, as a result of his tireless work and skilful manoeuvres, brings about confederation.<sup>10</sup> There is, of course, truth in this interpretation, for Smallwood played a centrally important and indispensable role on the confederate side. But conclusions aside, McCann was on the right track, as Peter Neary was soon to confirm, first in a research note in *Acadiensis*, then in a 1985 article in *Newfoundland Studies*,<sup>11</sup> and now in his book. Neary, however, rejects any suggestion that there was a plot: that the British and Canadian governments were thinking about Newfoundland's future should come as no surprise, and it should not be forgotten that in the end it was Newfoundland voters who made the choice.

A classic exposition of the plot theory of confederation is provided, however, by Bren Walsh in *More Than a Mere Majority: The Story of Newfoundland's Confederation with Canada* (St. John's, Breakwater, 1985). Walsh was a young reporter in the late 1940s, and in retirement has returned to an obvious obsession. He was convinced before he began his research, he says, and has now found it amply proven, that a plot existed "to manoeuvre Newfoundland into Confederation by fair means or foul...it was much worse than I thought. Where I was looking for venality on the part of two, three or four principal players, what I believe I uncovered was a deliberate, calculated design, fermenting over a decade or more, between Britain's Dominions Office and Canada's Department of External Affairs". (p.6) What Walsh found, of course, was a large amount of correspondence in which officials speculated and negotiated, and evidence of Anglo-Canadian discussions in which confederation was actively debated, but

9 McCann's lecture was not published. Accounts of this celebrated meeting can be found in the *Evening Telegram* (St. John's), 14 January 1983; the *Daily News* (St. John's), 15 January 1983; and *Maclean's Magazine*, 31 January 1983.

10 J.R. Smallwood, "The Story of Confederation" in Smallwood, ed., *The Book of Newfoundland*, Vol. III (St. John's, 1967), pp. 4-34; and *I Chose Canada* (Toronto, 1973).

11 P. Neary, "Newfoundland's Union with Canada: Conspiracy or Choice?", *Acadiensis* 12, 2 (Spring 1983), pp 110-9; "Great Britain and the Future of Newfoundland, 1939-45", *Newfoundland Studies* 1,1 (1985), pp. 29-56.



such evidence does not support a conspiracy theory.<sup>12</sup> Though Walsh was unable to prove his thesis, the book is nevertheless an interesting record of anticonfederate opinions that have been in existence for 40 years, and it shows how deeply wounded were many Newfoundlanders by what they deemed to be a shabby and unseemly proceeding. Smallwood and Walsh, indeed, represent two sides of the same contemporary coin.

What actually happened was altogether more prosaic than Walsh would have us believe. The war made Newfoundland technically self-supporting, and in 1942, with Clement Attlee at the Dominions Office, the British began to turn their thoughts to Newfoundland's future. Understanding that Newfoundlanders were divided on the subject of their constitutional future (but believing that confederation was not feasible), the British decided that after the war a national convention would be convened to examine the country's condition and the constitutional options. In the meantime, the Commission would develop a comprehensive reconstruction plan to be funded by Britain, which, if implemented, would act as a bridge between the Commission system and full independence: for the British feared, and with reason, that if Newfoundland returned immediately to responsible government its financial future would be uncertain at best. The reconstruction plan, submitted by the Dominions Office to the Treasury in September 1944, carried a price tag of \$100 million. The Treasury made it clear that no dollars would be available for Newfoundland; whereupon one of Neary's central figures, P.A. Clutterbuck of the Dominions Office, was sent to Ottawa in September 1945, to see what the Canadian attitude to Newfoundland might be. Both Neary and MacKenzie see this meeting as of pivotal importance, since the end result was an Anglo-Canadian understanding that the incorporation of Newfoundland into the Dominion would be the aim of both governments. The two authors, however, approach and therefore interpret the meeting in rather different ways, which illustrates the divergent yet complementary character of the two books.

For Neary, the meeting was "Clutterbuck's triumph" (p. 232). As the latter reported to his superiors, the Canadians "admitted frankly that they had been drifting before with no clear policy and were delighted that they now had a definite object to aim at". Thus in Neary's account, it is the skilled and urbane Clutterbuck who talks the Canadian officials present — Robertson and Wrong among them — around to a position advantageous to a Britain anxious, since it could not afford to bankroll Newfoundland, to unload it. British policy between 1942 and 1945, Neary concludes, "showed great foresight. Of all the players in a

12 For other reviews of Walsh, see David MacKenzie, "Three Sides of the Same Coin: Some Recent Literature on Canada-Newfoundland Relations in the 1940s", *Newfoundland Studies* IV, 1 (1988), pp. 99-104; and my review in *Newfoundland Quarterly*, LXXXII, 2 (1986), pp. 44-6.

complex game, they remained the best informed and the most clever" (p. 240). Yet MacKenzie shows how senior officials at External Affairs had been discussing Newfoundland throughout the war, and that a strong sentiment in favour of confederation had emerged long before Clutterbuck's Ottawa visit. It was consistent with this attitude that they would have opposed any suggestion that Canada find the dollars to pay for the Commission's reconstruction plan, which is where the talks with Clutterbuck began. If Canadian policy was unclear, it was surely because Canada was unaware of Britain's intentions. Clutterbuck, in fact, was pushing at an open door. Necessarily Canada had played the junior role, but as MacKenzie argues, "it was an essential one. They opened the door on Confederation just enough to permit the British to make union with Canada their goal. Without Canadian acquiescence, no action along this line would have been possible" (p. 163).

The extent of Canadian interest in and commitment to Newfoundland can be gauged from the three bulky volumes of *Documents on Relations between Canada and Newfoundland, 1935-1949*, published by External Affairs and edited by P.A. Bridle, once stationed at the High Commission in St. John's.<sup>13</sup> The first volume deals with defence, civil aviation and economic affairs; the second, in two parts, with confederation (1940-49). This admirable collection, which will remain a standard source for those interested in this subject and period, gives firm support to MacKenzie's contention that, having established a foothold on the island and spent \$65 million, the Canadians were concerned to maintain their influence there, particularly in view of the substantial American presence. As Bridle has written elsewhere, he and other officials were convinced in 1946 that "if Canada did not open its doors to Newfoundland, before long — in one way or another — the United States would".<sup>14</sup> It has to be admitted, though, that if officials in External Affairs were firm in their opinions, Mackenzie King was characteristically prone to vacillation — welcoming the role of father of confederation while fearing its impact on federal-provincial relations — and needed periodic reinforcement from Jack Pickersgill and others.

There were no such hesitations in London. The National Convention, pilloried as a betrayal by supporters of a return to responsible government (and by Bren Walsh), met in September 1946, and adjourned in January 1948. The British played their part by preventing substantive discussions on forms of closer relationships with the USA, by giving a stern and frosty reception to the delegation

13 P.A. Bridle, ed., *Documents on Relations Between Canada and Newfoundland. Volume 1, 1935-1949. Defence, Civil Aviation and Economic Affairs* (Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1974); *Volume 2, Confederation* (two parts, Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1984).

14 P.A. Bridle, "Canada, the US and Newfoundland, 1946,48", *International Perspectives* (Nov.-Dec. 1983), pp. 20-2.

which traipsed over to London, and by ensuring that confederation appeared on the referendum ballot. The Canadians did theirs by rolling out the red carpet for the Ottawa delegation, by eventually offering generous terms of union, and by encouraging the small confederate band. Neither MacKenzie nor Neary view the Convention as being of great importance. But no matter what one may think of the quality of its debates and reports, and despite the fact that the British government rejected its recommendation that confederation not be placed on the ballot, the Convention in fact served an essential purpose. It revived political debate after 12 years of Commission rule; it performed a much needed educational function; and it allowed confederation to be discussed at length and in detail.<sup>15</sup> It was, moreover, the making of Joe Smallwood, and proved to be his springboard into a long and controversial public career.

There followed the two referenda, the recriminations, the negotiation of the final terms of union, and the ceremonies to mark the extinction of a country and the birth of a province, all of which can be followed in the books under review. For Neary, the result was a victory for British diplomacy: "the United Kingdom had arranged her departure from Newfoundland with a hard logic and clinical precision she would not always manage in other parts of her far-flung but now crumbling empire" (p. 359). There are two questions to be raised about this interpretation. The first is how far the Newfoundland episode can be seen as part of the withdrawal from empire — the "business of going out of business" (p. 240). I think it can, but it should be remembered that the British Labour government of 1945-51 did not adopt a policy of immediate or even rapid decolonisation. Its policy was Fabian-inspired and stressed gradualism and trusteeship — after all, the empire still had considerable value, particularly those parts of it within the sterling area. At the same time the British recognised that certain imperial realities had to be faced. Hence the disengagement from India, Burma, Ceylon — and from Newfoundland, where the anomaly of Commission government had to go, where the exchange problem made a trusteeship policy impossible, and where immediate independence was judged to be undesirable. The solution was federation, a favourite British device, and it might be argued that the Newfoundland case anticipated the federations which were to be engineered, though without lasting success, in the West Indies and south central Africa.

The second question is whether Neary gives too much credit, throughout the book, to the Whitehall mandarins, their plans "expressed in taut Oxbridge English and flowing from one well-crafted position paper to another" (p. 40). The Amulree royal commission and the suspension of responsible government,

15 See J.A. Webb, "Newfoundland's National Convention, 1946-48", M.A. thesis, Memorial University, 1987.

for instance, might be interpreted as a quick and clever manoeuvre to fix the debt problem, rather than the result of careful and confident planning. And the episode of the wartime reconstruction plan leaves one astonished that men so allegedly clever as the civil servants at the Dominions Office could have expected the Treasury to find 100 million scarce postwar dollars for Newfoundland. The Treasury's reaction, it might be argued, brought the Dominions Office back to reality. It had to scramble to find another policy, which was conveniently provided by the Canadian officials who first murmured the word "confederation" to the smooth Mr. Clutterbuck. Finally, one should never forget that the success of British policy in Newfoundland was a close-run thing. Smallwood won the referendum by a narrow majority, and would probably have lost if his opponents had been better organised.

Whether or not the mandarins were so fully in command as Neary suggests, his book provides a full, detailed and extremely valuable account of the Commission period. He has given us the view from Whitehall and Government House. MacKenzie has provided the view from Ottawa and the High Commission in St. John's.<sup>16</sup> What we need now is the view from, shall we say, the common room at Memorial University College, the City Club, the Orange Hall at Joe Batt's Arm and the Big Dipper bar in Gander — perspectives that might explain how Smallwood did his "pretty good job of engineering". We need a history of Newfoundland in the Commission period which will explain the socio-economic factors which allowed confederation to become a realistic and widely-supported constitutional option by 1946, and which will closely examine the events of the two referenda. Senator F.W. Rowe's recent volume, *Into the Breach: Memoirs of a Newfoundland Senator* (Toronto, McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988), gives some leads that future scholars might follow. His interesting account of growing up in Lewisporte in the twenties mentions books and magazines arriving from the mainland, constant contact with relatives in mainland cities, the popularity of the *Family Herald* and the Maple Leaf Club, and the importance of the Newfoundland Methodist Church becoming part of the United Church of Canada. Since Memorial University College did not grant degrees until the 1950s, Rowe had to finish his education on the mainland, and he describes how many of his fellow teachers were, like himself, confederates. Rowe's upbringing as an outpost Protestant can be contrasted with that of the urban Roman Catholic, William J. Browne, whose first volume of memoirs ends in 1949.<sup>17</sup>

16 For a review of MacKenzie by Melvin Baker, see *Newfoundland Studies*, 4, 1 (1988), pp. 113-6.

17 W.J. Browne, *Eighty-four Years a Newfoundlander. Volume I, 1897-1949* (St. John's, 1981). See the review by Margaret Conrad, "Ego and Autobiography: Three Political Memoirs", *Acadiensis*, XVI, 1 (Autumn 1986), pp. 152-3.

Browne's orientation was towards Europe and New England rather than towards Canada, and he was a faithful member of a church whose hierarchy was openly opposed to union. His is a useful account from the anticonfederate trenches. That he lost and Rowe and his party won might perhaps be explained by a symbolic incident on a St. John's wharf in the late 1940s. An elderly official was watching schooners from northern outharbours load up with supplies; he was heard to mutter in disbelief as he turned away, "Asparagus tips! Tinned pineapple chunks!"

The publications mentioned in this article have added immensely to our understanding of Newfoundland's experience in the 1930s and 1940s, though further work will be needed before a full synthesis is possible. Equally, more research is needed on some aspects of the country's political history prior to 1934. But the period is coming into focus, slowly perhaps, since like constitutional history, political history is hardly fashionable. Would the process be speeded up by a conference in Edinburgh two years hence on Atlantic Region political history? It might be worth a try.

JAMES K. HILLER

### Ethnic Studies in Atlantic Canada: Or, Some Ethnics are More Ethnic than Others

THE STUDY OF ETHNICITY CONTINUES TO be one of the growth industries of Canadian scholarship, both academic and nonacademic branches. Increasingly in recent years, however, it has become clear that ethnic study is not a peculiarly Canadian phenomenon, but has a substantial international dimension. A recognition of ethnicity as an important human variable is, of course, not entirely of recent origin. Earlier generations studied ethnicity (calling it something else) under several rubrics. Much of the travel literature of the past dealt with the different customs of people to be found in exotic places, and with the rise of nationalism at the end of the 18th century, a good deal of ethnic analysis — however simplistic — went into the creation and promulgation of "nations" and "peoples" as the basis for new political reorganization of older outmoded states and empires.

The new ethnic studies share something in common with their historical ancestors, but their rationale has become much more complex, ranging along a very interesting continuum. That continuum begins on one side, perhaps, with the needs of the particular ethnic group itself for identity, recognition, and acceptance. Ethnic group identity in the Canadian context normally implies