

Growth Fantasies

Setting the Urban Agenda in Saint John, New Brunswick, 1960-1976

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Growth Fantasies: Setting the Urban Agenda in Saint John, New Brunswick, 1960-1976

THE 1960s AND EARLY 1970s was a dramatic era for Saint John, New Brunswick. The city was transformed by an ambitious urban renewal program as well as amalgamation and large-scale infrastructure projects. This research note, part of the author's ongoing examination of 20th-century Saint John, examines the promotion of development in the metropolitan area from 1960, the year of the election of the Robichaud government, to 1976, when the Hatfield government consolidated its economic development agencies and appeared to end its support for large manufacturing enterprises.¹ The urban agenda in Saint John included slum clearance, urban renewal, and public housing, but the main goals of urban development in this period were attracting industry and creating jobs. A coalition of business and political elites, backed by organized labour and the media, and despite a North American shift towards a service economy, promoted infrastructure development, heavy industry, and energy projects for a variety of reasons, including job creation, population growth, and a more positive city image. Social welfare or humanitarian arguments influenced the growth coalition, but they were secondary to economic justifications. The coalition was aided by planners and consultants, who predicted massive industrialization and port growth that would supposedly double the population and necessitate considerable investment in urban and regional planning, housing, and services such as health and education. Business was the key force in this ongoing campaign, but the provincial and federal governments were also complicit in promoting exaggerated and overly optimistic development projections that I have labelled "growth fantasies."²

The coalition mounted an active propaganda campaign to convince the public of the logic of its agenda. In the words of Harvey Molotch, urban growth coalitions "not only strive to create the material conditions for growth but also to convince people of the importance of growth to their well being." These coalitions also promote a more positive city image, often in the face of less than positive realities such as urban blight, poverty, crime, and outmigration. Urban boosterism includes

1 John Edward Belliveau, *Little Louis and the Giant K.C.* (Hantsport, NS: Lancelot Press, 1980); Della M.M. Stanley, *Louis Robichaud: A Decade of Power* (Halifax: Nimbus Publishing, 1984); John DeMont, *Citizens Irving: K.C. Irving and His Legacy* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); chap. 6; Della Stanley, "The 1960s: The Illusions and Realities of Progress," in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, ed. E.R. Forbes and D.A. Muise (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 421-59; John Reid, "The 1970s: Sharpening the Skeptical Edge," in Forbes and Muise, *Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, 460-504.

2 For urban issues in Saint John, see Greg Marquis, "Regime or Coalition? Power Relations and the Urban Agenda in Saint John, 1950-2000," *Journal of Enterprising Communities: People and Place in the Global Economy* III, no. 4 (2009): 355-68; Marquis, "Uneven Renaissance: Urban Development in Saint John, 1955-1976," *Journal of New Brunswick Studies* I (2010), <http://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/JNBS/article/view/18194>; Marquis, "Multilevel Governance and Public Policy in Saint John, New Brunswick," in *Sites of Governance: Multilevel Governance and Policy Making in Canada's Big Cities*, ed. Robert Young and Martin Horack (Montreal and

positive portrayals of a city as well as a negative role, where certain issues, groups, or organizations are “contained, controlled or ignored.” In some cases specific groups, such as unions or slow-growth movements or opinions such as environmentalism, are blamed for retarding growth and killing jobs.³

The state was fundamental to the politics of development in this period. Most big projects required support from senior levels of government, and by the 1970s the federal treasury was an important source of funding for infrastructure such as roads.⁴ As John Reid had written, optimism was in the air by the late 1960s with many in the Atlantic region anticipating major spending by the Trudeau government under the guise of regional development.⁵ Interest groups in New Brunswick tended to lobby not the bureaucracy but MPs and MLAs, especially cabinet members and regional ministers. The 1920s Maritime Rights protest, although a coalition involving farmers, organized labour, and other groups, had been driven by business; as Nerbas has detailed, the Saint John bourgeoisie has never been shy about lobbying government.⁶ Since the 1950s, if not earlier, the Saint John area, in terms of provincial politics, had been Progressive Conservative (PC) territory and usually represented in Ottawa by a Tory MP. Except for the Diefenbaker years (1957-1963), this meant that the city was represented by the opposition. In Louis Robichaud’s 1960 Liberal victory, greater Saint John’s six seats in the provincial assembly returned Conservatives. During the Hatfield era (1970 onwards) Saint John was largely Tory blue, but Liberal support was not absent. Opposition leader Robert J. Higgins (1971-1978), for example, was a Saint John MLA. Aside from electoral politics, partisanship, and patronage, Saint John, like other New Brunswick communities, was affected by economic development, environmental, and other policies at the provincial and national levels. At times, specific policies such as federal foreign investment controls or environmental levies were viewed as working to the detriment of the growth coalition.⁷

Economic development in Saint John was important on the provincial level for two reasons: it was the largest municipality in New Brunswick and a driver of the provincial economy. On the provincial level a non-elected authority, the New Brunswick Electric Power Commission (NBEPCC), which continued its established growth agenda based on the “power for industry” argument, was the most important public sector actor influencing development. During the Hatfield years, as explained below, the public utility would be major player in the Saint John region, with two

Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 136-61.

3 John Rennie Short, “Urban Imagineers: Boosterism and the Representation of Cities,” in *The Urban Growth Machine: Critical Perspectives, Two Decades Later*, ed. Andrew G. Jones and David Wilson (New York: State University of New York Press, 1999), 40-1.

4 Donald J. Savoie, “Governing a ‘Have Less’ Province: Unravelling the New Brunswick Budget Process in the Hatfield Era,” in *Budgeting in the Provinces: Leadership and the Premiers*, ed. Allan M. Maslove (Toronto: Institute of Public Administration of Canada, 1989), 31.

5 Reid, “1970s,” in Forbes and Muise, *Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, 460-1.

6 Donald J. Savoie, *Federal-Provincial Collaboration: The Canada-New Brunswick General Development Agreement* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1981), 11-13; Don Nerbas, “Adapting to Decline: The Business World of the Saint John Bourgeoisie in the 1920s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (June 2008): 151-87.

7 “Terminal plan threatened,” *Globe and Mail* (Toronto), 10 February 1972.

large energy projects that provided thousands of construction and related jobs. The area also contained the utility's largest industrial customers. The NBEPC, beginning in the 1950s, also exported power to other jurisdictions, which created a precedent for future debates about energy policy.⁸

The coalition also interacted with and was shaped by a new force – federal and provincial economic agencies such as the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) – which were tasked with attracting investment, creating jobs, and improving the provincial per capita income. Saint John would be designated a special area under DREE, and deserving of special funding for industrialization and infrastructure. Although DREE abandoned its growth centre focus after the 1972 federal election, the coalition continued to insist that investment, population growth, and increased value-added manufacturing in the Saint John region would benefit the entire province.

Saint John central business interests worked to raise the value of downtown real estate, but the coalition also promoted manufacturing, retail, the service sector, and cultural and tourism initiatives as well as construction projects to provide business and employment for suppliers, construction companies, the building trades, and engineering firms.⁹ The key organization, which functioned almost as a fourth branch of government, was the Saint John Board of Trade (SJBT); it maintained an active planning, lobbying, and propaganda campaign to boost the Saint John area. Briefs and statements from the SJBT reflected an abiding faith that it spoke for the citizenry and knew what was best for the community, in contrast to the allegedly shortsighted or ill-informed opponents of various development projects and private sector investments. It exerted major pressures on the municipal government, maintained a system of specialized committees, issued briefs and reports, and lobbied the provincial and federal governments. And its concerns were not restricted to economic issues. Most well-known entrepreneurs were involved with the Board of Trade and ancillary organizations. One of the most prominent was Philip Oland, owner of Moosehead Breweries. Capitalists like Oland also supported the arts and charitable organizations, part of the non-economic superstructure of the post-war city. Others were developers like Pat Rocca, who built Market Square, the Saint John Regional Hospital, and a number of shopping malls. Interestingly, though, most growth activists came from non-elite backgrounds. Malcom Somerville (1921-2012), for example, worked in the insurance sector. He chaired the Saint John Urban Renewal Commission during the 1960s and was involved with the local planning commission and other boards, agencies, and committees, including the Unity Committee of the early 1970s that lobbied the federal government for economic aid and infrastructure investment.¹⁰

The business community, which included professionals such as lawyers, was also linked to the provincial and federal governments – and opposition parties – through key operatives active in the Liberal and PC parties. These individuals and their

8 James Kenny and Andrew Secord, "Public Power for Industry: A Re-Examination of the New Brunswick Case, 1940-1960," *Acadiensis* XXX, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 84-108.

9 Marquis, "Regime or Coalition?"

10 Marquis, "Regime or Coalition?" 360-2; "Saint John's Case: Urban Renewal Needs Support," *Evening Times-Globe* (Saint John), 29 September 1973.

networks not only took part in election campaigns and worked to advance the party, they also were heavily involved in community boards, agencies, service clubs, and charities and often launched their public careers by being elected to the Saint John Common Council. These interconnecting webs gave legitimacy to both the political operatives and the growth coalition. One important example was the Port and Industrial Development Commission, an early manifestation of a regional development agency.

A major player in the politics of growth was the business empire of K.C. Irving. Irving began in the fuel supply business and branched out into gas stations, transportation, saw milling, pulp and paper, newspapers, radio, television, oil refining, shipbuilding, and shipping. His first expansion into industry was his acquisition of Canada Veneers in the late 1930s. During the Second World War the company became “the largest supplier of aircraft veneer on the planet.”¹¹ In the years prior to municipal amalgamation, Irving purchased the Saint John Shipyard and Dry Dock and opened a modern oil refinery in Simonds parish adjacent to Saint John. In the following years he bought a large share in Brunswick Mining and Smelting, a new venture at Bathurst in northern New Brunswick. Irving failed to have a smelter built in the Saint John area, but his companies were major beneficiaries of the construction of the smelter. Although Irving moved to Bermuda in 1972 to escape Canada’s tax laws, his enterprises, managed by his three sons, continued (and continue) to cast a large shadow over the province.¹²

One of the strengths of this expanding network of companies was the strategy of vertical integration. Irving also employed his considerable influence to extract favourable tax deals, water rates, and other concessions such as protection from nuisance prosecutions by municipal governments, which was a major reason why the Robichaud government during the 1960s attempted to abolish municipal bonusing in favour of a province-wide economic development strategy. The Irving group of companies, headquartered in Saint John by the middle of the 1970s, numbered roughly one hundred separate enterprises. Although Irving was a vocal advocate of private enterprise and a sometimes critic of government, his companies benefited from what social democrats called “corporate welfare.” The expansion of the Saint John Oil Refinery in the 1970s, for example, was partly facilitated by a contract to supply the new NBEPC thermal plant at Lorneville. Similarly, Canaport, Irving’s offshore crude oil unloading facility at Mispec, supplied the utility’s Courtenay Bay generating station that had been commissioned during the late 1950s and expanded during the 1960s.¹³

Urban studies literature often explains that the media plays an important role in boosterism by supporting the politics of growth in general and specific initiatives and portraying coalition activists and organizations as “community leaders.” The flip side is that opponents or critics of development are ignored, criticized, and

11 Jacques Poitras, *Irving vs. Irving: Canada’s Feuding Billionaires and the Stories They Won’t Tell* (Toronto: Viking Canada, 2014), 15.

12 Canada, Royal Commission on Corporate Concentration, *Study No. 16 – The Irving Group: A Case Study* (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, February 1978), 11; Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 68-9; Belliveau, *Little Louis*, 58.

13 Canada, *Study No. 16 – The Irving Group*.

neutralized. And despite the rise of radio and television broadcasting, the metropolitan newspaper remained a powerful influence on urban affairs; at this time Saint John was home to two Irving-owned dailies, *The Telegraph Journal* and *The Evening Times-Globe*, which were consistent promoters of pro-growth messages. This was accomplished through news reporting and editorials that promoted the growth agenda, although these dailies did not always agree with every project or every component of proposed and actual public and private sector developments.¹⁴

Although the influence of organized labour has partly waned, Saint John was known as a union town. The presence of rail yards, the port, processing and manufacturing industries such as two breweries and two pulp and paper mills, a shipyard and dry dock, a sugar refinery, foundries, and other unionized enterprises added to the city's blue-collar image. At its height, the winter port employed up to 1,500 members of the International Longshoremen's Association. One sign of labour's political clout was the presence of labour or pro-labour representatives on the Common Council and various civic boards and commissions. And labour organizations lobbied for public housing, better public transit, and other social amenities. At times local labour, notably the Saint John District Labour Council, was a formal part of growth coalition proposals or demands, although business and labour (particularly public sector unions) were also in conflict. Saint John unions were particularly active in the 1976 national day of action against federal wage and price controls.¹⁵ The building trades unions were reliable supporters of any infrastructure project, although this did not always translate into a lack of militancy as happened, for example, during the 1970s when the NBEPCC was building two major power plants near Saint John. The ambitious plans for port expansion and heavy industry and for major NBEPCC projects in the late 1960s and early 1970s assumed the expansion of the largely male, blue-collar, and unionized workforce. And so did the expansion of any Irving processing or manufacturing enterprises. Overall, labour in Saint John was an embedded pro-growth constituency. The increased levels of provincial government activity associated with the Robichaud and Hatfield eras, in health care, education, and social welfare, resulted in more public sector workers.¹⁶

One example of how supposedly non-economic developments could be promoted by the growth coalition was the Saint John branch of the University of New Brunswick. The main argument from local boosters was that students in the province's largest city should be able to attend university in their own community.

14 John R. Logan and Harvey L. Molotch, *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 71-3; Erin Steuter, "The Irvings Cover Themselves: Media Representations of the Irving Oil Refinery Strike, 1994-1996," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 24, no. 4 (1999): 1-18; Julian Walker, "The Once and Future New Brunswick Free Press," *Journal of New Brunswick Studies* 1 (2010): 64-74. Each prospective development or plan, such as the Urban Regional Impact Study of 1971, or realized project, such as the Saint John Harbour Bridge completed in 1968, generated detailed news coverage.

15 George Vair, *The Struggle against Wage Controls: The Saint John Story, 1975-1976* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 2006).

16 Saint John Board of Trade (SJBT), Brief on Forest Products Terminal, Port of Saint John, NB, Presented on Behalf of the Citizens of Saint John to the Honourable Otto Lang, Minister of Transport, Ottawa, 25 November 1975, file 337, New Brunswick Museum Archives (NBMA).

But a university is many things to many people, and while the fledgling campus filled a cultural role, helped improve access to higher education, and improved the city's image it also was thought to advance economic development.¹⁷ Although the educational mission was not as directly tied to the job market (and the needs of employers) as much as that of the local branch of the New Brunswick Community College, a university was considered essential to creating a modern workforce in postwar Canada. UNB Saint John was launched in 1964; the following year the municipal government ceded land for the Tucker Park campus, which formally opened in 1969. Like urban renewal, post-secondary education was supported as an investment in productivity as much as a social reform.¹⁸

Despite the city's reputation for slums, poverty, and pollution, average incomes in the Saint John area by the 1970s were higher than the provincial average and trades and production workers and their families shared in this prosperity. Blue-collar workers largely voted for the Liberals and Conservatives in provincial elections – not the New Democratic Party. The middle-class incomes of the 1960s and 1970s permitted many blue-collar workers and their families to relocate to single-family, owner-occupied neighbourhoods, a number of them in outlying municipalities where land was cheaper and taxes lower. In addition, because of a significant expansion of construction, the 1970s were a relatively prosperous time in the Saint John area, with low rates of unemployment. Workers did face the problem of inflation, and government anti-inflation measures, cutting into their incomes. In the future, most population and residential growth would be in the outer ring and not within Saint John city limits.¹⁹

The growth coalition's general agreement on the necessity of big projects and government support and funding did not bring unanimity on the details of development. In 1967, for example, a number of Irving enterprises and other companies criticized the route of a new harbour bridge and its interchanges.²⁰ And the coalition did not win all of its campaigns. In 1969, when the Robichaud government decided to support a new pulp mill in economically depressed Charlotte County and not the Saint John area, the decision created dissension in Liberal ranks. These tensions echoed the findings of a study of community leadership and corporate power in industrial Michigan, which uncovered "a considerable amount of political conflict, of negotiating among interests, of symbolic appeal, of incomplete information, and of snap decisions."²¹

17 "Board of Trade Speaker: Sees Good Prospects for Maritime Growth," *Evening Times-Globe*, 28 May 1970.

18 Paul Axelrod, *Scholars and Dollars: Politics, Economics, and the Universities of Ontario 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982); Peter McGahan, *The Quiet Campus: A History of the University of New Brunswick in Saint John, 1959-1969* (Fredericton: New Ireland, 1998). The Saint John Technical Institute, initially a trades school, was founded in 1963. A decade later it joined the newly created provincial system of community colleges.

19 Donald J. Savoie, *Regional Economic Development: Canada's Special Search For Solutions* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 113.

20 "Action Asked on Harbor Bridge," *Evening Times-Globe*, 6 March 1967; "Teed Questions Bridge-Throughway Details," *Evening Times-Globe*, 10 March 1967.

21 Bryan D. Jones, Lynn W. Bachelor, and Carter Wilson, *The Sustaining Hand: Community Leadership and Corporate Power* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1986), 200.

1967, Canada's centennial, was a year of both controversy and optimism for Saint John. The city annexed the parish of Lancaster, the city of Lancaster, and the parish of Simonds (the latter two were home to a number of industries). Efficiency and economic growth, the core goals of the coalition, which shaped public affairs in the Saint John area, were central to the amalgamation debate.²² Support for amalgamation by the early 1960s was strong within the SJBT, which stood for a greater Saint John economic region. Complicating the issue by 1965 was the Robichaud government's introduction of its Equal Opportunity legislation. The Saint John County Council in the mid-1960s endorsed a metropolitan focus by authorizing a detailed community survey of the greater Saint John area. In 1967 the four municipalities in the region were merged, creating a new City of Saint John with a population of 89,000 and an area of 103 square miles. The acquisition of population and territory, combined with the good will of Canada's centennial year, created a new optimism among the public – one fuelled by the media, public officials, and community organizations such as the SJBT.²³

That same year voters in Saint John took part in a provincial election that was a reaction to Robichaud's program of Equal Opportunity. The Royal Commission on Finance and Municipal Taxation, chaired by Edward Byrne and which reported in 1963, advocated centralization and equal provision of services across the province in the areas of education, social welfare, health, and justice. The Byrne report also recommended solving New Brunswick's chronic problems of poverty and unemployment by modernizing provincial services, municipal governance, and infrastructure in order to foster full employment. For the most part this was to be achieved by the private sector in resource and manufacturing industries. The report rejected municipal tax concessions to industry, arguing that provincial agencies should support the private sector through grants, loans, and other instruments.²⁴

Bonusing, the provision of favourable tax and municipal services deals to corporations that provided manufacturing jobs and added to the tax base, was at the heart of industrial promotion for North American cities. It paralleled tactics employed by provincial governments to attract or retain fixed-cost industries such as paper mills or smelters. In theory, tax abatements for industry either placed a greater burden on small business and residential ratepayers or degraded municipal services. The Irving paper mill's 1956 water deal with Lancaster, for example, was a superb bargain compared to the rates charged to the Atlantic Sugar Refinery, the NBEPC, or homeowners. In the early 1950s K.C. Irving, who was planning an expansion of the paper mill at Reversing Falls in Lancaster, secured a freeze on the value of the

22 Report of Commission Appointed to Study Proposed Amalgamation of Saint John City, Lancaster, Simonds, 1942, RS 156, F8 (A), Provincial Archives of New Brunswick (PANB); Saint John Town Planning Commission, *A Look at Our People* (Saint John: Town Planning Commission of Metropolitan Saint John, June 1965), 4, 45, 51; E.F. (Skip) Cormier, *Creating a Strong Future: Local Government Options for the Greater Saint John Area* (Fredericton: New Brunswick Department of Municipalities, Culture, and Housing, 1997).

23 Proctor, Redfern, Bousfield, and Bacon & Read, Voorhees and Associates & Town Planning Commission of Metropolitan Saint John, *Comprehensive Community Plan Saint John N.B.: A Municipal Development Plan* (Toronto: n.p., 1967), Part 1.

24 New Brunswick, *Report of the Royal Commission on Finance and Municipal Taxation*, vol. 1 (Fredericton: Royal Commission, 1963).

property for purposes of assessment, the right to discharge effluent directly into the Saint John river (and harbour), the right to expropriate nearby land, and immunity from prosecution under the law of nuisances. Similarly, during the 1950s, Irving convinced Kimberly-Clark to build a tissue plant at Lancaster, near his pulp mill, and sold 35 per cent of his mill to the “outsider” investor. This was on the understanding that Kimberly-Clark would purchase its paper from Irving. K.C. Irving personally secured long-term tax and water deals for the new tissue plant. In 1961 the water dispute took a new twist when Saint John temporarily cancelled its water agreement with Irving. Other Irving industries, such as the oil refinery and Ocean Steel, a metal fabrication site developed on prime harbour front land in the early 1960s, also benefited from favourable tax deals.²⁵

The taxation recommendations of the Equal Opportunity Program (EOP) and the centralization of power under the province at the expense of the municipalities were direct threats to both the political clout and bottom line of manufacturing enterprises. Irving newspapers, aided by Michael Wardell’s Fredericton’s *Daily Gleaner*, mounted a vociferous attack on Robichaud’s modernization and centralization policies. Yet the actual response in Saint John was more mixed and nuanced. Although there were concerns in the Saint John area that equalization and centralization would lower the quality of specific services such as education, the social welfare aspects of the EOP were not as intensely opposed as its taxation and municipal reform provisions. In the end, standing municipal property tax deals were not touched. Another factor was that businesses and business organizations sensed that both the provincial and federal governments, in name of job creation and regional development, were about to turn on the tap of state funding to the private sector.²⁶

One paradox in discussing Saint John’s connections with the EOP was that the urban area was viewed as a “have” region that supposedly stood to lose so much under Robichaud’s plan, which was itself identified with poverty, substandard housing, and social exclusion. When the Saint John area experienced prosperity, such as during the 1970s, the benefits were not evenly distributed to vulnerable neighbourhoods and the unskilled working class. Class divisions were most clearly evident in residential neighbourhoods, where a large percentage of the working class lived in substandard, tenement rental housing.²⁷

Not surprisingly, urban renewal initially focused on slum clearance. The 1956 Potvin Report recommended the demolition of 4,000 out of 13,000 residential buildings in the city. In 1962 the director of social welfare reported that many residents were living in substandard properties and that landlords were charging exorbitant rents. By this time urban renewal had displaced hundreds of people from Saint John’s east end and, despite the efforts of the Saint John Housing Authority, the crisis had not abated.²⁸ The city adopted a master plan in 1947, based on an

25 For Irving’s early career, see Russell Hunt, *K.C. Irving – The Art of the Industrialist* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

26 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*.

27 Report of Commission Appointed to Study Proposed Amalgamation of Saint John City, Lancaster, Simonds, 1942, RS 156, F8 (A), PANB.

28 Minutes of the Emergency Housing Committee, D.J. Hanley to Emergency Housing Committee, 20 November 1953, RS 156, file 6A (6), PANB; C.K. Mackenzie to Warden C.A. McIlveen, n.d., 1962, RS 156, file 6A (6), PANB; Saint John Town Planning Commission, *A Look at Our People*, 51.

earlier report, which although not given full legal authority served as a useful guide for various projects in the 1950s and early 1960s. These included the city's first urban renewal project, a new viaduct carrying automobile traffic over railroad tracks, and a causeway across Courtney Bay.²⁹ The Courtenay Place Urban Renewal Project, in Saint John's east end tenement district, redeveloped 57 acres of land near Courtenay Bay during the early 1960s. It aimed to balance residential, commercial, and industrial uses and to improve transportation routes. The \$4.5 million cost was covered by three levels of government, with Ottawa providing half of the funding.³⁰

In 1966 work began on a Comprehensive Community Plan (CCP) to guide urbanization of the cities of Saint John and Lancaster and the parishes of Simonds and Lancaster. Although social conditions were an important part of the argument in favour of urban renewal in Saint John in the 1950s and 1960s, the broader goal was to remove urban blight and engineer a more efficient city that would attract investment and jobs. As the CCP evolved it dovetailed with the ambitious plans for industrial expansion, and planners and politicians spoke of Saint John doubling its population by 1980.³¹ The CCP, by the late 1960s, was superseded by and merged with the Urban Impact study and plan for the Saint John region, which was initiated in 1969. Much of the focus of these studies was on the built environment, traffic and parking, and municipal services; but, as with much urban or regional planning in this era, housing and other social welfare issues were also explored.³²

Saint John's second major urban renewal initiative, the North End project, focused on Main Street and the neighbourhood to the south, another tenement district. In this case, the provincial government covered 25 per cent of the cost. Together with land clearances required for a new harbour bridge, an urban expressway, and a new viaduct connecting the north end and the central business district, this project displaced several hundred families. The municipality was responsible for 30 per cent of project costs.³³ By 1969, when the federal minister responsible for housing was criticizing urban renewal as expensive and misguided, Ottawa had spent or committed more than \$13 million to renewal projects in Saint John and there was more to come.³⁴ One of the factors behind amalgamation had been a shortage of land for residential development; although Millidgeville in Saint John's north end had been opened for residential construction in the early 1960s, the pace of building was slow compared to outlying subdivisions such as Forest Hills and Greendale. Housing remained a problem in Saint John following amalgamation; a CMHC

29 SJBT, Colin Blackwood to Mayor Joseph MacDougall, 13 May 1969, file 5, NBMA.

30 *Redevelopment Scheme: Courtenay Place Saint John-New Brunswick* (Ottawa, c. 1962), NBMA; "Courtenay Place," *Urban Renewal and Public Housing in Canada I*, no. 1 (January-March 1965): 1-2.

31 "Simonds Councillors Ask That Nothing Hinder Development," *Evening Times-Globe*, 13 September 1962.

32 Report of the Saint John Board of Trade, 1942, p. 7, RS 156, F8 (A), PANB; Proctor, Redfern, Bousfield and Bacon & Reed, Voorhees and Associates & Town Planning Commission of Metropolitan Saint John, *Comprehensive Community Plan Saint John NB: A Municipal Development Plan* (Toronto: n.p., 1967-1971). The Comprehensive Community Plan series consisted of 31 separate reports.

33 "Public Notice on Comprehensive Community Plan," *Evening Times-Globe*, 11 September 1969; "Urban Renewal 'Good Deal'," *Evening Times-Globe*, 16 September 1969.

34 "Public Notice on Comprehensive Community Plan," *Evening Times-Globe*, 11 September 1969.

official in 1975 informed the Board of Trade that “the housing situation . . . is a deterrent to the setting of industry in the city.”³⁵

The Saint John area had a manufacturing base by the mid-Victorian era, and new industries, such as a sugar refinery and a shipyard and dry dock, were added and existing industries expanded during the early 20th century; but until the 1960s, the city was regarded more as a port and railway centre than an industrial city. A boosterist article in *The Atlantic Advocate* in 1960 announced that the industrial age had dawned, principally because of the energies of capitalist K.C. Irving. By 1961 one-third of the workforce was employed in manufacturing and transportation. At this time Irving and his business and political supporters were promoting “the Atlantic Seaway,” a defensive counter to the St. Lawrence Seaway that would include a canal connecting the Northumberland Strait and the Bay of Fundy, tidal power projects, and a corridor highway connecting Sydney, Cape Breton, to Quebec via the state of Maine.³⁶ This megaproject, generally opposed by Nova Scotia as a threat to the port of Halifax, was supported by Robichaud in his first years in office and gained some federal government interest. The high cost and uncertain utility of the Atlantic Seaway made its actual completion highly unlikely, which suggests that it was more of a political symbol than a tangible project.³⁷

Much of the investment by government and the private sector into infrastructure improvements in the 1960s was justified in the name of attracting industry and other investments. In Saint John this included the new harbour bridge (1968), an urban expressway (which opened in the late 1970s), and modernized port and railway facilities, including expanded rail yards and a container terminal. Many of these initiatives originated with the SJBT, which advocated for certain projects for decades. Although elements of the business community objected to centralization and “interference” from Fredericton, the growth coalition in Saint John expected much from Robichaud’s New Brunswick Development Corporation (NBDC), especially when federal dollars were on the table. The role of the NBDC was to support new secondary manufacturing or new products – not processing industries such as oil refineries or pulp and paper mills.³⁸

In addition to internal battles over the direction of public policy within the province, politicians, interest groups, and the press were involved in the ongoing politics of regional equalization and development that, in most cases, translated into how much federal spending could be attracted to a city or a region of the province. The emphasis of local elites, provincial politicians, and the Irving media on the use of public funds and authority to create jobs was not simply mindless boosterism; it reflected then-current thinking on regional economic planning as represented by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC), which in 1967 advocated a five-year plan to boost productivity in the primary sector and employment in manufacturing and the service sector. Economist W.Y. Smith of UNB in 1971 was optimistic that growth centre designation and federal incentives would allow the region to

35 SJBT, Minutes of the Industry Committee, 7 March 1975, file 333, NBMA.

36 David Goshen, “The Metamorphosis of Saint John,” *The Atlantic Advocate* (March 1960), 16-25.

37 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 57-60.

38 E.B. DeMerchant, “New Brunswick Legislature Resumes next Month,” *Telegraph Journal* (Saint John), 29 October 1973; Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 104-7.

maximize its locational advantages. In the context of the day, promoting value-added and export-oriented secondary manufacturing in order to offset a traditional reliance on primary industries made perfect sense.³⁹

Much has been made of the social justice aspects of Robichaud's modernization policies. Della Stanley has suggested that Robichaud at heart was a social reformer, who viewed industrial promotion as a "political asset."⁴⁰ But economic arguments were at the core of the EOP. The ultimate goal of the program was to put more Brunswickers to work within a modern, industrial economy. The Liberals believed that their program of modernizing and equalizing municipal, social, health, and educational services, combined with close ties with the federal government, would lead to New Brunswick's economic salvation. The average income in the province at this time was 80 per cent that of the Canadian average. In keeping with the spirit of the age, business organizations and groups such as the APEC advocated federal government spending in the region as a contribution to national unity.

Saint John had begun the 1960s by being described by the *Globe and Mail* as a "boomtown" fuelled largely by the private sector. Although a number of smaller industries started or expanded in the area in the early 1960s, the only major new investment between Robichaud's first victory in 1960 and the 1967 election was the Rothesay Paper Co. Ltd. newsprint plant; it opened in Simonds parish near the Irving refinery in 1965. With a capital investment of \$34 million and a workforce of 300, this was not an insignificant addition to the local economy. The Rothesay mill, owned by an international consortium, asked for provincial land on Courtenay Bay that Irving had coveted for industrial expansion. After the Liberal victory, Irving was given the 90-acre site and the Rothesay Paper Co. mill, despite Irving's opposition, was built on land nearby.⁴¹

The expansive mentality of the late 1960s encouraged the SJBT to push for the city's designation by the federal government as a special development area. The provincial PCs made this a plank in their 1967 election campaign. The Saint John Port and Industrial Commission also supported federal and provincial government aid to industrialize the urban region. Although endorsing regional development spending, the business community did not surrender policy formulation to the public sector. As the SJBT federal and provincial affairs committee noted in 1970, the organization remained cognizant of the importance of developing "informed" (pro-development) public opinion and influencing government actions.⁴²

Opposition to the Liberal government's program of Equal Opportunity was associated with anglophone New Brunswick, the business community, and the municipalities and the county councils that stood to be shorn of their powers or, in the case of the later, abolished. The taxpayers of Saint John, a relatively prosperous

39 "What the Area Needs Now is a Cure" (editorial), *Evening Times-Globe*, 28 October 1967; Lydon Watkins, "Ten-Year Atlantic Area Plan Calls for \$20 Billion Investment," *Globe and Mail*, 6 April 1971.

40 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 220, 225.

41 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 70-1; Canada, *Study No. 16 – The Irving Group*, 16; SJBT, Industry Committee, Summary of Industries Started, Expanded or Closed in New Brunswick, 1900-1966, file 335, NBMA.

42 SJBT, Federal and Provincial Affairs Committee Minutes, 16 September 1970, file 411, NBMA.

community, would be forced to subsidize provincial services in less developed, rural areas, most of which were heavily francophone. New Brunswick's larger municipalities, with the support of the anglophone press, defended local autonomy against feared provincial centralization.⁴³ Irving, who had considerable investments in the Saint John area and who owned the local press, one radio station, and one television station, led the business counterattack against Robichaud's policies. And, as detailed by Stanley and other authors, much of the dispute between Irving and the Robichaud government was rooted not in Saint John issues, but controversies surrounding Noranda Mines Ltd. gaining control of Brunswick Mining by 1967.⁴⁴

The Official Opposition spoke in abstract terms of freedom and local autonomy, but PC electioneering in 1967 promised to secure federal development funding, stop outmigration, boost employment, assist rural families, and undo aspects of centralization – notably by restoring county councils and municipal control over property assessments and taxation. The Liberal campaign in greater Saint John was a preview of Robichaud's general approach in his final campaign in 1970, where social reform took a back seat to economic development. Robichaud won the hard-fought 1967 contest with just under 53 per cent of the popular vote. In the Saint John region, the Liberal share was only 31 per cent.⁴⁵ Despite the intensity of opposition to Equal Opportunity prior to the election, the issues in Saint John, from the point of view of the PCs, were all related to economic development and financial burdens. The Tories criticized tolls on the new federally owned Saint John Harbour Bridge, the unwillingness of the provincial government to establish a medical school in Saint John, and city's failure to be acknowledged as a designated area under federal regional assistance programming.⁴⁶ The Saint John area, aside from one riding, remained Tory blue.⁴⁷ The *Evening Times-Globe* immediately announced the newest critical policies necessary for enhancing Saint John's economy: federal government action on freight rates, port modernization, the expansion of the municipal airport, and an upgrade to the Bay of Fundy ferry service connecting the city to Digby, Nova Scotia.⁴⁸ In the weeks following the election, much was made of Saint John's new city hall project; a private company was given the green light to build a modern, multi-story office tower in the central business district. The city hall, in the words of an Irving newspaper, was "a bold step into the future" that would "lift civic spirits and civic pride" despite the fact that the municipality did not own it.⁴⁹ Another bricks and mortar goal of the local growth coalition was a civic complex, by then a basic amenity of a modern city. Two downtown malls were built in the 1970s, which lifted community morale and helped slow down central business district decline, but the

43 George M. Betts, "Conservatism and Local Government 'Reform' in the 1980s: The Byrne Commission Revisited. Some Myopic New Brunswick Reflections" (unpublished paper, 1985, copy in possession of author).

44 Canada, *Study No. 16 – The Irving Group*, 22-3; Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*.

45 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 254.

46 "Here Is the Real Robichaud Record," *Evening Times-Globe*, 21 October 1967.

47 Elections New Brunswick, Provincial Election Results, 1967, <http://www.electionsnb.ca/content/enb/en/resources/publications/election-results.html>.

48 "A Timely and Urgent Moment for a Frank Talk With Mr. Hellyer" (editorial), *Evening Times-Globe*, 27 October 1967, 4.

49 "City Super Block Seen as a Symbol of Progress," *Evening Times-Globe*, 31 October 1967.

civic complex, an arena capable of hosting large concerts, would not open until the 1990s.⁵⁰

Government aid to infrastructure and manufacturing investments continued to be given priority by the growth coalition, which welcomed the federal government's awarding, in 1967, of a large naval construction contract to the Irving shipyard. In 1968 the SJBT submitted a brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications explaining that industrial growth in southern New Brunswick "and perhaps the whole province" was dependent on "a modern transportation network or infrastructure." The brief mentioned pet projects of the local business community, such as the Chignecto Canal, as well as new proposals such as a new deep water port capable of handling modern "super" ships and offshore mooring capabilities that would allow tankers to discharge crude oil via submarine pipelines. The latter was put in place in 1970 when Irving Oil opened its offshore Canaport terminal at Mispec, east of Saint John.⁵¹ Yet Mispec was not the first choice for the deep water terminal. In 1968 Irving Oil and the provincial government had announced that Lorneville, a site to the west of the city and home to a small fishing community, had been selected as the site of a major port development.⁵²

The provincial government ended up expropriating several thousand acres at Lorneville, and the site became the focus of shifting and ever-expanding development schemes. In 1968 the NBDC announced that the site was suitable for handling both liquid and dry cargoes and Robichaud was confident that Lorneville, where the water approaches were one hundred feet deep, would be looked upon favourably by the Atlantic Development Board, which was seeking to recommend a location for an east coast "super port." At that point in time few ports on the Atlantic seaboard were capable of accommodating the newest generation of dry and liquid bulk carriers, which ranged between 150,000 and 300,000 deadweight tons. Proximity to the United States by water, rail, and road as well as access to global shipping routes were touted as other advantages.⁵³ Although the port of Saint John remained viable for bulk cargo and there were plans to develop the capacity to handle containers, physically it was too narrow to accommodate the newest generation of large freighters. That same year the NBDC began to promote the area as ideal for a "multiple industry complex" that could attract up to 50 different enterprises. The media reported that Lorneville-based operations would produce up to 20,000 jobs in 10 years, which would more than double the size of the wage-earning labour force in the Saint John area.⁵⁴ A 1969 report by the provincial Department of Economic Growth revealed that it had been in discussions with

50 "Long-Range Planning Essential, Price says," *Evening Times-Globe*, 29 January 1971.

51 SJBT, Submission to the Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications, 13 December 1968, file 335, NBMA.

52 Lyndon Watkins, "Site Near Saint John Picked for Superport," *Globe and Mail*, 22 June 1968.

53 "Deep Water Ports Deemed Valuable Resource," *Globe and Mail*, 7 December 1972; Watkins, "Site Picked."

54 Burt Burgoyne, "Saint John Is Poised at Fork in the Road," *Globe and Mail*, 16 November 1968; New Brunswick Development Corporation, *Annual Report 1968* (Fredericton: New Brunswick Development Corporation, 1968).

several enterprises on specific projects, such as an aluminum smelter and an iron ore and sulphuric acid plant, to locate at "Canport" (the working name of what soon was called Saint John Deep). Yet the report also listed several complicating factors, such as the cost of electrical power and uncertain commodity prices and did not oversell the projects.⁵⁵

In 1969 the provincial government announced preliminary approval of classifying Saint John as a growth centre. Although the Robichaud government had promised to develop Lorneville with its own resources if necessary, it was not in a fiscal position to do so. The president of the NBDC expressed the hope that any future facility would be taken over by the National Harbours Board, which also operated the port of Saint John.⁵⁶ With support from the newly organized DREE, the province committed to broadening the industrial base, improving infrastructure, and supporting a new comprehensive plan to guide the anticipated megacity of the future. Saint John (along with Moncton) was designated one of 22 growth centres eligible for federal assistance for infrastructure and it also benefitted from the Regional Development Incentives Act, which mandated assistance for new industries. Specific projects were eligible for 50 per cent federal funding; highway projects qualified for up to 100 per cent. Companies were eligible for up to \$30,000 for each new job created.⁵⁷ In 1970 construction began on the new urban expressway, funded by DREE. Despite a growing list of construction projects, many of the benefits were not trickling down to the community, population growth was slow, and new housing starts modest. Fed by the optimism of officials and politicians, who promoted massive industrialization in the urban region, planners were predicting that the metropolitan area would grow to more than 270,000 and the labour force to more than 100,000 by the middle of the 1980s. According to planners, as a growth centre Saint John would require water and sewage improvements, new residential neighbourhoods, parks, schools, and other community facilities as well as more than 2,000 new student places at the local campuses of the University of New Brunswick and the community college.⁵⁸

With the value of hindsight, the glowing statements of business and political leaders in the late 1960s seem like naïve boosterism. But a broader political and economic agenda, rooted in an outdated development model and partly motivated by partisan considerations, was at work, as the Robichaud government was linking the industrialization of Saint John with an emphasis on a cluster of metal-working industries and a "fundamental alteration in the structure of the provincial economy."⁵⁹ This was also to be the site of the multiplex, whose planners added possible chemical plants to the mix. Two years later, though, the political dynamics

55 Kates, Peak, Marwick and Co., Department of Economic Growth, *Deep Water Port Oriented Industry in New Brunswick* (Toronto: Department of Economic Growth, December 1969).

56 Lyndon Watkins, "New Brunswick Growth Patterns Hinges on Fate of Multiple-Industry Complex," *Globe and Mail*, 17 January 1969.

57 Swan, Wooster Engineering Co. Ltd., Saint John Port and Development Commission, *Saint John Port Development Study – Phase I* (Vancouver: Swan Wooster Engineering, January 1971); Savoie, *Regional Economic Development*, 37.

58 Marquis, "Regime or Coalition," 363.

59 "New Brunswick Industrial Complex Proposed for City," *Evening Times-Globe*, 3 May 1969.

had changed. Although Saint John was still represented on the opposition benches at the federal level, Richard Hatfield's PCs defeated Robichaud and held on to six of seven ridings in greater Saint John.⁶⁰ Like Robichaud, Hatfield made economic diversification and value-added processing and manufacturing a priority. Yet there was evidence of tensions between the provincial government's economic development priorities and those of communities and business organizations. One challenge for Hatfield was the need to promote growth in all regions of the province, including the economically depressed northeast (which in the Hatfield era was largely Liberal territory).⁶¹

The multiplex concept was championed by the New Brunswick Multiplex Corporation (NBMC), a federal-provincial agency created in 1971 and funded by DREE. Consultants referred to successful European models, but appeared to ignore indications that the metal fabrication industry in many parts of North America was in decline. At this time the resource sector accounted for half of provincial GNP, and most manufacturing by value was actually processing (refining oil and making pulp and paper). The NBMC was headquartered in Saint John in contrast to the NBDC, which was based in Fredericton (along with agencies or departments such as Economic Growth, the NB Industrial Finance Board, and Provincial Holdings, Limited). The Saint John office had a staff of 18 at its peak, including experts in heavy industry and metal fabrication. The corporation was tasked with not only recruiting heavy industry, but also assembling and leasing land, investing in enterprises, and contracting with companies to manage specific businesses.⁶² Its 1975 guide for potential investors and corporate executives, *The Saint John Region in Profile*, confidently explained that Saint John was currently developing as a major seaport, was the leading manufacturing centre in Atlantic Canada, and aspired to be "a national oil and electrical energy base."⁶³ This would supposedly produce a total population for the greater Saint John region of 185,000-250,000.

The estimated cost of Saint John Deep in 1970 was \$45-60 million, and its potential role included transshipping bulk products such as crude oil, coal, and iron ore from North America to Japan and other foreign markets. The NBDC reported that Norfolk and Western, the American rail corporation that shipped coal out of Appalachia, was interested in transporting coke to Lorneville for transshipment to Japan's steel industries. By late 1970 the federal government was prepared to contribute \$10 million to Saint John Deep provided the sponsoring interests reached a deal. The coke would be sent in small bulk carriers via the port of Hampton Roads to Lorneville where it would loaded onto carriers of 100,000 tons or larger. A year later the provincial government had added Australian iron ore to the list of potential

60 Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 254-5.

61 SJBT, Minutes of the Industry Committee, 24 November 1972, file 332, NBMA; Lyndon Watkins, "A Headache for Hatfield: Disparity Magnifies the Difficulties in Resource Industries," *Globe and Mail*, 14 January 1972.

62 "Corporation to Foster New Brunswick Metal Working," *Globe and Mail*, 11 February 1971; Watkins, "Headache for Hatfield." Provincial Holdings was a company owned by the provincial government and established in the early 1970s to loan funds for private industrial projects.

63 New Brunswick Multiplex Corporation, *The Saint John Region in Profile* (Saint John: New Brunswick Multiplex Corporation, 1975), A-2. The document was prepared with the assistance of the Board of Trade and the City of Saint John.

bulk cargoes. In time, however, the transshipment of non-petroleum cargo fell off the agenda for Lorneville.⁶⁴ In 1971 9,000 acres of expropriated land in the Lorneville peninsula were rezoned from agricultural to heavy industry. By 1971 the potential industrial mix for the planned port had been limited to an asphalt plant and a crude oil transshipment facility (the latter to permit super tankers to transfer foreign oil to smaller carriers destined for US ports). The rezoning, and the NBEPIC's announcement that it planned to build a thermal generating station near Lorneville, was followed by a joint federal-provincial environmental impact study.⁶⁵

The crude oil transshipment and bulk storage facility was promoted by the American multinational Continental Oil Company (Conoco), and the forecast was that 500-850 vessels a year would visit the new port in order to meet North America's growing demand for Middle Eastern crude. As of 1971 the plan for the \$460 million facility included three berths, with the provincial government providing up to \$14 million in support. Conoco also signaled its interest in building a 200,000 barrel-a-day oil refinery on the site, possibly in expectation of supplying the planned thermal generating plant. With the Irving bulk terminal at Canaport only 12 miles to the east, the logic of a deep water oil terminal and a new refinery at Lorneville was not apparent to some commentators.⁶⁶

Despite the optimism of the growth coalition, the federal government was slow to promise funding for the new port and in 1972 the project received a setback when the Ottawa announced a levy on oil cargoes for a fund to clean up oil spills. Although its actual impact was moderated after protests from the New Brunswick government, the announcement of the policy was the stated reason for Conoco to indefinitely postpone its investment and in the end no oil terminal was completed at Lorneville. In the immediate aftermath, the NBEPIC expressed an interest in financially supporting an oil dock or even a refinery at the site. For a brief period Northeast Petroleum Industries Inc. of Boston indicated interest in partnering in the proposed deep-water terminal, the refinery, and storage terminal. Two Japanese oil companies were also involved in discussions. But by 1973 work on phase one, a loading dock for mid-sized tankers, had stalled.⁶⁷

64 Nicholas Cotter, "Commitment Expected for Superport in New Brunswick," *Globe and Mail*, 12 December 1970; Burt Burgoyne, "New Brunswick: A Footloose Premier in Search of an Identity," *Globe and Mail*, 2 March 1971; Lyndon Watkins, "Continental Oil to Develop Depot for \$60 Million Near Saint John," *Globe and Mail*, 23 November 1971.

65 The report raised concerns about increased release into the atmosphere and water supply of sulfur dioxide, a byproduct of burning fossil fuel; see Honourable Jack Davis and Honourable G.W.N. Cockburn, *An Appraisal of the Environmental Consequences for Developments Proposed for Lorneville, New Brunswick* (Fredericton: n.p., 1973) and Jeff Carruthers, "Environmental Study Warns of Spill Danger at Lorneville Project," *Globe and Mail*, 7 February 1973.

66 Watkins, "Continental Oil to Develop Depot"; Lyndon Watkins, "Conoco not abandoning plans for \$60 million N.B. oil terminal," *Globe and Mail*, 23 February 1972.

67 Jacqueline Brewer, "Ottawa Doing Best to Create New Jobs in NB: Marchand," *Globe and Mail*, 17 January 1972; "Terminal Plan Threatened," *Globe and Mail*, 10 February 1972; "Oil Levy Draws Angry Criticism," *Globe and Mail*, 16 March 1972; "Ottawa may Change Anti-Pollution Levies," *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 1972; Lyndon Watkins, "New Brunswick Looks to Manufacturing, Building to Raise Growth," *Globe and Mail*, 7 July 1972; Albert Sigurdson, "Start on First Steps of Lorneville Deep-Water Terminal," *Globe and Mail*, 3 May 1973; "Dock, Refinery Urged at New Brunswick Thermal Plant," *Globe and Mail*, 12 October 1973; "Decision

In anticipation of massive industrialization, in 1971 the consulting company that produced the Comprehensive Community Plan released the Urban Region Impact Study – a blueprint for the economic and social development of the greater Saint John area extending from St. Stephen to the west to Sussex to the east. The updated plan, according to City of Saint John staff, was a requirement of the federal government for any community seeking major funding for infrastructure and industrial diversification.⁶⁸ Given the building boom of 1973 there were grounds for optimism, yet Saint John's population peaked at 89,000 in 1971 and in subsequent years the city continued to lose people to suburban municipalities.⁶⁹ Still, the 1970s for the Saint John region, compared to other parts of the Maritimes, were relatively buoyant in terms of employment and vacancy rates were low. This was in part the result of construction and infrastructure projects, such as the expansion of the Irving refinery and shipyard and dry dock and new NBEP facilities. By 1976 Irving Oil was preparing to activate its upgraded refinery in east Saint John, now the largest in Canada. The \$200 million expansion was based on importing crude oil from Saudi Arabia, fulfilling the contract to supply Coleson Cove, and increasing exports of refined products to New England.⁷⁰ The Irving shipyard began an expansion in the early 1970s to accommodate the repair or construction of 250,000-ton vessels. Aided by the federal Shipbuilding Temporary Assistance program, the yard modernized its capabilities to incorporate new modular construction processes. In addition to conducting repairs, during the 1970s the Irving yard built oil tankers, tugs, barges, and other craft.⁷¹

Despite the prominence of Irving interests, foreign or outside investment was part of Saint John's industrial mix; by the 1970s, for example, Standard Oil of British Columbia (controlled by Standard of California) owned nearly half of the shares of Irving Oil Ltd and more than half of the shares in the Irving Refinery Ltd. Kimberly Clark owned part of the Irving pulp and paper mill in west Saint John.⁷² By 1974 Premier Richard Hatfield, who in 1972 had committed to a \$20 million expansion of Saint John port facilities, was blaming the failure of Saint John Deep on nationalist federal government policies such as foreign investment review and the curtailment of oil exports to the United States. Three years earlier, in a speech in Saint John, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau had been hopeful that Maritime exporters

May be Soon on Lorneville Dock," *Globe and Mail*, 31 July 1975; "\$10 Million Allotted for 3,000 Jobs in New Brunswick," *Evening Times-Globe*, 11 March 1974.

68 "Sweeping Plans for Saint John's Growth," *Evening Times-Globe*, 10 September 1971.

69 By 1981 the population of the Saint John Census Metropolitan Area was roughly 120,000. In 2011 it was 127,000 and the population of the city had fallen to 68,000; see PlanSJ, *Technical Background Report: Fact Sheets* (Saint John: PlanSJ, n.d.).

70 DeMont, *Citizens Irving*, 125; Lyndon Watkins, "Active New Brunswick Construction Industry Expects Confirmation of Lorneville Project," *Globe and Mail*, 12 September 1972; "East Coast Builders Predict Increase in Construction Will Continue This Year," *Globe and Mail*, 25 January 1974.

71 James Rusk, "Hatfield Lists Benefits for Business in New Brunswick," *Globe and Mail*, 7 October 1971; Albert Sigurdson, "Saint John Plans Canada's Most Modern Shipyard," *Globe and Mail*, 7 October 1971; Esther Crandall, "New Irving Refinery Starts Up Production," *Globe and Mail*, 6 April 1976.

72 Canada, *Study No. 16 – The Irving Group*, 3-4. Irving later acquired 100 per cent of the refinery.

would benefit from liberalized trade policies in the United States. Yet protectionist policies in the United States, inflation, and exchange rates, according to the chair of the NBMC in 1972, were barriers to large-scale capital investment. In 1971 the Nixon administration had shocked the Canadian federal and provincial governments and exporters by imposing a 10 per cent import surcharge.⁷³

The energy crisis of the early 1970s appeared to present new opportunities for the NBEPCC, the Hatfield government, and the growth coalition. Cheap and reliable power for industry had been a motherhood issue in politics since the 1950s, and this intensified during the 1970s when the province's pulp and paper industry was struggling to remain competitive.⁷⁴ Following the 1973 oil crisis, and in light of a new emphasis on energy security, the Maritime premiers were thinking big with several large energy projects being discussed, including the harnessing of Bay of Fundy tidal power and the extension of an oil pipeline from Montreal to southern New Brunswick.⁷⁵ With the cost of crude oil on the rise (from \$3 to \$37 per barrel between 1972 and 1982), the electrical utility pointed to the logic of diversifying the province's energy sources. In 1975 53 per cent of the NBEPCC's capacity was derived from hydro-electric dams and 47 per cent from thermal plants. The anchor of the Lorneville industrial-port complex, a new oil-burning thermal plant proposed for Coleson Cove, had been planned before the 1973 energy crisis. In 1972, in order to minimize labour disruptions at Lorneville, the provincial proposed a master site agreement and a Lorneville Bargaining Authority to cover workers building the power plants and other facilities. The \$184 million Coleson Cove generating station established a precedent in terms of Canadian energy policy as it was purpose-built to provide power for not only for industrial expansion in southern New Brunswick but also the New England grid. On the recommendation of the National Energy Board (NEB), in 1972 the federal government approved the export of 400,000 kilowatts of power from 1976 to 1986. The NEB expressed concerns about air pollution and noted that the hearing on the NBEPCC's application had not addressed the question of marine accidents and oil spills, by then an issue of growing public concern. At the time, the decision was viewed as a boost for the super port plan. Coleson Cove, which consisted of three 355-megawatt units, was operational by 1976.⁷⁶

Two years prior to this the Hatfield announced a more controversial megaproject for the region, a nuclear power plant at Point Lepreau to the west of Lorneville. Both projects were strongly endorsed by the growth coalition, despite environmental concerns. Hatfield was re-elected in 1974 partly on the promise of the project. NBEPCC's Point Lepreau generating station would be the first plant in Canada powered by CANDU-6 reactors (with a total capacity of 1270 megawatts). New

73 Lyndon Watkins, "Ten-Year Atlantic Area Plans Calls for \$20 Billion Investment," *Globe and Mail*, 6 April 1971.

74 Watkins, "Headache for Hatfield"; Bruce Muirhead, *Dancing Around the Elephant: Creating a Prosperous Canada in an Era of American Dominance, 1957-1973* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 116-20.

75 David Folster, "New Brunswick Crunch Revives Old Ideas," *Globe and Mail*, 19 January 1974.

76 Rusk, "Hatfield Lists Benefits"; "New Brunswick Tries Utopian Approach for Site Agreement," *Globe and Mail*, 22 August 1972; "Power For Export" (editorial), *Globe and Mail*, 4 September 1972; Folster, "New Brunswick Crunch."

Brunswick became only the second province in Canada, after Ontario, to adopt nuclear power. The federal government provided loan guarantees for up to 50 per cent of capital costs. Construction began in 1975 and did much to take the sting out of the loss of Saint John Deep and Saint John Multiplex. At its peak in the late 1970s the project employed more than 3,000 workers and provided contracts to many local businesses. According to local unions, two-thirds of the skilled workers at both Coleson Cove and Lepreau were from outside the province. Hampered by delays, inflation, and labour disputes, the project was also characterized by cost overruns. By the time it was operational in 1983, Point Lepreau had cost \$1.4 billion, triple the original amount forecasted. Up to a third of the power generated at Point Lepreau was exported to New England.⁷⁷

The Robichaud era coincided with the beginning of significant federal government spending in the region. This continued under Hatfield during the 1970s. Yet federal support of manufacturing enterprise was not automatic, and involved “ministerial discretion.”⁷⁸ In 1976 a federal official reported that DREE had committed to spend \$100 million in the Saint John region on infrastructure projects such as industrial parks, sewage treatment plants, two schools, residential and industrial land banks, marine terminals, the local community college, and the throughway (a four-lane divided urban expressway that linked the harbour bridge with the provincial highway to Moncton). This urban expressway project alone had a budget of \$75 million. This spending did not include incentives to industry or support of transportation and industrial park studies. The official reported that Saint John, on a per capita basis, was the largest or second largest recipient of DREE funding.⁷⁹ DREE spent three times as much in Saint John as in the economically depressed Miramichi area.⁸⁰ In 1972 a DREE policy review supported an Atlantic Gateway concept, based on improving road, rail, air, and sea links for the established ports in Saint John and Halifax and potential superports such as Canso, Nova Scotia. Yet local business interests, represented by the SJB/T, continued to push senior levels of government on a number of key issues, suggesting in 1974, for example, that the National Harbours Board turn over all its property in the port of Saint John to the provincial government. This bold assertion that the local business community knew better than provincial or federal planners, bureaucrats, and politicians what was best for the local economy suggests that the growth coalition rejected a core recommendation of the Byrne report: that the provincial government should direct industrial promotion.⁸¹

77 Richard Starr, *Richard Hatfield: The Seventeen-Year Saga* (Halifax; Formac Publishing Company, 1987), 98; Esther Crandall, “Major Industrial Development Still Predicted For Saint John,” *Globe and Mail*, 25 May 1976; History of NB Power, http://www.nbpower.com/html/en/about/publications/history_pdfs/history80.pdf; Duane Bratt, *Canada, the Provinces and the Global Nuclear Revival: Advocacy Coalitions in Action* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 173-4.

78 Lyndon Watkins, “APEC Is Critical of Ottawa’s Efforts to Developing Regions,” *Globe and Mail*, 12 October 1971.

79 SJB/T, Industry Committee Minutes, 7 May 1976, file 332, NBMA.

80 Savoie, *Regional Economic Development*, 125.

81 SJB/T, Del Taylor to T.E. Aldeman, 9 August 1974, file 63, NBMA; Stanley, *Louis Robichaud*, 130; Savoie, *Regional Economic Development*, 45. In 1976, Saint John, Sussex, St. George, St.

In 1971 Hatfield explained to Toronto industrialists and bankers that New Brunswick was no longer interested in “buying” jobs by financially supporting outside firms that were not interested in long-term commitments to the province. He also claimed that fostering a pro-investment climate did not compromise the environment.⁸² The Byrne commission in 1963 had opined that attracting new industry to New Brunswick, was “more difficult . . . than it is to any other province except Newfoundland and, perhaps, Prince Edward Island.”⁸³ A decade later major capital investment generally was not possible without substantial government subsidies. And many large projects, even by the standards of the era, brought environmental consequences and imperiled other traditional economic sectors. Irving’s Canaport project, for example, damaged the Bay of Fundy fishery, and Coleson Cove was a major emitter of sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide.

The most dramatic example of the provincial government being attracted to high-profile, capital intensive, and somewhat risky ventures promoted by outside entrepreneurs was the ill-fated plan to assemble luxury sports cars for the American market. The Saint John plant for assembling a gull-wing vehicle was located in one of the three new industrial parks in the city (a spin-off, second park was established at Spruce Lake, adjacent to Lorneville). American entrepreneur Malcolm Bricklin, rebuffed by the government of Quebec in his attempt to establish a Canadian operation, had approached the New Brunswick government through the NBMC in 1973. DREE refused to support the plan because of complications arising out of the Canada-US Autopact so the Hatfield government invested directly in Bricklin Canada Limited, controlling 51 per cent of the shares. A plant for the vehicle’s acrylic fibreglass body was established in Minto and the main assembly operation located in Saint John. DREE later provided assistance with financing and Bricklin promised to construct up to 12,000 units for export.⁸⁴ The Bricklin was a colorful symbol of Hatfield’s successful 1974 election campaign but in 1975 the company went into receivership, having produced less than three thousand cars. Six hundred people lost their jobs, most of them in Saint John. The province’s contributions to the company had exceeded \$20 million.⁸⁵

By the middle of the 1970s the Multiplex Corporation had failed to produce most of its anticipated benefits. The list of new projects in the planning stages by 1972 had included a steel mill and an asphalt plant. By the time the NBMC, along with the NBDC, was absorbed into a new Department of Commerce and Development in 1976, it had supposedly helped to create 1,000 jobs (including those reported as forthcoming when specific firms became operational) and attracted more than \$17 million in investment. By 1976 the NBMC program claimed seven industries either

Andrews, and St. Stephen formed a regional body, the Fundy Region Development Commission, to promote industry, commerce, and tourism in Charlotte, Saint John, and King’s counties.

82 Rusk, “Hatfield Lists Benefits.”

83 *Report of the Royal Commission on Taxation and Municipal Finance*, vol. 2, chap. XVIII, 5.

84 Esther Crandall, “Saint John Building Permits Five Times Any Previous Years Total,” *Globe and Mail*, 27 July 27 1973; Peter Moon, “Opposition Skeptical of New Brunswick Premier’s Scheme,” *Globe and Mail*, 10 June 1974.

85 Crandall, “Major Industrial Development.”

functioning or under construction. Another 11 companies promising a total of 800 jobs had applications under review by DREE, and three of these fell by the wayside and went into receivership.⁸⁶

The collapse of Saint John Deep, the absorption of Multiplex, and the spectacular failure of the Bricklin appeared to be part of a larger pattern of failure for government-aided enterprises in the Atlantic region. By 1976 elements within the growth coalition were blaming DREE for the region's uneven growth and continued problem of unemployment.⁸⁷ Despite these controversies, throughout this decade the SJBT continued to push for industrialization and energy-related projects, such as a liquefied natural gas regasification facility. A Board of Trade brief in 1977 endorsed the development of export-dependent industries, such as "a steel mill, cement production, petrochemicals and other heavy industry."⁸⁸ The newest megaproject on the horizon by that year was Lorneterm – a rebranded Saint John Deep – consisting of a marine terminal and regasification plant. Promoted by Tenneco of Houston, Texas, the plant would have imported Algerian liquefied natural gas, reconverted it to gas and sent it by pipeline to New York and Pennsylvania. The terminal would have been owned by Canadian Pacific, Trans Canada Pipelines, and other companies. Discussion of the merits of the project, which also would have made natural gas available for eastern Canada, raised nationalist arguments in favour of a pipeline to deliver Western Canadian gas to the Maritimes. The project, for a variety of reasons, most of them external to New Brunswick, was dead by the late 1970s.⁸⁹

Conclusion

Saint John, like other cities, has been characterized by economic boosterism directed by a growth coalition. The long-term goal has been economic development, ideally in the form of private sector investment that produces employment, tax revenues, and value-added goods. As in other urban centres, one of the most important roles of the coalition was "maintaining a political consensus for growth."⁹⁰ That consensus was challenged from time to time by private sector rivalries (notably the resistance by Irving interests to outside competition) as well as differences among levels of government, and specific goals were not always achieved. There was occasional resistance by social forces, such land owners and environmentalists, to

86 "It's News to Us' Say Officials About Report," *Evening Times-Globe*, 28 October 28, 1975; Esther Crandall, "Major Industrial Development," *Globe and Mail*, 25 May 1976.

87 David Folster, "Faith in Industry Is Flagging," *Globe and Mail*, 3 July 1976; Lyndon Watkins, "DREE Policies for East Coast Called Subsistence-Oriented," *Globe and Mail* 26 October 1976. UNB economist W.Y. Smith, for instance, criticized DREE for appearing to want to make Atlantic Canada a region of consumption, not production, and a manager of a major real estate development company faulted the agency for backing high-risk ventures.

88 SJBT, A Brief from the Saint John Board of Trade to the National Energy Board on the Subject of a Proposed Facility for the Regasification of Liquid Natural Gas in Saint John, NB, June 1977, file 332, NBMA.

89 "\$500 million plan seen as boon to Fundy area," *Globe and Mail*, 11 February 1977; "Gas Line to the East" (editorial), *Globe and Mail*, 24 October 1978. Thirty years later Irving interests, in partnership with a Spanish multinational, built a controversial Liquefied Natural Gas terminal at its Canaport site at Mispec.

90 Mark Purcell, "The Decline of the Political Consensus for Urban Growth: Evidence from Los Angeles," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 22, no. 1 (2000): 96.

big development projects, but organized labour, a progressive force on social issues, was too wedded to development to question many of the non-economic implications of growth. In 1996, for example, a federal scientist called Saint John “the most polluted city in Canada.”⁹¹ Yet progress, as Della Stanley reminds us, was not simply an illusion in this period; during the 1960s most working families in New Brunswick experienced an improvement in their standard of living.⁹²

Starting in the 1960s, the provincial and federal governments were expected to play an increasingly important role in infrastructure and other investments that could make Saint John more attractive for investment and productive for industry. This was part of the larger challenge of narrowing the gap in per capita income between New Brunswick and the Canadian average, a goal that failed to be realized.⁹³ Robichaud’s EOP threatened traditional bonusing arrangements enjoyed by Irving and other enterprises in the Saint John area, and equalization’s redistributive policies evoked repeated complaints that Saint John’s property and income taxes supported the rest of the province. Yet the growth coalition was receptive to provincial government economic development policies and the increasing role of the federal government in promoting the modernization of the city’s infrastructure. Industry was not the only focus of the coalition; other typical pro-growth concerns such as intensification of land use and morale-building initiatives such as community facilities or festivals were also present.⁹⁴

Despite the amalgamation of Saint John with the city of Lancaster and the parish of Simonds in 1967, the city’s designation as a federal growth centre, and special attention given to the region by the NBDC and DREE, the most dramatic “growth fantasies” of the era – Saint John Deep and the Saint John Multiplex – failed to materialize. By the 1980s, a grim period for many North American industrial cities, experts were predicting that the urban future would be based not on production but the service sector. Saint John, as part of its continued quest for an urban revival, devoted considerable resources in the 1980s to the livable city concept, instituting a heritage zone in and adjacent to the central business district and promoting Market Square (a festival marketplace).⁹⁵ In the short term, the Hatfield government in the post-Bricklin era focused on supporting small- and medium-sized businesses.⁹⁶ Yet the growth coalition, in tandem with provincial and federal governments, found it difficult to drop its fixation on state support of large-scale industry and infrastructure projects. As with the Strait of Canso area, the combination of super port and energy projects remained a potent mix in the business and political spheres. The reorganization of provincial economic development agencies in 1976 into the Department of Commerce and Development appeared to signal the end of the promotion of risky manufacturing enterprises. Yet, largely through federal action,

91 Poitras, *Irving vs. Irving*, 111.

92 Stanley, “1960s,” in Forbes and Muise, *Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, 454.

93 Savoie, “Governing a ‘Have Less’ Province,” 31.

94 Marquis, “Multilevel Governance and Public Policy,” in Young and Horack, *Sites of Governance*.

95 David Folster, “Refashioning Economic Agencies,” *Globe and Mail*, Dec. 20, 1975; J.L. Short et. al., “Reconstructing the Image of an Industrial City,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 83, no. 2 (June 1993): 207-24

96 “Province Emerging from Year of Substandard Growth,” *Globe and Mail*, 26 July 1977.

Saint John experienced another state-fuelled boom starting in the 1980s with the Canadian naval frigate patrol program, which temporarily revived the Irving-owned shipyard and dry dock. The contract awarded in 1983 was the single largest ever granted to a Canadian yard. Saint John Shipbuilding and Drydock Co., was tasked with designing and managing the construction of six patrol frigates. Three would be built in Saint John and the rest in a Quebec shipyard. The federal government promised that the project would produce \$2.4 billion in industrial benefits and that the Atlantic region would profit from several thousand person years of employment.⁹⁷ The contract buoyed the Saint John region for several years, but eventually the shipbuilding work dried up and the yard closed permanently.

The growth coalition, undeterred, has continued to promote large, capital-intensive projects, most of them energy-related such as the controversial and costly conversion of Coleson Cove to burn orimulsion, the refurbishment of Point Lepreau (which was \$1 billion above budget as of 2012), shale gas exploration, and the Energy East pipeline. The promise of environmentally and economically questionable big projects to bring prosperity to a variety of metropolitan interests, ranging from small business owners to blue-collar workers to real estate agents, was the most powerful legacy of Saint John's urban development in the Robichaud and Hatfield eras.⁹⁸

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97 James Rusk, "NB Firm Major Contractor in \$3 Billion Frigate Project," *Globe and Mail*, 30 June 1983; Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 284-5, 289-92.

98 In the past decade, megaprojects that were supported but not built included a second nuclear power plant and a second oil refinery.