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Robert M. Lewis

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“Representative-beggars of a Set of Paupers”: The Politics of Social Welfare and Traditional Newfoundland.¹

ROBERT M. LEWIS

ON THE MORNING AFTER the most recent federal election an interesting discussion took place among the three successful Progressive Conservative candidates, all of whom had defeated incumbent Liberals. They were in general agreement on the nature of their support: 1) the voters were sick of cuts to government social programs, 2) their support was on the same basis as that received by the New Democrats, and 3) their most important mandate was that of protecting social programs. On the face of it these were very strange remarks coming from members of the political party of Mike Harris and Ralph Klien. These Newfoundland Tories sounded more like moderate social democrats than “common sense” revolutionaries. All three can be described as professional politicians and thus their remarks might simply be ascribed to their ability to read the mood of the electorate. However, they can also be ascribed to a political tradition in Newfoundland which goes back much further than 1949.

The argument is often made that collective social welfare (as opposed to private/familial welfare) and an acceptance of such are phenomena which are essentially foreign to *traditional* Newfoundland. Collective social welfare, it is argued, is one of the effects of Confederation or of the more general process of modernization. Among those on the right of the political spectrum it is often argued that such collective forms of social welfare have resulted in endemic welfare dependency, fostered by liberal and leftist politicians starting with Joseph R. Smallwood. Even those coming from the left of the political spectrum have argued that, while Newfoundland — especially rural Newfoundland — benefitted from the *new* social welfare policies, those policies had the hidden effect of undermining household self-reliance and independence and that they were at least an aspect of

the dissolution of *traditional* Newfoundland society, through the replacement of kinship supports of the *dependent*² with impersonal collective ones. Both ends of the political spectrum have generally agreed with the argument that these programs have held back the development of freemarket capitalism.³

These arguments are clearly only an aspect of the more general modernization theory which has been consistently applied to Newfoundland. While in the 1960s the theory was usually employed to justify the *modernization* of the fishery and the extension of the welfare state,⁴ since the early eighties it has more commonly been used to defend government cutbacks and the privatization of the public welfare system.

My work has been on the social history of the aged in Newfoundland and Brigus in particular.⁵ Social gerontology as a field has also been marked by a consistent recourse to modernization theory. The essence of gerontological modernization theory is that, in *traditional* societies, the elderly were supported materially and socially by their extended families, as well as physically within the extended family/household. According to gerontological modernization theory, a radical change occurs with the modernization of societies. In modern societies the elderly are isolated from their extended families via new norms of neolocal residence on marriage. Furthermore, in modern societies the material and social support of the aged come from the state and other collective institutions, and is at least qualitatively inferior to those which the aged received from their families in traditional society.

As with modernization theory applied to Newfoundland, gerontological modernization theory can have a number of ideological functions. It can serve as a critique of capitalism or a justification for the growth of the "Welfare State." However, since the early eighties it also has most commonly been used by conservative politicians as an ideological justification for dismantling the "Welfare State," cutting back government social support systems, and throwing the responsibility for the aged onto their families.

Two questions will be addressed here: 1) are the arguments of Newfoundland modernization theory and gerontological modernization theory correct regarding the place of collective social welfare measures in Newfoundland's history? and 2) does a reexamination of that lead to a rethinking of some aspects of Newfoundland's historical development?

The historiography of pre-nineteenth century Newfoundland has been dominated by the *problem* of Newfoundland's failure to develop along the same course from discovery to nationhood as Britain's other North American colonies. For the period from its rediscovery by Europeans in the late fifteenth century until the establishment of local government in the first part of the nineteenth century the problem has been framed in terms of Newfoundland's slowness in establishing *permanent* settlement and *settled* society. It has traditionally been argued that this *retarded* pattern of development was due to British colonial policy driven in turn,

and to varying degrees, by the West Country mercantile interests which controlled the migratory fishery at Newfoundland. This once dominant historical paradigm and still dominant political one has categorized Newfoundland's development as a process of "retarded colonization" or "retarded development" with Newfoundland's failure to follow the standard North American pattern of development from *discovery* to colony to nationhood being ascribed to a conspiracy by foreign interests.⁶ This construction of history was first made by John Reeves in 1793, though Reeves' interpretations are often more nuanced than much of what followed from his work. Reeves' version of Newfoundland history early on became a central theme in the writing of Newfoundland history and in turn reformed political debates.

It has been convincingly and repeatedly pointed out, that the evidence for anything like a systematic and consistent plot by the West Country merchants to stop year-round settlement is extremely difficult to find.⁷ Reeve's description of eighteenth century Newfoundland leaves us with the problem of the striking contradiction between the West Country merchant's outspoken opposition to *settlement* and their actions, which clearly encouraged it. As Reeves put it "the Merchants which pretend so much Zeal against Residents have been and still are the principal Encouragers of Residency."⁸

Reeves, in the same passage goes on to give the basic reason for the merchants' opposition to settlement, at least at the end of the eighteenth century:

... the Resident Boatkeepers are the Hens that lay them their Golden Eggs; so long as they are successful, and are able to pay their Way, no Merchant (with all his supposed Zeal for a Fishery carried on from Great Britain) ever wishes to remove them; but as soon as they run not only repeatedly in Debt (for the most thriving are so, and the Merchant takes pretty good Care to keep them so) but so much behind, Year after year, as not to afford a Prospect of the Merchant being any longer a Gainer by them, then no Body is so anxious as he is to send them out of the Country to prevent their being burthensome to himself; and some of these are the Instances the Merchants cite, when they say they have brought many Home without taking any Thing for their Passage. The other Instances are of Servants who are grown lazy and unprofitable....⁹

This passage makes it clear that it was not year-round residents as such which the merchants were objecting to. As Reeves points out, the merchants were the "principal Encouragers" of year-round residence at Newfoundland. Residents who, in the balance books of the merchants, could support themselves had become not only acceptable but necessary for the fishery. Rather the Merchants objected only to those residents who could not support themselves, those who could not "afford a Prospect of the Merchant being any longer a Gainer by them" and "Servants who are grown lazy and unprofitable," i.e., those persons who in England would have looked to the community — embodied in the Poor Laws — for their support and who in Newfoundland did the same and in the same place.

Another eighteenth century observer made the connection between institutions of collective security and truly permanent settlement even clearer:

I must say that in Newfoundland a Work House does not exist and Poor Rates are as great strangers as fertile fields and Cinnamon Groves. The Motto which is riveted on the minds of all Housekeepers here is that He who will not work shall not eat. ... In Newfoundland a lazy man is consider'd by Inhabitants in the same light as Bees do a Drone, where everyone assists in expelling him from the Hive. In this Land there is no Public Charity for the Sick and the Lame; even the Blind and Aged can have no assistance but what comes from the hands of Private Individuals. The Fisherman which Chance has left behind must be supported all Winter at the expense of the Master whom he serv'd during the Summer. It was his province to see that the Fisherman was sent Home at the close of the Fishing Season.¹⁰

The merchant adventurers from the West Country did not consider Newfoundland to be a settled society, any more than did the fishermen "chance has left behind." They did not because Newfoundland lacked the social institutions of a settled society. In particular it lacked those institutions, such as the Poor Laws, which were closely linked to landed, agricultural property,¹¹ "fertile fields," and which the merchant adventurers believed supported and even encouraged the "Drone," along with the "Sick and the Lame ... the Blind and Aged." Neither did the West Country merchants want Newfoundland to become such a settled society because the costs of the institutions of what they understood as settled society, that is of eighteenth century English society with its established social institutions and in particular the Poor Laws (and the institutions of local government which organized and manipulated it), would have had to be supported by the seasonal fishing industry. It was settled society and not settlement in the sense of year-round habitation or *residency* which the merchants objected to.

To a great extent the policies of the British government, the stated desires of the West Country Adventurers, and the choices of the fishing servants were directed towards ensuring that society's dependent and those institutions of "settled" society which supported the dependent remained features of the home societies in England and Ireland and not of Newfoundland. The low number of aged persons found in Newfoundland at the end of the eighteenth century, after almost 200 years of "settlement," was almost certainly one result of this.

The best evidence we have, though it is limited, suggests that before the nineteenth century the majority of the "dependent," including the elderly, and including those born at Newfoundland, looked to their "homes" in Britain for support in times of need. Newfoundland residents came from a cultural background within which support of the dependent (including the aged) portion of the population came from the collectivity, the sort of collectivity which did not exist at Newfoundland. The society the aged and others in need returned to was that of the

England of the Old Poor Law, within which community responsibility for the elderly was the norm and had been so for, at least, several centuries.¹³

As Ryan¹³ has convincingly argued, it was the seal fishery that was probably the real economic foundation of a truly settled society in Brigus and Newfoundland as a whole. The seal fishery necessitated year-round residence by all classes of society and so required some form of local government. With this the year-round population became a more or less permanent population and the demand for some form of local government increased.

In 1825 Sir Thomas Cochrane became the first civil governor and one of the first problems he addressed was that of government assistance to the poor. Previously, relief had been given on an ad-hoc basis and without condition and Cochrane attempted to put pauper labour to work on road construction around St. John's.¹⁴ However, he found that he had no legal ability to establish poor rates or other forms of taxation to fund that work. In fact, as early as 1730 the Attorney-General had determined that the governor of Newfoundland had no power to levy poor rates or impose taxes without the consent of some sort of assembly of the people and the decision had been reaffirmed in 1803, specifically in relation to poor relief.¹⁵

Faced with the inability to fund poor relief and with widespread pressure in Newfoundland for self-government, the British Parliament passed legislation granting the island full colonial status and an elected legislature, in 1832. Colonial government allowed for the establishment of those institutions of settled society which eighteenth century Newfoundland had lacked. However, the constitution which Newfoundland received from the Colonial Office resulted in a government quite unlike that of England and Ireland. To a great degree by mistake, the British government provided for an assembly elected through virtually universal male suffrage. The other feature of the Newfoundland colonial government was the lack of any local — county or municipal — government structures. With nearly universal male suffrage and with no mediating political structures the politically active working class, especially around Conception Bay and St. John's, took a direct role in the political process, both at the ballot box and on the streets.

The type of government this produced was to distress patrician observers from Lord Durham in 1839 to Lord Amulree in 1933.¹⁶ For them the Newfoundland political system was far too direct a democracy and was marked by what they saw as the antithesis of "enlightened government." As the Amulree Commission saw it in 1933:

The simple-minded electorate were visited every few years by rival politicians, who, in the desire to secure election, were accustomed to make the wildest promises involving increased public expenditure in the constituency and the satisfaction of all the cherished desires of the inhabitants. ... There is no leisured class, and the great majority of the people are quite unfitted to play a part in public life.¹⁷

While the Roman Catholic Bishop of Newfoundland in 1861, in denouncing his former Liberal allies, described it even more bluntly, "... the members [of the House of Assembly] in a great measure were chosen only as the representative-beggars of a set of paupers, and he who could get most flour was the best member."¹⁸

The debates which followed the first elections in the 1830s in the Newfoundland House of Assembly are evidence that the great majority of the people had shared and strongly held beliefs about the relation between the state and the needy, in particular, a belief in the responsibility of the collectivity, in the form of the government, for society's dependent, especially for the aged and for widows. After the representativeness of the legislature was limited in 1842, reformers would use "the indifference of the Executive to the cries of a starving population,"¹⁹ as a central aspect in their fight for responsible, and representative, government.

The system of poor relief established in the 1830s, 40s, and 50s in Newfoundland mirrored and yet was fundamentally different from the English Old Poor Laws on which it was based. The Old Poor Law tended to rise out of local practice and traditions rather than shape it.²⁰ The same applied in Newfoundland but, because relief was provided by the Legislature which was popularly elected and sensitive to local popular pressure, it was never given the definitive form of general legislation but rather continued to be provided on an ad hoc basis by the House of Assembly until the 1930s. While the members of the Legislature periodically bemoaned the problem of relief they never seriously attempted to reform it.²¹

Striking similarities between the Old Poor Law of the 1820s in England and the practice of poor relief in Newfoundland in the 1920s can be found. For example, what was known as the "Widows' Pension" was virtually identical in Old Poor Law England and in Newfoundland prior to the Commission of Government:

Relief is professed to be afforded on the ground of want of employment, or of insufficient wages; but a class of persons have, in many places, established a right to public support, independently of either of these claims. These are widows, who, in many places, receive what are called pensions, of from 1s. to 3s. a week on their own account, without any reference to their age or strength, or powers of obtaining an independent subsistence, but simply as widows.²²

Apparently, the belief has grown up that Widows, by the very reason of their Widowhood, are entitled to what is sometimes called the "Widow's Pay," or "Widow's Pension." Destitution is, of course, the only real cause for giving relief, and such destitution as will result in suffering or hardship, if the relief is not given.²³

"Deficiencies" in filial support (in the view of Benthamite reformers) or the belief that support of the aged should fall on the state and not on the married children of the elderly (in the view of those receiving such support), was also decried in both as both a symptom and source of moral decay:

If the deficiencies of parental and filial affection are to be supplied by the parish, and the natural motives to the exercise of those virtues are thus to be withdrawn, it may be proper to endeavour to replace them, however imperfectly, by artificial stimulants, and to make fines, distress warrants, or imprisonment act as substitutes for gratitude and love. The attempt, however, is scarcely ever made. Moral debasement ... is the offspring of the present system.²⁴

The disgraceful, almost inhuman practice by some children of shouldering on the Government the maintenance of parents ... is demeaning and immoral. Its permission by the authorities demoralises those concerned. It is not a far step from avoidance of filial responsibility to neglect of other duties of citizenship.²⁵

The most important difference between nineteenth century Newfoundland and the Old Poor Law England was political. While the English Poor Laws may have had wide scale popular support (at least relative to the alternatives to them), the reason they existed was that they served the interests of the landowners and their tenants.²⁶ Those receiving relief had little if any say in whether or how the Poor Laws were reformed, as they were in 1835. The wide scale franchise in Newfoundland meant that the system of public relief in Newfoundland could not be "reformed" as the English Poor Laws were in 1834 and in the 1870s and 1880s.²⁷ Any Newfoundland government which attempted to tighten and limit relief in the fashion actually accomplished in Great Britain would have lost the popular support required to stay in power. While Newfoundland governments might recommend limits on relief, they seem never to have been able to actually implement such limits. The sort of "reform" which took place in England between 1830 and 1900, and which saw the value of public support of the aged slashed, both in absolute and in relative terms, and the conditions under which support could be obtained, tightened, and made more unpleasant,²⁸ could not be implemented in Newfoundland until the suspension of representative government in 1935.

Up until 1911 there were no measures for the support specifically of the aged. Instead, the aged were covered either as widows or as "Crippled, aged, and disabled paupers" under provision for the permanent poor. The Newfoundland Old Age Pension was passed in 1911, almost twenty years before Canada was to do the same, as a form of social support to complement the "Widows' Pension," providing similar support to the latter for married couples and men aged 75 year of age and older.²⁹ Despite being promoted as a modern welfare measure,³⁰ the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was in many respects very similar to the old "Widows' Pension," both having no explicit needs criteria and being assigned to electoral districts on the basis of population rather than assessed needs. Clearly one of the driving forces for the pension was pension reform in Europe and in some of parts of the Empire, New Zealand in particular. Interestingly, the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was seen by McGrath as closely linked to the other great project of the modernization of Newfoundland, the railway, "This [building of the branch lines] was the largest

item in the Government's programme, and the most costly, but it was so successful that a scheme of Old Age Pensions was inaugurated."³¹

In the debates in the Newfoundland House of Assembly around the establishment of the pension, and later around changes to it, the logic of social welfare in pre-Confederation Newfoundland is made explicit. While there were disagreements about some aspects of the implementation of the legislation, there seems to have been general agreement that, "... where anyone, man or woman, having reached an advanced age ... where they have become dependent on charity, that it is the duty of the State to come forward to their support."³³

Clearly the Newfoundland Old Age Pension was not like the modern Canadian Old Age Security, representative of the "modern welfare state," where support is paid to essentially all those over 64 years of age by virtue of age alone. By the same token its application by the Newfoundland government stands in stark contrast to that of the Ontario provincial government which only reluctantly joined in such a scheme in 1929 (despite only having to shoulder 25% of the costs) and which showed extreme parsimony, granting public pensions only to those who could demonstrate absolute poverty.³³

During different periods when the Newfoundland government was facing financial crises there were rumblings about strengthening the financial responsibility of children to support their aged parents, however, this seems to have been, at most, only rarely enforced. For example, under the Commission of Government there were repeated calls from certain sectors of the administration (in particular the Comptroller and Auditor General's Department) to enforce the existing filial support laws; however, local relieving officers seem to have ignored this (as indicated by the total lack of any enforcement orders through the courts³⁴) and other sectors of the administration (in particular the Department of Public Health and Welfare) actively fought against it.³⁵ Again this stands in contrast to the attitude and actions of the Ontario provincial government which used existing filial responsibility laws to severely limit their old age pension responsibilities.³⁶

Public support of the aged, widows, the infirm, &c. was a "traditional" institution which arose in Newfoundland out of Newfoundland society's origins in those areas of Europe where the collectivity, rather than the extended family, was the ultimate guarantor of individual support of the needy. Public support of the aged was reinforced in Newfoundland because most Newfoundlanders, especially in communities such as Brigus, Conception Bay and St. John's, were not the "self-sufficient" agriculturalists of much of the rest of North America but rather were workers employed producing a commodity within an essentially capitalistic North Atlantic economy and they continued as such up through Confederation. While many, probably most, households supplemented their incomes with subsistence production the vast majority were absolutely dependent on the production of one (dried cod) or more (seal oil) maritime commodities, the success of which were generally uncertain.

An examination of the historical evidence as found in government records, and a careful reconstruction of households over the period 1921-1945 through the use of the nominal censuses and confirmed through oral history is the basis of a portrait of the elderly in Brigus in the period from 1920 to 1949. The portrait drawn is quite different from the traditional Newfoundland society said to have been in existence for “nearly a half-millennium,” to have been “shaped by centuries of isolated community life,” and to be centred on the “patrilocal and patricentric extended family.”³⁷ Instead is a community much closer to the society from which it originated historically, i.e., the north west European societies, England in particular, founded on the predominance of the nuclear family as the basic domestic group and with collective institutions a central part of the system of social security for the individual.

The amounts provided by relief in pre-confederation Newfoundland were small by modern standards, whether paid in cash — Old Age Pension and the “Widows Pension” — or kind — “dole.” But so, too, were the incomes of working people not receiving relief. While government relief and Old Age pensions could not provide individuals with a comfortable living, neither could the work much of the population depended on. Government support was absolutely necessary for large sections of the population, especially of the aged population, and it seems to have been considered a normal and necessary aspect of society.

Notes

¹ An earlier version of this paper was given at the Society for Socialist Studies session of the Learned Societies meetings, June 1997.

² The term *dependent*, while often used, is not entirely satisfying. In particular, why are those who must look to the collectivity for the protection of their individual physical rights, i.e., for food and shelter, somehow dependent while those who must look to the collectivity for the protection of their individual economic rights, via protection of property through the courts and law enforcement, seen as somehow *independent*?

³ For example, Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment, *Building on our strengths: Final report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment* (St. John's: Office of the Queen's Printer, 1986), 46.

⁴ See for example, Royal Commission on the Economic State and Prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador, *Report of the Royal Commission on the Economic State and Prospects of Newfoundland and Labrador* (St. John's: Office of the Queen's Printer, 1967.)

⁵ R.M. Lewis, “A socio-historical study of the aged in Brigus, Newfoundland, 1920-1949,” PhD thesis, University of Alberta, 1997.

⁶ See for example, D.W. Prowse, *A history of Newfoundland: From the English, Colonial, and foreign records* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1895); M. Harvey, *Newfoundland in 1897* (London, UK: S. Low, Marston & Company, 1897); A.H. McLintock, *The establishment of constitutional government in Newfoundland, 1783-1832: A study of retarded colonization* (London, UK: Longmans, Green, 1941); G.M. Sider, *Culture and class in*

anthropology and history (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and for a critique of such see, C. English, "The development of the Newfoundland legal system to 1815," *Acadiensis*, 20, 1 (1990), 89-119; K. Matthews, "A history of the west of England-Newfoundland fishery," PhD thesis, Oxford, 1968.

⁷Matthews, "A history," 1968; K. Matthews, *Lectures on the history of Newfoundland: 1500-1830* (St. John's: Maritime History Group, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1973).

⁸J. Reeves, *Mr. Reeve's evidence before a committee of the House of Commons on the trade of Newfoundland* (London, UK: J. Sewell, Cornhill; J. Debrett, Piccadilly; J. Downes, 1793), 88.

⁹*Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁰A. Thomas, *The Newfoundland journal of Aaron Thomas, Able Seaman in H.M.S. Boston: A journal written during a voyage from England to Newfoundland and from Newfoundland to England in the years 1794 and 1795, addressed to a friend* (Don Mills, ON: Longmans Canada, 1968), 171. By *Inhabitants* Thomas clearly meant *planters*, i.e., those who hired labour and who were the class equivalents of those who would have paid the poor rates in England (farmers, craftsmen, etc.), and not their servants, who were still to a great degree migratory.

¹¹Despite the claims of Liberal politicians and historians (e.g., Prowse, *A history*, 1895; Harvey, *Newfoundland*, 1897; Sider, *Culture and class*, 1986) it is clear that the West Country merchants' judgment of the agricultural potential of Newfoundland and, in particular, the Avalon Peninsula was substantially correct (see P. Crabb, *Agriculture in Newfoundland: A study in development* [University of Hull], 1975) rather than a plot to retard the development of agriculture in order to retain a monopoly.

¹²D. Thomson, "The welfare of the elderly in the past: A family or community responsibility?," in *Life, death, and the elderly: Historical perspectives*, M. Pelling and R.M. Smith, ed. (London, UK: Routledge, 1991), 196.

¹³S. Ryan, *The ice hunters: A history of Newfoundland sealing to 1914* (St. John's: Breakwater, 1994).

¹⁴G.E. Gunn, *The political history of Newfoundland, 1832-1864* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 4.

¹⁵McLintock, *The establishment*, (1941).

¹⁶Lord Durham. *Lord Durham's report: An abridgement of Report on the Affairs of British North America* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1963); Newfoundland Royal Commission. *Report: Presented by the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to Parliament by command of His Majesty, November, 1933 [The Amulree Commission Report]*. (London, UK: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1933).

¹⁷Newfoundland Royal Commission, *Report* (1933), 82, 86.

¹⁸Quoted in Gunn, *The political history* (1966), 158.

¹⁹Quoted in *ibid.*, 116.

²⁰J.D. Marshall, *The Old Poor Law, 1795-1834* (London, UK: Macmillan, 1985), 17-9.

²¹S.R. Godfrey, *Human rights and social policy in Newfoundland, 1832-1982: Search for a just society* (St. John's: Harry Cuff, 1985).

²²S.G. Checkland, and E.O.A. Checkland, eds., *The Poor Law report of 1834* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974), 113-4.

²³Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities. *First interim report of the Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities, June 1930* (St. John's: Office of the King's Printer, 1930), 194.

²⁴Checkland and Checkland, *The Poor Law report* (1974), 115, 179.

²⁵Royal Commission on Health and Public Charities. *First interim report* (1930), 202-3.

²⁶G.R. Boyer, *An economic history of the English poor law, 1750-1850* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

²⁷D. Thomson, "The decline of social welfare: Falling state support for the elderly since early Victorian times," *Aging and Society*, 4, 4 (1984), 451-82.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 453-4.

²⁹See, J.G. Snell, "The Newfoundland Old Age Pension Program, 1911-1949," *Acadiensis*, 23, 1 (1993), 86-109.

³⁰House of Assembly of Newfoundland. *Proceedings of the House of Assembly during the third session of the twenty-second General Assembly of Newfoundland* (St. John's: Evening Telegram, 1911), 448; P.T. McGrath, *Newfoundland in 1911, being the coronation year of King George V and the opening of the second decade of the twentieth century* (London, UK: Whitehead, Morris & Co., 1911).

³¹McGrath, *Newfoundland in 1911*, 250.

³²House of Assembly of Newfoundland. *Proceedings of the House of Assembly during the third session of the twenty-sixth General Assembly of Newfoundland* (St. John's: The Evening Telegram, 1926), 980.

³³J. Struthers, "Regulating the elderly: Old Age Pensions and the formation of a pension bureaucracy in Ontario, 1929-1945," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, 3 (1992), 235-55; K. Bryden, ed., *Old age pensions and policy-making in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974); A.S. Orloff, ed., *The politics of pensions: A comparative analysis of Britain, Canada and the United States, 1880-1940* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

While the amount of a full Canadian old age pension was greater than that of Newfoundland, less than half of those receiving the pension in Ontario were given a full pension and only one in three of those over 70 (the age of eligibility) were deemed eligible by the needs criteria of the program (Struthers, "Regulating the elderly," 1992, 245). In any case the standard of living differences which existed between Newfoundland and Ontario make direct comparison difficult.

³⁴This is in contrast to child support (bastardy and affiliation cases) which appear regularly in the local (Magistrate's) courts.

³⁵Newfoundland Department of Public Health and Welfare. "Letter from the Commissioner for Public Health and Welfare, J. C. Puddester to the Comptroller and Auditor General, George P. Bradley, concerning the granting of a Widow's Allowance to Mrs. M. L. Knee, September 2, 1943." (St. John's: Provincial Archives of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1943).

³⁶J.G. Snell, "Filial responsibility laws in Canada: An historical study" *Canadian Journal of Aging*, 9, 3 (1990), 268-77.

³⁷S.A. Queen, and R.W. Habenstein. *The Family in various cultures* (New York: J. B. Lippincott, 1974), 382-3, 395.