

LAND, RESOURCES, AND DISCOURSES OF  
DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL LABRADOR

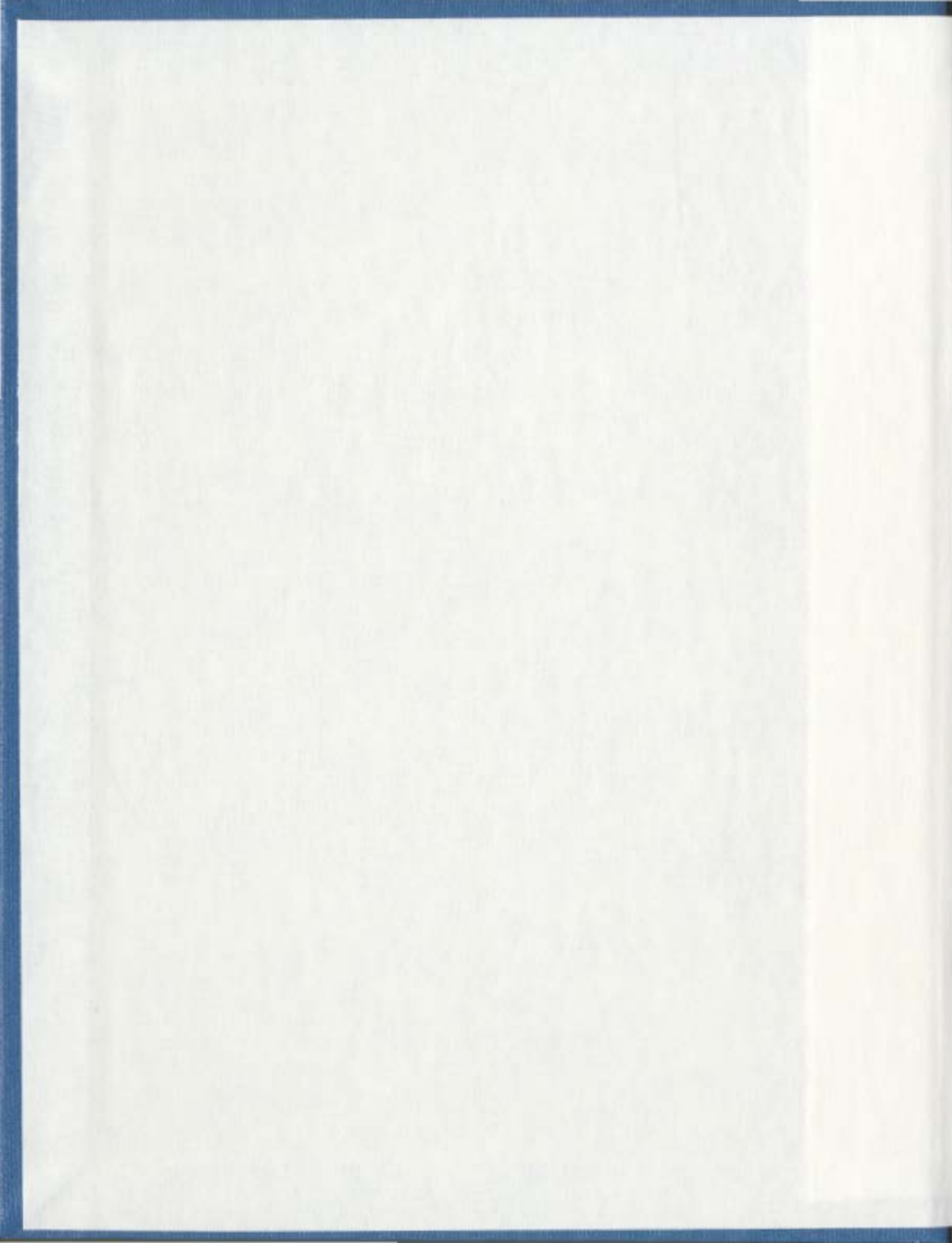
CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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RHONDA CAROL BURKE







**Land, Resources, and Discourses of Development in Central Labrador**

**by**

**Rhonda Carol Burke**

A thesis submitted to the  
School of Graduate Studies  
in partial fulfilment of the  
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## **Abstract**

During the last decade, a number of large-scale resource development projects have been proposed for Labrador. Most prominent among these are the mining complex slated for Voisey's Bay and the expansion of hydroelectricity generation on the Lower Churchill River. Debates about the merits of these proposals have been particularly heated in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the bureaucratic hub of Labrador. This thesis explores the core elements of the pro-development discourses that were put forth by the town's political and business elites. These individuals tended to characterize Labradorians as having a set of shared goals and interests that could only be realized through modernization. Many spoke disparagingly about the Innu Nation, which they accused of selfishly standing in the way of the aspirations of other Labradorians through their public opposition to certain aspects of these new developments. This research contradicts this claim. While many interviewees did support some degree of industrial expansion, most voiced serious concerns about the potential social, cultural, and environmental impacts of further development. These concerns were evident among people from a wide range of backgrounds, and do not appear to be easily ascribed to any particular group.

## Acknowledgments

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Louis Chiaramonte encouraged his students to look inward in order to come to a better understanding of ourselves as researchers. He challenged us to think of our fieldwork projects in new and creative ways. The insights that I learned from Louis have been a guiding force during all stages of this project.

This project is dedicated to Reade Davis, my companion and guiding light. Thank you for the intellectual support and for reminding me not to take it all so seriously.



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## **List of Abbreviations**

- AIP**- Agreement-in- Principle
- CLEDB**- Central Labrador Economic Development Board.
- EIS**- Environmental Impact Assessment.
- FEARO**- Federal Environmental Assessment and Review Office
- HRDC**- Human Resources Development Canada
- HV-GB**- Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- IBA**- Impact and Benefit Agreement
- IN**- Innu Nation
- INTFMA**- Innu Nation Task Force on Mining Activities
- JWEL**- Jacques Whitford Environment Limited
- LDC**- Labrador Development Committee
- LIA**- Labrador Inuit Association
- LMN**- Labrador Métis Nation
- NLP**- New Labrador Party
- NR**- (the) Northern Reporter
- TDA**- Them Days Archive
- VBBC**- The Voisey's Bay and Beyond Conference
- VBNC**- Voisey's Bay Nickel Company

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix I:** Employment Profile of Happy Valley-Goose Bay
- Appendix II:** The Prehistory of Labrador and the Central Region
- Appendix III:** Population Change: Upper Lake Melville, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1986-1996
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- Appendix VI:** Time Line of Development in Labrador

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction: Land and Development in the Labrador Context**

The people of Labrador currently face a number of large-scale resource developments that promise to drastically change the physical and social landscape of the region. When I began my fieldwork in May of 1999, three major industrial projects were being negotiated. The proposed development of the Voisey's Bay mineral deposit was continuing to generate intense debate, despite the fact that Inco, the company that held the rights to the deposit, had reached a stalemate with the provincial government. An announcement concerning the expansion of hydroelectric power generation on the Lower Churchill River seemed to be perpetually "just a few weeks away." The construction of the southern Labrador roadway from Red Bay to Cartwright had just begun, marking the most ambitious period of road-building the region had ever seen. In addition, the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA) was on the verge of ratifying an Agreement-in-Principle which brought them closer to reaching the first land claim agreement in the Province.<sup>1</sup>

Under negotiation, both formally and informally, was the relationship that area residents had to the surrounding land, to industrialization, and to each other. This thesis explores the discourses surrounding these changing relationships that were articulated by residents of central Labrador, with a particular focus on the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. It presents a brief snapshot of the negotiations that were occurring during the

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<sup>1</sup> Other Aboriginal organizations in Labrador were also in various stages of land claims negotiations during this period. The LIA Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) ratification, however, represented a significant milestone that generated particular interest during my fieldwork term. The Innu Nation and Labrador Métis Nation have also submitted claims.

summer of 1999 and examines the varied ways in which residents of Central Labrador advanced and/or contested particular development frameworks. Debates around resource development in Labrador provided an arena in which differing factions could articulate their visions for the future.

Development issues have taken on particular significance in Labrador because they have become rallying points for various regionally-based political movements and organizations that have developed and evolved since the 1970s. Previous debates over development, such as those surrounding military low-level flight training in the region, have brought the issue of Aboriginal rights to the forefront (Wadden 1991, Armitage and Kennedy 1989, Plaice 1996).<sup>2</sup> These issues remain very significant as newly proposed mega-projects become test cases for more participatory models of development.

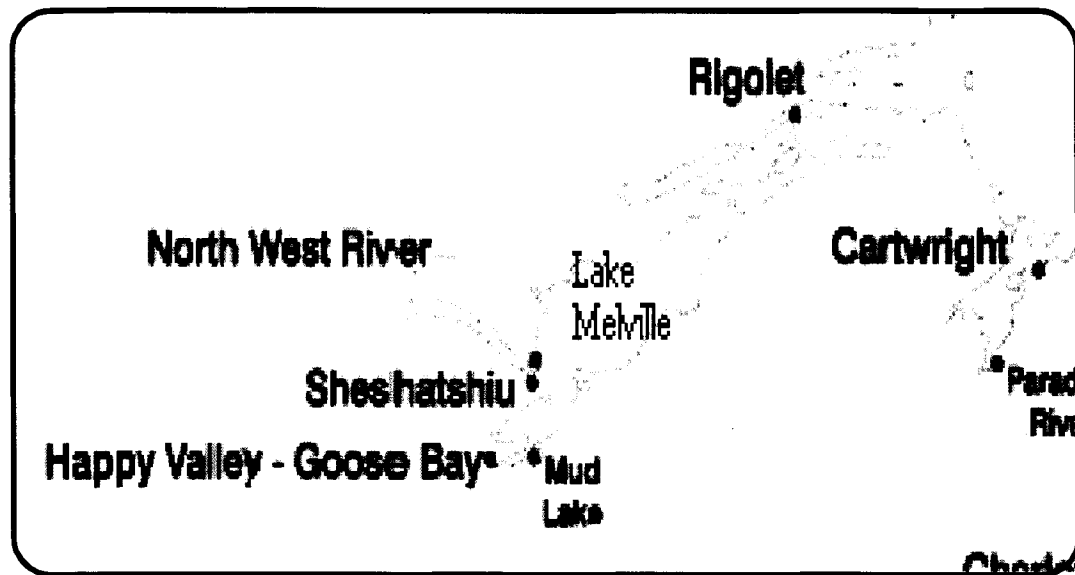
In recent years, some local elites<sup>3</sup> in Happy Valley-Goose Bay have sought to position themselves as intermediaries in the development process. In support of their pro-development agendas, they have emphasized the inevitability of modernization. Simultaneously, they have argued that Labradorians should be given a greater say in making resource development decisions. The difficulty with this position is that it presupposes that most Labrador residents share common goals about the direction development should take. This claim appears to be undermined by a closer ethnographic

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<sup>2</sup> The term Aboriginal is defined here as it is in the Canadian Constitution Act (1982) to refer to Inuit, Indian and Métis.

<sup>3</sup> I use this term to refer to those people who belong to one or more of the regional and/or provincial decision-making bodies. A complete explanation of this term and its usage by past Labrador scholars can be found in Chapter Four, Section 4.1.





**Figure 1.1 Hamilton Inlet and Area**

investigation of the situation. While the efforts of these powerbrokers in promoting development met with some degree of success, local people were hardly passive recipients of their claims. Elements of modernization and local autonomy discourses were contested by many Central Labrador residents. Although most residents accepted the need for some level of industrial development, many raised concerns about the potential social, economic, and environmental consequences, and about whose best interests development would serve.

### **1.1 The Setting: Central Labrador**

Spanning 294,330 square kilometres, Labrador comprises three-quarters of the total land mass of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Its western border

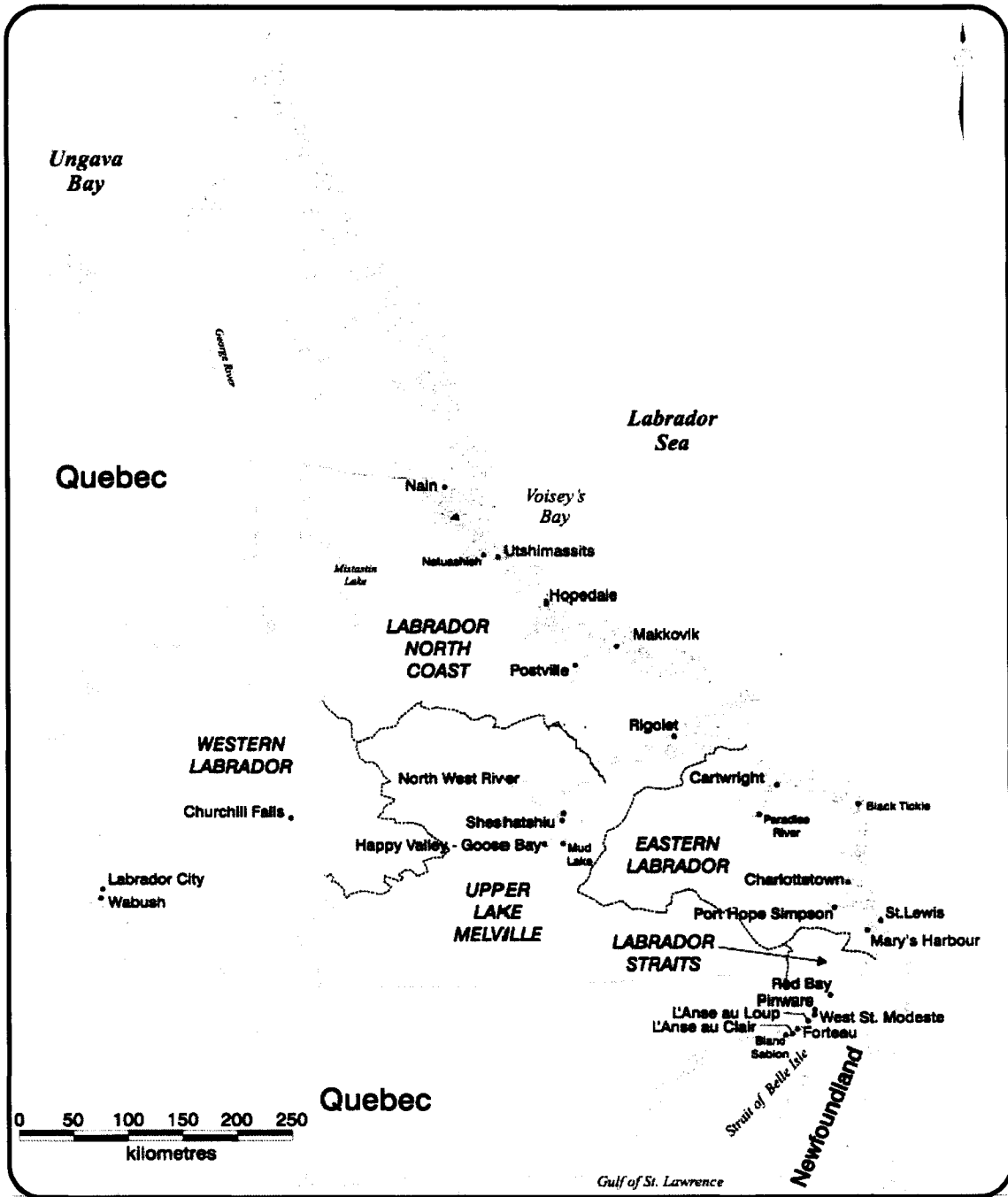


Figure 1.2 Map of Labrador (adapted from VBNC 1997b). Illustrating economic zones of Labrador as defined by the regional economic development boards.

remained undefined until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is still contested by the province of Québec. The boundary line, which follows the continental divide from which rivers run east to the Labrador sea, was established by a decision of the British Privy Council in 1927, after a protracted conflict between the Dominion of Newfoundland and the Dominion of Canada.

This border historically has held little significance for the Innu and Inuit peoples who inhabited the Québec-Labrador Peninsula. However, it created an artificial division between the Aboriginal inhabitants on each side (Tanner 1996:3).<sup>4</sup> Despite this political separation, a great deal of interaction continues to take place between the Labrador and Québec Innu communities.

My research focuses on the communities of central Labrador, which are situated at the western end of Lake Melville (the area is also known as Upper Lake Melville - see Figures 1.1, 1.2). The central region is one of the most heterogeneous areas in Labrador, with a burgeoning business class, federal, provincial, and municipal government administrators and the offices of Labrador's three Aboriginal organizations. It is also home to a number of residents who originally hail from other communities in Labrador, from the island of Newfoundland, and from other parts of Canada. The town is also the site of the Five Wing Goose Bay military air force base, which houses German, British, Dutch, and Canadian military personnel. Happy Valley-Goose Bay is a transportation and

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<sup>4</sup> The Innu were formerly known as the Montagnais-Naskapi Indians, a term imposed by early missionaries. In the 1980s the Innu publically proclaimed their preferred name, "Innu" which means "people" in the Innu language, *Innu-aimun*. This language is classified by linguists as part of the Algonquian linguistic family (Tanner, 1999). The Innu use the word *Nitassinan* ("our land") to refer their traditional homeland, described as "... stretching from the mouth of the Saguenay River, to the Strait of Belle Isle, from Lac St-Jean to Ungava Bay, as far as the Atlantic coast"(Ashini, 1989:46).

administrative hub and is the only urban centre in the region. Because of the central region's role in the economic activity generated by Voisey's Bay and the Lower Churchill (such as supplying goods, services, and workers), Upper Lake Melville is the ideal staging ground from which to study debates surrounding industrial development in Labrador. It is an area where people with diverse interests converge and where key debates over land and development issues intersect.

### **1.1.1 Statistical Profile of Central Labrador**

Central Labrador is a unique area: geographically, economically, and politically. Geographically, Labrador is comprised of four regions which are reflected in the current provincial electoral districts for the region.<sup>5</sup> Economically, Labrador is broken into five zones, as defined by the regional economic development boards.<sup>6</sup> These five zones also have distinct statistical profiles (Table 1.1). This thesis focuses on what is known as 'zone three' the central region, of which Happy Valley-Goose Bay is the heart.

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<sup>5</sup> Provincially, Labrador has four members in the Legislative House of Assembly. They represent the regions of: Labrador West, the South Coast (Cartwright-L'Anse au Clair), the North Coast (Torngat mountains), and Lake Melville. Labrador has one federal Member of Parliament.

<sup>6</sup> The regional development boards grew out of the 1992 provincial document *Challenge and Change: A Strategic Economic Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador*, which presented the framework for the establishment of regional economic planning zones. The joint Provincial-Federal task force that followed published a report in 1995 that recommended that nineteen regional economic development boards be established throughout the province. The Central Labrador Economic Development board (zone three) evolved from the provisional board that was established in 1995.

<b>Economic Zones</b>	<b>North Coast</b>	<b>Western Labrador</b>	<b>Central Labrador (Upper Lake Melville)</b>	<b>Eastern Labrador</b>	<b>Labrador Straits</b>
<b>Population 1996</b>	3,186	11,190	10,240	2,876	2,062
<b>Population 2001</b>	3,214	10,283	9,654	2,717	1,996
<b>Population change from 1996-2001</b>	0.87%	-8.10%	-5.72%	-5.52%	-3.20%
<b>Those with post secondary education</b>	16%	38%	37%	22%	19%
<b>Average family income</b>	\$27,559	\$64,342	\$48,584	\$31,299	\$33,193

**Table 1.1 Statistical Summary by Economic Zone.** Data obtained from Statistics Canada (1996, 2001), and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador (2001).

The communities of Central Labrador include: Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, Mud Lake and Sheshatshiu. The town of North West River split into the two communities of North West River and Sheshatshiu in 1979. The largely Innu community of Sheshatshiu, occupies the south bank of the river, while the mainly Settler community

of North West River occupies the north.<sup>7</sup> Prior to the split, the community was reported to be deeply divided by religious and ethnic divisions (Jackson & Jackson 1971).

According to 2001 Census data, Labrador has a population of 27,864. The majority of this population (72 percent ) is clustered in the three industrial communities of western Labrador and the four communities of central Labrador. Labrador saw a 5.7 percent decrease in population from 1996 to 2001, with only the northern region reporting a slight increase (see Table 1.1). The population of Labrador can also be broken down in terms of membership in various ethnopolitical organizations. The Innu Nation claims approximately 1,500 members, the LIA claims 4,000 members and the Labrador Métis Nation claims 5,000 members. Central Labrador had a population of approximately 9,654 in 2001, down from 10,240 in 1996. This included 7,969 residents in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 567 in North West River, and 1,134 people in the combined census district of Sheshatshiu and Mud Lake.

Most residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay are involved in the wage-labour economy (see Appendix I). The majority of these are employed in government services, retail and wholesale operations, and construction trades and services. Despite the heavy reliance on wage labour, some residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay continue to be involved in trapping, fishing, hunting, sealing and other seasonal pursuits such as berry picking. Hunting, trapping, and subsistence harvesting are even more important for the

---

<sup>7</sup> For more information about the community of North West River see Plaiice (1990). For more information about Sheshatshiu, see Mailhot (1997).

residents of North West River and are vitally important activities for most of the people of Sheshatshiu.

### **1.1.2 The Physical Landscape**

The unique physical landscape of Labrador is itself a subject of intense debate in conflicts over development issues. This section describes the physical landscape of Labrador and highlights the potential for resource development that this distinct terrain offers. This introduction to the landscape is also meant to serve as an introduction to the overall geographic and environmental conditions which have helped to shape the ways in which the people of Labrador have adapted and survived.

The territory now known as Labrador has been conceived of in radically different ways by the various peoples who have visited and occupied it throughout its history. Early European observers often made references to the ‘barrenness’ and apparent uselessness of the land:

Cartier, who made his first voyage in 1534, is remembered for his famous condemnation of Labrador as ‘the land God gave to Cain,’ a characterization rivalling the equally unflattering note on the Ribero map of 1529 that there was ‘nothing of much value’ in Labrador (Kennedy 1995: 19).

In time, a succession of European entrepreneurs came to realize that Labrador contained a number of valuable resources, most notably the marine resources along its coast. More recently, attention began to be paid to the ‘richness,’ the ‘bounty,’ or the ‘storehouse of resources’ that Labrador contains, particularly in terms of its mineral wealth and its potential for hydroelectric power generation.

Labrador is the eastern edge of the Great Canadian Shield, the immense range of Precambrian rock in which much of Canada's mineral wealth is found. Ancient bedrock makes up much of the physical landscape of Labrador. Much of this bedrock is dated at between two and four billion years old. The movement of ancient glaciers rounded mountain tops, cut deep fjords along river valleys, and pitted numerous depressions that have since filled in with water. This created the numerous lake and ponds, and the powerful rivers that now dominate the Labrador landscape. Developers would later discover that this terrain was ideal for the generation of hydroelectricity.

The post-glacial landscape of Labrador includes a mosaic of different landscapes. The Torngat mountains are North America's highest peaks east of the Rocky Mountains, rising to 1,700 metres above sea level. The coastline of Labrador is extremely rugged and deeply cut with long inlets which were gorged out by glaciers. The longest of these is Hamilton Inlet, which extends over two-hundred kilometres from the coast to the interior.

Labrador is unusually cold, given its latitude, which is roughly parallel with the British Isles. This cold water is due to two climatic factors: the cold Labrador Current and the continental air masses that flow just south of the region. The Labrador Current is a cold southward movement of water flowing out of the Hudson Strait. The temperature and salinity influence Labrador's climate, which is characterized by long, cold winters and short summers.

When glaciers began to retreat around 10,000 years ago, much of the previously rich topsoil eroded, leaving the land surface barren and without enough nutrients to



sustain abundant vegetation. What remains of these soil deposits are shallow, acidic and cold. This, combined with a short growing season, imposes serious natural limits on forest regrowth. Growing recognition of this fact makes forestry a contentious issue in the region (Innes, 1999a). Labrador combines spruce-fir forests with the generous cover of lichens and mosses which provide forage for caribou. Coniferous bushes, such as alders, willows and birch grow well in the river valleys and sheltered areas in south and central Labrador. Labrador has an abundance of berries which are an important source of food for people when harvested in the late summer and fall.

The George River caribou herd ranges across the entire peninsula and is the largest in the world. Caribou is at the heart of Innu hunting life, providing a vital source of food and skins.<sup>8</sup> The coastal waters of Labrador host a wide range of fish and marine mammals that have traditionally been a mainstay of the diet and, later, income of many Labradorians.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Other major land species include: bears, moose, wolves, lynx and polar bears on the North Coast and a variety of smaller fur bearing mammals such as: foxes, muskrat, mink, marten, ermine, lynx, and beaver- this is not a comprehensive list. For a detailed description of vegetation, land and sea fauna, birds and fish of Labrador see Kennedy (1985) and VBNC-EIS (1997b). The most abundant marine species which are most frequently harvested are salmon, arctic char, shrimp, scallops and snow crab. Larger marine mammals include several types of seals, whales, dolphins and porpoises.

<sup>9</sup> For a description of ice conditions and its significance for Inuit populations, see Taylor (1974:21-22).

### 1.1.3 Early European Resource Use

The earliest European exploitation of what is now Newfoundland and Labrador began around in 1000 AD, when Greenland Norse adventurers spent one or more winters at L'Anse aux Meadows at the northern tip of Newfoundland. Interpretation of Norse sagas suggests, during this period, that a Viking expedition led by Thovold Erikson entered Hamilton Inlet.

In the later centuries, the abundant marine resources of Labrador attracted European merchants and fishers. Each summer, annual visitors to the coast included French, Portugese, and Basque fishing vessels. Systematic land-based exploitation began in earnest with Basque whaling operations which were established in the Strait of Belle during the latter half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Tuck and Grenier 1989). The academic convention for the prehistoric period (the period prior to European contact) has been established at 1550, when Basque whalers established a whaling industry centred in Red Bay (J. Kennedy, personal communication).<sup>10</sup>

The Basque operations were to have an adverse impact on the Inuit communities who relied on the whales and lasting effects on the resources that they targeted. During the approximately eighty years of Basques operations, it is estimated that tens of thousands of whales were killed. This led to a dramatic decline in the stocks, which eventually forced them to abandon their operations altogether.

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<sup>10</sup> It is possible, however, that a more plausible date for European contact in Labrador predated 1500, and, most likely, occurred in Northern Labrador (J. Kennedy, personal communication). For an overview Labrador prehistory, see Appendix II.

By contrast, European activities prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century had minimal adverse effects on the Labrador Innu. Tanner (1999) notes that initial European contacts with the Labrador Innu did not dramatically change their nomadic lifestyle. The Innu continued to live in small bands in the interior of Labrador and Québec, their subsistence patterns, physical and spiritual well-being tied to the migratory movement of the caribou herds. They moved seasonally to occupy the best hunting grounds, and developed ingenious technologies suited to their mobile lifestyles. This pattern did not change significantly until the arrival of trading posts in Innu territories during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The physical distance between Europeans and the Innu was eliminated with the establishment of a French trading post near present-day North West River in 1743. Initially, the Innu exercised a great deal of autonomy in their trading relations, but this relationship had changed to one of increasing dependence by the 1880s, as they grew increasingly reliant on ammunition and supplies (Cooke 1976).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Innu in present-day Québec began to face growing threats from non-Innu settlers and trappers. These threats reduced their food resources, forcing them to seek relief from missionaries and traders (Armitage 1991). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Labrador Innu were facing much the same plight as their counterparts in Québec. The most productive hunting grounds were being encroached upon by the Settler<sup>11</sup> population, who had a vastly different system of land tenure.

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<sup>11</sup> The Settlers are the descendants of European (Britain, France, Norway) men who came to Labrador as workers on fishing stations or trading posts. Many of these men initially married Inuit women and became independent fur trappers.

Armitage (1991:47-8) notes that these problems were compounded by declines in the price of furs, declines in the size of caribou herds, and the introduction of European diseases. Like their western kin, the Labrador Innu were eventually forced to seek government assistance, as they were “by their own standards” living in severe poverty (Armitage 1991:48). In the 1960s, the Innu were forced to settle into two permanent communities: Utshimassits (Davis Inlet) and Sheshatshiu. The negative impacts of this sedentarization continue to be experienced in the present day.

The Inuit came into regular contact with Europeans much earlier. They had been colonised by the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Moravians who established Mission stations at Nain, Okak, and Hopedale. Like the Innu, the Inuit population of Hamilton Inlet was negatively affected by European contact. Diseases, especially smallpox, wiped out nearly all of the Inuit population south of Hamilton Inlet. In the north, Inuit populations suffered from epidemic diseases during the following decades, the worst being the influenza outbreaks at Okak and Hebron in 1918, which resulted in the death of one-third of the total Labrador Inuit population.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Inuit became increasingly dependent on the market economy and earned income from char, salmon and cod fishing, seal netting, and trapping (Brice-Bennett 1997). The construction of the airbase at Goose Bay offered wage employment for the first time ever, drawing many northern coastal residents to central Labrador.

## 1.2 Theoretical Perspective: Resource Development and Political Identity

As stated earlier, one of the primary goals of this thesis is to document the ways in which local elites in Happy Valley-Goose Bay presented an image of a unified Labradorian identity as a way of furthering their pro-development agendas. Those who wanted expedient resolutions to the stalemates that had been reached in negotiations over the development of the Voisey's Bay mineral deposit and the Lower Churchill Hydroelectric Project often represented Labradorians as a unified group, possessing shared goals and interests that were largely distinct from those of Newfoundlanders and other outsiders. Most were also united in their condemnation of the Innu Nation as the only Labrador-based group who was refusing to accept the inevitability of development. As a consequence of this resistance, the Innu were often portrayed as standing in the way of the long-term prosperity of all Labradorians. This research casts serious doubt into the credibility of these claims, however, as it appears that reservations about the merits of development were widely shared, and not easily ascribed to members of any single ethnopolitical group.

One of the most influential thinkers on the construction of national and regional political identities is Benedict Anderson. In his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1991), Anderson asserts that nationalist rhetoric is typically promulgated by local elites. It is almost always characterized by a latent assumption that the nation is limited, meaning that it has well-delineated physical boundaries, and by a view that the people living within those boundaries constitute a

“community” that is characterized by a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (1991: 7). The irony of this claim is that most nations span vast geographic space and are characterized by a high degree of internal heterogeneity. Furthermore, most citizens never actually meet each other.

While Labrador is not an independent nation, nor do local elites suggest that it should be one, Anderson’s ideas do have some salience in this context. The approximately 30,000 residents of Labrador are spread over an enormous land mass. Three distinct Aboriginal organizations are active in the region, in addition to other settlers, who represent a range of cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, each of the main settlement areas of Labrador has its own unique history and, for the most part, has developed independently of the others. Lastly, the precise location of Labrador’s western border has long been a source of contention and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal inhabitants of the western region have a long history of dealings with residents of the Québec side of the border. This suggests that, to the extent that this political border has been recognized by Labrador residents, it has always been seen as very porous, and has had a very limited influence over the ways in which residents lived their lives. All of these factors suggest that any claim to a unified Labrador identity should be viewed with suspicion.

A significant shortcoming of Anderson’s analysis is that he does not sufficiently examine the tensions created by attempting to bring together a wide range of individuals and groups under a single nationalist or regionalist banner. Furthermore, Anderson’s

portrayal of nationalism as a modular form fails to sufficiently explore the locally specific factors that shape the form that nationalist rhetoric takes in particular settings. Anderson reverts to a decontextualized, functionalist explanation, which fails to account for the ways in which nationalist (or regionalist) movements and counter-movements are played out in particular settings at particular times. In the Labrador context, for example, I believe that it is essential to examine the ways in which arguments about land and resources have contributed to the construction of particular identity claims.

The work of David Trigger (1996) is particularly insightful in understanding this relationship. Trigger has examined contesting ideologies surrounding resource developments in Australia and Canada, focussing on the ways in which various interest groups deploy “subtle contesting imageries of language to portray the moral failings of the other side” (Trigger 1996:56). Trigger’s research demonstrates the ways that national imagery and elements of ‘national’ identity are often invoked in environmental conflicts:

Without underestimating the critical ways in which economic interests are implicated in the reproduction of ideologies promoting resource development, I seek to break with economic determinist ways of thinking about environmental conflicts. While such disputes inevitably encompass major economic issues, they should also be understood as “culture conflicts.” To take this approach is to build upon studies that have focussed on symbolic studies over identity, and the meaning of environmentalism versus development in the cultures of forest workers, fisherman and aboriginal people (Trigger 1996:56).

Trigger points out that struggles over land and resources are deeply embedded in issues of identity-construction and other non-economic elements of resource disputes which need to be given sufficient ethnographic attention.

This research has also been aided by the work of development and post-development theorists who have sought to uncover the meanings inherent and implied in the project of development. Critics (Esteva 1992; Sachs 1992; Shiva 1992; Hobbart 1993, Escobar 1995, Munck and O’Hearn 1999, Arce and Long 2000) have charged that development is a homogenizing Western notion; a notion whose project has great damage to diversity the world over. Esteva writes:

Development cannot free itself from the words with which it was formed- growth, evolution, maturation ... The word always implies favourable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better. The word indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing in a sense of necessary, ineluctable, universal law and toward a desirable goal ... But for two-thirds of the people on earth, this positive meaning of the word ‘development’ -- profoundly rooted after centuries of its social construction -- is a reminder of *what they are not*. It is a reminder of an undesirable, undignified condition. To escape from it, they need to be enslaved to others’ experiences and dreams (Esteva, 1992:10).

In the 18th century, the term development began to be used outside of the biological sphere and came to be applied to the social realm. A century later, Marx used ‘development’ as a central theme in his work, applying it to the study of historical processes. According to Esteva, it was during this period that the term reached its current form:

Both the Hegelian concept of history and the Darwinian concept of evolution are interwoven in development, reinforced with the scientific aura of Marx. When the metaphor returned to the vernacular, it acquired a violent colonizing power, soon employed by the politicians. It converted history into programme: a necessary and inevitable destiny. The industrial mode of production, which was no more than one among many forms social life, became the definition of the terminal stage of a unilineal way of social evolution. Thus history was reformulated in Western terms (1992:8).



Although much of the literature on the discourses surrounding ‘development’ is drawn from ‘Third World,’ many of these ideas can be usefully applied to debates surrounding development taking place in Labrador.

### **1.3 Previous Research on Land Debates in Central Labrador**

This project is related to several previous studies that have focussed on conflicting claims to land and resources in central Labrador. Armitage and Kennedy (1989) combined an exploration of the ‘mobilization of ethnic symbols’ with an examination of the rhetorical devices used by the Innu and their military expansionist opponents. They looked at the ways in which Innu leaders present their arguments against military encroachment to the wider public by way of ‘ethnic dichotomization.’ This is defined by the authors as: “the mobilization of specific ethnic symbols from the total cultural repertoire of such symbols and themes at an ethnic boundary in order to create symbolic oppositions” (1989: 807). Armitage and Kennedy demonstrated that the Innu Nation used traditional symbols to paint themselves as a peaceful, ecologically-aware group whose ties to the land are vital to their cultural survival. In response, proponents of military expansion sought to delegitimize the moral claims made by the Innu. They used racism and ‘redbaiting’ (accusing a group of communist sympathies) in an effort to destroy the Innu claims.

Following Armitage and Kennedy’s lead, my research looks at the ways that “identity” has become a part of local development discourses. I examine the ways in

which the representations of land and identity that are embedded in these discourses have been received, and in some cases challenged by other groups. This project is different from that of Armitage and Kennedy in that I have expanded my scope to include contemporary land and resource debates, such as those surrounding the proposed developments at Voisey's Bay and Churchill Falls. Secondly, while Armitage and Kennedy and Armitage the rhetoric on each side of the polarized debates about military expansion, I will concentrate on the pro-development rhetoric that is most pervasive within the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. I also look at the ways that people in the town, and to a lesser extent the other communities of the central region, engage with and/or seek to counter these discourses.

One of the more recent explorations of land and identity construction in Central Labrador is offered by Evie Plaice in *Touching Base: Land and Lives in Central Labrador* (1996). In exploring competition over land and resources, Plaice argues that contemporary debates about land use are also "... couched in terms of competing identities, or the competing validities of certain identities" (Plaice 1996:193). Plaice examines both land use and cultural identity and the ways in which the two things are interrelated. She suggests that landscapes are "... culturally specific in that they support the cultures and the societies that produce them"(1996:3). One of Plaice's crucial points is that landscaping also exists in multi-ethnic and complex situations. She argues that in an age of globalization, in which cultural interconnections have intensified, the anthropological preoccupation with discrete and bounded cultures must be abandoned. What is needed is

a move away from the “clear ground” of definition so that the discipline can begin to grapple with “.. the more ambiguous area of the process of defending and defining cultural space”(1996:193).

My exploration of debates over land and resource development builds upon Plaice’s ideas in a number of ways. Much like Plaice’s work, this thesis examines the ways in which identity and ‘way of life’ are represented in development debates. Secondly, I examine a complex and ‘multi-ethnic’ situation in an effort to point to some of the ways in which ethnic symbols are mobilized in support of particular claims. Finally, like Plaice, I maintain that cultural boundaries must be viewed as porous and deeply contextual, continually negotiated and renegotiated by different actors in different situations. This represents a clear conceptual break from the ‘culture as object’ approach that characterized much of the history of the discipline.

The interest around the Voisey’s Bay discovery was so great that it spawned two popular books that examine the effects of this massive mineral find, albeit from very different perspectives. McNish’s *The Big Score* (1998) minutely details the competitive and sometimes absurd corporate dramas in the boardrooms of mineral development companies. McNish focuses on the process of mineral exploration, the marketing of mines to shareholders, and the deal wrangling that went into the multibillion dollar takeover of Voisey’s Bay by Inco. The second book, *Premature Bonanza* (Lowe 1998), details both the conflicting and cooperative efforts made by the Innu and Inuit in their protests over land rights in Labrador. The principal focus of Lowe’s book is the ways in

which pre-existing conflicts over debates over land ownership were exacerbated by the mineral exploration and preliminary developments at Voisey's Bay.

#### **1.4 Methodology**

Because of the broad focus of this research, I employed a wide range of research techniques, including discourse analysis,<sup>12</sup> in-depth interviews and participant observation at public meetings and forums. I also made extensive use of media, library and archival resources.

Fieldwork was carried out in Central Labrador between May and August of 1999. During this period, I attended public meetings regarding land and development proposals and initiatives, town council meetings and the Voisey's Bay and Beyond Conference, which focussed on resource development issues. I conducted semi-structured and open-ended interviews with a variety of people involved in development oriented debates. These included: town officials, Chamber of Commerce members, provincial government officials, newspaper and radio reporters, representatives of the Innu Nation, Métis Nation, Labrador Inuit Association and the United Labrador Movement, and other residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, North West River, Sheshatshiu and Mud Lake. I also took part in an 'illegal' Métis salmon gathering.

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<sup>12</sup> For further exploration of the use of discourse analysis as a research method, see Brown and Yule (1983) and Gee (1999).

I arrived in Happy Valley-Goose Bay on May 1, when there was still a considerable amount of snow on the ground, and was able to rent a small but comfortable bachelor apartment. Memorial University's Labrador Institute (formerly the Labrador Institute of Northern Studies) offered me a work-space in their archives. These archives are a repository of research about the area, and I made extensive use of the materials that were housed there. This base of operations also allowed me to gain access to a network of local people who were extremely knowledgeable about the region.

I began this project by reviewing media materials and compiling a list of people in Central Labrador who were involved in development issues. I usually approached people by phoning and asking whether they would grant me an interview. Most people did give generously of their time and allowed me to tape record our discussions. I was aided in the process by a series of overall, general guiding questions that I hoped to have answered.

These included:

- What are the types of arguments, information and symbols being advanced by various factions in debates over land and resources?
- What are the limitations imposed on claims to group identity by surrounding groups and by societal power structures?
- How do these debates impact upon political structures and upon the organization of ethno-political groups?
- Have the identity claims of these various groups been challenged in debates over resources?
- What have been the reactions to these claims? Are they contested, modified, rejected or accepted by other groups?

In an effort to explore some of these issues, I asked participants to answer a series of open-ended questions about development in general, the existing and anticipated effects of Voisey's Bay and the Lower Churchill project, about changes taking place in the region and about changes in local land use patterns.

Following the lead of Armitage and Kennedy (1989), who studied the controversy surrounding low-level flying in Central Labrador during 1980s, I also collected and categorized texts from a variety of media sources:

... we examined texts from the electronic and print media for rhetorical statements representing each side of the debate. The texts were categorized according to the specific issues addressed (e. g. contemporary Innu land-use), and an analysis was made of the contrasting rhetorical strategies evident in them (Armitage and Kennedy 1989:800).

I supplemented my media texts with material from the web pages of the Innu Nation, Labrador Inuit Association, Labrador Métis Nation, town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Inco, media web sites (CBC, Globe and Mail, etc.) and other relevant groups. My collection of media files were also supplemented by a review of relevant sources from the Centre for Newfoundland Studies at Memorial University of Newfoundland in St. John's, the archives of the Labrador Institute, and the *Them Days* Archives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay.

I have tried to be as faithful as possible in transcribing recorded interviews. Sections where words are removed for the sake of clarity are marked with three periods and my clarifications are noted in brackets. All quotes that are not attributed to another source are taken directly from the interviews and meetings. In some instances, I have

used pseudonyms. The only people who are referred to by their proper names are public officials and presenters who were speaking in public forums or people who made statements that were printed by the media.

The majority of town officials and development officers in Happy Valley-Goose Bay are male. Very few women were represented in the political and development associations discussed in Chapter Four. For this reason, I do not always accurately identify the genders of the speakers. The fact that there are so few women in these organizations makes them easily recognizable to those familiar with the area. For the sake of confidentiality, I have obscured their genders by switching back and forth between the use of 'he' and 'she' and have maintained this format throughout Chapter Four.

Developments such as Voisey's Bay and Churchill Falls have prompted several large environmental assessments and have led to the development of environmental monitoring programmes. Recently, Aboriginal organizations in Labrador have made it known that they would like to have a part in the planning and implementation of these studies. More generally, these groups have made it known that they desire to be informed of, and possibly included in, any research endeavours involving their members. Several organizations have voiced concerns about the uses and misuses of previous research that has been conducted in the region.<sup>13</sup> In the words of LIA official Frank Andersen, some

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<sup>13</sup> The Innu Nation explains the reason for their cynicism this way: "Given that a great deal of the research done in Labrador over the past 50 years has been directly related to development projects, it again should not come as a surprise to anyone that many Innu view science- and scientists -with a great deal of suspicion. Poor management decisions have been

past efforts have been “intrusive and alienating” (LIA 1999:2).

One of the problems identified by the Innu Nation is that research in Labrador is being duplicated because the data remains in the hands of the organizations who conducted the research, and is, therefore, not available to other researchers. The Innu Nation retains its own environmental advisor and other consultants who have communicated the organization’s goal of undertaking its own research wherever possible (IN 1999c):

... another big problem from the Innu perspective is that much of the research that was done went off with the researchers ... anyone who has ever spent time in an Aboriginal community knows, with the summer comes the flies and the anthropologists. It’s a common problem. People spend time with the anthropologists, the sociologist or the ologist of whatever description and then September comes and away they go. They go back and write their papers. If they never get back to the people, and if they never take the time to explain what happened - while knowledge has been shared, it becomes a one way sharing and the insights or the expertise of the anthropologist doesn’t come back to the community (Innes 1999b).

Being one of the anthropologists who appeared with the flies, I am determined to take steps to share this research with those who contributed to it. Accordingly, a copy of this thesis will be placed in the Labrador Institute. As well, this project will be listed with the “Q-links” Internet database (Québec-Labrador Integrated Knowledge System that was established for Québec-Labrador) under a series of searchable keywords that will describe the parameters of the project and list the contact information for the author.

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dressed up with inadequate scientific rationals all too often, and as a result, many Innu people equate the work of scientists with the decisions that are made by governments and resource managers (IN, 1999c:3).”



## 1.5 Chapter Preview

This thesis is divided into two main sections. Section one (Chapters One to Three) use archival material, library research and media sources to present an overview of the historical and social context in which contemporary developments in Labrador are taking place. This first section explains the *where*, (the setting-Chapter One), the *who* (the people and organizations involved-Chapter Two), and the *why* (a presentation of the major contemporary developments being contemplated and the key issues surrounding them-(Chapter Three).

The second half contains the bulk of the original ethnographic data. Chapter Four focusses on the pro-development rhetoric put forth by many local elites. I draw heavily on the work of Trigger (1996) who finds that examining pro-development factions has the advantage of revealing the underlying assumptions that drive the quest for economic expansion:

In such societies as Canada in the 1990s, there is a broad national (and global) language and cultural system, encompassing a range of multiple discourses, that exercises considerable influence over the constitution of sentiments regarding land and resource development. These discourses can be conceived as “ideological” in the sense that they provide an organizing framework through which people make “sense” of resource conflicts (Trigger 1996:56).

Trigger investigates the key elements of the contesting ideologies involved in resource conflicts by examining the texts promoted by industry groups, government, environmentalists and others. Located in these public debates and the “taken for granted” assumptions are the key components of environmental/resource development debates. In examining these debates and texts I examine the ways in which calls for local autonomy

and calls to embrace “progress” and modernity are used by local pro-development advocates to further their goals. Although some of these positions appear to be contradictory, many local elites sought to meld them into a coherent conceptual framework.

Chapter Five looks at the complexity of opinions and attitudes concerning development and change that were voiced by local residents. Despite the efforts of some people, particularly business and municipal leaders, to link resistance to industrial development with particular groups, especially the Innu, interviews revealed that apprehension about development was widespread and not restricted to any particular social category. It seems that, above all else, it is the troubled history of economic development in the region that has been the major determining factor in shaping attitudes toward contemporary development projects. It seems evident that, by stereotyping the Innu as the sole anti-development faction, local elites sought to ascribe social and environmental concerns to a particular group, thereby dismissing them as characteristic of a minority position.

## **Chapter Two**

### **The Political Terrain of Central Labrador**

This chapter provides an overview of the major organizations that are involved in current resource development debates in central Labrador. An understanding of the ways in which regional politics have been intertwined with land and resource-based issues in the past is critical to understanding the intensity of resource debates in the present context. The first half of the chapter outlines the ways in which early governance institutions in Labrador has helped to shape the more recent articulation of a Labrador ‘regional’ identity. The second half of the chapter looks at the development of Aboriginal organizations in Labrador, and the associated move toward land claims. These claims have become an integral part of contemporary debates about land and resource use.

#### **2.1 The Emergence of Formal Governance Institutions in Labrador**

For most of its history, Labrador has been characterized by a relative absence of government services and regulations. During the early years of European occupation, local political representation was systematically excluded as Newfoundland government officials related to the region primarily in terms of the economic benefits that it could bring to the rest of the province. This quasi-colonial relationship contributed to the emergence of regionally-based political movements, which demanded greater local control over resource developments.

### **2.1.1 Governance Institutions in the Early Period (1763-1941)**

Following the British conquest of New France, and the subsequent establishment of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, the English took possession of Labrador. Initially, administration of the territory was based in St. John's. Labrador was considered by the British colonial government to be a summer fishing station which required "... a minimum of administrative machinery" (Hiller 1993:355). The first governor of Newfoundland, Commodore Hugh Palliser (1764-8), prohibited year-round settlement in Labrador.<sup>14</sup> Palliser's vision was that the Labrador fishery should continue to be a migratory ship fishery, with no private ownership of onshore facilities (Kennedy 1995:24). This was entrenched in a formal proclamation in 1765. Zimmerly (1991) contends that the reason for the ban on settlement was to prevent the types of conflicts that were already occurring in Newfoundland, between fishers living onshore and those who travelled from English ports to exploit the fishery. Another motivation appears to have been the desire keep control of the area in the hands of British merchants. Notwithstanding the prohibition, British plans for establishing control over the fishery in Labrador had already been delayed due to misunderstandings and hostilities between Inuit residents and European fishers.

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<sup>14</sup> These laws mirrored those already in place on the island of Newfoundland. Despite restrictions, English and Irish settlers had begun overwintering along the southeastern coast of Newfoundland by 1815. What began as a migratory fishery gradually became a resident fishery (Muisse 1993). Immigration reached its peak during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries after merchants established permanent operations in Newfoundland (Matthews 1988; McBurney and Buyers 1997).

The law prohibiting settlement in Labrador began to be criticized in 1773 by merchant and captain George Cartwright, who argued to the British Board of Trade that year-round residence in Labrador was necessary in order to ensure the profitable exploitation of the salmon and seal fisheries. The first settlers, mostly of English and Scottish descent, arrived in Central Labrador in the 1770s (Andersen 1984, Kennedy 1995).<sup>15</sup>

Political control of Labrador has changed hands several times in its history. Administration of the territory was based in St. John's between 1763 and 1774. It was then passed to Québec for the following thirty-five years. The chaotic period of Québec management was described by Kennedy as follows:

Labrador's lack of government meant that anarchy and disorder were common and, following 1763, the regulations of successive governors did little to alleviate the situation. Between 1774 and 1809, coastal Labrador was nominally administered by Québec, but its distance from Québec City and the fact that authorities there lacked both naval forces and the political will to provide regular patrol meant that injustice and disorder prevailed (1995:75).

In 1809, the administration again moved to St. John's, where it has remained until the present day (Kennedy 1995).

A powerful institution that was to have a very dramatic influence on the history of northern Labrador made its entrance during the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Moravian Mission, a European Protestant religious denomination was granted a tract of land and a trading monopoly by the Newfoundland government in the 1760s. They were

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<sup>15</sup> For details on the early settlement of Labrador see Kennedy (1995), Gosling (1910) and Zimmerly (1991).

also given the right to exclude settlers from using their land. The Moravians established the first of their Labrador mission stations at Nain in 1771 in an effort to convert the Inuit in the north. Early 19<sup>th</sup> century Labrador was characterized by 1) social and religious reform as Moravians began their conversion efforts and 2) mercantilism as the British began to exploit and export Labrador's marine resources.

In the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of developments compelled growing numbers of Newfoundlanders to travel 'down' the coast of Labrador to fish.<sup>16</sup> Disputes between the competing fishers from Newfoundland and America led to the emergence of a court system as a means of settling disputes in 1826 which marked the rudiments of the first locally-based administration in the region (Kennedy 1995). In addition to administering justice, the state also began collecting duties and other revenues during this period, a practice which intensified after 1840. Resident merchants and foreign fishers opposed these initiatives, complaining that they had no political representation in the Newfoundland legislature and should therefore be exempt from taxation (Kennedy 1995).

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the first fishing and wildlife regulations were put into effect in Labrador. For the most part, however, these regulations were never effectively enforced. Instead, settlers tended to adhere to their own set of customary laws. Zimmerly suggests that it was precisely this lack of government administration that made

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<sup>16</sup> A detailed examination of these factors is available in Gosling (1910:405) and Kennedy (1995: 57-60).

Labrador so attractive to those adventurous Europeans who settled in area during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (1991).

In 1892 Wilfred T. Grenfell founded an institution that brought “ ... great social, medical, and educational changes for the people of Labrador” (Zimmerly 1991: 159). The mission was established to attend to the medical needs of the thousands of people who were coming to Labrador aboard schooners each summer to take part in the cod fishery, as well as for the settlers onshore. Much has been written about the life and work of Grenfell (Koeber 1979; Rompkey 1991; O’Brien 1992; Curwen, 1996). His approach to the people of Labrador was described by Kennedy in the following way:

Grenfell approached his Labrador mission first as an evangelical Christian, second as a powerful and often charismatic fund raiser and finally, when called upon by patients, as an impetuous and impatient physician ... his connections were instrumental in drawing influential and affluent people to Labrador, and for this alone Grenfell’s contribution to the territory is unequalled (1995:147).

The Grenfell Mission had an enormous transformational effect on much of Labrador. In addition to providing hospitals and nursing stations, the Mission also supported boarding schools, libraries, nursing homes, co-operative stores, community gardens and an orphanage.

Support for the Labrador fishery by the Newfoundland government increased significantly during the first half of the twentieth century. During this period, the province began to provide a number of new services to Labrador fishers and merchants, including subsidies to mail and passenger steamers, expansion of the Marconi wireless

communication system, and seasonal medical and educational services (Kennedy 1995).<sup>17</sup>

### **2.1.2 Governance Institutions in the Post-War Era (1942-1965)**

The 1940s were marked by rapid and unprecedented political and social change in Labrador. Goose Bay was selected as the site from which aircraft were to be ferried across the Atlantic during World War II. Shortly thereafter, the Royal Canadian Air Force and the United States Air Force hastily constructed a massive airport facility at the site. During this period, the town of Happy Valley was formed by the people who moved to the area to work at the base. To cope with the rapid expansion of the town, the provincial government eventually began to expand its services in the region.

Although Newfoundlanders elected representatives to the House of Assembly as early as 1832, Labrador residents did not receive voting privileges until 1946, when they elected a delegate to the National Convention on Newfoundland's future. In 1949, Labradorians voted heavily in favour of Confederation with Canada, possibly as a protest against the prolonged neglect of the region by Newfoundland politicians. Jackson speculates that this support for Confederation was a protest against the self-interested approach taken by the Newfoundland government. He writes:

After the appalling poverty of the Depression, the war set off and Confederation sustained a wave of profound social change throughout the province. Labradorians, who had been subject to Newfoundland's law and taxes but were never represented in its government, voted overwhelmingly for Confederation (1982:38).

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<sup>17</sup> The first police in the territory, the Newfoundland Rangers, were also established at this time. The Labrador division had little real power, however, and was "received rather coldly" by many locals who felt that they were capable of managing their own affairs (Tanner 1944:765).



In its first decade of its existence (1943 to 1953), Happy Valley was composed almost entirely of Labrador Settlers. These early inhabitants had to fend largely for themselves. They often made long trips on foot to the store or hospital in North West River to obtain essential goods and services. The homes of these first residents were constructed, primarily, out of the materials that they scavenged from the base.

The post-War era saw continued military presence in Goose Bay and in a number of coastal areas, which came to be used as Cold War defence sites.<sup>18</sup> Settlers who had migrated to Central Labrador formed the majority of the initial labour force at the base, but their mainly American employers felt little responsibility for their well-being. According to Zimmerly, even the Canadian military establishment had little direct involvement with the townspeople:

... they felt the welfare of the new community was a provincial matter. Newfoundland had viewed Labrador as little more than another natural resource for so long that it was slow to act and allowed Happy Valley, for the most part, to develop on its own (1991:209).

During the next few years, however, the population increased rapidly, as large numbers of Newfoundlanders migrated northward to take advantage of job opportunities.<sup>19</sup> The services and amenities available in the region expanded greatly

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<sup>18</sup> Military usage of Goose Bay continued after the War, as American fears of a Russian nuclear attack saw Goose Bay become a support base for the Strategic Air Command (SAC). As the cold war continued, early warning stations were constructed along the coast of Labrador (Zimmerly 1991).

<sup>19</sup> Zimmerly notes that while the total civilian employment at the base rose well over one thousand people, the number of Labradorians employed never exceeded two hundred (1991:209).

between the mid 1950s and the early 1970s. It was also during this period that the “all Settler” political system began to be taken over by newcomers. Zimmerly notes that this period represented a missed opportunity for native Labradorians to take control of the economic and political development of the region:

For most of Labrador’s history, there was no representation in the provincial government. When it finally did arrive, the members were hand-picked by the government from men who had never lived in Labrador and at best, had only business interests there (1991:244).

Most of the local positions of power were assumed by the recent wave of Newfoundland immigrants, who soon took on community organizing and leadership roles in the area.

Zimmerly notes that:

The Newfoundlanders’ eventual domination in the newly emerging areas of local government, business and other institutions were generally resented, but in the silent acquiescent fashion of the Labrador Settlers (1991:273).

This local power was both political and economic. No native Labradorians held elected office at this time, nor did any own businesses.

The town of Happy Valley was incorporated in 1961. The incorporation of the town led to an increased “sense of permanency,” despite the fact that it was home to a transient population who rotated through the American and Canadian Bases (Zimmerly 1991:209). After incorporation, a number of services that had been provided on the military bases were extended to Happy Valley (Perrault 1967). Happy Valley also became the headquarters for a number of Labrador-wide government agencies, such as welfare, education, transportation and communication (Zimmerly 1991).

Prior to the “Labrador-first” political movements of the late 1960s, there was little local affiliation with partisan politics. The local population, for the most part, had little involvement in political matters beyond the municipal level. This is probably because the region had few models to draw upon and had limited access to political outlets and institutions. As Fowler explains:

Political parties and MHA’s were nearly invisible and silent—but no one knew what else they were supposed to be. The standard of living saw little or no progress and in some areas actual retardation. But no one complained except among themselves. (1976:40).

One reason for the lack of political participation by Labradorians is traceable to the legacy of paternalistic control by outsiders. The first public services that arrived in Labrador were provided by religious and medical missions rather than government bodies. This gave the local population little opportunity to control, manage or direct their own affairs in any meaningful way. Jackson and Jackson observe that:

... most of the few elementary services on the coast have come not from the government but from medical and religious missions. Labradorians could rarely gain from these much experience in the conduct of their own affairs. In Eskimo communities of the north coast, the Moravian Brethren has been offering religious and educational services since 1771 ... and along the entire coast the International Grenfell Association ... has supplied the medical services. The lack of significant local organization enabled these two missions to become extremely influential in the lives of coastal Labradorians. Without disputing either the motives or the dedication of the staff of these institutions, one can still fairly observe that their services amounted to having outsiders do for people what communities should ideally do for themselves. Their authority was thus not only a result but a further cause of the people’s inexperience in running their own affairs (1971:21).

Finally, the structure of the provincial political regime itself hindered meaningful political participation by Labradorians. The political hub for the region was based far away in St. John’s. This highly centralized administration caused problems for the

geographically remote outposts of Newfoundland, and this problem was even more acute for Labrador (Jackson and Jackson 1971). Until the 1971 elections, the electoral districts of Labrador north and south did not have an elected leader in the provincial House who actually resided in the area they represented. Factors such as these have led previous researchers to comment that the communities of Labrador have not had the same experience with democracy and political participation as their counterparts in other parts of Canada (Jackson and Jackson 1971:21).

### **2.1.3 The Influence of Resource Development on Regional Politics**

The influence of former Newfoundland Premier Joey Smallwood in the economic development of Labrador cannot be understated. Smallwood was instrumental in bringing the province of Newfoundland into Confederation with Canada, and his Liberal government continued to dominate provincial politics in the two decades that followed. Smallwood left his stamp on Labrador through “his partiality for large-scale industrial developments, few of which produced the promised socioeconomic benefits” (Kennedy 1995:213). The largest of these was the construction of a massive hydroelectric dam at Churchill Falls.

Despite the magnitude of the Churchill Falls project, Labradorians did not benefit greatly in terms of employment. According to an article written in 1971 profiling the employment effects of the dam, the “choice” jobs were taken by skilled workers from Québec. These exogenous labourers made up as much as 60 percent of the work force

during the construction phase, because there were so few workers from the island of Newfoundland or Labrador who had the training and experience required to fill these positions (Martin 1971).

The politicalization of resource development in Central Labrador began in earnest in the 1960s. It was at this time that politicians and residents alike began to anticipate the loss of the industry that had been the *raison d'être* for their town. As early as 1966, community leaders in Upper Lake Melville expressed concern that the expiration of the lease of the American base, which was originally scheduled for June 5, 1972, would have a profound effect on the economy of the area (NR Dec.23, 1966).<sup>20</sup> William H. Rompkey, then director of the Department of Labrador Affairs, publically voiced his distress about rising unemployment levels stemming the impending phase-out of the base. Like other community leaders of the time, Rompkey looked to forestry projects and highway construction to offset the jobs that would be lost at the base (NR Dec.23, 1966).

In 1971, Conservative MP Ambrose Peddle began asking the Federal and Provincial governments to recognize that the Happy Valley-Lake Melville area needed to be provided with new industrial developments to diversify the local economy, and to offset the jobs that would be lost with the base shutdown. Expressing concerns about the economic impact that would be caused by the impending loss of military and civilian personnel, Peddle called on the federal government to accelerate its consideration of a proposal to develop a Labrador-Québec highway system (NR Feb.18, 1971).

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<sup>20</sup> The American lease was later extended to July of 1976.

Another proposed scheme to help alleviate the impending employment problem was to further develop the forest industry in the region. An agreement was signed on June 7, 1968, between Premier Smallwood and Melville Pulp and Paper Ltd., a subsidiary of Canadian Javelin. The Agreement outlined the details for the construction of a liner board plant at Stephenville, Newfoundland and a chip mill operation which was to be located in Happy Valley. The mill was expected to be brought into production by 1970. In 1969, Javelin Forest Products began large-scale pulpwood cutting to supply the Stephenville mill. Jackson & Jackson, observed that the operation was well received by local people, but was not without its share of financial woes:

Jubilant government announcements about the future of the operation promised thousands of jobs and the injection of millions in new housing and wages to the local economy, but Javelin has managed to cut and ship only a fraction of its projected cordwood volume in the past three shipping seasons. It has trouble paying its local bills, and appears to need repeated financial injections in the form of loans guaranteed by a local provincial government already heavily in debt (1971:5).

Despite these difficulties, Javelin's operations did save many from unemployment during a period in which the American military was in the process of closing down their operation at Goose Bay (Schuurman 1996).

On December 23, 1968, Smallwood announced that the much anticipated chip mill would not be built in Happy Valley after all; instead, the mill would also be going to Stephenville. An election was looming and Stephenville, also near a former military base, and had far more voters than Happy Valley. Like Happy Valley, Stephenville was in dire need of employment. For the residents of central Labrador, the announcement represented yet another development scheme that had failed to bring jobs and stability to the area. The

front-page of the local newspaper described the initial reaction to Smallwood's announcement:

It is understandable to anyone living in the in the Goose Bay area that the Premier's announcement should meet with such violent reactions ... To Newfoundland ... the chip mill was just another industry, to the people of Labrador North it meant *an* industry, the *industry*, the *only* industry ... The town has a population of close to 5,000 all of whom depend, either directly or indirectly, on the USAF base for a living. The promise of a chip mill offered men more than a living ... Without hope for an industry, people can only work from day to day, waiting for an announcement which will surely come- the phase out of the USAF activity in Goose Bay (NR Jan.9, 1969).

This newspaper called the chip mill loss "another discrimination against the area . . . the straw that broke the camel's back" and compared it to other disappointments endured by the area, such as the broken promise of government assistance to complete the road from Happy Valley to Churchill Falls. A flurry of angry rhetoric written by local people also appears in the 'Letters to the Editor' section in the same issue of the paper. One such letter condemns the chip mill announcement as further proof of the Premier's intention to drain the wealth of Labrador for benefit of the remainder of the province, a sentiment that would resurface in the decades that followed (NR Jan.9,1969).

#### **2.1.4 Labrador First Politics**

The reaction to the announcement by Joey Smallwood created a sense of betrayal in the minds of many Labrador residents. Out of this frustration came one the first organized protest groups in central Labrador. The Labrador Development Committee (LDC) was created at a public meeting on December 30, 1968. Its stated goals were to:

meet with provincial officials concerning the chip mill, investigate the possibility of Labrador becoming the eleventh Canadian province, and establish a separate federal riding for Labrador (NR April 24, 1969). The LDC's supporters complained that the provincial government suffered from a lack of communication with the 'common' people of Labrador (NR April 24, 1969). Fowler would later describe the formation of the LDC as a watershed moment, stating that: "From this point on, the voices of Labradorians began to be raised in earnest"(1976:40).

In the years that followed, the people in Upper Lake Melville began writing letters and editorials to express their frustrations with a greater frequency than they had in previous years.<sup>21</sup> This growing discontent is evident in this excerpt, taken from an editorial published in the local newspaper, the Northern Reporter on July 13, 1969:

... Being 'a part of' and 'belonging to' are two vastly different things. Labrador does not 'belong to' Newfoundland. It is part of the province of Newfoundland - a larger part and a richer part - a part which is far richer in resources than the island will ever be. When will the government wake up and realize that? (NR July 13, 1969).

In subsequent decades, many area residents continued to express their desire for greater participation, greater autonomy and, in some cases, complete political separation from the island portion of the province.

The topic of separation first surfaces in the newspapers of Central Labrador during the late 1960s and has continued to appear sporadically in editorials ever since. Various researchers have taken different approaches to the topic of separation over the years.

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<sup>21</sup> I base this statement on a content analysis of the weekly paper 'the Northern Reporter' published in Happy Valley, Labrador from December 1966 to until December 1971.



Some have pointed out that, while the threat of secession may be unlikely, Labrador separation makes for a somewhat popular conversation topic among Labradorians.

Jackson and Jackson assert that:

... most native-born Labradorians, however inadequate their ties to Canada, emphatically do not consider themselves Newfoundlanders. Thoughts of separation are common. People rarely voice in public the idea of becoming a "Northeastern Territory," or an eleventh province, or even joining Québec, but such prospects are a prominent theme of earnest "kitchen talk"(1971:14).

Kennedy also discusses the symbolic value of the separation theme among Labradorians:

... in Labrador, antipathy toward what Labrador people believed was Newfoundland's historic exploitation of Labrador was growing. Alienation and resentment fuelled suggestions that Labrador should separate from insular Newfoundland. Though primarily a ruse intended to place Labrador on the public agenda, separatist rhetoric made island Newfoundlanders nervous. Such rhetoric was most common wherever Labrador people had most contact with Newfoundland and/or Newfoundlanders, particularly the Labrador Straits, the Lake Melville area and western Labrador (1995:213).

Kennedy (1995) argues that fears of Labrador separatism flourished in Newfoundland during 1976 and 1977, a period which coincided with the separatist threats of the Parti Québécois government in Québec. He claims that Newfoundlanders failed to see the difference between those who were advocating pro-Labrador viewpoints and those who were advocating separatism. Kennedy examines the way that the topic of separation was expressed, both on the island, and in various regions of Labrador:

... among the people of Labrador, such as those in southeastern or northern Labrador, separatism meant little. Labrador separatism was always more important in Newfoundland than in Labrador, and interpretations of the 'separatist threat' depended on one's political stripe. In Newfoundland, ignorance of Labrador abounded. Thus, among politicians and the media alike, talk of separatism persisted; it made good political fodder and the widespread neo-colonial view continued that Labrador's primary importance was to bolster Newfoundland's economic position (1995: 217).

The separatism motif seems to have reached heights of popularity in the 1970s and again in the 1990s, although it was never more than a fringe political movement. Most often, the theme was invoked as protest against Newfoundland business interests, who often failed to recognize Labrador as a unique socio-political entity. Actual calls for separation or independence are much less common than are calls for greater independence and assertions that Labrador has a unique regional identity.

The late sixties and the early seventies ushered in a new era in the political history of central Labrador. The dawning of this period is reflected in the increased appearance of pro-Labrador attitudes and organizations. This new era of political participation began in 1969 when the New Labrador Party (NLP) was established in Labrador West. For a variety of economic and political reasons, the Party's message was particularly well-received in central Labrador. For the first time in the history of the region, established political parties found themselves fighting for favour among the voters of Labrador. Themes of alienation and exploitation by outsiders were invoked by the NLP to bolster political support for its mandate. According to Zimmerly (1991), the NLP not only gained popularity among Labradorians, but was also able to garner support from Newfoundlanders who had lived in the region long enough to become disappointed by

what they perceived as chronic government indifference.

The NLP was formed by Tom Burgess, an Irish immigrant and a former steelworkers' union organizer, who was elected to the Provincial government in 1966. Burgess was a Liberal from Labrador West, who had a history of loyalty to then Premier Smallwood. Dissatisfaction with Smallwood's ongoing neglect of the people of Labrador led Burgess to cross the house and sit as an independent in 1968 (Burgess 1971). In describing his reasons for leaving the Liberal Party, Burgess explained that he believed that the region needed an advocate to explain its plight to the ruling party:

I was elected as a Liberal ... on the basis that all that was needed on the Liberal side of the House was someone capable of expressing the needs and desires of the people of Labrador ... I found out after I had been sitting on the Smallwood side of the House for a year that they had known all along the value of Labrador but they didn't intend to do too much for the people. Geographically, it was out of sight, out of mind. That is how it appears to us here, in Labrador West, where 24 percent of all the revenues that accrue to the Province originate.<sup>22</sup> We've got absolutely nothing in return. We've got no roads. We've got no TV. Very little in the form of communications ... There seems to be a great swelling of support for the idea of an identity for Labrador. We are trying to work within the system itself – to sit in the House of Assembly and speak with one voice for Labrador ... (Burgess, 1971: 32).

Now independent from the Liberal Party, Burgess took advantage of his position as an independent to travel throughout Labrador. In so doing, he discovered that some of the grievances of the people of Labrador West were shared by those in other regions (Fowler 1976). Fowler contends that Burgess “... was immediately struck by the ripening disillusionment among old-time Labradorians. Being a political animal first and

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<sup>22</sup> After the base was established in Goose Bay, iron ore was discovered near the present-day mining towns of Labrador City and Wabush. Like Happy Valley, the towns in western Labrador attracted newcomers in search of jobs and business opportunities associated with the mines.

foremost, he made the most of the situation” (Fowler 1976:40). Burgess announced that he and a group of concerned Labradorians would be forming a new political party, with the stated purpose of putting forward Labrador’s point of view. He believed that this splinter party would help to ‘establish an identity’ for the region (Burgess 1971:32).

Burgess made his first public appearance in the area as the leader of a ‘Labrador Rights Party’ (the term given to the New Labrador Party by the media), as the guest speaker at a special meeting of the Happy Valley Chamber of Commerce on January 6, 1969. He argued that Labrador should have its own party and its own representatives running in each of its ridings. Burgess said that he went to St. John’s hoping to tell the government about the difficulties and frustrations that faced the people of Labrador but “... found that they already knew what our problems were - but they just didn’t care” (NR Jan. 9, 1969).” He spoke of the need for the party to set its own policy to suit its own local situation. After this initial meeting, the NLP gained a small but loyal support base in the central region, including several writers for the Goose Bay local newspaper, who continued to give it favourable press in the years to follow. The NLP sought to establish a common identity for the diverse parts of Labrador and promoted the need of Labradorians to elect three permanent Labrador residents to the House in St. John’s.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> During that time period, Burgess was the only one from Labrador, the other two seats were held by Newfoundland residents (Golder 1971).

Although the success of the NLP was limited and short-lived, a few of their objectives were eventually met.<sup>24</sup> As explained by Jackson et al.:

The immediate effects of the New Labrador Party were intense but short-lived, as the New Labrador Party held the balance of power in elections which ended 23 years of government under Joey Smallwood. The party itself faded when its only sitting member resigned in 1974, but the frustration and sense of a Labrador identity remained, supported now by knowledge and political skills gained since the turmoil in the early '70s (1977:3).

The party only existed for seven years, but during that relatively short time period, they managed to galvanize a sense of a unified 'Labradorian' identity amongst a diverse populace especially around the theme of local control over resource developments.

Since the late 1960's, Labrador politics has begun to take on an increasingly 'regionalist' dimension. Many Labradorians, have expressed resentment over the loss of economic benefits from resources such as fish and hydroelectricity to those residing outside of the region. For these reasons, many are very wary of future development schemes. This wariness is expressed in a variety of ways. People "from away" (but especially Newfoundlanders) are seen as having extracted rich resources from Labrador, leaving the environment degraded, and taking away jobs from deserving local people. In the minds of many Labradorians, one form of resource exploitation cannot be separated from another. Generally speaking, resource development projects are seen as having benefited outsiders at the expense of residents.

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<sup>24</sup> In the 1971 provincial election, the New Labrador Party had candidates in all three ridings but only managed to re-elect Burgess in Labrador West. Burgess was then defeated a few months later in a by-election. The party did, however, manage to elect another NLP member in the Labrador south riding, who served the region between 1972 and 1975.

## 2.2 The Emergence of Aboriginal Organizations in Labrador

In Newfoundland and Labrador, no treaties were ever signed between the colonial government and the Aboriginal peoples living within the boundaries of the province. Furthermore, the province did not adapt the federal Indian Act when it entered Confederation with Canada in 1949. This rendered the Aboriginal people of Newfoundland and Labrador ineligible for the funds and services that were available to other Aboriginals in Canada. Some federal-provincial agreements, were, however, put into place for the cost sharing of health-care, housing, education, economic development and other programs. Federal money would be provided to the provincial government which would then administer programs of their own design.

The province avoided the problem of having to distinguish between Aboriginals and non-Aboriginals in the same community by setting up a unique arrangement whereby Aboriginality depended on “the perceived history of the community” (J. Kennedy, personal communication). With this arrangement, the government provided funding for *all* the members of designated communities, whether they were of Aboriginal descent or not. This is a contrast to the federal funding programs that apply elsewhere in Canada. Tanner has argued that one of the underlying motives behind the development of this unique Newfoundland and Labrador system was that the province was primarily concerned with “... raising the standards of community infrastructure in Labrador, rather than addressing the specific problems raised by Aboriginal hunters”(Tanner, 1996:20). In addition, there was concern that raising the standards of the Aboriginal population, even

to the low standards of other Aboriginals across Canada, may have put the province in an uneasy political situation vis-a vis the non-Aboriginal population of Labrador (Tanner 1993). Tanner argues that the different approach to dealing with Aboriginal peoples in Newfoundland and Labrador that was employed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was also due, in part, to the fact that in other parts of Canada, Aboriginal lands were seen as being of value for agriculture, forestry, and settlement. This relative lack of federal legal status is quite different from the “wardship status,” that can be used to describe Aboriginal governance of status Indians in other parts of Canada.<sup>25</sup>

The emergence of Aboriginal political organisations in Labrador was stimulated by an organizational period at the national level. A factor that had a major effect on the development of Aboriginal organizations at a national and regional level were the changes in funding which made these organizations eligible for funding from the federal government and other sources (Frideres 1993). In the 1970s, Aboriginal Associations in Newfoundland and Labrador began using the same federal funds available to Aboriginal groups elsewhere in Canada. Kennedy (1997) has argued that the formation of Aboriginal associations was also facilitated by events such as the tabling of the federal White Paper

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<sup>25</sup> The structures and policies that are in place in Canada today have grown out of Canada’s colonial past, and this colonial relationship can best be termed what Tanner has called the “wardship principle,” a principle that has grown out of the efforts of the colonizers to afford the colonized peoples protection, while at the same time allowing them control of the lives and the land of the Aboriginal population. These two goals were accomplished by giving Aboriginals “... a more restrictive legal status and a more centralized administrative system than the rest of the population” (Tanner: 1983:2).

(officially titled *The Statement of the Government Of Canada On Indian Policy* [1969] ,<sup>26</sup> and the advent of major land claims cases, such as the 1971 Alaska Settlement. He observes that ethno-politics that grew out of these events, both in Labrador and elsewhere, were responsible for “... a resurgence in Native cultural identity, for bitter debates about who is Native, and for advocating Native rights and demands, some which occasionally fuel an anti-Native backlash ...”(1987:13).

The first major regional Aboriginal organization in the province, the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (NANL), was founded in Newfoundland in February 1973. In September of that same year the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), was formed. Kennedy describes this chaotic early organizational period:

The period between 1973 and 1975 was marked by much confusion, rivalry, and distrust between supporters of NANL and LIA. NANL primarily included (in descending order) Newfoundland Micmacs, Northern Labrador Settlers, Labrador Innu, and some Labrador Inuit (Kennedy 1995:229).

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<sup>26</sup> In 1969, the government admitted to having discriminatory legislation in place with respect to Aboriginal peoples and advanced a proposal called the White Paper as a way of phasing out this special legal status and separate administrative structures. The White Paper was, in effect, an effort to repeal the Indian Act. Instead, Aboriginal bands would acquire title to their lands from the Department of Indian Affairs. Critics of the proposal argued that it would amount to cultural extermination, since any outstanding land claims and other legal suits against the government would become redundant. Frideres (1993) sees the White Paper as an important milestone in Aboriginal political organization, which has resulted in the emergence of a number of Aboriginal organizations since the 1960s. As a consequence of widespread opposition, the White Paper was formally retracted on March 17, 1971.



### **2.2.1 Innu Political Organization**

When the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project flooded vast tracks of Innu hunting territory in 1969, the Innu did not publically decry the injustice that had taken place. Tanner (1993) explains that, at this time, very few Innu people were fluent in English or had the political savvy to convey their outrage. The Innu were more or less isolated from mainstream Aboriginal political groups in Canada and lacked a unified political voice. This changed as young people who had grow up in the settlements, became fluent in English and began to articulate the interests of the community. The Innu formed the short-lived North West Indian Association as early as 1969 (NR Dec.23, 1969), but their involvement with a major political association occurred when they joined the Native Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (NANL) which was formed in 1973. The Innu branched off into their own organization, the Naskapi-Montagnais Indian Association (NMIA) in 1975. According to Tanner (1993), it was during this period that the Innu really began to gain political momentum.

By the late 1970s, the NMIA were asserting a form of “pan-Innu nationalism” that forcefully and directly questioned the legitimacy of the Canadian state “... an ideology which would subsequently determine how they would react when their territory began to be used for intensive, high speed, low-level jet training in the early 1980s”(Tanner 1993:77). Tanner lists a number of factors that account for this rather aggressive form of ethno-nationalism as compared with other Canadian Aboriginal groups. These included their recent and rapid decline of autonomy and the relative social isolation that the Innu

had from the surrounding Settler and Euro-Canadian communities prior to the 1960s (Tanner 1993). In 1990, the NMIA changed its name to the Innu Nation.

Tanner contends that this Innu nationalist ideology has been taken to its “logical conclusion” in recent decades, as they have aggressively challenged the legitimacy of provincial and federal courts and authorities (1993:76). In 1976, the NMIA asked then Premier Frank Moores to declare a freeze on industrial development in the region until a land claims settlement had been reached. Since this time, the Innu Nation has made land rights a central issue, demanding that their Aboriginal rights to land and self-government be recognized since they never relinquished control over their lands and resources. They state:

Our rights to self government and self determination within the confederation must be the basis of any agreement with the federal government. Basic to that right is the recognition of exclusive Naskapi-Montagnais political jurisdiction over areas of primary importance to our life as a people (NMIA in Armitage 1991:93).

The recent move toward resolving Aboriginal land claims came out of a major policy change that occurred in 1974. After years of resistance to the recognition of Aboriginal title, the federal government conceded that in the areas that were not covered by the treaties, they would look into those lands where research would support a claim (Tanner, 1983:26). This change opened the possibility of land claims for Labrador Aboriginal groups. The NMIA began research to support a land claim in 1974, as soon as government money to support the claim became available. By 1977, the NMIA’s Statement of Claim was presented to the Office of Native Claims. Tanner (1993) reports

that this original statement of claim was a radical statement of sovereignty over Innu land, which included a call for no extinguishment and for self-governing status. In 1978, their claim was accepted for negotiation by the federal government. At the time, the federal position was that sovereignty was not negotiable, so between 1980 and 1987 there were no formal discussions regarding the land claim. The Innu Nation was invited to negotiate the claim in 1989, but they still refused the abrogation clause. In 1996, the Innu Nation signed a Framework Agreement which outlined the scope and parameters for future negotiations. These negotiations continue into the present day.

### **2.2.2 Inuit Political Organization**

In 1973, the Labrador Inuit formed the Labrador Inuit Association (LIA), a regional affiliate of the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, a national-level organization that has established a major role for itself in the “business of land claims on Inuit traditional territory” (McMillan 1988:271). One of the distinct features of the LIA is that the organization included Settlers living in the coastal communities that had been designated Aboriginal under the federal-provincial funding agreements.

In 1976, the LIA filed a land claim for Aboriginal rights and title to lands and sea ice in northern Labrador. The following year, the LIA submitted their land use and occupancy study, entitled *Our Footprints are Everywhere* (Brice-Bennett 1977). The claim was accepted by both the federal and the provincial government in 1985, but was delayed while federal officials made changes to their land claims policies. It was not until

1989 that the LIA began formal negotiations. In 1990, they reached an agreement which outlined the parameters for negotiations. These negotiations eventually led to the ratification of a land claims Agreement in Principle by the LIA membership in 1999.

### **2.2.3 Métis Political Organization**

There are a number of conflicting reports about the genesis of the Labrador Métis Association (now known as the Labrador Métis Nation). Plaice (1990) claims that discussion of a 'Métis Association' to represent Central Labrador Settlers occurred around 1983, while a resident of Labrador (Blake 1997:8) claims that he tried to generate interest in a Métis organization as early as 1978. According to Kennedy, the Labrador Métis Association that exists today grew out of the conflict over low-level flight training in central Labrador:

In 1985 ... an influential white civil servant in Goose Bay, who covertly promotes military expansion in Labrador, encouraged the formation of the Labrador Métis Association (LMA) apparently to split "Native" opposition to militarization (1987:22).

Whatever its present-day origin, the LMN draws its legitimacy from the 1982 Constitution, which defined Métis as "Aboriginal." Their claim, however, is not without opposition from the provincial government, the LIA and the Innu Nation (Kennedy 1997). The Labrador Métis Association was incorporated in 1986 and submitted a comprehensive land claim in 1991. In 1998, the federal Justice Department submitted its preliminary opinion that Canada should reject the Métis's claim. The LMN has submitted new reports to the federal government in 2002 and are awaiting federal response.

## **Chapter Three**

### **Contemporary Developments in Labrador**

This chapter presents case studies of the proposed development of the Voisey's Bay mineral deposit and the proposed expansion of hydroelectric power generation on the Lower Churchill River. It is intended to provide the necessary context for a discussion of the various discourses surrounding development and conservation that are currently at play in central Labrador. I hope to convey some sense of the enormous scope of these mega-projects, and the extent to which the landscape will be modified in order to accommodate them.<sup>27</sup>

#### **3.1 The Voisey's Bay Mineral Deposit**

The project that was most widely discussed at the time of my field study was the proposed mine and mill development at Voisey's Bay. Exploration to date has determined that the area surrounding Voisey's Bay contains an estimated 150 tonnes of nickel (along with cobalt and copper), making it one of the richest nickel deposits in the world. The mine is to be located approximately 35 kilometres southwest of the community of Nain, 79 kilometres northwest of the community of Davis Inlet, and 330 kilometres north-northwest of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. If developed, it will bring tremendous social and economic changes to much of Labrador.

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<sup>27</sup> These developments take place within the context of a relatively sparse history of industrial and resource development in the region. For a historical overview see Appendix VI.

Voisey's Bay has already had a significant impact on the regional economy, particularly in the town Happy Valley-Goose Bay, where businesses have sprung up (and in some cases gone under) in an effort to provide services and supplies for the exploration camp, the prospective mine, and its workers.

### **3.1.1 A History of Human Occupation at Voisey's Bay**

Human use of the area surrounding Voisey's Bay goes back much farther than the discovery of the ore deposit in 1993. Abundant wildlife populations have attracted people to the area for centuries. This section provides a brief outline of the prehistorical and historical uses of Voisey's Bay. In the contemporary period, the historical and wildlife resources associated with this area have emerged as a central focus for debates surrounding resource development and land use.

Archeologists have found evidence that there has been human occupation of the Voisey's Bay area for at least 6,500 years (Jacques Whitford Environment Ltd.[JWEL] 1997). During field surveys undertaken in and around the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company claim block in 1995 (see map 3.1), a total of 26 archaeological sites and six contemporary sites were discovered. Most of these sites consisted of Innu and Inuit camps, storage areas, and burial sites (JWEL 1997:28). By 1996, more than 250 sites had been identified in the region.<sup>28</sup> Most sites appeared to be used sporadically, as short term camps or as

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<sup>28</sup> Over half of these sites were discovered by teams which consisted of personnel from the Mushuau Innu Band Council and the Torgâsok Cultural Centre, which was working on behalf of the Labrador Inuit Association. These activities were part of a major cooperative Historical  
(continued...)

places to cache meat.

Archaeologists have also unearthed a number of larger settlements at Voisey's Bay, including evidence of camps and villages in preferred resource harvesting areas. Voisey's Bay, and the surrounding area, appears to have been used extensively by a wide range of successive cultural traditions. Researchers have pointed to the "unusually abundant, predictable, and accessible migrations of fish and game" as one of the reasons why the area yields such a wealth of archaeological evidence (Fitzhugh 1997: 9).

Another incentive for the Innu to visit the area (which they call Emish), prior to this century was the trading post that was established there in the 1840s by Amos Voisey, a young Englishman who had migrated from Newfoundland to take part in the Labrador fishery. Beginning as early as 1776, 'stationers' from Newfoundland began travelling to the Labrador coast each summer to take advantage of the region's bountiful cod fishing grounds (Kennedy 1995). With these fisheries came many schooners filled with workers to assist in splitting and salting the cod for export. By 1900, an estimated one thousand of these 'liveryers' were living year round in Labrador. There eventually came to be several families in the Voisey's Bay area. The families engaged in the seasonal subsistence cycle of fishing in the summer, trapping in the winter, and hunting caribou and seal in the spring. By 1937, there were an estimated 38 Settlers and 65 Innu living around Voisey's

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<sup>28</sup>(...continued)

Resources Assessment in the area of the proposed development, which was published in *The Voisey's Bay 1996 Environmental Baseline Technical Data Report* (JWEL 1997). This report has sections on traditional land use and archaeological findings, and includes data on subsistence and material culture.

Bay. Innu visits to the post were probably short and infrequent until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the depletion of game populations in the interior caused them to experience periods of starvation (Fitzhugh 1997: 10-11).

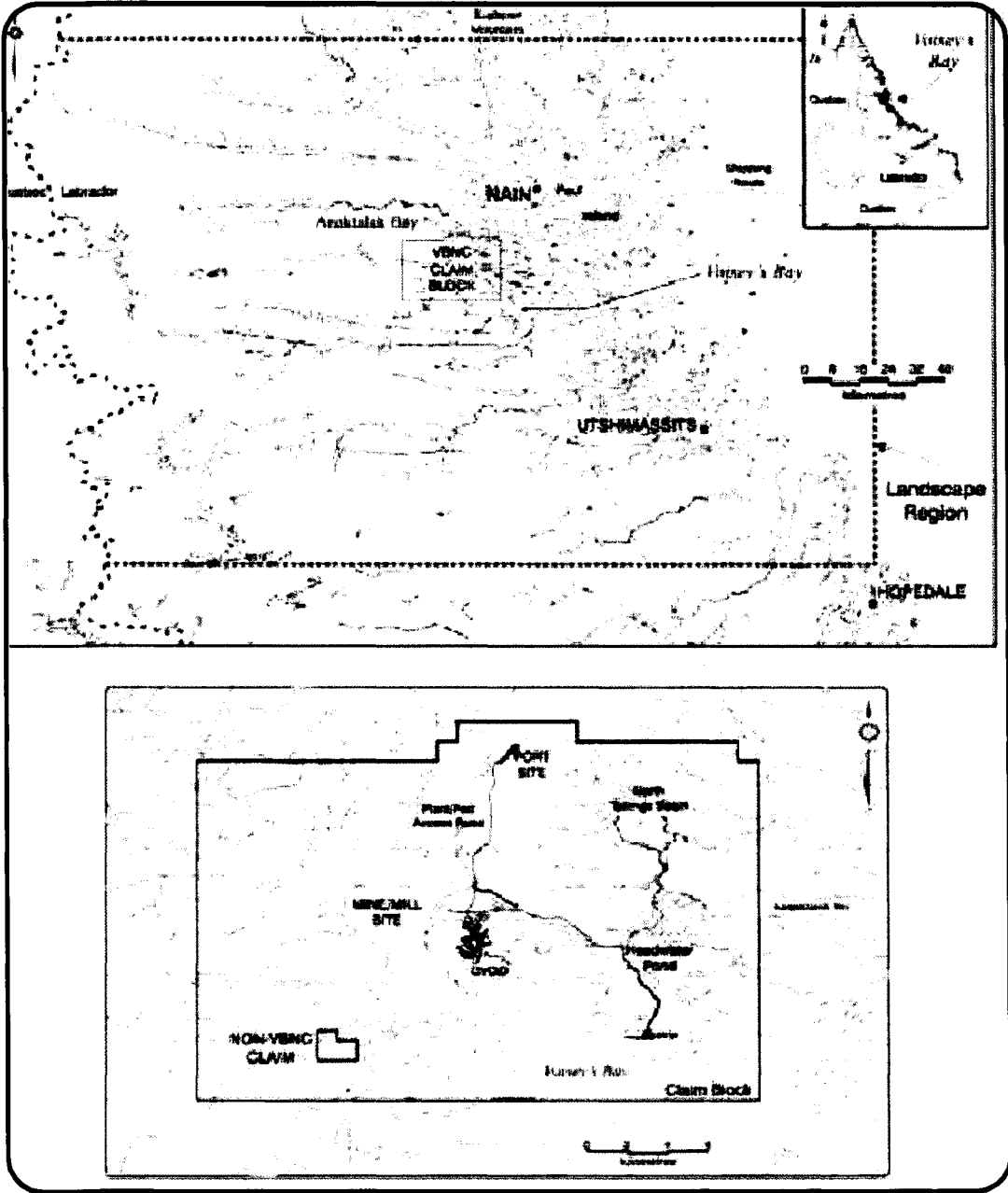
The Moravians established a community and a missionary post at Zoar on the south side of the Bay in 1865. This short-lived community had considerable interaction with the Innu and also served as burial site for a number of individuals who succumbed to starvation and disease. Both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Moravian Mission's records indicate that Innu people made sporadic winter visits to Zoar between 1868 and 1880. After the caribou population suffered a sharp decline in 1916, the Innu became increasingly dependant upon the European trading posts at Voisey's Bay and Davis Inlet to maintain "an element of security in their interior hunting"(JWEL 1997: 18).<sup>29</sup> The Voisey's Bay post was finally shut down in the 1950s and the remaining families moved onto other communities. All that remains are their weather-beaten houses and gravestones.

Archaeological surveys of historic period occupations have uncovered that there has been a surge in resource harvesting at Voisey's Bay since the 1960s, when the Innu people were permanently "settled" at Davis Inlet. From this point onward, Innu campsites can be found near virtually every goose-hunting and char-fishing spot along the bays and river banks that lead from Voisey's Bay to the interior.

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<sup>29</sup> The Hudson's Bay Company operation at Davis Inlet was short lived, because cod and fur prices never fully recovered from the Depression. By the 1950s few could make a living from the fish and fur trade.





**Figure 3.1: Location of Voisey's Bay Claim Block.**  
 Source: adapted from the VBNC 1997b

### 3.1.2 Putting Voisey's Bay "On the Map"

Although mineral riches in the western regions of Labrador were first discovered as early as the late 1800s, the Voisey's Bay discovery is what most *recently* put Labrador 'on the map' in terms of mining stock speculation and investment.

One of the first geologists to examine Labrador's rock formations was American Everette Pepperrell Wheeler. During a 1926 visit, Wheeler became so intrigued by the bedrock surrounding the coastal community of Nain that he decided to study the area for his doctoral thesis at Cornell. The first major mineral discovery in Labrador occurred in 1892, when A. P. Low of the Geological Survey of Canada uncovered huge iron ore deposits along the Labrador-Québec border. Because of the remote location, however, it was not until 1954 that the first shipment of iron ore left the new mining town of Schefferville, Québec (McNish 1998:61).

Interest in the area did not peak again until the 1990s. On September 9, 1993, Al Chislett and Chris Verbiski, two young prospectors from Newfoundland, discovered what they believed to be a hill containing a copper and ore body. Prior to this discovery, Michael McMurrrough, then working for Arkansas-based Diamond Field Resources had read about the area's ancient archaean rock formations. Recognizing that these formations were known to house diamonds, he ordered geological reports from Newfoundland's Department of Mines and Energy in 1993, but was told that Chislett and Verbiski had already laid claim to much of the area (McNish 1998:58). Six weeks later, McMurrrough and Diamond Fields reached an agreement to buy the claim.

A second phase of exploration began at Voisey's Bay in 1994. In October of that year, core samples were found to contain massive sulphides: "a rare form of rock made up almost exclusively of valuable sulphide materials" (McNish 1998:85). This finding suggested that Voisey's Bay had serious mining potential and could deliver untold riches to its owners and developers.

In November of 1994, Diamond Fields Resources issued a press release announcing the results of the Voisey's Bay core samples. The tests from the drill holes revealed high grades of nickel, copper, and cobalt. On the day after the announcement, Diamond Field's stock price nearly doubled on the Vancouver Stock Exchange. This event brought Voisey's Bay to the attention of the Canadian media for the first time.

When it became clear that a major nickel deposit had been discovered, corporations from around the world began vying for ownership. On April 3, 1996, after a series of lengthy negotiations, a draft agreement was signed. This allowed for a 4.3 billion-dollar takeover of the Voisey's Bay site by Canadian nickel giant Inco, the largest nickel mining company in the world.

Inco has been in operation for 90 years and currently operates in 23 countries around the world (Voisey's Bay Nickel Company [VBNC] 1997b). In its first 50 years, Inco controlled the vast majority of the world nickel market, reaching a peak holding of 92 percent in 1928, after it merged with Britain's Mond Nickel (McNish 1998). By the 1990s, Inco was still the world's largest supplier of nickel, an essential ingredient in the manufacturing of stainless steel, but was engaged in a struggle with its competitors to

maintain that title. For Inco to remain the world's largest nickel producer, it had to increase its production and reduce its reliance on outside producers. The acquisition of the mineral deposit in Voisey's Bay in 1996 was seen as a major step toward realizing this objective.<sup>30</sup>

The proposed mine and mill project at Voisey's Bay is to be undertaken by the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company, a subsidiary of Inco, Ltd. From the very beginning, Inco president Mike Sopko had promised shareholders an ambitious timetable that called for ore production within three years. This left a very little time for the huge task of 'resolving' Aboriginal land claims and completing environmental reviews.

Inco holds claim to 2,059 square kilometres of land in Labrador. The proposed mine and mill site is to be located on the peninsula that lies between Antalak Bay and Voisey's Bay. For Inco, the size of the reserves is only one of the reasons for the high value of Voisey's Bay. Unlike most of the world's nickel, which is buried thousands of metres below the surface, Voisey's Bay ore is easily accessible. At the Inco mine in Sudbury, Ontario, by contrast, operators must dig down more than two-hundred metres to access the ore. Because the Voisey's Bay deposit is so shallow, costly mining shafts would not need to be built for many years. Furthermore, drill tests have shown that the

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<sup>30</sup> Inco's *1996 Annual Report*, subtitled "*Accelerating our Growth*," boasted that the company had acquired 100 percent of the huge Voisey's Bay nickel-copper-cobalt deposit in Labrador, which was expected to be the world's lowest-cost source of nickel. The report also outlines the details of Inco's plans for the development of Voisey's Bay, heralding Labrador as their "centrepiece for expansion." The company planned to have the first concentrate leave the mill in late 1999, and to have production underway by 2001. This, the report speculates, would help Inco to achieve its goal of expanding its share of the worldwide nickel market by up to 30 percent (Inco 1997: 4-5).

ore is formed in the shape of an ovoid, resembling a deep egg-shaped bowl. Subsequent exploration has discovered that the ovoid has surface dimensions of approximately 800 metres by 300 metres and extends to depths of approximately 125 metres. (VBNC 1997b).

Based on the current knowledge of the mineral resources at Voisey's Bay, three primary mineralized areas have been identified and targeted for development. These are: the Ovoid, the Eastern Deeps, and the Western Extension. These zones have different characteristics and require different mining methods. The Ovoid deposit is located near the surface and its formation is perfectly designed for an open pit, the cheapest and most convenient way of extracting nickel. The Eastern Deeps and Western Extension, by contrast, lie well below the surface, and will require the use of underground mining methods (VBNC 1997b).

### **3.1.3 The Ecological “Footprint” of Voisey’s Bay**

By 1995, there were nearly 50 exploration companies with claims in the Voisey's Bay area and another 70 with claims in other parts of Labrador (Falconer 1995:125). There was also a 20 person full-time crew assembled at the Voisey's Bay site. By November of that year, Archaean (the company formed by Chislett and Verbiski) had more than 50 employees and 11 drill rigs boring holes in the Labrador tundra in search of a new deposit area, despite the fact that the Innu Nation had initially been told by Diamond Fields that the company would only dig a few holes. By early 1996, the exploration camp at Voisey's Bay had ballooned into a busy village of tents and trailers

housing more than 100 workers. Later that year, a second exploration camp was constructed at Antalak Bay, and the number of people employed at the site rose to 300 people (Lowe 1998:36).

In 1997, the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company released the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which outlined their plans for a fully-operational mine. The principal components of the proposed project were to include: open pit and underground mining operations, a port facility, accommodations for 350 people, water treatment and disposal areas, a diesel generating plant, 47 kilometres of roads, and an airstrip. At Edwards Cove in Antalak Bay there would be docking, storage, and loading facilities. Waste rock would be stored in an underwater tailings pond.<sup>31</sup> The Company plans to put 15,000 tonnes of crushed waste rock into a nearby lake, and then use the north tailings basin when the first lake reaches capacity. VBNC admits that there will be considerable habitat loss at these tailings ponds.

A major concern of both the LIA and the Innu Nation is that the Company plans to ship the concentrate by icebreaker through land-fast ice. There is concern that this shipping lane will cause major disruptions for those people who must travel by ice through the area to get to neighbouring communities and hunting grounds. It is also suspected that these shipping activities will have negative effects on caribou movements and seal denning.

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<sup>31</sup> In the past ten to fifteen years, engineers have found that by placing these tailings underwater the production of acid can be prevented (Falconer 1995).

At full capacity, the mine will operate year-round and produce about 20,000 tonnes of ore each day (VBNC 1997b). All employees will be transported to and from the project site by air. VBNC will provide transportation to the project area from six communities along the North Coast of Labrador, (Nain, Utshimassits, Hopedale, Postville, Makkovik, Rigolet), as well as from Happy Valley-Goose Bay and Labrador West (VBNC 1997c). The Project is expected to create 420 jobs during the open pit stage and as many as 900 during the underground operation. It is projected that a workforce of up to 1,400 persons will be required over the course of the project's estimated 25 year operational life. The Company estimates that the project will create a maximum of 28,000 direct person-years of employment for the residents of Newfoundland and Labrador and will generate \$1.5 billion in direct employment income. VBNC predicts that direct employment effects will be supplemented by the employment generated through the provision of goods and services to the Project (VBNC 1997c). According to Company estimates, as released in the Voisey's Bay Environmental Impact Study, it is expected that communities on the North Coast will receive about 21 percent of the employment and income generated by the project in Labrador. Most of these benefits will be concentrated in Nain. According to this same study, Upper Lake Melville will receive 27 percent of the economic activity, most of which will be felt in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Labrador West should receive about 24 percent of the projected activity (VBNC 1997b).

As part of Inco's ambitious plans to get Voisey's Bay into production by 1999, it had promised to build a new refinery in the province. In November of 1996, the company selected the site of the former United States Navy base at Argentia, Newfoundland as the site for a massive smelting and refining complex (Inco 1997:16). In the summer of 1997, however, the price of nickel plunged on the London stock exchange. When the deal to buy Voisey's Bay from Diamond Fields was finalized, the price of nickel was \$3.80 US per pound. By June of 1998, it had fallen below \$2 US dollars per pound. In October of 1999, it fell to its lowest level in eleven years, trading at just \$1.73 US per pound. Inco shut down most of its St. John's operation in February 2000, reducing its staff of twenty-three to three.

To make up for the huge expense that Inco had incurred to acquire the mineral rights to Voisey's Bay, the company decided to sharply scale down its original plans and back away from its widely publicized promise to build a smelter and refinery at Argentia. This about-face undermined the credibility of the company in the eyes of many people in the province. It was widely perceived as the latest in a long series of inequitable resource deals that had plagued the province since its entry into Confederation with Canada.

McNish notes that:

(A)fter more than 500 years of seeing outsiders reap most of the profits from its fishing, timber, mineral and hydroelectric resources, Inco became a lightning rod for Newfoundland frustration with the province's poor track record with resource deals. Inco believed it was adhering to a standard business protection practice when it inserted a clause allowing it to withdraw from the hydromet processing plant if it proved uneconomic or technologically unsuitable (McNish 2000).



In February of 1999, Newfoundland Premier Brian Tobin proclaimed:

Newfoundland is not a poor province. It is rich in resources, but we have been poor negotiators. Generation after generation has given away our wealth. To extract and process the metals, Inco needs a mining permit from Newfoundland. Newfoundland will not grant the permit unless Inco pledges, in writing, to build a smelter and refinery in the province to process the nickel (Globe and Mail 2000: A16).

Even in Labrador, where some residents believe the smelter *should* be located, I found support for Premier Tobin's stance that a smelter needed be constructed before a deal would be struck. One Happy Valley-Goose Bay town councilor told me:

Now two years ago, the Premier called us up, because Inco was putting on the table a proposal that didn't include smelting. All it included was for a seven-year operation and mining what they call the ovoid. We said "no." That's it, Inco wanted to do that, ship it to Ontario, Sudbury, right? ... Inco can go away ... the ore can stay in the ground, right? We said no smelter, no mine.

By February of 2000, the price of nickel had regained much of the ground it had lost in 1999. In light of this recovery, Inco offered to build a plant in Newfoundland to test a new production process called hydrometallurgy. To reassure prospective investors, Inco reserved the right to process some of the Voisey's Bay ore outside of the province. This provided them with some insurance in case the new process proved to be inefficient or too expensive. This was unacceptable in the eyes of the Premier. In a press release in January of 2000, Brian Tobin said that negotiations between the province and Inco had been suspended. Tobin insisted that the province required a commitment to *full* processing in the province, whether or not the hydrometallurgical process proved to be a success (NL 2000). Later that month, the VBNC announced it would be unable to start construction on the Project in 2000.

Public reaction, in the form of letters to local newspapers and responses to radio call-in programs revealed a great deal of support for Brian Tobin's stance. A St. John's radio station received hundreds of sympathetic e-mails and calls of support for Tobin's position on Voisey's Bay (McConnell 2000). Support also came from groups such as the St. John's Board of Trade, and even the leaders of the opposition parties.<sup>32</sup>

#### **3.1.4 The Clash Over Ownership**

One of the major effects of this delay was that it provided an opportunity for Innu and Inuit representatives to mount serious challenges over land ownership. Tensions between mining companies and Aboriginal peoples were evident from the early stages of the project, and have intensified over time. Initially, the mining companies paid little attention to Aboriginal concerns. Diamond Fields Incorporated went ahead with exploration and expansion of the camp without communicating their intentions to the neighbouring peoples. The provincial government was also guilty of paying insufficient attention to the situation of Aboriginal peoples in Labrador. The mineral rights granted to Diamond Fields and other companies during the exploration boom were located on tracts of land previously targeted for land claims negotiations. Had Diamond Fields researched

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<sup>32</sup> Tobin's position did face some criticism, however. In an interview with CBC radio in February, 2000, Fred Hall of the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation, complained that Torngat Services Incorporated, (a partner in a joint venture that had been running the Voisey's Bay exploration camp) had gone from a peak of 100 employees to a mere five (Hall 2000). Later that same week, Labrador Inuit Association mineral advisor, Chesley Andersen announced that the Voisey's Bay delay was a setback to his organization, and expressed concern that employment and other business opportunities would be missed due to the delay (Anderson 2000).

the situation in Labrador, it would have learned that Voisey's Bay was part of an area that both the Labrador Inuit Association and the Innu Nation had separately claimed. These claims had been accepted as a starting basis for negotiations with the federal and provincial governments. Both groups had claimed the area as part of their traditional land for decades, but after years of on-again, off-again talks, little progress had been made. It was not until the Voisey's Bay mineral discovery that resolving the land claims developed a sense of urgency. With the discovery of minerals, the claims process was made a priority for both the federal and provincial governments.

After an unsatisfactory meeting with Diamond Fields, Innu Nation president, Daniel Ashini and Davis Inlet Chief Tshakapesh met with dozens of townspeople to discuss the unwelcome encroachment by the miners and to decide on an appropriate course of action. The decision to act was made and, on February 5, 1995, representatives of the Innu Nation confronted the workers at the exploration site. They rode snowmobiles from Davis Inlet north to the Voisey's Bay exploration site, surrounded the camp, and began a tense standoff.

At the exploration camp the Innu protestors were met by ten RCMP officers from Happy Valley-Goose Bay who had apparently been "tipped off" about the protest by the people from the neighbouring Inuit community of Nain. Many Labrador Inuit Association members were infuriated that the Innu was seeking control of the disputed land. LIA leaders also feared that the rebellion would jeopardize their own land claim negotiations (McNish 1998).

The Innu served camp manager Mort Verbiski with an eviction notice, and began a 12-day standoff with the RCMP. Hostilities escalated when one hundred Innu tried to disrupt the drilling. The Innu sought to accomplish this feat by preventing fresh supplies from arriving at the camp. The RCMP responded by increasing their numbers to 57 officers. The result was \$15,000 worth of damage to equipment and building materials. Innu leader Peter Penashue eventually negotiated an end to the standoff. In spite of these events, the situation received scant media coverage.

In a meeting between the LIA, Innu Nation and Diamond Fields on February 17, 1995, the Innu Nation asked Diamond Fields to suspend drilling at Voisey's Bay for two months. They felt this was needed to provide time to research the environmental impact of the exploration work. LIA president William Barbour told Diamond Fields that the Inuit supported the two-month moratorium, but "unlike the Innu Nation, his group fundamentally favoured the exploration, under the appropriate environmental conditions" (McNish 1998: 164).

The Voisey's Bay Nickel Company pressed ahead with its plan to build an airstrip and a road as part of what they stated was necessary infrastructure for the mining exploration camp. This time, it was the Labrador Inuit Association leadership who decided to take action against the unauthorized construction at the mine. LIA representatives and members began an occupation of the Voisey's Bay site on August 20, 1997. Protestors arrived at the camp in a tug boat owned by the Labrador Inuit Development Corporation and pitched their tents in such a way as to block further

construction on the road (Lowe 1998:80). Shortly thereafter, Innu protestors arrived in support. Eventually more than two hundred Innu supporters, including entire families, occupied the site. By August 27, a provincial supreme court judge had granted the protestors their injunction and ordered a halt to all further construction at the camp, pending the outcome of a joint LIA-Innu Nation lawsuit.

Aside from the land claim processes, Inco has also been engaged in negotiations with the Innu Nation and LIA since 1996 to reach Impact and Benefit Agreements (IBAs)<sup>33</sup> to compensate them economically for the impact that the Voisey's Bay mine would have on their traditional lands. IBAs are extremely important to Aboriginal groups and communities because they outline such things as: the hiring of Aboriginal and local people, local purchasing agreements, training for the specialized employment, provisions for environmental safeguards and Aboriginal input into the project. IBAs are common practice in the resource sector.

Labrador's Aboriginal peoples are seeking what is, by past standards, an "unusually lucrative" settlement (McNish 1998: 326-7). Inco had offered a standard royalty structure, that would have amounted to 75 million dollars over the estimated 25-year lifespan of the mine. After considering the enormous price paid for the rights to

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<sup>33</sup> The purpose of these agreements is to "reduce adverse effects of a project and to provide benefits to Aboriginal peoples" (VBNC-EIS, 1997b). This agreement process has grown out of the Whitehorse Mining Initiative (1994) and has become an important process that Canadian mining companies follow when pursuing new mines in or near Aboriginal communities. These IBAs often include agreements concerning: environmental protection, job training and employment, workplace language, business partnerships and dispute resolution mechanisms. VBNC is pursuing separate IBA's with the LIA and the Innu Nation.

Voisey's Bay, however, the Innu and the Inuit decided to negotiate for a much larger amount. The Innu have been demanding at least 3 percent of net smelter royalties, which is the amount that Voisey's Bay co-discoverers Verbiski and Chislett had been promised as their discovery bonus. Innu leader Katie Rich has insisted that: "The Innu people will never accept an IBA if they think that the two guys that stumbled on the discovery could receive more royalties from the company than the people who actually own the land" (Lowe 1998:90). The Innu Nation issued a press release late in 1999 that reiterated its stance on the development of Voisey's Bay. It stated that Innu consent is required before any further development at Voisey's Bay may proceed (IN 1999d).

In the fall of 1997, the Labrador Inuit Association reached a framework with the provincial governments for a land claims Agreement in Principle (AIP). On July 26, 1999, the AIP, was ratified in a vote by members of the LIA. When interviewed in June 1999, however, LIA mineral rights advisor Chesley Andersen speculated that there was still a way to go before the land claim and the Impact and Benefit Agreement could be reached:

... if the Agreement in Principal is ratified by Inuit, the next step would be to look at land selection - where to put the boundary lines on the 28,000 square miles of Inuit land and where the 6,100 square miles would be located within that settlement area, then the Agreement in Principal is ratified in both the provincial and federal government systems. Once that step is out of the way, you move back into negotiation toward a final agreement, and for final agreement we still have a number of things to do. We haven't concluded the Voisey's Bay chapter, because we didn't know what the project was going to look like. Obviously we would like to see an Impact and Benefit Agreement in place before the project starts.

The lavish publications of the Voisey's Bay Nickel Company highlight the benefits that developments could bring to the communities in Labrador through the jobs and spin-off businesses that the mine is expected to stimulate. Many of the town officials and residents from Happy Valley-Goose Bay said that there have already been a number of positive changes that have resulted from the discovery of the deposit at Voisey's Bay. Some of the local people speak of the festival-like atmosphere that characterized the first month after the initial discovery. One local resident described it in this way:

I guess initially when Voisey's Bay was announced in 1993 there was nothing but a big scurry in town. I mean businesses popped up and people wanted commercial lots. It was really booming. There must have been over twenty exploration companies set up here.

In 1996, more than forty new businesses were established in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. According to the town manager, Al Durno, most of these were home-based or food service industries. Durno noted that the housing starts were up as well, in anticipation of a boom once construction activity starts at Voisey's Bay. Happy Valley-Goose Bay (like Labrador City) wants to be the bedroom community and a major procurement centre of the mine (Harnett 1997).

Happy Valley-Goose Bay hosted the first annual "Voisey's Bay and Beyond Trade Show and Conference (VBBC)" in 1995. According to the organizers, there were hundreds of delegates in attendance. During that first year, approximately one hundred and eighty businesses set up booths inside a local arena to display their goods and/or trades. By June of 1999, these numbers had dwindled to less than half of the original

amount. A local town official explained that, although some of this initial spark had died, a number of the early businesses continued to operate.

Although there was and still is a great deal of optimism about the mine, some of the residents of Central Labrador question the scale and the fast pace of economic expansion that has taken place to date. One area resident reflected on the positive effects of the Voisey's Bay to date, but also discussed some of her reservations about the project:

Same as with any increase in population you have ups and downs. When it comes to produce and groceries, it has expanded a little bit, but not a lot. But because they have to fly supplies up to the camps, the town has prospered that way. The down side is, with increased population, you get strangers coming into your area. It has increased some of the alcohol consumption. You hear it more. And that's the scary part of it. They don't, as of yet, have the social structures in place to deal with this kind of increase. It all made a big impact.

### **3.2 Hydroelectric Expansion on the Lower Churchill**

The initial Churchill River hydroelectric project is an infamous chapter in Newfoundland and Labrador's resource development history. The 5,225 megawatt (MW) hydroelectric generating station at Churchill Falls was completed in 1974. The damming of the Churchill River led to the creation of the Smallwood Reservoir, which flooded 6,527 square kilometers, making it the 10<sup>th</sup> largest lake in Canada.

The project was made possible by a contract which committed Newfoundland to sell almost all the electricity generated to Québec at 1960s prices over the 65-year life of the contract, with no allowance for inflation. Newfoundland committed to sell electricity to Québec at a fixed price of three-tenths of a cent per kilowatt hour until 2016, and then



at one-fifth of a cent until the year 2041. Energy prices rose dramatically during the energy crises of the early 1970s, allowing Hydro Québec to reap tremendous profits from the Churchill deal. Québec profits are estimated at \$600 million per year, which accounts for 96 percent of the total profits from the project. Newfoundland's lost revenues create tremendous bitterness in the province which continues to haunt current development proposals. The province of Newfoundland took Québec to court three times (unsuccessfully) to challenge the terms of the original project.

### **3.2.1 Making Churchill “Viable”**

The terms of the original Churchill agreement to sell power to Québec were so inequitable that the Churchill Falls (Labrador) Company (CF (L) Co.) would have been incurring losses by 2002, according to the Company literature (Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, 1999).<sup>34</sup> In order to make CF (L) Co. “financially viable” there has been a renegotiation of the Contract to allow for the resale of power to Hydro-Québec at current market values. An additional agreement, the Guaranteed Winter Availability Contract (GWAC), guarantees the availability of peak season power. This contract came into effect in November of 1998, and in the first season gave \$3.4 million in additional

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<sup>34</sup> Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is the parent company of Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation, the Lower Churchill Development Corporation Ltd (LCDC), the Gull Island Power Company Ltd, and Twin Falls Power Company. Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro is a crown corporation, owned by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. According to the CEO, this company supplies 70 percent of the population with electricity (Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro 2000). Formerly a development of BRINCO (British Newfoundland Corporation Limited), the Company was nationalized by the Moores administration in 1974 (Churchill 1997:34).

revenue to CF (L) Co., and is expected to provide as much as \$1 billion in addition revenues over the life of the contract (1998 to 2041).

There have been plans to expand hydroelectric generation on the ‘underdeveloped’ lower portion of the Churchill River since the late 1960s (FEARO 1980:6). Upon completion of the original Churchill Falls Project, BRINCO carried out feasibility studies on the expansion of hydroelectricity at the Gull Island and Muskrat Falls locations located further downstream. Further feasibility studies were undertaken on the Gull Island site in 1974. In 1976, these plans were abandoned, because of problems associated with the marketing of the energy that was to be produced. This made project financing unattainable. Four years later, plans for expansion resurfaced again, when the federal and provincial governments jointly funded a survey on the technical, financial, and environmental feasibility of the project. This survey investigated the possibility of the Gull Island and Muskrat Falls generation project as well as a transmission line to Newfoundland. Again the project was shelved due to energy marketing problems and other financial difficulties.

The most recent plans for hydroelectric expansion on the Lower Churchill River were unveiled in March of 1998, when the government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced that it had begun formal negotiations with Hydro Québec. These latest plans included a 2,264 megawatt generating station at Gull Island. The Gull Island power complex is to be located approximately 200 miles downstream from the existing Churchill Falls station, and about 322 kilometres from Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The

dam at Gull Island will be 100 metres high and 1.3 kilometres long, and will flood the river gorge between Gull Island and Churchill Falls. In addition, the generating capacity of the existing 11 generators at the Churchill Falls station will be increased to 80 percent capacity, up from their current 70 percent capacity. This will be increased by the partial diversion of the Romaine River into the Smallwood reservoir.

These expansions which be developed by a limited partnership formed by Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, which would own 65.8 percent and Hydro-Québec, which would own the remaining 34.2 percent. Then Premier Brian Tobin announced that Happy Valley-Goose Bay would have a major role to play in the development of the Gull Island expansion due to its close proximity to the project.

Both politicians and media outlets have cited Innu objections as a “stubborn issue” (Hilliard 2000) or the reason for delays on the project (Cahill 2001). However, in May of 2000, both Québec and Newfoundland agreed the project was on hold due to the deregulation of the United States energy markets and a shift toward short-term pricing agreements in the American market. This made it difficult to arrive at the long-term pricing agreements necessary for the financing of the development of the project (Whiffen 2000).

The proponents of expanding hydroelectricity generation in Labrador tend to describe hydroelectricity as a clean, renewable, and safe source of electricity. Some advocates, including provincial politicians, Happy Valley-Goose Bay town officials, and representatives of local businesses, have suggested that developing the Churchill would

assist Canada in honouring its commitment to the Kyoto Protocol on Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In signing the Kyoto Accord, Canada has committed to reducing carbon dioxide emissions by six percent of the 1990 levels by 2012. The Churchill project slated for Labrador could account for up to 15 percent of this required reduction. Provincial officials have suggested that it could represent Canada's "single, largest block of achievable greenhouse gas reductions" (NL 1998b).

The benefits of hydroelectricity are not without contention. Some analysts have pointed out that, depending on the type of emission trading system that is put into place, credit for the reduction could go to the US, where the power is being sold, and not to Canada (Pottinger 1998). Critics of hydroelectricity also point to the social and economic costs of relocating displaced peoples from their lands and have drawn attention to the loss of wildlife and habitat associated with flooding large tracts of land (McCully: 2000).<sup>35</sup> Hydroelectric reservoirs may also have other negative environmental effects including methyl mercury contamination in reservoirs and downstream rivers and in the fish that inhabit them. They also lead to a loss of wetlands and may contribute to the production of greenhouse gases through the decomposition of organic materials in inundated areas (Pottinger 1998).

The proposed hydroelectric expansions are on lands that were never ceded by the Innu. The Innu Nation has requested a moratorium on this project until their land claim

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<sup>35</sup> For a complete critique of dam building and the rise of the anti-dam movement worldwide see Patrick McCully's (2001) *Silenced Rivers: the ecology and politics of large dams*. McCully argues that dams are a major source of freshwater contamination and have caused at least 30 million people to be dislocated from their lands.

negotiations are resolved. The Innu Nation is also seeking restitution for their lost hunting grounds, burial sites and equipment and for the loss of valuable caribou and waterfowl habitat as a result of the creation of the initial Churchill Falls Dam. Daniel Ashini (vice-president of the Innu Nation in March of 1998) insisted that any future development proposals be based on the recognition of Innu rights and their meaningful participation in the negotiation process (Pomeroy 1998c).

When the Smallwood Reservoir was created in the early 1970s, many lakes were submerged in the flood. The Innu Nation lists the Innu place names of 16 lakes that were lost or absorbed into the reservoir now named for Joey Smallwood. They claim that this action “obliterated Innu geography both symbolically and physically” (IN 1999b, 2000). As well, some Innu spokespeople have publically mourned the loss of the majestic waterfall, Mihta-paushtik<sup>u</sup>, which was reduced to a trickle by the diversion into the Churchill powerhouse. In addition, Innu people have complained that the flooding has caused further erosion of their burial grounds and has, in some cases, uncovered the bones of their ancestors:

Ashini and Pokue decided to excavate the remainder of the skeletal remains and bury them further back from the shore so that they would not continue to wash onto the lake. It would appear that most of the cemetery had not yet disappeared into the lake. However, Ashini could not be sure of this because they did not wish to undertake any additional excavation of the site. Thus, there is a strong possibility that other skeletal remains are buried at the site and risk washing into the lake unless remedial measures are taken in the near future. Such measures would have to be taken under the direction of the Innu Nation (IN 2000).

The Innu of Québec and Labrador expect to lose additional land to flooding and through the granting of permits to sports camps, outfitters, and cabins on their territory. The project involves the construction of access roads and transmission corridors over huge areas, so it would also provide access to stands of timber south of the Churchill River that are currently inaccessible to commercial operations.

In 1999, the province and the Innu Nation announced the results of the 1998 archaeological study of the territory that would be flooded by the proposed Gull Island Dam. This survey found two long-lost trading posts, in addition to 20 pre-contact sites and 65 trappers tilts and Innu campsites (Bennett 1998:4). A St. John's newspaper reported on the finds and comments made by Innu Nation vice-president Daniel Ashini:

... Ashini said they are not yet prepared to endorse the hydro project development, but they are involved because they want to find out what impact the development will have on their land and their people. He said the Innu burial sites and historical sites are still being washed away by the Smallwood reservoir which flooded their lands for the Upper Churchill Hydro development. "We have to insure that these things are not repeated and that things are done better this time around" said Ashini, "People have to understand our home is not just a big empty wasteland" (Bennett 1998:4).

When Premier Tobin and Québec Premier Lucien Bouchard left the Churchill Falls airport en route to a press conference to announce the Project, approximately 150 Innu blocked the only road from the airport to the community. Earlier in the year, Innu Nation leaders tried to get a seat at the table to discuss the proposal with the two governments, but were rebuffed. Since the protest in March 1998, the Innu have been cautiously participating in preliminary environmental baseline studies and archaeological investigations. The Innu Nation's vice-president Daniel Ashini announced in November

of 1998 that their participation in the design and conduct of environmental baseline studies was strictly for the purpose of informing their communities and properly assessing the impacts. It was not a signal of consent for the project (IN 1998b). The Innu Nation's lawyer, Armand McKenzie, told a United Nations working group in Geneva:

We are not anti-development, but we demand respect for our territory, our way of life and our rights. [If] the project is viable and justified on both environmental and economic grounds, we are ready to negotiate with Québec and Labrador." (Clugston & Halley 1998).

An Innu Nation press release, issued by president Katie Rich on January 16, 1998, threatened the governments of Newfoundland and Québec, promising that the Innu Nation would take: "... whatever legal action necessary to prevent Newfoundland from entering into contracts regarding the Lower Churchill Hydro Development, unless the Innu choose to consent to the development." She added:

We were never consulted or even informed about what would happen to our land when Churchill Falls was built, and we have never been compensated for the damage that was done by the flooding ... We will not be bulldozed again. Any discussions about hydroelectric development in Innu territory must include the Innu. Newfoundland needs to recognize its responsibilities to the Innu and conclude a land rights agreement with the Innu Nation before trying to renegotiate terms with Hydro Québec, otherwise will have no choice but to seek justice in the courts. (IN 1999b).

The next chapter examines the discourses that were employed by local elites in support of the development of Voisey's Bay, the Lower Churchill, and other industrial projects in the region. It also looks at the strategies that were used by these individuals in an effort to marginalize the Innu Nation and others who were raising questions about the merits of moving ahead with these mega-projects.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Dialogues of Industrial Expansion**

One of the things that struck me most during the early stages of my fieldwork was the remarkable similarity of the sentiments advanced by local politicians and businesspeople in their endorsement of large-scale industrial development. This chapter examines the ways in which these pro-development advocates sought legitimacy for their positions, as Trigger argues:

Pro-development perspectives or environmentalist challenges to them may be embraced by citizens, either with deliberation and reflection about competing ideas, or because particular propositions are connected with some form of historically accepted and essentially unreflective commonsense (Trigger, 1996:59).

Examining the local pro-development lobby ethnographically, I have identified a number of key themes that development protagonists used to assert and maintain moral authority. These included: frequently using concepts of social evolution and progress, asserting the need for economic expansion and growth, devaluing the lifestyles of local Aboriginal peoples, linking the overall ‘well-being’ of the region to the expansion of capital and industry, and expropriating the sentiments of “pro-Labradorian” movements.

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one examines the evolutionary models presented by pro-development factions and the premises upon which these models were built. The second explores the tendencies of development protagonists to employ pro-Labradorian rhetoric in making appeals to local audiences.



#### **4.1 Regional Elites and Pro-development Discourses**

While carrying out interviews in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, I made a practice of concluding each session by asking the interviewee to provide suggestions about other people that I should speak to. In addition to generating a list of potential informants, this strategy illuminated some of the linkages between various groups and individuals. I was consistently steered toward a relatively small network of political and economic elites in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Often these individuals would know each other's phone numbers off-hand. Mapping out these relationships also helped me to recognize that there was a great deal of overlap in the membership of the various municipal decision making bodies in the region. These organizations included: the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Town Council, the Goose Bay Airport Commission, the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce, the Combined Councils of Labrador,<sup>36</sup> and the Central Labrador Economic Development Board. Historically, most of these organizations were dominated by non-native Labradorians, with many hailing from Newfoundland (Zimmerly 1991). Although more native-born Labradorians are now involved in these organizations, the majority of their members still come from outside of Labrador.

Previous researchers have also written about the pro-development protagonists who have influenced the course of industrialization in Labrador. J.D. House (1985)

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<sup>36</sup> The Combined Councils of Labrador is a lobby group consisting of representatives from most communities in Labrador. The group was formed in 1972 as the "Combined Community Councils of Labrador North," with a mandate to have a "stronger, more unified voice for Labrador's problems in isolated areas where the communities are hopelessly scattered" (Harnett, 1997:29).

examined the relationship between the social changes wrought by the proposed industrial developments of the day (hydroelectricity, uranium, and offshore petroleum) and the construction of ethnic identity in coastal and central Labrador. Conducting research between 1977 and 1979, House looked at three main proponents of development (federal and provincial governments and multinational companies). He characterized the pro-development lobby as primarily an *external* phenomenon, albeit one with provincial-level support. House argued that this period of rapid industrialization was a contributing factor in galvanizing 'Labradorian' regional identity, but maintained that the local politicians of Happy Valley-Goose Bay were wary of the ascendancy of regional Labradorian political movements. According to House, members of the local political and business elite:

... were pro-development and consistently favoured the political *status quo* to the prospect of a regional government which might undermine their position. Predominant among these groups have been the town administration, development association, and Chamber of Commerce of Happy Valley-Goose Bay ... There was a strong business-official class element to this way of thinking, but the division was not primarily one of class. The unemployed in Happy Valley -Goose Bay was also pro-development because they wanted jobs, and the regional-government movement has been perceived as holding much immediate promise for them (House 1985: 113, emphases in original).

Two decades later, these local pro-development lobbies remain apprehensive about regionally-based political organizations. They have, however, been successful in harnessing pro-Labradorian sentiments in making calls for greater regional involvement in economic development.

The pro-development contingent of Central Labrador is also congruent with those referred to by Armitage and Kennedy (1989:799) as the "military expansionists":

Our term ‘military expansionists’ includes both local business and political leaders as well as people not resident in the region who support military development. Military expansionists, particularly federal and provincial politicians, argue that military development is the panacea for a depressed region with a history of failed economic development. Militarization, they contend, will provide a sound economic base for other kinds of development in the area.

Armitage and Kennedy conclude that, from the outset, calls for military expansion exacerbated existing tensions over development goals in the area. These tensions continue into the present day. Now, organizations that were at the centre of the low-level flying and military expansion debates of the mid-1980s (the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce, Happy Valley-Goose Bay Town Council, and other development associations) have turned their attention to other potential industries, such as: the expansion of hydroelectricity generation on the Lower Churchill, the mining of the Voisey’s Bay mineral deposit, and the construction of the Trans-Labrador highway.

#### **4.2 Talking Development: Part I- The ‘Development Metaphor’**

... what’s my daughter going to do in twenty years if she wants to stay in Labrador? You know? The old way of life is not there anymore. So you’ve gotta have resource development, transportation connections, and this sort of thing. Lower Churchill has gotta happen, Voisey’s Bay has gotta happen, right?

The above quote is taken from Steve, a member of both the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Town Council and the Combined Councils of Labrador. Steve’s claim that the “old ways are gone” was repeated several times during our conversation. He repeatedly stressed that large-scale development was the only viable path forward. He also asserted that Labradorians are entering a new “progressive” stage of living, adding that people “don’t

have to live off the land” and that the ‘old ways’ are better left behind.<sup>37</sup> Steve believed that, if given the choice, earlier generations of Labradorians would have also preferred modern modes of living and working:

You trapped on the land because you were forced to feed your family and that was the only way to make an economic return right? They did it because they *had* to. *We* do it because we enjoy it. If I want something to eat, I go down to North Mart and buy something. They trapped because they had to get money to feed their family. If they didn’t trap, they starved. There was no work in them days. Economics are dictating that my children will have to work with some kind resource development in Labrador if they wants to stay here. If that’s what economics are dictating, we must develop!

Like the speaker above, many members of the pro-development lobby dismissed the hunting, trapping, and fishing economy as outdated and no longer able to viably support this or the next generation.

The rhetoric of political and business elites downplayed the importance of ‘traditional’ life and bestowed the virtues of future industrial developments. One prominent businesswoman said that the past should be acknowledged but should not stand in the way of industrial developments. She advocated the hiring of archaeologists to remove human remains and historic resources so as to clear the way for hydroelectric development on the Lower Churchill River:

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<sup>37</sup> Differing views on the subject will be discussed at length in Chapter Five. It should be noted that this attitude stands in opposition to the images depicted in local museums and lore that valorize the era of the independent fur trapper.

People say, “Well we shouldn’t flood the Lower Churchill because people trapped (there) and there’s dead people there,” but we can’t stop resource development because a man trapped up there and made his living there. It should all be documented. They should be identified, and it should be all documented and mapped out if graves are there. But to me ... if you gotta to flood it, you gotta flood it. You can’t stop the whole project, a billion-dollar project, because, you know, because twenty or thirty fellas trapped there.

Many of the informants framed discussions of development in terms of an evolutionary path leading to ever greater levels of progress. The idea expressed in the proceeding narrative is not new. The ideal of ‘progress,’ as characterized by increasing complexity, rational growth, and an improved quality of life, has been a pervasive force in Western civilization for three centuries (Long & Long 1992, Gardner & Lewis, 1996, Tucker 1999). In Labrador, as in other peripheral areas of the world, development and modernization have become synonymous with ‘progress.’ According to Esteva (1992), establishing the primacy of the economic sphere necessarily requires the devaluing<sup>38</sup> of older and/or incompatible modes of social life:

Establishing economic value requires the disvaluing of all other forms of social existence. Disvalue transmogrifies skills into lacks, commons into resources, men and women into commodified labour, tradition into burden, wisdom into ignorance, autonomy into dependance. It transmogrifies people’s autonomous activities embodying wants, skills and hopes and interactions with one another, and with the environment, into needs whose satisfaction requires mediation of the market ... (Esteva 1992:18).

Seizing the development metaphor, pro-industrialists have argued that, unless the development process goes ahead, the region will be “left behind,” or worse, “run over.”

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<sup>38</sup> For an excellent overview of the devaluation of Aboriginal hunting skills by the classification systems of government agencies see Crump (1988) and Brice-Bennett (1986).

Most local businesspeople that I spoke to said development is inevitable and discussed ways that they might optimize their benefits and opportunities in light of this fact:

... probably the major concern is how we as Labradorians are going to be able to *fit into* this big development and maximize our benefits. We've got a lot happening in Labrador. I just hope it doesn't happen so fast that we can't keep up to it.

In keeping with this evolutionary schema, other business owners and politicians asserted that they were waiting for the area to reach its "full potential," and were anxious that the slated mega-projects were advancing too slowly. Some business owners stated that they felt like they were in a state of "flux," and were very anxious to see their investments come to fruition:

We're waiting for Voisey's Bay to come on stream. We're waiting for the development of the Churchill River ... It's encouraging to see this kind of development. But it's frustrating too because, as much as we see it all coming, it's not here yet, you know? And that's what we're all waiting for-when is it actually going to come along?

Despite the frustration that was expressed about the slow pace of development, many development proponents exhibited a great deal of optimism about the future of the region.

Many townspeople shared the view that industrial development was an unavoidable, and ultimately, desirable process. This is evident in the passage below, taken from a local woman who expressed her frustration toward those who opposed further hydroelectric expansion:

... I hope they don't succeed in having this whole thing banned because we need the jobs right? I mean in this world everything changes. I'd love to be able to go back home (to the coast) and live at home, but I know that's a dream. It's not gonna happen unless I become rich. Maybe I'll get a (lotto) 6-49 and It'll be a good one! Everything changes, but you still have your beautiful memories.

Business owners employed this idea as well, stressing that the workforce needs to remain flexible in order to adapt to fluctuations in the local job market:

Change is constant in Goose Bay. When I came here in the late 70s everybody was saying that the base was going to die because the Americans pulled out in '74 and the Labrador Linerboard pulled out in '76. They didn't have much hope for the community, but it's built back up again. Everything comes in cycles ... Labrador needs a very *versatile* people.

This sentiment was echoed in the *Community Profile* posted on the town's web page. It proposes to offer prospective employers a "stable, *adaptable* and motivated workforce"(HV-GB 1999d, emphasis added).

#### **4.2.1 The Employment Spectre: Job Creation as Development Imperative**

Projects such as the Lower Churchill have the potential to generate hundreds of jobs in the region. Employment benefits from direct employment and spin-off businesses are usually presented by development advocates as the prime reason for moving ahead with industrial megaprojects. Often jobs created through the resource sector were spoken of in tandem, as illustrated by this town official, who named spin-off after spin-off in rapid fire succession:

... with the Upper Churchill, all that land (the Smallwood Reservoir) was flooded without extracting any wood. Today, under federal environmental rules, that is not allowed. That wood has got to be extracted and so that's another economic boost. Not only direct jobs in construction. There's a million cubic metres there! That's forty million dollars! That's a lot of local jobs- probably in the vicinity of a hundred or a hundred and fifty. Now also you talk about the saw-milling jobs that will come out of that, right? So there's another big whack of jobs! Then you got environmental monitoring that gotta go on with that- engineers have got to be hired to do operational plan. It's got to be monitored by foresters, another whack of jobs. Then, more roads have got to be built to extract that wood ...

As illustrated by the speakers above, development projects were often quantified by protagonists in terms of the profits generated, the production value or output, and the numbers of additional industries and/or jobs created.

The provincial government has been keeping a careful tally on the province-wide jobs and revenues generated by the planned mega-projects. When the Lower Churchill development was presented to participants in the 1999 VBBC, provincial representatives tantalized the audience by relaying current regional employment statistics immediately before telling them that they were already “accepting resumes” for future employment.

Minister Grimes proclaimed:

Since the project was announced in 1998, there have been significant pre-development activities for the project. We have an office in St. John’s that employs about 50 people. We have a satellite office here in Goose Bay. Last year we awarded more than 30 contracts worth about 13 million dollars in engineering and environment field studies. And more than 90 percent of those contracts were awarded to provincially based engineering and environmental firms. About 74 businesses in Goose Bay alone received spin-off benefits and that involved everyone from hotels, motels, B & B’s, restaurants, outfitters, transportation companies, gas companies and so on. And many Labradorians benefited from employment last year as a result of those contracts.

As elsewhere, the capacity for individuals to ‘earn a living,’ and ‘feed the family’ was highly valued in central Labrador. Many area residents were highly critical of actions by the government, protesters, environmentalists, striking workers or other organizations which they perceived as preventing them (or others) from finding employment. Robert Schneider found similar attitudes toward (particularly male) work roles on the South Coast of Labrador during the mid-1970s, where work was also a pervasive local dialogue:



It is a fundamental value that an individual's means of earning a livelihood should not be encroached upon. To do so is considered a violation of a person's integrity and security. In other words, to stand between an individual and his means of a livelihood is an act of "interference" (as it is commonly called) which constituted a threat subject to, ideally, some kind of retribution ( Schneider 1984:195-6).

Similarly, House's work shows that job creation was also a major local imperative two decades ago:

The province of Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the Western world, currently over 20 per cent, with some sources suggesting that the real rate is even higher ... In coastal Labrador, unemployment statistics, which assume national market categories, are difficult to interpret because of the continued importance of subsistence and nonmarket exchange activities. But there is little doubt that unemployment and underemployment are chronic problems in most communities. The town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay was particularly hard hit by economic recession in the 1970s ... It is hardly surprising then, that one of the most powerful and oft-repeated argument favouring industrial development is for the jobs it would create. Local people who favour development cite jobs and local business opportunities as their main strand to the industrialization argument, the one that carries the most weight at the local level. In light of the above discussions, it is clear that the pressures for the eventual development of coastal Labrador's natural resources will be all but irresistible, whatever local opinion might be (House 1985:108).

I found that local people continued to place a premium on jobs and job creation in 1999, despite the fact that unemployment rates in the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay had fallen since House carried out his research in the late 1970s.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> See Appendix IV for details on local employment statistics.

#### **4.2.2 ‘We Know Better Now’: the Belief That Technology Can Overcome Risks**

For some people, the importance of new employment was such that they tended to downplay the negative impacts of development projects. These people often expressed a belief that governments and industrialists (with the help of scientists) could manage and mitigate environmental risks. When asked about the environmental consequences of expanding the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project, one self-described Métis woman replied:

We have a lot of people who are afraid of the pollution in the river ... I'm not really into them much. I'm all for ... if they can develop something go to it, you know? If it's going to create work. But always keep in mind to keep things clean and keep health hazards eliminated, all those things. Because, I mean, who are we to say don't do this and don't do that. We still have to live. If you want to create work, that's fine. I don't think it's going to be a Hiroshima. I don't think anyone is going to come in and blow something off the face of the earth. I think we have learned our lesson ... I want to see people working. Everybody wants to work. There's a lot of welfare here in this town, and there's no need, you know?

This attitude contrasts with those who believe that the legacy of hydroelectric development on the Churchill illustrates just how destructive large-scale development can be. In spite of such criticism, proponents of hydroelectric expansion felt the environmental and social hazards associated with further developments were being overestimated. Some pointed to studies that were being done by environmental consulting firms as proof that wildlife populations and habitat were being sustainably managed. One town resident, speaking specifically about low-level flying, described the role of environmental studies in this way:

I think you always need little checkups now and then to make sure that hazardous materials are not being left but that's not something that you can't deal with, you know? Raise the issue and deal with it. But not wanting anyone to fly! Most people I hear screaming about that are people who have already made their living and retired anyway.

Several townspeople believed that, before any development would proceed, the appropriate checks, such as environmental laws and management regimes, would be in place to ensure that damage would be mitigated. Many expressed the view that history had taught them how *not* to do things in the future, and that they weren't going to make the same mistakes again.

#### **4.2.3 'The Frontier Ethos': Pride in Progress**

It is very apparent that Labrador is Canada's last frontier, and it is rich in natural resources that will be developed. The construction of the Trans-Canada Highway across Labrador, including the connecting links between Fremont and Baie Comeau, Québec, is a natural and logical progression in the opening of Canada's northeast (Brett, 1980:43).

Pro-development rhetoric often emphasizes the role played by industrial development in the history of the region. Many stress that the people of Labrador forged communities out the 'harsh, wilderness' and that liberation from this hard way of life was the direct result of modernization and development. These claims make the move toward developments appear to be a natural and inevitable transition.

Many of the panel members making presentations at the VBBC painted resource development as having great historical and social importance for Labrador, as well as for the rest of Canada. Dr. Derek Wilton of Memorial University reminded the audience that the Aboriginal people of Labrador were part of an ancient mining history, emphasizing

that Maritime Archaic people mined Ramah chert “some four thousand years ago,” and that the Inuit have a long history of mining soapstone.

Other proponents of development used the history of mining in Labrador West as an example of economic success in what was once an untamed frontier setting:

... The (ore) discovery was readily dismissed as being too lean and best left as a resource for our grandchildren to exploit. Those grandchildren arrived seven years later with the development of the Carol Project by the Iron Ore Company of Canada ... The construction of the town commenced in 1959 with the building of permanent bunkhouses, staff houses, cafeterias, row houses, and a communication system. These projects were particularly challenging given that, at the time, Carol Lake was totally disconnected from civilization by road and rail. The early camp site soon gave rise to other developments, schools, hospitals and recreational and shopping facilities to accommodate the influx of families. From Labrador’s rugged wilderness area a modern industrial town was born.<sup>40</sup>

In his study of the British Columbia logging industry, David Trigger examined the various ways in which countries such as Canada and Australia have commemorated participants in the ‘pioneer industries’ that helped to open the frontier and ‘settle the country’(1996). These discovery myths also loomed large in the imaginations of the present-day Labrador resource developers at the VBBC, who reminded their audiences that resource development was responsible for carving modern towns from the “harsh Labrador wilderness.” Trigger also examines ways in which pro-development ideologies find legitimacy by linking themselves to elements of Canadian national identity, particularly, the resource developments that have been central to the historical formation of this

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<sup>40</sup> The speaker here was Graham Letto, Chair of the Combined Councils of Labrador, Labrador City town councilor, and chair of the town’s Economic Development Committee.

identity, such as logging and mining.<sup>41</sup> In Labrador, efforts to link resources and identity can be recognized in comments such as those made by a representative of the lumber industry during an impassioned speech at the VBBC:

The Canadian federal government does not fully acknowledge that forestry is by far the country's most important industry. Part of the problem is the incorrect perception by some politicians and policy makers that forestry is a dying industry ... Because of that, they ignore us. This is an ignorant strategy. It's equally important to appreciate that Canadians enjoy, and you in *this* community know this as well as anybody, Canadians enjoy and will continue to enjoy a high standard of living because we cut down trees. We Canadians are hewers of wood. We mine metals and minerals. We produce massive quantities of oil, natural gas, coal, uranium and electricity (Diane Blenkhorn, Maritime Lumber Bureau, June 22, 1999).

This speaker sought to assert a fundamental link between forestry, and other resource developments, and "our" prosperity and well-being as Canadians. This link between "quality of life" and resource extraction was reinforced by the mining industry literature that was distributed to Conference participants:

Our country, Canada, is the best country in the world ... From sea to sea, opportunities exist for all citizens to share in this high quality of life because of the diverse fabric of the Canadian economy. One of the building stones for this economy is the mineral industry (McAlpine, 1999:6).

As Trigger observes, tying industry to national wealth and improvements in "well-being" is an important device used by pro-development factions:

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<sup>41</sup> In a related vein, Salisbury (1977:173) examines the notion of resource development as 'heroism,' using examples such as Robert Bourassa's referral to the James Bay hydroelectric project as the "triumphant conquest of northern Québec."

... just as many citizens know routinely about such celebratory discourses concerning history and identity ... they are likely to be disposed toward believing resource development to have generally been a good thing for Canada. This is particularly the case for those who understand their jobs and sense of personal identity to be related to the resource extraction enterprise. Pro-development sentiments among such people can thus achieve a degree of moral standing because the meanings of resource extraction enterprises are understood simply as making good “common sense” (1996:66).

Drawing upon examples from resource rich areas such as western Australia and western Canada, Trigger looks at the ideological elements which have, over time, become entrenched in development discourse. These include: the necessity of exploiting *all* available natural resources, and what he terms the ‘frontier ethos’:

Development ideology thus entails placing “a high premium in taming harsh, unsettled northern environments,” and on opening up a romanticized frontier through the introduction of large-scale and complex technology. Moreover, this is a process of social and cultural civilizing and a symbolic progress, apart from the economic achievements involved (Trigger 1996:59).

While the current importance of the ‘noble frontier epic’ is beginning to be downplayed by the current logging industry executives of British Columbia (Trigger 1996), such was not the case with the geologists, lumber industry promoters and other developers who made public presentations at the VBBC. Nor was it true of local industrial expansionists speaking in less formal venues. Trigger notes that this ideology has become less important in the last two decades in Australia, but still has far from disappeared from development debates in that country:

The theme that development of land and its resources is culturally essential, and coterminous with the pattern of historical striving that has produced the modern Australian identity, appears still quite central to the defence mounted against environmentalist and Aboriginal critiques. While pro-development ideology in Australia cannot be regarded as hegemonic in any sense of being reproduced without challenge, it should be recognized as appealing to, and often mobilizing, powerful symbols within the discourses by which many Australians understand their history and culture (Trigger 1996:59-60).

Like Trigger, I detected elements of these 'pride in progress' narratives at work in the pro-development statements of both industrialists hailing from outside the region and local development supporters. These historical epics valorize land developers, past and present, legitimize modern approaches to management, and to link resource exploitation to the well-being and identity of Labrador and its people.

#### **4.2.4. Striving for Economic Diversity**

Failed negotiations between the Public Service Alliance of Canada and the service delivery company, SERCo<sup>42</sup> of Britain resulted in a bitter six-week strike at Five Wing Goose Bay military base during the summer of 1999. Many people saw this dispute as proof that the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay needed to diversify its economic base in order to lessen its reliance on the base. As outlined in Chapter Two, this debate can be traced as least as far back as the mid-1960s. At the time, the American military was in the process of closing down its Goose Bay operations, thereby raising concerns about the need to diversify the local economy.

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<sup>42</sup> In 1998, the federal government, through the Alternative Service Delivery plan (ASD) contracted the management of the Five Wing Goose Bay to a private company, SERCo Facilities Management of Britain.

The need for economic expansion and diversification remains an important part of pro-development discourse in the present day. The promise that developments like Voisey's Bay, the Lower Churchill and the Trans-Labrador highway would deliver this expansion was frequently offered as the primary reason for moving ahead with them. This dialogue was a pervasive one in central Labrador, despite the fact that the area has already made a significant step toward diversification through its growing role as a regional government and service centre for communities along the north and south coasts. Evidence of this shift is reflected in current employment statistics for the town (see Appendix I). Nevertheless, several town and provincial officials stressed the high level of dependence that the region continued to have on the base. One local politician claimed to have inside knowledge about the economic importance of low level flying to the region and pointed to the strike as further proof of this dependence:

The average person-on-the-street doesn't know what I know. In my opinion, Happy Valley-Goose Bay is 75 percent dependent on low-level flying. If there was no base, there would be no town. There would be a town, but not as we know it. Most of the people would move out. Some people are going to stay here, no matter how bad a situation it is. They are not going. Some of them never went out and got a whole lot of training. They just want to stay in Labrador. So low-level flying is the bread basket of Happy Valley-Goose Bay and I think that showed when they were on strike up here. I think it really showed.

The six-week strike caused a great deal of anxiety for many local people, due to the financial strain and the heightened animosity that developed between striking workers and management. According to the Chamber of Commerce, many businesses claimed that



the shortened flying season and lost wages had hurt their businesses.<sup>43</sup> SERCo used the dependency imperative to its own ends by developing an ad campaign designed to gain support during the strike. It ran full page advertisements in the local newspaper that read as follows:

SERCo is the biggest employer in Goose Bay. When our company is not working it hurts everyone. The union decision to leave the table may permanently damage the Happy Valley-Goose Bay economy. The British, German, Dutch and French air forces may be forced to cancel low level flying scheduled for August, September and October if this strike does not end soon ... A strike mandate can only destroy confidence in Goose Bay as a base for low-level high performance jet training and will certainly undermine the efforts that the local community is making to encourage greater use of Goose Bay by new nations (SERCo, 1999a, 1999b).

In keeping with these imperatives, local officials stressed the importance of diversifying and expanding the local economy. One town councillor explained:

One of the biggest issues facing this town is economic diversity, right? Everybody knows this is a one industry town, meaning the base. It's time for the community to start diversifying into other things like the Lower Churchill, the completion of the Trans-Labrador highway ... I do like to see resource development. The base has got to diversify ... so does the whole community.

Town officials have several plans to achieve their goals of economic diversification and growth. The first is the promotion of Labrador as a staging ground for hydroelectric expansion and, especially, for Voisey's Bay. To this end, Happy Valley-Goose Bay is seeking to promote itself as a service and supply centre for the mine. The strongest competition for this position has come from Labrador City-Wabush in western Labrador. These two areas have both been extolling their strategic advantages in

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<sup>43</sup> According to *The Labradorian*, the local weekly paper, an informal survey conducted by the Labrador North Chamber of Commerce found that, of the 35 businesses surveyed, 80 percent indicated that they had seen a decrease in sales since the strike began (The Labradorian, 1999: A4).

promotional campaigns to attract mining related businesses and activities. The towns have been duelling with slogans as well. Happy Valley-Goose Bay has promoted itself as ‘the Gateway to Voisey’s Bay’ and encouraged businesses to ‘Explore the Opportunities,’ whereas Labrador West has opted for ‘Get Your Piece of the Pie’ and ‘We Know Mining.’<sup>44</sup>

Happy Valley-Goose Bay has also been moving to expand its services to further entrench its position as a regional service centre. Through the expansion of transportation to the coast, forestry, and other developments, the town is aiming to become the “hub of Labrador.” In addition to the promise of economic growth, there was also much excitement about the town’s population growth and the increased availability of goods and services that would accompany this growth:

Yes, it’s going to have an effect on Goose Bay because Lower Churchill is only 60 kilometres away from Goose Bay. They have already named Goose Bay as the service centre for the Lower Churchill. In the construction phase they’re talking about six thousand jobs. For seven years, them six thousand people have gots to live somewhere. So this town is gonna really grow. A very prosperous local businessman, I won’t say his name, believes that this community (Happy Valley-Goose Bay) will be a city one of these days. Hopefully you’ll come back in five years and talk to me and this community will have tripled in size.

#### **4.3 Talking Development: Part II- The Regional Dimension**

Conducting research on oil and mineral exploration in the 1970s, J.D. House (1985:107) examined the ideological imperatives that drove development in Labrador:

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<sup>44</sup> These ads were primarily appearing in publications such as *Newfoundland and Labrador Mineral Industry update*, *The Voisey’s Bay News*, and *Atlantic Business*.

The government's need for income in the short term, combined with its free enterprise ideology, ensures that the industrial development that will take place in Newfoundland and Labrador will be spearheaded by large corporations which operate out of central Canada, the United States, and Europe. This makes the Newfoundland government dependent upon these corporations, and it must bend to their priorities if industrial development is to take place.

These imperatives still apply in Newfoundland and Labrador. The government continues to balance the interests of investors against regional goals. This is made clear by the debates over Voisey's Bay outlined in the previous chapter. In central Labrador, local political and business elites help maintain this balance by using regional or local empowerment arguments in support of industrial development. To this end, they have succeeded in appropriating some key elements used in galvanizing a "Labradorian" identity, such as: the sense of alienation from the island of Newfoundland, the desire for local control and autonomy, pride in the abundance of natural resources in the region, the 'world-class' developments that have taken place to date, and the role the region plays (both now and possibly in the future) in contributing to provincial employment levels and revenues.

As outlined in Chapter Two, resource development issues became a rallying point for pro-Labradorian sentiments in the late 1960s. Over time, these sentiments grew, perceived 'failures' related to forestry, road construction, and other industries that would have brought greater economic stability to the region aroused anger and suspicion among local people. For example, during the 1980s, past development disappointments were used to support the need for military expansion in the region:

In 1976, the Americans abandoned their SAC (Strategic Air Command) operation in Goose Bay, and the closure of the Labrador Linerboard mill the same year resulted in the loss of 600 jobs. There were other economic development projects that failed, but of more interest here is the contemporary political use of the rhetoric of failed development to justify the current military expansion at Goose Bay. (Evening Telegram, May 30, 1986 in Armitage & Kennedy, 1989:802).

Current proponents of development often appeal to the region's sense of pride in its natural abundances. Labrador's 'wealth' in minerals, timber, and other resources are portrayed as the economic 'gift' of the region. A passage on the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay's web page echoes this sentiment: "Trophy sized fish, giant caribou herds, world-class wilderness country, vast hydro, mineral and timber resources, they are all standard fare here"(HV-GB, 1999d).

Another appeal that is made by development proponents is that large-scale development will allow the residents of the region to be self-supporting. Labrador, they contend, will be *essential* in its contributions to the provincial and national economy. Occasionally, arguments supporting industrial development emphasized that Labrador's resources are essential to ensuring the province's economic growth and combatting out-migration.<sup>45</sup> Local elites sometimes emphasized the economic plight of the province after the collapse of the cod fishery and argued that Labrador has a special role to play in the

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<sup>45</sup> According to the literature evaluating the federal government's programmes to counter the effects of the cod moratorium, (The Atlantic Groundfish Strategy), the fear of out-migration is well founded. According to one report released by Human Resource Development Canada, some rural, fisheries dependant areas experienced out-migration rates as high as 30 percent in the years of 1991 to 1996 (HRDC, 1998:10, 19). For population change information for central Labrador, and the province as a whole, see Appendix III.

economic recovery of the Province as a whole.<sup>46</sup> Many Labrador politicians spoke of the interests of the entire province, *even as they harnessed the rhetoric of pro-Labradorian movements*. In so doing, they masked the apparent divergences between these positions and presented them as though they were imminently reconcilable. Labrador City Councilor, Graham Letto, opened a speech on mineral development with an anecdote about the “geographic ignorance” endured by early Labrador residents at the hands of provincial officials, while, at the same time extolling the virtues of development because of the province-wide economic impact it would have:

The development of Labrador resources *holds the key* to continued economic growth and to ending the cycle of out-migration in this province. With development comes huge employment opportunities for skilled workers and a compounding effect of secondary processing ... Labrador West can proudly boast *we know mining*. We are extremely proud of our mining industry and the roots which have taken hold in Labrador, the land God gave to Cain.

His speech combined the popular local perception that Newfoundlanders were ignorant of Labrador’s geography with a slogan which arouses Labradorian indignation - “the land God gave to Cain.” Simultaneously, he emphasised provincial job imperatives as a primary reason to push ahead with development. In this way, he inspired pride in Labrador’s role as a province-wide contributor to economic growth and job creation.

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<sup>46</sup> The collapse of the cod fishery was used to illustrate a variety of different points. Some pointed to the collapse as a reason to push for greater industrial development and resource exploitation in order to solve the province’s economic woes. Others implied that the collapse gave reason to distrust government management, pressing instead for local control over the exploitation of natural resources.

#### 4.4 Constructing Barriers to Development

One area upon which development protagonists differed was in their views about Aboriginal land claims. Many told me that resolving land claims will bring “certainty” to the region and secure the path for future developments. Others worried that land claims will hinder resource development by handing control over to Aboriginal organizations.

There are also differences in the way that the position of the Innu Nation was constructed. Some emphasize that they were unrealistic traditionalists, clinging to outdated modes of life. Some said that the valorization of Innu traditions was a “ruse,” being used to gain the sympathy and support of outsiders. The common thread, of course, was that the Innu were repeatedly portrayed as an impediment to the development goals of the region. In an effort to dismiss the concerns of the Innu, many spoke about the superior numbers of non-Aboriginals living in the region, suggesting that it was unfair to compromise the interests of the many for those of the few. Many complained that they were being “held hostage” by Innu Nation demands for participation, recognition and land claims. Some argued that protests over low-level flying and hydroelectric expansion were merely a political manoeuvre designed to further their land claims aspirations:

**Rhonda:** Tell me about low-level flying, what was that like ... what happened?

**BA:** I’ve been involved right from the time when the Natives were on the runway. Well there was major protests by the Innu. They’d go up and they’d lean on the fences and knock the fences down and get out onto the runway to disrupt the flying. I think a lot of it was a means to an end, to be able to deal with government on the land claims issue ... Oh well (laughing), the local bingo parlours or the local churches would be hard pressed if the Innu didn’t frequent their bingos at night.

Some of the residents of Happy Valley-Goose Bay complained that the Innu Nation will continue to subvert development until their aim of settling land claims is achieved. This is consistent with the findings of Haycock (1971) who, in a content analysis of Canadian media over a seventy-year period, found that themes dealing with Canadian Aboriginals have shifted in recent years. Once portrayed as “poor doomed savages,” Aboriginal peoples are increasingly portrayed as “a discontented and exploited minority who will agitate until they get what they want” (Haycock 1971, quoted in Singer 1982:350-352).<sup>47</sup>

Others have espoused the opposite view, stating that the Innu were *not* genuinely interested in pursuing land claims. Consider this conversation with a displaced Newfoundlander who now runs a weekly paper:

**Rhonda:** How have land claim negotiations affected the area?

**DG:** Land claims are going well for the Inuit, the Innu’s claim is not ... personally I don’t think the Innu want a land claims deal.

Others expressed the belief that the Innu are against all development, because they want to maintain their traditional territories and simply “don’t care” about other people living in Labrador:

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<sup>47</sup> Singer’s (1982) review of research on Canadian media content finds that portrayals of minority groups centred on conflict, disruptions and crime. Generally, this pattern is true of Labrador, where media stories concerning the Innu are primarily centred on conflict and “social problems.”

Most of the people here in Happy Valley, and probably in other parts of the country as well including Newfoundland that they feel that the Innu are anti- development, you know? Take for example, the Trans-Labrador Highway. The Innu from Québec and Labrador ... seems like they're just anti-development. And they are not going to go away. They've got to be addressed but I think they got to cooperate a little bit more than what they're doing now, you know? We don't want to stop development. In fact, in fact in the end *they* probably won't stop any. As far as trying to negotiate, there are major problems. Major problems! They see it their way or the highway, and they don't really care!

Some expressed frustration with what they viewed as a shift in the balance of power toward the Innu and toward Aboriginal rights in general. Some were also concerned about the growing ability of the Innu to enlist financial "help" in the form of sympathetic outsiders and obtain outside expertise to help them to further their interests. Not only was there concern with the negotiating powers of the Innu, but also cynicism about the factuality about the claims they are making:

**KL:** I think that in 1999, the community of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has a very derogatory outlook on the Innu and their land claim. I think a lot of people, a lot of white settler people, believe that some of the statements made by the Innu people are not factual. And they shouldn't be given a hell of a lot more than what they have right now.

**Rhonda:** And you think that is fairly widespread?

**KL:** Yes I do, yes, I do.

There was also a clear sense that changes wrought by land claims would lead to a clear shift in power. Land rights constitute, in the eyes of this government employee quoted below, "a whole different ball game:"



Well, for example, the Inuit land claim now is agreed to in principle but it's not going to be officially voted on for two more years. That came in, so they have a right to certain monies from Inco right now. But, if there are further developments, say for example that there is another major discovery on their land claim, I don't think anybody knows down the road the implications. The same with the Innu. If a major discovery was discovered on one of their ceremonial burial grounds, you know? You could have a big mineral deposit sitting underneath the ground that can't be developed because the Innu would not allow that development to take place because it is on their sacred burial ground. So these things haven't been worked through and they won't be worked though. Not until the Innu have been pacified by, I suspect, remuneration. And not only money, but land. They want to govern themselves, same as the Inuit. It's a whole different ball game.

This chapter has focussed on the discourses that were evoked to legitimize the claims of the local political and business elite. It has also examined some of the municipal and regional power resources that these groups have available to them in their efforts to "naturalize" industrial development (Yanagisako & Delaney 1995).

Previous chapters have shown that, in the past, industrial mega-projects were often unilateral exercises undertaken by external developers. In recent years, a complex relationship has emerged between the external agents of development, power brokers or intermediaries, and local populations. The influence of pro-development intermediaries lies in their capacity to assert moral authority by drawing upon existing political themes and translating development schemes into local terms. As will be seen in the following chapter, these themes are not without opposition. Challenges to the moral authority and expert knowledge of these mediators were fairly widespread, and were sometimes successful in calling their visions of development into question.

## Chapter Five

### “Progress Is Not Always Beautiful”: Concerns About the Impact of Development

Innu philosopher and political activist Ben Michel, gave a poignant speech at the Voisey’s Bay and Beyond Conference in 1999. His impassioned call for critical reflection on the merits of “progress” provided a sharp contrast to the meticulous technical details given by the proponents of hydroelectric expansion, who spoke during the same session:

**Ben Michel:** Today it’s beautiful to have all the things that we do have, but in that progress do we ever sit down and say to ourselves “What does it do for us?” If I didn’t have a truck it would take me longer to get here, but while I’m walking here I’m helping my body. I’m developing my mind and my body and my soul. Expedience, a lot of times, took us in a very wrong direction. I guess the point I’m trying to make here is ... (*long pause*) progress is not always beautiful, especially if it’s used in the wrong way. When we have mega-projects like the Lower Churchill development, we have to be sure that whatever happens, it’s going to influence our lives in the present, and how much of that influence is going to change our culture in the future. Greed takes us somewhere else, or into the unknown, and I think that’s not where we want to be.

Michel’s words directly challenged the benefits of mechanization and industrialization.

During his speech, he read a passage from E.F. Schummacher’s influential book *Small is Beautiful* as a way of reminding the audience that projects such as the Lower Churchill “must satisfy criteria which are not purely economic,” because “we” will remain when those who have “time tables” are gone.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This was a reference to previous presenters at the conference, who had spoken about their short ‘window of opportunity’ to begin work in the area. His remark is significant considering that the Innu have already witnessed a mining project run its life-course before abandonment. The mining town of Schefferville, Québec, which lies within the Innu hunting territory, closed down in 1992. According to Tanner, the Innu “... were left in virtual sole occupation of a ghost town, surrounded by a landscape of abandoned open-pit mine craters, tailings heaps, garbage dumps, and polluted lakes and rivers” (2000: 78). The Innu Nation Task Force on Mining Activities (INTFMA) reports that: “There was considerable consensus ... regarding negative impacts that could be anticipated from mining activities in Nitassinan ...

(continued...)

Chapter Four showed that the development discourse deployed by political and economic elites in Central Labrador is primarily centred around economic concerns such as industrial expansion and job creation. As Ben Michel's comments make clear, this exclusive focus on economics can have the effect of obscuring other ways of understanding the changes that are taking place. Roy Rappaport explains this position as follows:

The criticism here is not of all uses of monetary metrics or all forms of economic analysis but of their privileged status. Economics undoubted analytic capacities would be less "useful" but more helpful if the discipline were not so influential that it leaves little room for other discourses. Its excessive empowerment makes it part of the problem rather than part of the cure (1993: 299).

The optimism that the pro-development faction expressed about the future of the region follows not only from being in a position to benefit economically from large-scale developments, but also from their positions as formal and informal representatives for the region. Their arguments in support of development were surprisingly coherent and unified, perhaps as a result of their clear vested interests in moving forward with these large-scale projects. This chapter seeks to uncover some of the other ways in which people in the region conceived of recent developments, paying particular attention to the varied ways in which individuals in less powerful positions engaged with and/or sought to counteract these dominant discourses. Speaking with individuals who were not cast as

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<sup>48</sup>(...continued)

Many had concerns that history would repeat itself. They spoke of the experience of the Innu with previous mega-projects on Innu land, how Innu land rights have been consistently ignored and how the Innu have been marginalised from any decision-making in these developments" (Innu Nation Task Force on Mining 1996: 20-23).

‘official’ spokespersons illustrated that ideas such as ‘local control’ are being borrowed back from local elites and used to provoke debates about what constitutes meaningful employment, what counts as acceptable ‘risks’ to the environment, and what factors, other than economic growth, need to be considered in making decisions about large-scale resource development projects.

Many people in the region seemed quite ambivalent about their future. Among the less-vocal majority I found an overarching sense of uncertainty and pessimism about the impending changes that were to result from large-scale development. Ambivalence about development took a number of forms and was a factor that appeared to unite, at least ideologically, people from a diverse array of political and ethnic affiliations. This chapter examines six of the most common concerns that were put forth as counterpoints to the dominant progress narrative. These included: concerns about the security of local employment, concerns that development would benefit outsiders more than “ordinary” Labradorians and would result in a loss of control, concerns about damage to the environment, concerns about the destruction to historical and cultural resources, concerns about the negative impacts of rapid social change, and concerns about the rising levels of tension and violence in the region.

The purpose of this chapter is not to set up a false dichotomy between the perspectives of local elites and those of all others in the region. On the contrary, elements of pro-development discourses were evident in the attitudes expressed by a wide variety of individuals who represented a wide range of social categories. Many of the voices

represented in this chapter belong to people who do favour *some* forms of industrial development. However, their less public positions provided them with much greater latitude to be critical of the changes that were taking place. It is this undercurrent of dissent that I wish to chronicle in subsequent sections.

### **5.1 Concerns About the Loss of Employment to Outsiders**

Conversations with Upper Lake Melville residents revealed that many felt that development would not necessarily translate into local, long-term and desirable forms of employment. Some were also concerned that their lack of specialized training would severely limit their capacity to take advantage of any newly created opportunities. There was widespread fear among area residents that employers might resort to using imported labour. Part of the indignation about the use of ‘outside’ workers stems from the belief that local workers are disadvantaged, due to unfair hiring practices and union policies that prohibit the use of local, non-unionized workers. In addition, many voiced concerns about the lack of local training facilities, such as this Métis woman, below :

Where can you go in Labrador to get experience? Where are you going to get the training? Labrador is a big country, but there are so few people. We’re tired of people coming in from outside and getting jobs that we can do.

Many recounted stories about previous instances in which specialized workers had been brought in from Newfoundland and elsewhere:

When the Labrador Linerboard started here, which was years ago, they (Newfoundlanders) came in like maggots the way they always do if there's any development. If you ever seen a codfish left on a beach and see the maggots there are just a wriggling mass. That's what popped into my mind, because they were everywhere. This is one of the things that concerns me. It's going to open Labrador up to big businesses on the island who are going to be after the timber and whatever other resources they can get. And then they don't want to hire Labradorians when they come in. Contractors will come in and it's virtually impossible for locals, Labradorians, to get jobs. One of the excuses is that they have to belong to the union so that's how they justify bringing in all the fellas and uncles. It's frustrating and it keeps adding fuel to this Newfoundland /Labrador ongoing battle.

Many interviewees stressed that this practice of bringing in non-local workers had been going on for quite some time:

There are Newfoundlanders who understand why we feel we have rights to jobs, but then you get that other group of them who go "We own Labrador, we have the right to go in there and take all we want. It belongs to all." Until that is resolved, there will never be any close feeling. ... I'm sure all of us, even those who say that they hate Newfoundlanders, have friends that are Newfoundlanders. If everyone could only understand that it's the government of Newfoundland who has created that attitude from the very beginning.

This quote also illustrates the resentment that many Labradorians feel about the idea that Labrador is 'owned' by Newfoundland.

Many local people saw themselves as longtime contributors to the local economy, and deeply resented it when they heard about newcomers finding employment quickly.

This concern surfaced at a local land claim meeting in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, when a man (who identified himself as being originally from Newfoundland) who was married to a member of the LIA rose to his feet and proclaimed:

It's time for the people here to stop thinking about themselves so much and think about the children and educate them. They can't fight for jobs (*starts to shout*) with the rest of Newfoundland. They all comes in takes the jobs ... Newfoundlanders comes in and takes the jobs away from the people here who can't get jobs. That's a known fact around here! Everybody in this town knows that! They're coming in and taking the jobs! They're going out with their stamps, laughing at Labrador! I was one that come here in 1975, and I stuck here and every cent I makes stays here!

Local employment has emerged as a key issue upon which critics of development have seized. There was a degree of skepticism about the duration and quality of the work that would be available. Some said that the employment generated by projects like Voisey's Bay and the Lower Churchill would have to be balanced against the long-term damage that these developments would cause the environment. A woman from Happy Valley-Goose Bay expressed her concerns as follows:

Be a good little boy. Be a good little girl. Be a good servant. And let them come and bulldoze your mountains flat, and take the ore out of them. If you're lucky enough, you might get job for eight or nine dollars an hour, seasonally.

Despite the optimism about job creation that was voiced by municipal and provincial officials, there was a great deal of scepticism expressed by Happy Valley-Goose Bay and area residents, who felt that job statistics compiled by government and industry were not completely accurate, such as this self-ascribed Métis woman:

Maybe some companies had some sales (from the Voisey's Bay exploration camp) but we were promised work. If you've got an opportunity, why not take Labrador people? Especially on the coast! They take a few (workers), but it's only on paper. The story that I have been told is that they take a few Native people up there and then they intimidate them so much that they quit and go home. But their names are still on the books. They can say "Oh yeah, we got our quota of Native people." They say things to them and just make life miserable. They say things like "You don't need this because you're LIA" and they mock them. Stuff like that.

In addition to accusations of having inflated statistics about the numbers of local people that were employed, other major problems, such as discrimination, have been identified by the Innu Nation. For example, an essay on the work experiences of a Sheshatshiu resident at the Voisey's Bay exploration camp in 1995 chronicles the treatment of Innu and Inuit workers at the camp (Nuna 1999). Aboriginal workers met on occasion to talk about their lack of promotions by comparison to their non-Aboriginal colleagues, about racist comments they had received, and about the mistreatment and harassment of wildlife at the site (Nuna 1999).

The employment rates are quite low in many parts of Labrador, and are especially low in some of the coastal communities (see Appendix IV and V). One Innu man spoke to me about the high rates of unemployment in Sheshatshiu:

As you know, our community is over a thousand people and probably 80 percent of the younger generation don't work. We want to be able, not only to just keep people working, but also to be trained. We want to be able to promote the education part which is really important too. Recently, there's been more people working, but I don't think the unemployment rate is solved just because there are some people working. There is a chronic problem that twelve hundred people share, and there's still a lot to be done.

According to the Innu Nation Task Force on Mining, a panel which sampled attitudes toward mining in the communities of Utshimassits and Sheshatshiu, found that employment was the most frequently cited benefit of mining development identified by residents of Utshimassits (78 percent ) and Sheshatshiu (58 percent ). According to the Task Force, many of these respondents were "cautious in their optimism" about the intentions of the VBNC to hire from Innu communities, the availability of jobs for



women, training availability and workplace safety, along with many other concerns (INTFMA 1996: 11, 39-48).

## **5.2 Concerns About Losing Control and Autonomy**

Another widely voiced concern was that, if they advanced too quickly, development projects were likely to benefit outsiders and leave area residents with only a marginal role in dictating the future of the region. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a widely shared sentiment that previous development projects have tended to benefit the island portion of the province at the expense of the interests of most people in Labrador, and many were adamant that this trend must not continue in the future.

Connections were often drawn between various contemporary development projects, including hydroelectric development, mineral extraction, road building and forestry. There was widespread concern that these resources would be pillaged in the same way that previous ones have been, leaving area residents with relatively little in return, since industrial projects, like the development of the Voisey's Bay deposit, involve vast capital outlays that forgo the possibility for local interests to control the development process.

Concerns about outsiders shaping the direction of the development process seemed to be particularly common in discussions about the construction of the Trans-Labrador Highway between Red Bay and Cartwright. One interviewee worried that the

people living on the coast were not ready to deal with the effects of road building and resource extraction:

This Trans-Labrador Highway in southern Labrador is built to take minerals and timber and pulp for St. John's and Corner Brook and Stephenville. I think people have a right to have a road, but I don't think the people are strong enough yet to protect themselves.

Many people claimed that the road was not being built for the convenience of people living on the Labrador coast.<sup>49</sup> Rather, it was seen as a vehicle for transporting timber and other resources out of Labrador.<sup>50</sup> One man expressed particular frustration about the impact on local forests that would be caused by road building, drawing an analogy with the prior devastation of the cod fishery along the Labrador Coast:

One of the things that created some animosity was the Grand Bank fishery off the island. They lost their fish approximately eight years ago. Now they have a moratorium on it. We lost our fish in 1968. We never heard of moratorium money or any kind of compensation until the Newfoundlanders lost their livelihoods. The first time that one of the old guys in Cartwright received a cheque was when they started passing them out ... He sent it back and said, "My fish have been gone since 1968, is there anything retroactive there?" "No." Our codfish were gone for 30 years. And lots of people didn't qualify.<sup>51</sup> (They were) refused the compensation by a government who took their codfish in the first place, right? That's the kind of kick in the teeth that you get sometimes with your resources. The same thing is now happening with the road. We don't think that the road is a way out for community people, I feel that it is a way in for the wood harvesters.

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<sup>49</sup> Kennedy's (2001) research on the South Coast of Labrador revealed that similar fears existed in that region about the probable relationship between road construction and timber extraction, even though Kennedy doubts that timber potential is as great as locals believe.

<sup>50</sup> It has long been noted that one of the major barriers to "industrial development" of the forests of Labrador is a lack of adequate transportation (Wilton 1970: 73-74).

<sup>51</sup> For more on attitudes and overview of the Labrador fishery see Jackson et al (1977).

Chris's comments also illustrate how different resource extraction industries are often spoken of together.

The deeply politicized nature of road construction in Labrador first became clear to me when I attended the Métis Salmon Gathering that took place in the town of North West River in July of 1999.<sup>52</sup> My time spent on the beach provided me with ample opportunity to talk with the participants about their views on past, present, and future developments:

**Man 1:** I'm pretty sure of the name they gonna put on that road: "Bowater Road," because all they're puttin' it there for is to cut logs for Bowater.

**Rhonda:** From Red Bay to Cartwright?

**Man 2:** Red Bay to Cartwright.

**Man 1:** There's people up around the coast there that wanted (to develop) sawmills but the Newfoundland government wouldn't let them. They were keeping them logs for Bowater.

**Woman 1:** Newfoundland businessmen living in Goose Bay. Same old story.

Another concern is that the people of Labrador will simply be 'employees' rather than business operators. Speaking again about the Trans-Labrador Highway, another LMN member stressed the importance of achieving local ownership and control over economic development in the region:

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<sup>52</sup> In June of 1998, the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) closed the commercial Atlantic salmon fishery in Labrador due to low stocks. This follows similar closures throughout Atlantic Canada. Following the declaration of the Labrador moratorium, the Labrador Métis Nation called for an illegal salmon food fishery in Williams Harbour, Port Hope Simpson and North West River, to press for their rights "as Aboriginal peoples" (The Examiner 1999c). The LMN has been in negotiations with DFO since August of 1999 for an Aboriginal food fishery. To date, however, there are no "Métis-specific" Agreements for fishing salmon (LMN 1999c, 2000).

It's not necessarily going to be bad thing. It's going to bring cheaper groceries and gas and things like that. It's going to help the communities and provide some work, but the thing is that the people have to be prepared for it. The Métis Nation should be preparing for that now, to make sure that we take the business. Not just the jobs. (We) don't want the fucking jobs any more. We want to own the businesses. I don't want to work for those guys, I want to own the God damn building, you know? This is our land and we should hire our own first, and if there's anything left, then that can go to whatever settlers want to live here. We should decide what the environmental laws are, not the St. John's Board of Trade's or the provincial government's bought and paid for Ministers and scientists. We should decide what quotas are for fish and forestry and things like that.

The Labrador Métis Nation press release echoed this sentiment:

We must be the decision-makers in our own territory. It is not good enough to have Métis people map river valleys that are going to be flooded in the name of corporate profits. It is not good enough to offer our people a few token manual jobs and then cut our homeland to ribbons by building a resource access road for multinational companies. (LMN 1999b).

A report for the Environmental Assessment hearing into the proposed Voisey's Bay Mine and Mill, which was commissioned by the Innu Nation and written by economist Thomas Green, also expressed concerns that the scale and pace at which development was taking place could preclude local people from playing an active role in shaping the process. Green summarizes his conclusions as follows:

By reducing the scale of the project and delaying start-up to provide an opportunity to build local capacity to participate in the project and to manage the changes induced by the project, prospects for local economic development are likely to be enhanced (Green 1999).

Many of the people who opposed rapid development were quite critical of local politicians and business owners for failing to uphold local interests. Fred, a resident of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, expressed his cynicism in this way:

Politicians are running around yapping about this and that, but really they're just making sure their buddies get the right contracts ... This is the way Labrador works today, and the way the Happy Valley Town Council works. Let's see how many of them are really in it for the people here, where so many are poor and needy.

Fred questioned the allegiances of the town council, noting that there was a great deal of cohesion between local politicians and local business elites. He told me that he felt that few genuinely deserving local people would be in a position to become business investors or owners, and expressed concern that positions of control and influence would continue to be dominated by outsiders who did not have the region's best interests at heart.

Some local residents mentioned that the control that these individuals wielded over funding obtained from St. John's and Ottawa made them highly susceptible to manipulation by federal and provincial interests. When I asked a Happy Valley-Goose Bay resident about the possibility of meaningful local participation in industrial development schemes, he replied:

I suppose there's always hope, you know? If the people ever got in charge of the (political) organizations. But as long as we have funding pots from St. John's and Ottawa, this kind of crap will keep going on. Consultants and advisers and lawyers coming in from somewhere else and fights over money ... I guess there's probably not much hope.

Prior to making this comment, he lamented the high degree of outside control, arguing that it has helped to create and maintain divisions between regionally-based groups, such as Aboriginal organizations.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the local pro-development faction has selectively borrowed some elements of regional pro-Labradorian stances in appealing to

local residents. This strategy has not gone unnoticed. Several Labrador activists were quite wary of these efforts. This became clear in my conversation with Jane:

**Rhonda:** Are you still involved in the Labrador Métis Nation?

**Jane:** Oh ya, I'm a member. I'll always be a supporter. Same as the United Labrador Movement, I'll always be a supporter of that. I'll always be a supporter of anything that's truly pro-Labrador but these Chamber of Commerce, Town Council kind of things carrying their little Labrador flag and wearing their little Labrador clothes at the grand opening of some bullshit, I'm not supportive of that.

Jane believed that organizations like the Labrador Métis Nation and the United Labrador Movement could be catalysts for change. In contrast, she viewed the Town Council and Chamber of Commerce as organizations that were seeking to uphold the status quo. She found it ironic that the members of these organizations embraced pan-Labradorian symbols such as the flag, while working against what she believed were the best interests of the region.

### **5.3 Concerns About Environmental Degradation**

In response to the faith that many pro-development advocates placed in the capacity of scientific assessments to mitigate environmental harms, some critics raised questions about the “expert” knowledge of biologists, foresters and other professionals. Several interviewees expressed skepticism about the hidden agendas of environmental consultants and academics, many of whom were in a position to profit from development, and emphasized the ties that existed between researchers, mining officials, the provincial government, and local business people. When one man was asked about those in favour of the development of the Lower Churchill River, he replied:

Generally speaking, I would imagine that the people here *do* support the Lower Churchill for economic reasons only, okay? They're not environmentalists that are supporting it. The business community is supporting it, because they're seeing the economic return at the end. These people aren't experts in biology or anything like that (laughs). They just know how to make a dollar, and that's all they seem to worry about.

In some situations, the knowledge base of the 'expert' was also called into question. For example, around the issue of forestry, several Happy Valley-Goose Bay residents claimed to have superior knowledge about the Labrador ecosystem, unlike "school" educated foresters working in the region.

The environmental advisor for the Innu Nation brought it to the attention of the assembled crowd at the Voisey's Bay and Beyond Conference that biologists and scientists were only *now* beginning to understand ecosystems in a holistic way. He argued that the overspecialization of academic disciplines often leads to an inability to see the interconnections between ecological processes. He claimed that he and other Innu people had always looked at the connectedness of various aspects of their environment, adding that:

... it's always good policy to leave alone what we do not understand. It's not only us humans who depend on forests. All life depends on it. We need to let things be and let the forest grow naturally. This is our approach, and we think it's a good policy. But in your society, you try to understand things more. The more you think you understand things, the more you try to take away the natural fibre of what makes up this world. How many mistakes have you made? You can continue with your sciences but, in the end, all the science in the world will not save you if you continue to take away what is there and what keeps us here. I know that everything depends on everything else ... Many scientists, forest ecologists, foresters, wildlife biologists and others have started to understand that you cannot understand the whole without understanding the parts. Similarly, you can't understand the part by understanding the whole (Larry Innes quoting Simon Michel, an Innu elder, Innes 1999a).

Critics of hydroelectric expansion and road building often drew upon past experiences in expressing caution about current proposals. As one resident of North West River explained:

Churchill Falls is not a new idea. The first part of it has already been done. We learned from that. A lot of lands were flooded, you know? Again, on the environmental side of things there were also the historical, traditional grave sites and things like that, that have been destroyed. People want to learn to have more of a say about it, to make sure that it won't happen again. The Upper Churchill created an economic boom for the province at the time, but the results are evident now - what we got out of it.

These critics don't have far to look for examples of the problems caused by the flooding created by the initial Churchill Falls hydroelectric project. Widespread erosion of the banks of the Churchill River stands as a testament to the environmental problems that dam building can create. People are keenly aware of the dangerous effects of flooding and increased mercury levels in the water that it may cause. The Churchill Falls project had a destabilizing effect on many tributaries and streams entering the river. This has led to chronic flooding problems for people living in Happy Valley, which is farther downstream. One man spoke to me at length about the negative environmental legacy left by the initial Churchill Falls project:

It's had a major impact on the environment, a negative impact. People fear, some people fear, that the new development will only compound that negative impact on the environment and ruin the river. The mercury levels are high in the river as it is now, and any increase will make it worse. I mean, where are we getting our water from downstream here? What about the fish that are in the rivers? What about the wildlife that is along the shores? Peregrine falcons that are nesting along those shores, they're an endangered species. So there's a lot of things that people see the negatives of.

Similar environmental concerns emerged in discussions about the development of Voisey's Bay. A survey of Innu communities found that serious concerns about the



environmental impacts of mining were nearly universal (92 percent in Utshimassits and 87 percent in Sheshatshiu). The primary concerns expressed about the proposed Voisey's Bay mine included: the loss of caribou migration grounds, waterfowl nesting areas, over hunting by non-Innu mine workers, and the development of sports fishing camps.

The Labrador Métis Nation has raised concerns about the environmental effects of building the Trans-Labrador Highway, with a particular emphasis on the destruction of fish habitat. One LMN press release argued that: "With no environmental assessment worthy of the name, the province is building a very long and very dirty logging road over the most pristine salmon habitat in the world ..." (LMN 2000).

The tradition of framing resource development debates in terms of environmental degradation was also explored in the work of Kennedy, who studied differences in community opposition to uranium mining near Makkovik. He found that:

Makkovik people oppose the development primarily because they fear possible contamination of the environment, specifically, they maintain that uranium tailing, to be stored and treated in several storage ponds near the mine sites, will eventually seep into rivers hosting salmon populations. Makkovik people believe that with proper management the traditional hunting and fishing economy remains viable. Finally, they are not convinced mining techniques have advanced considerably in the twenty years since extensive environmental damage began at Elliot Lake, Ontario. In the words of one Makkovik man, whose opinion accurately expresses the view of most Makkovik people, the Brinex mine(s) will be the "ruination of the country" (Kennedy 1978: 126).

Kennedy also noted that the people in Makkovik who were against the uranium mine also tended to be more aware of other ecological problems that have been caused by industrialization, both in Newfoundland and in the rest of Canada.

## 5.4 Concerns About the Destruction of Historical and Cultural Resources

... There are Innu concerns with the Churchill River power project. Not because we're afraid of development but because, like your houses, it is our home, And for every one of us, a home means security ...

One of the major concerns that was raised in discussions surrounding resource development was that major alterations to the physical landscape would lead to the destruction of critical symbols of local identity, including historical artifacts, sacred sites and abundant wildlife. These things were presented by many people as being vitally important in shaping who they were. Some spoke of them as "living resources" and resented the argument that they were merely relics of an outdated way of life. When I asked a woman from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to offer her thoughts about the possible effects of Voisey's Bay, she spoke primarily about the things she feared would be lost. In her opinion, these included hunting grounds and spiritual and recreational spaces:

... Land means much, much more than money or whatever. It's the very heart and soul of the Aboriginal groups. It's not only used for food purposes, but also for recreation and spiritual kinds of things. So it affects you in so many ways. You live on it. You look after it. One of the things people are really concerned about is the environment. The effects this will have on the environment for future generations. For the children, grandchildren who are coming along and it's very important that animals are not all killed out. The fear is that miners will come in and mines will be put in and then in 20 years it will be left in desolation.

She pointed out that land has an intrinsic value of its own, which has nothing to do with commodification, and that people have a duty to preserve the land so that it can continue to provide material and symbolic value to future generations. This provides an interesting contrast to the quote which opened the previous chapter from a man who spoke about the moral imperative to create jobs for future generations. Whereas the former speaker took

the primacy of wage labour and the need for industrial development as givens, the latter questioned the epistemological underpinnings of this perspective, suggesting that Aboriginal people have much to lose by abandoning their historic relationship to the land.

Even some relative newcomers to the area emphasized the value of protecting historically significant areas. This was evident in an interview conducted with a man, originally from the island of Newfoundland, who had become a vocal supporter of the Grand River Heritage Project:

A lot of people want to see that (Churchill River) maintained as a heritage river. There is a lot of heritage and history in this region based on trapping. They went back and forth up that river. That was their highway. There was no roads back then. They would go up the river and go to the height of land to trap and feed their families. They maintained that lifestyle for years and years.

Many Innu have expressed concerns about the traditional hunting grounds and ancestral burial sites that would be flooded by the expansion of hydroelectric generating capacity on the Lower Churchill. One Innu man from Sheshatshiu explained:

Well, one of the main concerns has to do with grave sites in that area. How much damage is going to be done here? How are we going to avoid it? The other thing is that, as you know, we (the Innu Nation) are in very active negotiations with the federal and provincial governments. I guess the concern is that, what's the point in negotiating that land claim when you guys already signed it? You know? It's not going to be a fair thing, because the government just said go ahead with anything they want, without even settling the land claims with the Innu.

## **5.5 Concerns About Rapid Social Change**

Another concern voiced was that certain segments of the population of Labrador were not prepared for the social upheaval that industrial development would bring. Often, people who espoused this view raised questions about the appropriate scale and pace of

development projects. For example, several people commented that they were glad that the initial flurry of activity surrounding the Voisey's Bay mineral deposit had quieted, because the area needed time to reflect on the impending changes:

Voisey's Bay is going to have a major impact on this community. As the largest service centre closest to the site, we'll probably be a bedroom community. A lot of people are wondering if we're going to be ready to meet the challenges. I think this delay that's taking place in the last year or two sort of helped us ... puts things in more perspective.

While the idea that negotiations were moving too quickly, or possibly 'moving in the wrong direction,' was a common theme for those wary of large-scale development, it was also not uncommon for some people to question the benefits of change in a general sense. The Innu man quoted below spoke about the effects that alcohol abuse has had in his home community of Sheshatshiu and expressed concerns about the rapid social changes that were taking place in the town:

Now I ask myself sometimes, 'what are the different changes that you go through?' You always question yourself. 'Are they for better or for worse?' I always come out saying that maybe they are for worse, because you see so many different changes in people, suicide and things. That's one of the things that scares me. It's coming into our community, like booze, you know? A week ago two people killed themselves. So these are changes that are not really good. Like when I was growing up, that there was so much love in the family. We shared with one another. Now these days with my younger kids ... they don't even care if I'm talking but I'm trying to stop them from doing things like that.

Both of these speakers questioned the notion that change is necessarily positive. It is also important to note that these two speakers both live in Innu communities, which have fared the least well in state-sponsored modernization programmes and have felt the negative effects of development most acutely (Sampson et al. 1999, Henriksen 1993).

Discussions about the negative social impacts of past developments served as a rhetorical resource that was often used by people to express their concerns about current proposals. For example, Sarah, an LIA member, discussed the planned expansion of the low-level flying program in Goose Bay in the context of the changes wrought by the initial arrival of the military in Labrador:

Well it's good and bad. I think that the [Happy] Valley depends on it. Happy Valley-Goose Bay depends on it very much as an industry. At one time, people used to talk about the effects of alcohol and all these kinds of things, you know? Alcohol and changes in the culture. Culture was the big thing, with the big American base over the years.

This statement demonstrates how issues as broad as the negative effects of alcohol and 'culture change' are often seen as being fundamentally tied to future development schemes. Sarah also spoke at some length about her fears surrounding the language loss that she thought was likely to occur as a consequence of the modernization process. She talked about the need to develop educational programs to instill pride in heritage as a way of combatting this erosion. Like Sarah, many residents of Upper Lake Melville, by virtue of their long residence in the area, were able to reflect in some detail on the negative consequences of previous development schemes.

A related concern was that resource development would create a situation in which local residents would be 'swamped' by outsiders, who would come to the region in pursuit of jobs. One woman explained:

I can't predict the future. I used to be pretty good at doing things like that ... but now I'm not sure. There are different scenarios, you know? I think that we're going to be swamped. We're swamped now with outsiders now and we're going to be flooded like we've never seen. I think that, maybe, the flooding will ruin us. Or maybe the flooding will make us say "we gotta do something." Maybe we can keep it from going that way.

Fear about the impact of rapid social change appears to have been a longstanding discourse in the region. The quote below is taken from a regional conference that took place more than twenty years ago:

Just as Labradorians are becoming involved in the development of their resources and in the management of their affairs, the global need and search for energy resources has come to Labrador. The question and challenge is whether or not all these new capital intensive activities will swamp the people of Labrador. The juxtaposition between local interests and global needs, traditional economies and modern industrial economies; the balance between local control and external demands— appear to be the paramount issues for Labrador in the 80s ... what will be lost and what will be gained? (Williamson 1980: ix).

Concerns about the influx of outsiders into the community seemed to be particularly common among women and especially Aboriginal women's organizations (INTFMA 1996; Tongamiut Inuit Ad Hoc Committee on Aboriginal Women and Mining in Labrador 1997; Archibald and Crnkovich 1999). Concerns specific to the influx of miners included: the lack of availability of affordable housing and increased incidences of racism, prostitution, sexual exploitation, sexually transmitted diseases, and alcohol abuse.<sup>53</sup> Many of these concerns stemmed from past experiences with large numbers of

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<sup>53</sup> This is by no means a comprehensive list. For more information on the concerns of women in Labrador as they relate to development and the inadequacy of the gender based analysis in the Voisey's Bay Environmental Impact Statement see: Labrador Native Women's Association et al. 1989; INTFMA 1996; Tongamiut Inuit Ad Hoc Committee on Aboriginal Women and Mining in Labrador 1997; Archibald and Crnkovich, 1999.

transient men who worked on the military base. In the words of one respondent to the Innu Nation's Task Force on Mining:

... it will bring in lots of alcohol and probably prostitution by young women will appear. As well, many young women will be discarded by white men as it now happens in Goose Bay. (Kathleen Benuen, Utshimassits INTFMA 1996: 58).

The town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay already serves as a recreation area for the military. It has a thriving club scene that caters to the military personnel. The town has more than a dozen bars that rely heavily on the patronage of Allied Forces. Some of these bars have sought to satisfy the tastes of foreign soldiers by playing German dance and European techno music. Furthermore, the managers of Maxwell's, a popular Happy Valley dance club, offered two free drinks to any women willing to patronize their establishment. This was, no doubt, an effort to procure female companionship for the predominately male soldiers.

### **5.6 Concerns About Rising Levels of Tension and Violence**

Another recurrent theme was the high degree of tension and uncertainty that had developed in the area, as a consequence of the stalled industrial mega-projects. Many local people who had initially invested in Voisey's Bay were growing frustrated because their investments had still not come to fruition. This initial optimism surrounding the Voisey's Bay discovery also simulated a mini housing-boom. Town officials informed me that the discovery of Voisey's Bay had sparked many people to 'make the jump' to home ownership. Many of these people intended to build spare rooms or apartments, with

the hope of renting them out to newcomers who found employment in the mine or in related industries. By the time I arrived in the region, this optimism had begun to turn increasingly to concern, as the local real estate market had declined significantly from its peak in the mid 1990s.

Many people emphasized the growing social unrest that was emerging out of this frustration. Women in particular expressed concern about the tension and violence (or potential for violence) in the workplace, home, and community that was resulting from these uncertainties.<sup>54</sup> Barbara, the Constituency Assistant for the local Member of the House of Assembly, told me that some people were growing increasingly agitated and that this was beginning to spill over into hostility and aggression:

I'm here in this office by myself ... A lot of times, when we have any kind of conflict going on within the community, it's very isolated here. I am, physically, one person in a building, one person all by myself. Diffusing people is not a problem. It's when they start making physical threats or calling me at home. That's when I worry. I know that a lot of the reason people explode is because they are afraid. They don't know what to do, they don't know where to go. They feel like they are on their last rope. I have no problem dealing with that, but when it comes down to physical confrontation, then I have a problem, I'm five foot two. What am I going to do?

She claimed that her office provided a focal point for people who wanted to take action against the government. This tension made her job extremely difficult at times. In the past, her office *had* become a site of conflict when there were political disputes in the community. Both the Member of the House of Assembly's office and the Member of Parliament's office were occupied during the union protest against the privatisation of

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<sup>54</sup> This gendered pattern of tension management resonates with the work of Neis (1991).



service delivery at Five Wing Goose Bay Air Base in 1999. Frances, the head of a local women's organization also talked a great deal about the level of 'tension' in the community. She believed that there were several different reasons for these feelings:

Privatization was supposed to stimulate the economy into diversifying itself. This was the hope, you know? The thing is that the base closure has been a threat in this community for a long time, it was: "when the 10 thousand Americans move out, what's going to happen to our town, you know? When the downsizing happened in 92, "what's going to happen to our town?" And when SERCo takes over, "what's going to happen to our town?" The threat has lost its power, because it has been overused. It's been so constant, a part of this place.

Many of the concerns presented in this chapter are not new to central Labrador. They seem to have existed for as long as large-scale development has been contemplated in the region. People have long asserted their own 'commonsense' outlooks on their future, some of which diverge significantly from the pro-development discourse. This process does not, however, imply a complete rejection or a passive acceptance of the views advanced by local elites. Rather, it is a complex negotiation of meaning. Certain elements of pro-development discourse have been widely accepted, even as others have been challenged.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> This corresponds closely with Charles Hale's (1994) conception of interrelation between hegemony and resistance.

## **Chapter Six Conclusion**

The idea of a shared Labradorian identity has always been closely linked to the history of resource development in the region. Given Labrador's vast geography and the varied cultural backgrounds of its residents, the success of regionalist political movements has always been closely linked to their ability to galvanize public sentiment against the exploitation of Labrador's resources by outsiders. The peak of regionalist politics in Labrador came in the late 1960s, when growing frustration over the prolonged neglect of the region by the Newfoundland government contributed to the rise of the New Labrador Party. The NLP was deeply critical of the government's tendency to allow Labrador's resources to be plundered by exogenous interests, with little benefit to local residents. They fought for better political representation for the people of Labrador, and for greater local control over the course of development. The NLP movement represented one of the first coordinated efforts to mobilize Labradorians around shared political goals.

Over the last decade, there has been renewed interest in developing Labrador's resources. The discovery of a large mineral deposit at Voisey's Bay and the most recent proposal to build a hydroelectric dam on the Lower Churchill River have the potential to generate enormous revenues for the province and create considerable employment. Accordingly, they have piqued the interest of people throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, where jobs continue to be at a premium. Nowhere has this excitement been more pronounced than in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The town is a bureaucratic and

commercial centre for Labrador, and many residents expect to reap financial rewards through the provision of labour and/or services to these new projects, if, or when they go ahead. The ongoing concern that the Five Wing Goose Bay air base might one day be unable to sustain its low level flying program and be forced to shut down only contributes to this thirst for new industries.

Not all are as optimistic about the changes that these developments will bring. Representatives of the Innu Nation have been quite vocal in their criticisms of these developments, and the dramatic social and environmental changes that they promise to bring. Innu spokespersons have underscored the considerable negative impacts that previous development projects, such as the initial Churchill Falls hydroelectric project, have had on their historic land use patterns on the wildlife and cultural symbols that have defined them as a people. The Innu Nation has organized several public protests and blockades to demonstrate their opposition to the ways in which development is being pursued and to demand greater input into these processes.

Furthermore, both the Innu Nation and the Labrador Inuit Association are engaged in ongoing land claims negotiations. Both groups have laid claim to the land surrounding Voisey's Bay, and the Lower Churchill dam would flood land that falls within the Innu Nation's claim. While the LIA claim appears to be nearing completion, the Innu Nation claim has considerable work left to be done.

The highly visible forms of resistance that Innu Nation members have employed has made them easy scapegoats for those wishing to move development ahead quickly.

Among these, some of the most vocal have been business owners, municipal politicians, and members of the Central Labrador Economic Development Board in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Analysis of the pro-development discourses put forth by these local elites has made up the core of this thesis. In seeking to discredit the Innu Nation, and other critics of development, these individuals have tended to emphasize a number of prominent themes. Firstly, they spoke of industrialization and modernization as an evolutionary process that was an essential and unavoidable part of the region's future. Associated with this claim was their dismissal of all resistance to development as romantic, backward or unrealistic. Secondly, they highlighted the role played by resource development in the history of the region. Many valorized the pioneer industries that were critical to the settlement of Labrador. In so doing, they sought to draw a natural connection between resource extraction and the cultural identity of Labrador residents. Thirdly, they regularly spoke about the jobs that would be created by these new projects. Some made explicit reference to projected employment statistics as a way of bolstering these claims. Fourthly, they stressed that thanks to rigorous scientific and environmental research, any potentially negative impacts of development would be avoided or, at the very least, mitigated. Fifthly, they emphasized that economic diversity was the only way to ensure the survival of the town, particularly in the event of a base closure, and stressed that resource development was the only way to bring this diversification process about. Most importantly, they appropriated some of the key sentiments of previous pro-Labrador movements, such as: the sense of alienation from the island of Newfoundland, the desire

for local control and autonomy, an emphasis on the abundant resources of the region, and pride in the positive role that the region can play in ensuring the financial stability of the province as a whole. They maintained that resource development would be in the best interests of all Labradorians, and were adamant that the concerns of a few critics should not stand in the way of positive social and economic change.

I have shown, however, that pro-development discourse is, by no means, passively accepted by all Central Labrador residents. Although many of the people that I spoke with agreed that industrial development was probably inevitable, a strong majority voiced one or more concerns about the possible negative impacts that this development could bring. Many questioned the benefits of mechanization and industrialization and stressed that the purely economic focus of most development proponents did not sufficiently consider the importance of other factors. Some continued to be deeply worried that development would not necessarily translate into desirable, long-term employment for people in the region. Secondly, many were concerned that, like their predecessors, these new projects were likely to benefit outsiders at the expense of local people. Some feared that people from outside of the region would continue to control the development process, and would reap most of the economic benefits that accrued from it. A number of people were concerned about the scale and the pace at which these projects were moving forward. Some worried that the flood of outsiders into the region would change their lives in negative ways. Many were also very concerned about the environmental impacts of Voisey's Bay and the Lower Churchill project. Several people expressed distrust

toward the scientists who were responsible for carrying out environmental studies in the region. There was frustration about the fact that local knowledge and expertise were being excluded from most environmental assessments, and concern that scientists were corrupted through their association with industry and government. Accompanying this concern was the fear that critical cultural resources would be destroyed by these projects, including historical artifacts, lands and wildlife. Finally, many were upset about the rising levels of violence and substance abuse in the town that had accompanied the growing interest in these developments.

The ubiquity of these concerns raises serious questions about the extent to which local elites in Happy Valley-Goose Bay do, in fact, speak on behalf of the majority of Labrador residents. This research suggests that their discussions about a shared Labradorian perspective that understands the need for modernization and development are, in large part, indicative of a political and economic opportunism. This rhetorical move serves to obscure the tremendous diversity of opinions that were expressed by people in Happy-Valley Goose Bay, instead presenting them as a unified front.

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## Appendices

## Appendix I Employment Profile of Happy Valley-Goose Bay

### Major Employers

The largest employer in the Town has traditionally been the Department of National Defence; in recent years, it employed around 21 percent of the total labour force. DND operations contributed an estimated \$77.4 million to the regional GDP in 1992 and an additional \$50.9 million to the provincial GDP.<sup>56</sup> This structure has changed with administration of CFB Goose Bay contracted out to a private company SERCo.

### Employment - Occupational Groupings and Sectors

The Census Canada data illustrated below gives the basic framework of the Happy Valley-Goose Bay labour force by occupational groupings and sector as recorded in the 1991 Census.

#### Selected Occupational Groupings, HV-GB, 1996

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
Services	24.9%	25.3%
Construction trades	16.5%	
Transport equipment occupations	9.9%	
Processing operations	0.7%	
Machining, product fabricating, assembling and repairing	8.1%	
Clerical & related occupations		36.7%

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**Source:** Census Canada, 1996

The high percentage of employment in Government and other service sectors reflects the Town's importance as a military base and regional administrative centre for the delivery of health care, education, utility and many other government services to central and coastal Labrador. There have been a number of changes in the economy of Happy Valley-Goose Bay since 1991, but few recent data are available to indicate the effects on the labour force.

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<sup>56</sup>Statistics Canada Input-Output model.

<b>Major Employers - Happy Valley-Goose Bay, 1992*</b>			
<b>Employer:</b>	<b>1986</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>% 1992 employees</b>
<b>Federal Government:</b>			
Department of National Defence	411	716	32.8%
Public Works Canada	310	3	0.1%
Transport Canada	143	25	1.1%
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	60	28	1.3%
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation	28	13	0.6%
Employment and Immigration Canada	23	25	1.1%
Supply and Services Canada	22	2	0.1%
Canada Post	20	14	0.6%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>826</b>	<b>37.8%</b>
<b>Provincial Government:</b>			
Labrador East School Board	225	119	5.4%
Grenfell Regional Health Services	147	168	7.7%
Other Provincial Departments	541	484	22.2%
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>943</b>	<b>771</b>	<b>35.3%</b>
<b>Municipal Government and Private sector:</b>			
Woodward's Group of Companies	120	178	8.1%
Labrador Lumber and Plywood	75	0	0%
Canadian Catering	50	53	2.4%
Newfoundland Telephone Company	45	25	1.1%
Hudson's Bay Company/ Northern	42	52	2.4%
Other Private:	205	280	12.9
<b>Subtotal:</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>26.9%</b>

\*Major employers are defined as those with twenty or more employees.

Source: VBNC, 1997b.

## **Appendix II**

### **The Prehistory of Labrador and the Central Region**

Historical and prehistoric resources have a threefold relevance to land-based debates in Labrador. Firstly, they contain the necessary 'proof' of occupation required in Aboriginal land claims (Tanner 2000:87). Secondly, they are valued as links to the past, and finally, they are used by regional development associations (and other officials and individuals) as potential mechanisms for generating economic activity through tourism (CLEDB 1999:4).

Labrador has a rich archaeological record. Human habitation of the region is believed to have commenced soon after the melting of the glaciers that once covered the region (Tuck 1976).<sup>57</sup> This warming trend, which occurred 10,000 to 12,000 years ago, brought the return of flora and fauna, and created an environment suitable for human habitation. Archaeologists believe that the first inhabitants of Labrador arrived from the southern Maritimes and the Gulf of St. Lawrence (Tuck, 1976). The first traces of human activity were found in the Strait of Belle Isle and date from around 9000 BP. These initial residents, known as Palaeo-Indians, did not appear to stay long and no evidence has been found to suggest that they travelled farther north.

Around 8500 BP, the Maritime Archaic tradition emerged (Tuck 1982). It persisted in Labrador for about five thousand years. Remnants of this tradition have been identified as far north as Ramah Bay in northeastern Labrador and as far south as the island of Newfoundland. This tradition is associated with long-distance trade networks, elaborate burial sites, large multi-family dwellings, and elaborate tool kits of bone, slate, wood and most characteristically, Ramah chert (Hood 1993 in VBNC 1997b).

Approximately 4,000 years ago, the Maritime Archaic people were met and gradually replaced by the first prehistoric Inuit-like people that archaeologists called Pre-Dorset or Palaeoeskimos.

The Pre-Dorset entered the region from the eastern Arctic and expanded as far south as Nain (Tuck 1976). The Pre-Dorset tradition was followed by the Intermediate Indians whose occupation spans from 3,500 to 2,000 BP. They are believed to have moved into the region from southern or western Québec. They spend most of the year inland, but travelled to the coast for periods of the summer to harvest marine resources (Fitzhugh 1972).

The Groswater Tradition appears next in Labrador prehistory. It spans from around 3,000 to 2,000 BP. Evidence of Groswater occupation can be found along the coast of Labrador along with one known site on the island of Newfoundland (Fitzhugh 1972). Their harvesting strategies were vastly different from those of the Intermediate

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<sup>57</sup> For a complete prehistory of Labrador, see Fitzhugh (1977, 1978); Loring (1985); Tuck (1976).

Indians. They focussed primarily on marine and coastal animals, with limited seasonal harvesting of interior resources.

The Late Pre-contact Indian phase in Labrador occurred between approximately 1,700 and 350 years ago. These peoples are believed to be either descendants of the previous Intermediate culture or possibly remnants of the Maritime Archaic Indians further south. The contemporary Innu are believed to be the direct descendants of these late pre-contact Indians.

The Dorset tradition (or late Palaeoeskimo), arrived from the eastern Arctic and were found in Labrador between about 2,500 to 500 BP. Like the Groswater tradition, they relied primarily on marine and coastal resources. Their sites can also be found along the entire coast of Labrador and parts of the island of Newfoundland.

The Thule tradition appeared roughly 700 years ago and occupied the north coast of Labrador, extending as far south as the Nain area. Thule people gradually migrated into Labrador from the eastern Arctic, presumably in pursuit of whales. They are the direct ancestors of the Québec and Labrador Inuit. The Thule are credited with the introduction of the husky dog, the kayak, umiak boats and the ulu, or women's knife, into the region.

The shores and tributaries around the present-day towns of North West River and Sheshatshiu are rich in wildlife and vegetation and have been attracting peoples for centuries. Hamilton Inlet shows signs of occupation from about 6,000 years ago, starting with the Maritime Archaic. The majority of archaeological sites in the region, however, belong to the Intermediate Indians and are found around the Sheshatshiu area. There are also a great number of Late or Recent Indian sites around Hamilton Inlet (Fitzhugh 1977, Mailhot 1997). The outer coast of the central region of Labrador exhibits signs of sixteen hundred years of occupation by Palaeoeskimos (Mailhot 1997:5).



**Appendix III**  
**Population Change:**  
**Upper Lake Melville, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1986-1996**

<b>Population Change:</b> <b>Upper Lake Melville, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1986-1996*</b>				
	1,986	1991	1996	% change, 1986-1996
<b>Happy Valley- Goose Bay</b>	7,248	8,610	8,655	19.4
<b>North West River</b>	526	528	567	7.8
<b>Sheshatshiu/Mud Lake</b>	716	912	1,018	42.2
<b>Upper Lake Melville</b>	8,490	10,050	10,240	20.6
<b>Labrador</b>	28, 741	30,375	29,190	1.6
<b>Newfoundland and Labrador</b>	56,8349	56,8474	55,1792	-2.9

**Source:** Statistics Canada 1987, 1992, 1997, VBNC 1997b.

**Appendix IV**  
**Unemployment rate, Mean Incomes, 1991, Upper Lake Melville, Labrador and**  
**Newfoundland and Labrador**

<b>Unemployment rate, mean incomes, 1991, Upper Lake Melville, Labrador and Newfoundland and Labrador</b>						
	Happy Valley - Goose Bay	North West River	Sheshatshiu/ Mud Lake	Upper Lake Melville	Labrador	Newfoundland and Labrador
<b>Participation Rates (%)</b>						
15-24 years	64.3	57.1	26.5	49.3	50.6	51.2
≥25 years	85.6	64.8	50.8	67.1	75.9	64.3
female (%)	72.2	53.7	36.7	54.2	60.4	53.7
male (%)	87.4	66.7	46.9	67	76.6	68.9
<b>Total (%)</b>	<b>79.8</b>	<b>61.6</b>	<b>42.9</b>	<b>61.4</b>	<b>68.8</b>	<b>61.3</b>
<b>Unemployment Rates (%)</b>						
15-25 years	24.8	-	44.4	23.1	36	38.2
≥ 25 years	14.1	15.2	24.2	17.8	19.2	25.3
female	18.6	13.6	27.8	20	26.9	27
male	14.6	20	34.8	23.1	19.7	28.4
<b>Total %</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>28.6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22.7</b>	<b>27.8</b>

Source: Statistics Canada 1992, 1997.

**Appendix V**  
**House Hold Income: Upper Lake Melville, Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990**

<b>House Hold Income: Upper Lake Melville, Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador, 1990</b>						
	<b>Happy Valley-Goose Bay</b>	<b>North West River</b>	<b>Sheshatshiu/Mud Lake</b>	<b>Upper Lake Melville</b>	<b>Labrador</b>	<b>Newfound &amp; Labrador</b>
Number of private Household	2,480	180	160	2,820	8,490	17,4495
<\$10,000,	170	10	35	215	515	16,695
\$10,000-\$19,000	135	40	40	215	765	30,190
\$20,000-\$29,000	240	35	30	305	890	28,355
\$30,000-\$39,000	370	20	15	405	1,100	27,645
\$40,000-\$49,000	440	15	15	470	1,190	22,030
≥\$50,000-	1,130	65	15	1,210	4,025	49,580
<b>Average Income (\$)</b>	<b>5,0614</b>	<b>41,029</b>	<b>26,438</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>50,317</b>	<b>39,861</b>
<b>Median Income (\$)</b>	<b>47,032</b>	<b>39,214</b>	<b>20,032</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>48,117</b>	<b>34,015</b>

**Source:** Statistics Canada 1988, 1994. n/a = data not available.

## **Appendix VI**

### **Time Line of Industrial Development in Labrador**

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- 1909- Attempts made to establish a pulp mill at Sandwich Bay.
- 1900-1925- Three major saw mills built in the Lake Melville region.
- 1941- Construction starts on the Goose Bay Airbase.
- 1951- Start of the railroad from Sept Iles to Schefferville
- 1953- A group of banking and industrial firms established the British Newfoundland Corporation Limited (BRINCO), which was granted exclusive mineral and water rights to 129, 450 square kilometres in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- 1954- Construction of the Québec Northshore and Labrador Railway (QNS&LR).
- 1954- The first power station in Labrador was build at Menihek Lake to service energy needs of the Iron Ore Company's Schefferville, Québec mine.
- 1957- A 170 kilometre road constructed from the railroad at Esker to the Hamilton (later Churchill) Falls.
- 1958- BRINCO established a subsidiary called the Hamilton Falls Power Corporation, later renamed Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation, for the purpose of developing the Hamilton (Churchill) Falls.
- 1958- Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC) begins the Carol Lake mining project. Wabush mines development begins.
- 1962- Twin Falls power development on the Unknown River completed, providing power for the IOC and Wabush mines, as well as for the communities of Labrador City and Wabush.
- 1962- Bowaters Newfoundland Ltd. started an operation to produce pulpwood for export at Port Hope Simpson. Hampered by lack of interested local workers (who relied on the fishery and social assistance) and the added costs of operating in an area with little infrastructure (roads and a medical station) operations ceased in 1967.

- 1966- (October 13) Churchill Falls (Labrador) Company and Hydro-Québec sign the deal to develop hydroelectric power on the Churchill River.
- 1967- (July 17) Construction started on the Churchill Falls Project.
- 1968- Cutting operations began in Upper Lake Melville to supply pulpwood for the Stephenville Linerboard mill.
- 1969- The contract to sell power is signed by Churchill Falls (Labrador) Ltd. and Hydro-Québec.
- 1970- The flooding of the Smallwood Reservoir begins. The first power is produced at Churchill Falls by the use of two of the eventual eleven turbines.
- 1971- A rough road started which would complete the final link in the roadway from Esker to Goose Bay, completed in 1972.
- 1974- The Churchill Falls generating station is complete.
- 1977- A study finds elevated levels of mercury in the bloodstream of Sheshatshiu residents. A provincial new release asks residents to limit their consumption of fish from the Smallwood Reservoir.
- 1990- The Labrador Inuit Development Corporation (LIDC) initiates operations of its anorthosite quarry at Ten Mile Bay in northern Labrador.
- 1991- The Innu nation announces intentions to seek compensation for damages inflicted to land and property caused by Churchill Falls. According to the Innu Nation, Canada and Newfoundland refuse to discuss compensation or consider interim protection against future hydroelectric developments.
- 1992- Innu residents of Sheshatshiu remove hydro metres from homes to protest the failure of the Newfoundland government to compensate the Innu people for the flooding caused by the Churchill Falls Project.
- 1993- The mineral discovery at Voisey's Bay is made by Archean Resources Ltd..
- 1996- Inco purchases the mineral deposit at Voisey's Bay.

- 1997- The Labrador Transportation Initiative is signed between the federal and provincial governments. This Agreement turns over \$340 million to the province to improve Labrador's infrastructure including \$150 to improve Coastal Labrador Marine Services.
- 1997- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Government of Canada, Government of Newfoundland, LIA and Innu Nation established a single, comprehensive environmental assessment review process for the Voisey's Bay nickel mine/mill and smelter project with a five member panel to conduct the review.
- 1997- The VBNC submits its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to the Panel.
- 1998- The five hundred kilometre road from Happy Valley-Goose Bay to Churchill Falls and Labrador City gets a 60 million dollar upgrade to allow year-round passage.
- 1998- (January 15, 1998) President of the Innu Nation, Katie Rich, writes to premiers Tobin and Bouchard concerning the Lower Churchill development. Rich advised the Premiers that Innu consent would be required for this development, and that the Innu must be included in any negotiations or discussions of the project.
- 1998- (January 27) Premier Tobin responds to President of the Innu Nation, denying that negotiations between Newfoundland and Québec are taking place.
- 1998- (February 18) The substance of an agreement between Newfoundland and Québec is reported on extensively in *Le Soleil* and *Le Devoir*.
- 1998- (March 9) Tobin and Bouchard announced a 'Framework Agreement' on the development of the Lower Churchill.
- 1999- Construction of the road from Red Bay to Cartwright begins which will connect most of the communities of the southeast coast.
- 1999- The Voisey's Bay Environmental Assessment Panel delivers its report. The Panel recommends that land claims with the Innu and Inuit be settled prior to the Project.

1999- The Newfoundland government maintained the position that full processing of nickel must occur within the province. Inco would not commit to full processing in the province in the event that the technology did not prove viable. Talks between Inco and the province were suspended in January of 2000.

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**Sources:** Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation 1974; Newfoundland & Labrador Royal Commission 1974, volume III; Voisey's Bay Nickel Company 1997b; McNish 1998; Archibald and Crnkovich 1999; Innu Nation 1999b; Government of Newfoundland and Labrador 1999; 2000, 2001









