

**National Project, Regional Perspective:
Newfoundland, Canada and Identities, 1949-1991**

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I dedicate my doctoral dissertation to my late grandfather, Frank Flynn.

My grandfather was enthusiastically supportive of my desire to be a historian. Sadly, he unexpectedly passed away only days before I received my first PhD acceptance offer. In the years since, I have often wished to be able to talk with him about Newfoundland history, my dissertation, and Irish whiskey preferences.

Abstract

The Canadian government has long striven for an official national identity grounded in a cohesive sense of national unity, but this has been in contrast to the regional reality of the Canadian state. The postwar period reveals increased concern within Canada regarding its national identity, when the federal government was attempting to construct an intrinsic identity and trying to encode what it meant to be Canadian. When Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, it became an additional element in this enduring struggle. After confederation, a cultural revival in the province further entrenched its distinct identity during the same period in which it was acclimatizing to a new Canadian reality.

The main goals of this research are to comprehend how Newfoundland understood official Canadian identity in its post-confederation period and how the province pursued a distinct identity while becoming a part of Canada. This project examines how Newfoundland understood official constructions of Canadian identity during the post-1949 period to observe how Canada's official national identity was understood outside of the dominant central-Canada perspective. This alternative regional perspective provides an understanding of how the realities of Canada's regionalism play a role in why the official national identity was not as homogenous or uniting as the federal government had idealized. By addressing the national question of Canadian identity through a regional Newfoundland perspective, this project seeks to deepen and expand our knowledge and understanding of modern Canada and its continued regional realities.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	v
Introduction: Canadian and Newfoundland Identities.....	1
Chapter 1: Confederation and Identity.....	42
Chapter 2: Canadian Culture, Commissions, and the Changing Official Canadian Identity.....	76
Chapter 3: The Shift from the Problem of National Identity to a Problem with National Unity.....	142
Chapter 4: Newfoundland's Identity in Canada, 1949-1990.....	182
Chapter 5: The Newfoundland Provincial Government: Culture, Nationalism, and Identity, 1949-1989.....	226
Chapter 6: From the Meech Lake Accord to Renewing and Strengthening Intrastate Relations: Newfoundland and Canada, 1987-2003.....	273
Conclusion: Re-engaging with Canada's 'Limited Identities'	319
Bibliography.....	336

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Introduction: Canadian and Newfoundland Identities

I hear of Canadians looking for an identity. To me that's funny.

Newfoundlanders have one.¹

In the summer of 1978, an unidentified interviewee from Newfoundland described the relationship between the state of national identity in Canada and Newfoundland. In a report submitted to the federal Task Force on Canadian Unity, the interviewed individual emphasized that Newfoundlanders have a solid sense of self in terms of their cultural identity. Even with three decades of Canadian-born citizens, residents still readily identified as Newfoundlanders (or Labradorians) before identifying as Canadians; the explanation was two-fold. Firstly, Newfoundlanders had a defined, regionalized identity within Canada, which permits ease of recognizable cultural identification. Secondly, Canadian identity was, in comparison, not as clearly articulated; it lacked the uniting essence typical of a national identity. This is demonstrated in the interviewee's statement that Newfoundlanders had an identity while Canadians were searching for one. While Canadians are often content and even proud to be Canadian, what it means to be Canadian is not unanimous throughout the country. In contrast, regional identities largely flourish within Canada. This contrast, combined with my interest in the formation of official Canadian national identity and the resilience of Newfoundland identity since its union with Canada, ultimately led to this research project investigating the relationship between these developments.

¹ A Statement from an unidentified interviewee from Newfoundland conducted during the summer of 1978 for a report submitted to the Task Force on Canadian Unity. G.A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation: Report to the Task Force on Canadian Unity*, (St. John's, NL: Breakwater, 1979), 375.

Prior to confederation with Canada, Newfoundland (like Canada) was an autonomous state within the British Empire, complete with its own passports, currency, and Prime Ministers. Many scholars agree that Newfoundland has since kept its own separate cultural identity, with an established cultural nationalism, and a small but dedicated few who romanticize notions of separatism, like Québec, though Newfoundland has never come close to separation.²

Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949, at the onset of a period when public concern was pushing governments in countries like Canada to take action, and adopt new perspectives, on humanitarian and civil rights issues. At this time, new perspectives on national identity caused questioning of Canada's official identity, which led the federal government to begin a period of introspection on the matter followed by a series of attempts at constructing an intrinsic Canadian identity. How did Newfoundland understand Canadian identity, the identity of the country it was joining, during this period? How and why did Newfoundland pursue a distinct identity within Canada? What do these understandings demonstrate in terms of Canada's struggle for identity?

Canadian historians such as Bryan Palmer have argued that in the postwar period Canada was lacking an identity. Scholars such as Robert Thomsen have insisted that Newfoundland is distinct within Canada, to the point of arguing that the province is a stateless nation. Yet, Newfoundland and Canadian historical

² Note that I am using "Newfoundland" as opposed to "Newfoundland and Labrador" throughout this project. The province's official name was "Newfoundland" until December 2001 when an amendment was made in the Canadian Constitution to officially change the provincial name to "Newfoundland and Labrador." Given that the period of this project is before 2001, the name Newfoundland will be used exclusively.

narratives are divergent. Newfoundland's place within the Canadian historical narrative is seen an addition, an added chapter to the Canadian history text with its confederation understood as inevitable in the Whiggish tradition of colony-to-nation historical narrative.³

I am not satisfied with the established view of Canada lacking an identity in the postwar period, given that the federal government especially focused on Canadian identity at this time. However, the federal government's focus on Canadian identity and their attempts to formulate an intrinsic, uniting identity never worked as intended, which caused me to question why this was the case. The historical narrative of Canadian identity was written overwhelmingly from a central Canadian perspective, which led me to consider that this may be a reason why the narrative was not offering enough explanation. As this was the same period that Newfoundland became part of Canada, I considered that addressing this national matter from the perspective of the newest province could provide increased understanding. Concerning Newfoundland's historical writing, I noted not only divergence between Newfoundland and Canadian narratives, but also the separation of social-cultural and political narratives within Newfoundland's historiography. Identifying links between the spheres within Newfoundland's historical writing, as well as connecting Canadian and Newfoundland historical narratives, could provide a more robust understanding of the history of both Newfoundland and Canada.

³ Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Robert C. Thomsen, *Nationalism in Stateless Nations: Images of Self and Other in Scotland and Newfoundland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010); Donald Creighton, *The Forked Road: Canada 1939-1957*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).

In the late 1960s, historians Ramsay Cook and J.M.S. Careless advanced the concept of 'limited identities,' whereby a host of smaller identities based along regional, class, and racial lines composed the overall Canadian identity.⁴ A lively debate about this perspective played out not only among academics but also in the larger Canadian society. The enduring relevance of this long-standing academic and sociological debate needs reinvigoration from a perspective and research strategy that examines the official Canadian identity in the later twentieth century. The case of Newfoundland, during its initial decades of confederation, offers a unique opportunity for such reinvigoration.

While different people may conceive of what it is to be Canadian differently at a particular moment in time, the general ideas about the basis of different imagined groups, such as cultural symbols and rituals, are more long-lasting. Yet, in the decades after the Second World War, even these general ideas were up for debate in Canada given the transnational and geopolitical changes that occurred, specifically the decline of Anglo-conformity and the concurrent rise of multiculturalism. This period witnessed a weakening of British power and saw Canadians "forging a new national identity of their own;" the flag debate and other changes to the symbolic order of Canada are indicative of this forage into an intrinsic "Canadianism." The often contentious battle between "Britishness," "Canadianness," and "Americanness" heightened during this period and the fear of Americanization was a key factor in Canada holding onto their formal and

⁴ Ramsay Cook, "Canadian Centennial Celebrations," *International Journal* vol. 23, no. 4 (1967): 659-663 and J.M.S. Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 50, no. 1 (1969): 1-9.

informal British connections during the mid-twentieth century, often using it as a stopgap measure against an increasingly influential American “pop culture.”⁵

In the 1960s, Canada’s national identity, official and otherwise, was of interest to academics, as well as the wider public, and consequently was a primary concern for the federal government who claimed Canada was experiencing an “identity crisis” during the decade. While many groups and individuals within the nation were immersed in a period of questioning their identities during the sixties, the federal government, academics (and other cultural producers), and the general citizenry were questioning the identity of the nation as well; questioning what made the Canadian nation and what the official identity of both English and French Canada should be. The idea of grounding Canada’s official identity in the dual English and French linguistic and cultural traditions of Canada was in direct response to the Quiet Revolutions that took place in both French and English Canada in the early 1960s. This was an attempt to enhance a quasi-unity between the two most prominent linguistic and cultural nations seen to comprise Canada.⁶ A leading component of the binational idea was the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission), a federal government-orchestrated attempt at producing a cohesive national identity for Canada. Linguistic rights were central in this commission, as well as the events that took

⁵ Harold Troper, “An Uncertain Past: Reflections on the History of Multiculturalism,” *TESL Talk* vol. 1, no. 3 (1979), 10; Philip Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 32; Paul Rutherford, “The Persistence of Britain: the Culture Project in Postwar Canada,” in *Canada and the End of Empire*, edited by Phillip Buckner, 195-205, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005) and Allan Smith, “From Guthrie to Greenburg: Canadian High Culture and the End of Empire,” in *Canada and the End of Empire*, edited by Phillip Buckner, 206-215, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

⁶ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965.

place in its aftermath, such as a federal and provincial government initiative to establish linguistic equality between English and French in the late 1960s. However, this initiative faced considerable opposition in some regions, especially western Canada.⁷

While this situation unfolded nation-wide, in Newfoundland in particular a different set of circumstances were developing. In the new province's earliest decades as part of Canada, it set out to modernize and bring itself up to Canadian national standards. Yet, in response to this, Newfoundlanders (and those studying them) sought to safeguard their cultural identity and uniqueness within Canada. What is known as the cultural revival began in Newfoundland in the mid-1960s, while the ardent program of Newfoundland Studies began earlier in the 1950s. These two elements in Newfoundland society affected their perceptions of the nation-wide identity and unity crises that plagued the post-1949 period in Canada, while further entrenching Newfoundlanders' sense of self.

In the postwar era, the official Canadian identity moved from a predominant idea of "Britishness" to a series of attempted constructions of an organic Canadian identity – from biculturalism, to multiculturalism, and "pan-Canadianism" – orchestrated by the federal government due to its desire for increased national unity predicated on a singular and cohesive national identity. This evolution of unifying federal-government-based constructions of official national identity is in contrast with the fragmented reality of Canadian identity

⁷ Matthew Hayday, "Reconciling the Two Solitudes?: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada from the Quiet Revolution to the Victoria Charter," in *Debating Dissent: Canada and the 1960s*, edited by Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Greg Kealey, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

largely based in its regionalism, as illustrated in the scholarly work from the period and in the views of Canadians at that time. These attempted constructions of official national identity were from the central Canadian (and federal government) perspective and the regional realities of the Canadian nation can help explain why these official constructions did not provide a cohesive and unifying nation-wide identity. The 'limited identities' debate played out in the context of this divide between 'official' and 'authentic' Canadian identities; the juxtaposition of the Canadian government (state) with the Canadian citizenry (nation) in terms of how each understood Canadian identity.⁸

Establishing an understanding of how reflective these predominately central Canadian perspectives were of Canadian society requires analysis from a different perspective. Utilizing the perspective of a different region would provide evidence of how those outside the metropole understood Canadian identity, thereby establishing a more thorough understanding of Canada's identity in the period. Better yet, employing a Newfoundland perspective, a region that joined Canada at this time, not only provides a better understanding of official Canadian identity throughout the period but also evidence of an adoption process of such an identity, while allowing for the pervasiveness of a regional identity.

If the official Canadian identity can be adopted alongside various regional (and/or cultural) identities, this then would provide evidence for the effectiveness of the 'limited identities' approach in understanding Canadian identity. The

⁸ See Shannon Conway, "From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s," *Études canadiennes/Canadian Studies* no. 84 (2018): 9-30. For discussion of Canadian identity in the early 20th century see Shannon Conway, "George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s," *Manitoba History* no. 86 (Spring 2018): 12-22.

official national identity need not replace the regional (and/or cultural) identities; they can work in tandem. The present-day issues of identity and adapting to larger geopolitical structures can be examined through this subject matter and this particularly underutilized perspective and course of events in the region, which have been under-analyzed in terms of the official national identity. Taking a different regional approach to the question of national identity permits a more nuanced way of understanding the official Canadian identity and its ambiguous nature, and possibly even provide a better understanding of this recurrent issue in the history of the Canadian state. It has been 153 years since the first iteration of Canadian confederation, with the majority of its provinces and territories having joined in the time since; it is time for a better understanding of various regional (and cultural) influences on the development and reception of Canada's official identity.

Concepts

The *official* national identity of Canada is the identity sanctioned and promoted by federal politicians and policy makers, which attempts to provide a homogenous, united identity as opposed to any regional or minority-national variants. While acknowledging that Canada consists of many nations, the Canadian state and its resulting identity and the Newfoundland identity are the focus of this project. The French Canadian and Indigenous nations, to name but a few, have their own national cultural identities that differ from the larger official Canadian variety. Moreover, concerning the Newfoundland identity, the focus is primarily on the island portion of the province and treated as a cohesive unit

despite its internal regional differences as the identity in question here is best described as a homogeneous Newfoundland *national* identity. While the official national identity of Canada and the Newfoundland identity are the focus of this research, the many nations and cultural groups within Canada have their own expressed identities and these identities often interact with one another – culturally, politically, and otherwise.

A nation's identity is constructed in part from its national history; therefore, the identity constructed from the nationalist historical trope of each nation helps to solidify the national group. In Canada, nationalist history is not as uniformly understood nor translated into a specified identity that represents the nation as a whole due to the many minority nations (and the various regional and cultural identities) and their consequent historical understandings. This creates a fragmented understanding of what the Canadian identity is and why the federal government has repeatedly attempted to construct a unifying official national identity.⁹ It should be noted that while an official national identity is a state creation that fosters national unity, it is not the only example of this in Canada. Government introduced equalization payments and social programmes are other examples of state-created elements of Canadian society that foster national unity and social cohesion.

The construction of national identity, both historically and present-day, involves several methodological and theoretical approaches from socio-cultural

⁹ See Charles Taylor *Multiculturalism and The Politics of Recognition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992) and *Reconciling the Solitudes*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993). Also, Will Kymlicka *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).

history and anthropology, to the history of mentalities and historical consciousness, as well as post-colonialism and transnationalism. Inquiring about national identity in the past requires an understanding of the ways in which people understood themselves and what influences were present in the shaping of such beliefs. As well, nations do not operate in isolation; influence from other nations affects many areas of a nation's consciousness, from its borders to its ideologies and cultures. For both Canada and Newfoundland, it is crucial to remember that they were part of the British Empire. Understanding Canada's official national identity requires an understanding that it was part of that Empire, as well as the implications of such a past. Additionally, as part of the Commonwealth, Canada remains actively tied to that past, which continues to shape the national identity.¹⁰

Regarding the term *nation*, an understanding is derived from those such as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm, where the nation is an "imagined community" that shares specified constructs of geographical space, governmental and cultural institutions, as well as the mind. These constructs, and thereby the nation itself, are fluid in their conceptions rather than remaining static; this understanding is also directly applicable to the construction of national identity. As well, Ernest Gellner's theory of nationalism is relevant, describing the nation as a sociological construction of modernization and nationalism as "primarily a political principle that holds that the political and the national unit should be

¹⁰ Adele Perry, "Nation, Empire and the Writing of History in Canada in English," in *Contesting Clio's Craft: New Directions and Debates in Canadian History*, edited by Chris Dummitt, (London: Institute for the Study of the Americas, 2009), 123. However, Perry is careful to interject that transnationalism "does not mean rejecting the state as an object of inquiry or an analytical category," rather is it simply avoiding "the *a priori* the salience of the nation," 129.

congruent;” therefore, a standardized (official) cultural identity is required of the modern nation, predicated on the necessity of national unity.¹¹

Defining region and regionalism within Canada presents some difficulty, as there is no consensus on the particular regions within the country. There is an ambiguous nature of the regional structure of Canada, particularly because it can be broken down along varying lines – provincial, cultural, linguistic, and so on. There is physical, geographic, and environmental reasoning, as well as a metropolitan-hinterland relationship to account for, but regions can also be formed around ethnicity, language, history, and class. David Bercuson addressed the understanding that Canadian regional identity is a “product of the federal-provincial struggle” but concludes that this alone “cannot explain regionalism” and, in a rather tautological argument, states that “regionalism exists because there are regions.” Notably, Ramsay Cook reminds us “no region is only a region, for it contains classes, ethnic groups, and genders” and that “regions, groups, and individuals have several identities,” which can be held simultaneously.¹²

Identity is both a complex and loaded term, often evading complete definition and understood quite differently from one discipline (or individual) to the next, though philosophy can be a neutral starting point. Charles Taylor

¹¹ Palmer, *Canada's 1960*, 5-7; Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed., (New York: Verso, 2006); Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1 and 57; and Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism*, (London: Pluto Press, 1993).

¹² William Westfall, “On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 15, no. 2 (Summer 1980), 6-12; David Jay Bercuson, “Regionalism and “Unlimited Identity” in Western Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 15, no. 2 (Summer 1980), 122; Ramsay Cook, “Identities are not like hats,” *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 81, no.2 (June 2000), 265; and Ian McKay, “A Note on ‘Region’ in Writing the History of Atlantic Canada,” *Acadiensis* XXIX, no 2 (Spring 2000).

believed attaining identity occurs through the recognition (not condescension) of others and that identity formation is dialogical – a dialogue of the ideation, which through recognition then becomes an identity. As well, Chad Gaffield has argued that “culture, ethnicity, and identity” are processes rather than “static categories” and these processes need to be understood in their “changing historical contexts.” Moreover, the notion of ‘othering’ is particularly important for understanding identity, as one understands and recognizes oneself in juxtaposition with the ‘other’; we cannot identify ourselves without a recognition of difference between others and ourselves.¹³

A group identity is a cohesive and malleable societal construct embraced by the collective group and in doing so share a common culture and language. A cultural identity is a group identity and a national identity is a particular type of cultural identity, the cultural identity of the state. The national identity is the idea of a social construction of collective consciousness that shares an “attachment” to the nation in question. National identity should be differentiated from the concept of nationalism, as a national identity is less dedicated to the directly patriotic goals of nationalism even though national identity can form under much of the same criteria, such as a shared language, culture, and ethnicity. Alternatively, national identity can be understood as the set of historical features that define a people, while nationalism can be understood as the realization of these features

¹³ Charles Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition,” in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, 25-73; Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French-Language Controversy in Ontario*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1988), xvi. Also Rodgers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, “Beyond Identity,” *Theory and Society* vol. 29 (2000); Philip Gleason, “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” *The Journal of American History* vol. 69, no. 4 (March 1983); Erik H. Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle: Selected Papers*, (New York, 1958) and *Childhood and Society*, (New York, 1950).

and the will to ‘promote’ them.¹⁴ National unity refers to believed and shared commonalities present throughout the nation that rest on the nation’s collective identity. National identity can provide a sense of national unity, as the construction of a national identity seeks to enhance or create national unity, where the collective identity bonds the nation together. Miriam Richter defines national identity as “one overall identity that unites the members of the nation” and she links the long formation of Canada’s modern national identity to its relationship with Britain, its essentially dualistic nature (English and French), and the presence of the United States, listing these among other geo-political and cultural conundrums as “impediments” to Canada’s identity formation.¹⁵ However, arguably, these impediments (such as regionalism) are perhaps what shapes Canadian identity rather than impede one from forming.

Essentially, identity indicates a notion of ‘sameness’; those belonging to a group identity, such as a national identity, share certain qualities that enable them to belong to the identity group, a sameness amongst them. The criteria of an identity can change and is arguably always in flux. Identity can also be understood as a narrative, a set of causal links, and national identity can be understood in this way – what these ‘causes’ are, form the identity and the various regions within Canada can be seen as a prominent cause in the formation of Canadian identity, official and otherwise.¹⁶

¹⁴ Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 7-8.

¹⁵ Miriam Verena Richter, *Creating the National Mosaic: Multiculturalism in Canadian Children’s Literature from 1950 to 1994*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), xiii-xix, 27-29, and 30.

¹⁶ Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

Historiography

Within the current scholarly literature, there is no established answer regarding how “Canada” is understood from various domestic perspectives and this has largely been the case since at least the immediate postwar era. Although, since this period there has been a general consensus that no singular portrayal of “Canada” is predominant and, despite the continuing efforts on part of the federal governments, national unity is weak. This remains unsatisfactory for several reasons pertaining to the scholarly perspective, sources, and research strategies principally used to provide answers. The perspective is typically centre-periphery with little effort to understand Canada from a perspective outside of the metropolitan Montreal-Ottawa-Toronto corridor and when other areas within Canada are used, these regional vantage points are usually seen as a topic rather than an analytical category. As well, there is much attention given to federal government documents, with a subsequent federal government perspective used alongside, with too little attention paid to discussion outside of the metropolitan centre.

Regarding the literature pertaining to the history of post-confederation Newfoundland, there is little concerning its view of the official constructions of Canadian identity in the period and disagreement within the understanding of its own regional (or cultural and even national) identity. In his *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*, Sean Cadigan argues ardently against the notion of Newfoundland being a nation, cultural or otherwise, while Robert Thomsen orients his work around the belief that Newfoundland is indeed a nation with a

distinct cultural identity and an unreserved political nationalism in its post-confederation period. Others such as Jeff Webb have investigated Newfoundland's distinct cultural identity in its post-confederation period, as well as the revival of 'traditional' culture in the province. As well, Raymond Blake has thoroughly addressed Newfoundland's integration as a Canadian province and the challenges between Newfoundland and Ottawa that have occurred in the time since, but always in the socio-economic, political, and intergovernmental spheres as opposed to the cultural. Throughout the literature, Newfoundland's identity and its relation to the official Canadian identity in the post-confederation period have been under-analyzed from a perspective centred on national and/or cultural identities. My issue is not with what has been written but that the particular line of inquiry addressed in this project has yet to be given proper focus; my work seeks not to correct or disprove earlier work but rather to add to the narrative, illuminating a line of inquiry and perspective previously ignored or undervalued.¹⁷

Notions of competing 'Canadianisms' are evident across the scholarly work concerned with Canadian identity; the differences are not just between

¹⁷ Raymond B. Blake, *Canadians at Last: Canada Integrates Newfoundland as a Province*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994) and *Lions or Jellyfish: Newfoundland-Ottawa Relations Since 1957*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Sean T. Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Thomsen, *Nationalism in Stateless Nations*; and Jeff Webb, *Observing the Outports: Describing Newfoundland Culture, 1950-1980*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016). Also Margaret Conrad, "Mistaken Identities? Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 18, no. 2 (2003): 159-174; James Overton, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Neo-Nationalism in Newfoundland," in *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Atlantic Canada*, edited by Robert J. Bryan and R. James Sacouman, 48-6, (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1979) and "Sparking a Cultural Revolution: Joey Smallwood, Farley Mowat, Harold Horwood and Newfoundland's Cultural Renaissance," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 16, no. 2 (2000): 166-204.

English and French Canadian historiography but this divide does permit a noticeable distinction. The Canadian state contains a multitude of minority nations and the French Canadian nation consists of Québécois, Franco-Ontarians, Acadians, and so on, with each having their own distinct cultural identity. In the case of French Canadian and Quebec historians, the writing on national identity often deviates from the official identity of the Canadian state, focusing instead on their distinct, regional, and even marginalized, cultural (and national) identities. This is not to say that there is ignorance of the larger Canadian nation and its identity, as some prominent historians in Quebec such as José Igartua are well known for their work on official Canadian identity.¹⁸ As well, Jocelyn Létourneau's insights on Canadian historical writing are pertinent. He has addressed the concept of "Candianness" and its role in the writing of Canada's history, seeing it as a "neglected, even forgotten theme of the great collective narrative of Canada." Létourneau defines "Canadianness" as "the way of being together that has developed within the space of social political interrelations called Canada," specifying that it is the result rather than an intrinsic property of the "Canadian historical experience." He agrees with the understanding that it has

¹⁸ Some of the relevant literature includes Gilles Pacquet and Jean-Pierre Wallot, *Nouvelle-France/Quebec/Canadas: A World of Limited Identities*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa, 1983); Jocelyn Létourneau, *Passer à l'avenir. Histoire, mémoire, identité dans le Québec d'aujourd'hui*, (Montréal: Boréal, 2000); Jocelyn Létourneau, "L'avenir du Canada: par rapport à quelle histoire?," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 81, no. 2 (June 2000): 229-259; Michel Bock, *Quand la nation débordait les frontières: les minorités françaises dans la pensée de Lionel Groulx*, (Montréal: Hurtubise HMH, 2004); José E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005); José E. Igartua, "The Genealogy of Stereotypes: French Canadians in Two English-language Canadian History Textbooks," *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 42, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 106-132; Anne Gilbert, Michel Bock, and Joseph-Yvon Thériault, *Entre lieux et mémoire. L'inscription de la francophonie canadienne dans la durée*, (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2009); and Jean-François Caron, *Affirmation Identitaire du Canada: Politique Étrangère et Nationalisme*, (Outremont, Québec: Athéna Éditions, 2014).

never been possible to impose one single vision of Canada on its inhabitants, as there is much ambiguity in the Canadian experience, though there have been attempts to eliminate this through federal government-endorsed efforts of national unity and officialized national identity.¹⁹

Recently there has been much attention paid to the Canadian nation, its national identity and national unity in English Canadian historical writing.²⁰ In recent years, scholars, following the insights of those such as Hobsbawm and Anderson, have explicitly provided histories of nationalism rather than nationalist histories. In Canada, some of the more prominent scholars interested in such questions are Adele Perry and Ian McKay. These historians, in their view of history and identity, understand that the “nation” is a construct and they, among others, have begun to examine the rise and shifting nature of national imaginings and mythologies. Perry rejects the idea that there is “one narrative line in Canadian history” to be uncovered and that there is no such thing as “totality and coherence” to be found in the history of the nation. She argues for the moving away from the nation as the frame of reference for historians because it gives no

¹⁹ Jocelyn Létourneau, *A History for the Future: Rewriting Memory and Identity in Quebec*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), 66-91.

²⁰ Such works include Michael D. Behiels and Marcel Martel, *Nation, Ideas, Identities: Essays in Honour of Ramsay Cook*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2000); Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis, eds., *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006); C.P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964-1968*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010); Norman Hillmer, *Canada’s of the Mind: the Making and Unmaking of Canadian Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007); Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*; Kurt Korneski, “Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 41, no. 2 (2007): 161-184; Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, (Toronto: University of Oxford Press, 1997); Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*; and Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity*.

answers and only further constricts the historical understanding of a geographically defined place, as well as that place's people(s), nation(s), and identity(ies). Moreover, McKay provides an argument for Canada being an ongoing project, rather than something that is finished and awaiting discovery. Both McKay's and Perry's arguments suggest a change in how Canada should be thought of and used in historical investigations and otherwise, and much of the recent literature discussing the national imaginings of Canada have endeavoured to do just that.²¹

The official Canadian identity underwent significant transformation in the twentieth century, moving from a primarily 'British' identity to one that is more 'multicultural' in character. When the transition happened, and how long the transition occurred, are frequented questions by those interested in the subject. Throughout the early twentieth century, Canadian culture was dominated by its connection to Britain and its reliance on "Britishness" for cultural mores in an attempt to ward off thorough Americanization, though it is clear that there was an attempt to portray a uniquely Canadian culture during this period. However, the British cultural identity remained intact well into the mid-twentieth century, as José Igartua and C.P. Champion evidence in their respective works on the 'clash' between "Canadianness" and "Britishness" during the 1960s. Igartua's *The Other Quiet Revolution*, and Champion's response, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*, are key works in an evolving historiography about the problem of

²¹ Perry, "Nation, Empire and the Writing of History in Canada in English" and Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 81, no. 4 (2000), 617–651.

English Canadian national identity, and specifically the process of moving away from “Britishness” towards “Canadianness” during the initial postwar period. The larger arguments, evidence presented, and analyses reveal the wilful separation of “Britishness” from the official Canadian identity, while noting that the struggle of developing an official Canadian identity in the presence of a diminishing British identity is not a unique problem when considering the other former dominions that also dealt with this issue in the development of their own national identities. Another prominent work addressing Canada’s official identity during this period is Bryan Palmer’s *Canada’s 1960s: the Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*. Palmer argues that the 1960s were unable to provide a new social identity to replace the older British identity and this ultimately led to the undefined Canadian identity that we hold at the present. He claims that the apparent lack of unity and cohesiveness in society during the period caused the uncertainty of Canada’s identity and he ends with questioning if a “national identity [is] really what we need.”²²

There is a more compelling case to be made here. The 1960s and thereafter did not mark the end of an official Canadian identity; instead, the era marked the transformation of it, or a new understanding of Canada’s official identity. When Palmer asserts the 1960s signalled a “failure to secure a truly different national identity” for Canada, I believe he means a homogenous, united identity – not that the previous ‘Brito-Canadian’ identity was all that homogenous

²² Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*; Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada*; and Palmer, *Canada’s 1960s*, 5 and 429-430.

or a uniting force in Canadian society.²³ I agree with Palmer's view of the 'irony' of the period, given that the 1960s appears to be a decade when the federal government seemed consumed with forming a unifying identity, with the flag, the B&B commission, and so on, yet ultimately failing to produce such an identity. However, what did emerge was the notion of 'limited identities' and it replaced the previous largely homogenous official national identity. While no longer having the appearance of homogeneity, it is at least nation-wide and more representative of the nation as a whole.

Cook and Careless forwarded the concept of 'limited identities' in the late 1960s, taking note of an increasing focus on region, ethnicity, and class in the scholarly literature of the period and indicating that this pattern in Canadian historiography demonstrated how the national identity could be better understood. This development within the historiography was concurrent with the changing narrative of official Canadian national identity and this is worthy of consideration, specifically the debate surrounding 'limited identities' in the literature in the decades that followed its advent. Prominent scholars such as David Bercuson, Doug Owsram, William Westfall, and Philip Buckner, directly addressed the concept, endorsing it, critiquing it, and discussing whether it had outlived its usefulness for understanding the national identity.²⁴

²³ Palmer, *Canada's 1960s*, 24.

²⁴ The debate includes J.M.S. Careless, "Limited Identities – Ten Years Later," *Manitoba History* vol. 1, no. 1 (1980): 3-9; Bercuson, "Regionalism and "Unlimited Identity" in Western Canada;" Westfall, "On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature;" Ramsay Cook, "Regionalism Unmasked," *Acadiensis* vol. 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1983): 137-142; P.A. Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective," *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 23, no. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer 1988): 177-198; Doug Owsram,

Létourneau also addressed the concept of 'limited identities' arguing that it has not provided a metanarrative, a "comprehensive synthesis of [the] Canadian experience," instead it has fragmented the national historical experience. In calling for a history of "Canadianness," he stresses for a narrative in which the divided identities in Canada fuse "to form meaningful realities" that are to be "built on something other than a sterile historical correctness." He sees the tensions within Canada's diversity as what makes Canada and we should strive not to hide the ambiguity of Canada's historical experience, because that ambiguity is Canada's historical experience and is what will provide the historical narrative.²⁵

Those who tackled the 'limited identities' concept often focused on the region, as it highlights some central problems with Canadian national identity, chiefly its fragmentation. Bercuson felt that the strength of Canadian regionalism was something not fully understood and while some Canadians "wish regionalism did not exist," it nonetheless does and requires our full understanding and explanation of how it affects the construction of Canada's national identity. Westfall addressed how distinguishing the region impedes the 'Whiggish' colony-to-nation process well documented within the metanarrative of Canada's history. The regions were seen as "obstacles that must be overcome in the romantic quest

"Intellectual History in the Land of Limited Identities," *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol.24, no.3 (Fall 1989): 114-128; Doug Owram, "Narrow Circles: the Historiography of Recent Canadian Historiography," *National History: A Canadian Journal of Enquiry and Opinion* vol. 1, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 5-21; Cook, "Identities are not like hats;" P.A. Buckner, "'Limited identities' Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History," *Acadiensis* vol.30, no.1 (Autumn 2000): 4-15; P.A. Buckner, "Defining Identities in Canada: Regional, Imperial, National," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol. 94, no. 2 (June 2013): 289-311.

²⁵ Létourneau, *A History for the Future*, 66-91.

for the attainment of a unified nation-state with a genuinely national culture” and confederation was described as the “triumph over regionalism.” He stated that regionalism “focuses upon the parts rather than the whole: it emphasizes the pluralistic character of Canadian culture and the limited nature of the Canadian identity” and that while “the nation-state exists [...] the facts of history point Canada towards regional cultures and regional identities.” In agreement with Westfall, Owram stated, “Canada is a nation in which the national sense of community has always been challenged by the pulls of regional identities.” These understandings of regionalism should not be seen as negative but rather as a way of recognizing and understanding the larger Canadian identity, with its various parts adding up to the sum of the whole.²⁶

Before the later 1960s, historians had rarely focused on the question of Canadian identity, more often putting the emphasis on the Canadian state.²⁷ In recent years, there has been increasing interest in Canadian identity in the postwar period, and while this work is an informative start, there is more to be done. Issues of scope and scale persist in the historiography on official Canadian identity, with some historians preferring to limit their focus to the more provocative period of the 1960s and often relying on the positions of the federal government while largely ignoring the scholarly and lay understandings of national identity. However, the foremost problem within the literature on official

²⁶ Bercuson, “Regionalism and “Unlimited Identity,” 126; Westfall, “On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature,” 3-4 and 13; Owram, “Intellectual History in the Land of Limited Identities,” 115; Buckner, ““Limited Identities” and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective,” 178 and 193.

²⁷ Careless, “Limited Identities” and William Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, Second Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972).

Canadian identity lies in its predominant central Canada perspective; therefore the adoption of a different regional perspective in addressing the development of official national identity is a way forward.

The literature on Canadian national identity (official and otherwise), as well as the ‘limited identities’ debate, comprise the larger underlying intellectual foundation of this project, while the literature focused to the official Canadian identity and the development of Newfoundland identity in its post-confederation period is where my contribution to the field is grounded. Much has been written about the Canadian nation and the region of Newfoundland, while less has been written about the transformation of official constructions of Canadian national identity during and since the postwar period, as well as Newfoundland’s adaptation to becoming Canadian and the retention of their cultural identity during this process. Those who address the matter of Canadian identity fail to speak sufficiently to the subtle nuances of the transformation of the identity and largely disregard the role of regionalism in its formation. As this is a project centred on the study of Canadian national identity, it is a work of Canada’s national history – but from a regional perspective, as opposed to being a work of regional history. My contribution to the wider field of English Canadian historical writing is the reconsideration of the region and regionalism in Canadian nationalist historiography, in particular the use of the region as a category of analysis in understanding Canada’s national identity. There is more to be done on the evolution of official Canadian identity in the later twentieth century and of Newfoundland identity since confederation, particularly a new conceptualization

of the use of the region in understanding these identities and their evolution. The bringing together of the Canadian national historical narrative and the Newfoundland historical narrative, as well as the different spheres of Newfoundland historical writing (cultural and political), is the contribution of this project to these larger bodies of historical writing.

Methodology and Sources

This work aims to advance the understanding of official Canadian identity in the post-1949 period and deepen the understanding of Newfoundland identity in its post-confederation period, by studying how Newfoundlanders understood official constructions of Canadian identity and how the province retained a distinct regional identity, from 1949 to 1991. This project furthers this understanding by re-examining familiar sources from a regional, Newfoundland, perspective and by incorporating sources not previously used to investigate the development of official Canadian identity. As well, the project further develops our knowledge of these topics by utilizing a research strategy that selected key events pertaining to the development of the official national identity in the post-1949 period to interpret the changing views of Canada and events that uncover the process in which Newfoundland retained a distinct regional identity while becoming Canadian.

By the 1980s Cook and Careless were denouncing the region as an “analytical tool” but it was not truly being utilized as such, with the region often seen as a topic more so than a proper category of analysis; the region as a perspective on the national experience and national questions still appears to be

underutilized.²⁸ This project employs such a use of regionalism, utilizing a regional perspective to address a recurrent national question, and disagrees with the premature insistence of moving away from the region as an analytical tool but rather insists that it be used in a different way. Canada's national identity, official and otherwise, should continue to be analyzed and from the perspective of every Canadian region. While the 'limited identities' concept advocated for the inclusion of the region in understanding Canadian identity, the concept itself came from the central Canadian perspective which acts as the default in Canadian historiography despite the fact that central Canada is itself a region and not an exemplar of the nation writ large.²⁹

In January 2003, historian Desmond Morton gave a speech at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, wherein he specified, "Canadian history is a work in progress which cannot be viewed from a single perspective. National history is possible, if Canadians embrace the good, the bad, the minority and majority perspectives."³⁰ Morton's statement reiterates the importance of utilizing and considering a multitude of perspectives in crafting a national historical narrative. With this in mind, reengaging with regionalism, particularly using it as

²⁸ Careless, "Limited Identities – Ten Years Later;" Cook, "Regionalism Unmasked," 141. Also see Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective," 184.

²⁹ Since the late 1980s, Phillip Buckner has published several articles insisting it would be premature to abandon the 'limited identities' approach. The reasoning behind his insistence pertains to "the centralist bias of Canadian history" and that the historians "who have taken the Ontario identity as the Canadian identity" were essentially wrapped up in their own regional perspective, and those who fall into this category are unwilling to accept that they are also regionalists. Buckner dutifully reminds us "regionalism implies a concern [...] with the interrelationship between the region and the larger nation of which it is a part." See Buckner, "'Limited Identities' and Canadian Historical Scholarship: An Atlantic Provinces Perspective," and "'Limited identities' Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History."

³⁰ Desmond Morton, "Canada: A Pluralist History," *Canadian Speeches* vol. 17, no. 1 (March/April 2003), 54.

an analytical framework, was at the forefront of this project. Addressing the problem of official Canadian identity not only from a regional perspective but also from a newly incorporated province adjusting to the realities of now being Canadian provides needed insight for the construction of official identity in the period and even today. The questions of why an official Canadian identity struggled to develop across the country and why regions have managed to keep their distinct regional understandings can be explained by the existence of the various ‘limited identities’ within Canada, in particular those regional identities. Regionalism then could be the key for why a cohesive Canadian national identity has struggled and largely failed. Ultimately, if the national identity is the coming together of regional (among other) identities under the larger umbrella of official Canadian identity, and if this can be accepted as the official Canadian identity, there has not been a failure of national identity for Canada.

Previous research on the transformation of official Canadian identity during the 1960s served as a starting point for this project. Some of my earlier research focused largely on the B&B Commission and argued that the work of academics and the concerns of the citizenry in tandem facilitated change in the political discussion around the official Canadian identity, from being largely based in “Britishness” in the 1950s to multiculturalism by the 1970s.³¹ Using this earlier research on the B&B Commission and a variety of additional resources spanning the period, this project re-examines well-known documents and rarely used or ignored primary sources, while employing the regional perspective of

³¹ Conway, “From Britishness to Multiculturalism.”

Newfoundland as opposed to the central Canada perspective typical of historical narratives on Canadian national problems.

The objective of this research project is to focus on Newfoundland's take on Canada, rather than centred on the machinations of the federal government – the dominant focus for studies of Canadian identity. This project is not attempting to research national commissions of inquiry in and of themselves, nor is it focused exclusively on the government's (neither federal nor provincial) perspective. The aim was to avail of what was available to Newfoundlanders at the time, to ascertain what they understood Canada's identity to be (or what they believed it should be), to gain an understanding of what was publically known, thought, and believed. As such, I strove to use information and materials that Newfoundlanders would (or could) have been privy to during the period in question.

Although this project re-evaluates some previously considered material, it is through a different research strategy and methodology. Using the region (or regionalism) as a category of analysis, such as the ways in which gender, class, and race are utilized as analytical categories, provides a new way of understanding the construction of the Canadian nation and its official identity.³² In using a regional framework in this way, the peripheral (Newfoundland) perspective of the metropole (federal government and central Canada) concern is the focus, offering a view of the outside looking in at the centre. Addressing the problems of national identity and unity through a regional perspective reflects a

³²Not unlike the distinctions Joan Scott made regarding using gender as a category of analysis, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American History Review* vol. 91, no. 5 (December 1985), 1035-1075.

different understanding of Canada as opposed to relying only on central Canadian understandings.

The region can be used as an analytical tool for redefining not just a national identity but also political and social equality. Heretofore, the central Canadian perspective that has been given the most attention in inquiries of national significance, which is problematic as Canada is a large and varied state comprised of a multiplicity of regions. The fact that Canada since 1867 has had a formalized regional structure (as in the Senate for example) does not hold much sway when accounting for its national identity formation, particularly what occurred more than 100 years later. While the federal government has often acknowledged Canada's regions, regionality, and regionalism (as well as other measures of diversity), it is of little substance when compared to the central Canadian focus of the commissions of inquiry into Canada's national culture and identity formation.

Canada is an ever-evolving entity, including its identity. Upon beginning this research I wanted to understand why the federal government's attempts of a united Canada repeatedly failed and how Newfoundlanders retained a sense of identity that was distinct from the rest of Canada while becoming Canadian and questioned whether a better understanding of the Newfoundland-Canada relationship could change established understandings of both in the post-1949 period. When I began considering the issue of regional identification in Canada, I questioned whether regionalism was truly in contraposition to national unity. Ultimately I concluded that rather than understanding the regions as impediments

to national unity we should instead understand regions as the core of the Canadian reality and lived experience.

I see a conceptual problem in Canada's national history with the dominant central Canada perspective not accurately reflecting the history of the state. Thus I believe utilizing the region as an analytical framework to establish new ways of thinking about Canadian national history, for reconceptualizing problems of national identity and unity, and allowing for Canada to become a reframed entity, to be a way forward in the understanding of Canada as a multinational state. Using regionalism as a category of analysis sets this project apart from previous attempts at understanding the construction of official identity. Embracing the regional breakdown of Canada and utilizing it to understand the country captures the regional variance of Canadian identity and demonstrate the regional reality of that identity.

To examine how Newfoundlanders understood official Canadian identity, four federal government studies from the period which signify the importance given to national identity formation by the federal government – the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences (1949-1951), the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1969), the Task Force on Canadian Unity (1977-1979), and the Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future (1990) – were analyzed from the perspective of Newfoundland. Despite input from commissioners with differing regional backgrounds, as well as commissioned studies of regions in the case of the Task Force, these national commissions of inquiry were central Canadian in their creation, intent, and

perspective. Thus, the regional perspective analyses how Newfoundland was involved in and what its contributions were to these national studies. Each study takes place in a different context but always pertaining to the understanding and construction of a unified national culture and official Canadian identity.

These studies produced many publications, reports, briefs, and nation-wide consultations, which include the views of diverse groups ranging from those in rural Canada to recent immigrants, thereby providing views of the concerned citizenry as well as the federal government's objectives for these studies, along with the outcomes and recommendations of the various deliberations. A focus on assessing the involvement of and views from Newfoundlanders in these studies provided the unique regional perspective of those integrating into the Canadian nation at that time and how they perceived the Canadian identity in light of this. For each of these studies, Newfoundland was an active participant in the nation-wide discussion and provided briefs covering items of particular interest to the province, from concerns about second language teaching, to how rural Newfoundlanders viewed Canadian unity. Examining such written evidence from the advantageous position of both a distinct region and a provincial newcomer offers evidence of how Newfoundland understood the official Canadian identity. As well, a re-examined close reading of the materials from these federal government studies also provides evidence of how Newfoundlanders understood their own identity in the period and its relation to the larger Canadian nation.

Newfoundlanders did not choose and subsequently learned to become Canadians in the same way that other peoples and provinces have done.

Newfoundlanders officially became Canadians in name as of 31 March 1949.

They did not have to adopt a persona of Canadianness or prove a certain level of knowledge of being Canadian prior to being accepted as Canadians, as

immigrants are required to do in citizenship testing or sponsoring for example.

The province negotiated its entry into the Canadian federation and the Terms of Union and its negotiations provide documented evidence of this process. Within

the Terms of Union, there are examples of how Newfoundland used this

document and process to preserve traditional culture and ways of life when

joining Canada, such as preserving traditional foodways by enshrining them in the

formal agreement. Examining this and other related documents provide insight

into how the new province sought to protect its own identity while being

incorporated into the larger state of Canada. The Terms of Union also provides

evidence for how Newfoundland's union with Canada differed from the

previously joined provinces. The documents pertaining to Newfoundland's

confederation with Canada provides direct evidence of how the province

negotiated its entry into the state and how it used this process to protect against

completely assimilating into the Canadian nation.

As well, concerning the comparison of Newfoundland and Quebec in

terms of their regional and marginalized identities within Canada, there is

considerable difference to note. Quebec is a founding nation of Canada and is at

the centre of the nation literally and figuratively, whereas Newfoundland is

disconnected from the larger Canadian nation. There is also the issue of language,

where Newfoundland is predominately English (albeit with varying dialects and

language use) and Quebec is Canada's only French-dominant language province; in this respect, Newfoundland is less marginal than Quebec. The two provinces have utilized quite different approaches in their relationship with the federal government, as seen within the parliamentary debates, as well as in news coverage of particular episodes and events. The House of Commons Debates from the 21st to the 34th Parliaments document and neatly bookend parliamentary response between 1949 and 1991, from the Liberal government of Louis St-Laurent to the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney. During the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, it was the governments of John Diefenbaker, Lester B. Pearson, Pierre-Elliot Trudeau, and Brian Mulroney, that experienced much of the struggles concerning the official Canadian identity in the postwar era. Each government had its own particular obstacles and attempted solutions, such as the Quiet Revolution, the adoption of a multiculturalism policy, the first Quebec referendum, and the patriation of the Constitution; it was a dizzying period regarding national unity and identity. The House Debates were assessed for the importance placed on national unity and identity in parliamentary discussion, as well as for addressing intergovernmental relations pertaining to these issues. It is important to understand how the federal government, as orchestrators of the official national identity, understood the evolution of official Canadian identity and their role in constructing it.

The notion that Newfoundland has been more docile in its relationship with the federal government in comparison to Quebec is grounded in the oft-mentioned economic dependency that Newfoundland has found itself in since

confederation, but the changing economic realities of Newfoundland from its confederation era, during the immediate post-confederation decades, and more recently, tell a more nuanced account of this simplistic understanding. The relationship between the federal government and Newfoundland in terms of its economy, especially regarding its natural resource development, has often been contentious. Such episodes regularly demonstrated heightened cultural nationalism within the province due to its rebellious feelings toward Ottawa. These events evidence not only socio-economic themes on the part of Newfoundland but culturally as well. For example, the Progressive Conservative government during the 1970s and 1980s strengthened their socio-economic argumentation by appealing to traditional Newfoundland culture to garner a more significant impact with their political campaigning, as evidenced in their political platforms from the era. For analyzing Newfoundland's relationship with the federal government, the debates from the House of Assembly of the provincial government of Newfoundland throughout the period and the accompanying Throne Speeches were examined, along with documents from the Dominion-Provincial (Federal-Provincial) conferences, as well as pertinent news coverage. In particular, provincial Throne Speeches from the 1970s and 1980s focused on socio-economic self-sufficiency and increasing autonomy for the province, in contrast with the desire of centralization from the Trudeau governments, highlighting the strengthening of Newfoundland's resolve in regards to maintaining its distinct status in the confederacy at a time when the province was undergoing a cultural revival. A reading of these documents provides evidence of

Newfoundland's combative interaction with the Canadian government in terms of how Newfoundlanders understood Canada and how the province defended and protected its own position at the time, with Newfoundland politicians often invoking nationalist rhetoric.

Regarding Newfoundlander's identity since confederation, there were several prominent archival avenues to explore. While the regional identity has naturally evolved and modernized over time, it still has a 'traditional' culture at its core. There have been many publications and news editorials focused on Newfoundland's confederation with Canada, in both positive and negative lights. Additionally, there have been many studies regarding Newfoundland's place and feelings toward Canada since confederation; in particular, a survey report from 1979 on Newfoundland's attitudes regarding confederation and a 1982 election survey both reveal expressly pertinent statistical information on such views. Information such as this provides evidence of how the process of adopting the larger national identity does not diminish the persistence of a regional identity, and that one need not negate the other. In addition, the importance placed on heritage and tourism in the relevant provincial government department documents demonstrates governmental concern with maintaining the provinces distinct cultural identity. For example, from 1964 to the present, the CBC television program *Land and Sea* has aired in Newfoundland providing plenty of documented evidence of both traditional culture and its variance and modernization (or lack thereof). That the program exists at all demonstrates the consideration given to traditional Newfoundland culture, as well as being an

example of the cultural revival that began at that time. There is a notable connection between the cultural revival and the provincial government. In 1972, there was a change of government in Newfoundland. Prior to this, the cultural revival began in response to the rapid modernization measures put in place by the province's Liberal government. When the Progressive Conservatives came to power in 1972, they utilized the social movement behind the cultural revival. Various political party and government documents evidence these connections.

Lastly, Newfoundland and Labrador's 2003 Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada was analyzed to provide an understanding of how the province adjusted to being a Canadian province in the time since the union. The commission provides insight into the problems that have plagued the province since confederation and how these issues evolved into the province's current position in Canada. Examining the long-term effects and consequences of Newfoundland's decision to join Canada from the perspective of Newfoundlanders demonstrates the evolution (or lack thereof) of Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward the country of which they are a part. How Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders are viewed from the perspective of other Canadians and how this affects Newfoundland's and Newfoundlanders' relationship with Canada is also analyzed through this Royal Commission, via nation- and province-wide surveys conducted for the commission.

Outline

This project contributes to our understanding of how social, cultural, demographic, and political changes converged to re-define the official Canadian

identity through intense debates about what it meant to be “Canadian” in the post-1949 period. By re-addressing the understanding of official Canadian identity from a Newfoundland regional perspective, and how the province retained a distinctive regional identity since confederation, this project deepens and expands our knowledge and understanding of modern Canada and its continued regional realities. This research provides new insights for the fluid concept of Canadian identity by connecting the work of federal government studies on official Canadian identity and national unity to the regional reality of the nation it was studying. The insight gained from addressing the official Canadian identity from the perspective of Newfoundland, a new region with a distinct identity on the fringes of Canada in the period, enables a more comprehensive understanding of Canadian national identity in the later twentieth century and beyond. The implications of this research permit a more nuanced understanding of Canadian identity, as well as how various regions and cultures within Canada maintain their distinct identities, which allows for a better-informed national historical narrative and even a more suitable pathway for policy formation in areas such as Canadian culture, heritage, and of course regionalism.

The following chapters cover the period from Newfoundland’s union with Canada in 1949 until the final report of Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future in 1991. The rationale for ending the inquiry in 1991 is two-fold. Firstly, the Cod Moratorium began in 1992 and drastically changed the socio-economic conditions in Newfoundland, as well as its relationship with the federal government. Secondly, also in 1992 was the Charlottetown Accord, which contributed

additional strain on inter-governmental relations nation-wide, much like the earlier Meech Lake Accord in 1987. Each chapter advances a research-based argument that contributes to how Newfoundland understood Canadian identity at the specified time, why a unifying Canadian identity was not achieved as hoped by the federal government, as well as how Newfoundlanders were able to retain their own regional identity while becoming an integral part of Canada.

The first chapter provides context for understanding the national identities of pre-1949 Newfoundland and Canada and for addressing Newfoundland's confederation with Canada including the negotiation of their entry into Canada, the differences between Newfoundland's entry and others who had previously joined, and how Newfoundland sought to protect itself within this union. The second and third chapters directly address the central research questions of how Newfoundland understood the official Canadian identity and why the federal government had struggled to achieve a unifying national identity for Canada. Chapter Two covers the Royal Commissions established by the federal government when attempting to understand the Canadian identity and further develop that identity and national unity during the 1950s and 1960s. The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences and the B&B Commission are analyzed, as is the transformation of official Canadian identity during the 1960s-70s from 'Britishness' to multiculturalism due in part to the outcomes of these commissions and other pertinent contextual events. Covering these federal government commissions and developments pertaining to official national identity from the perspective of Newfoundland during this period

demonstrates how these processes sought to establish a cohesive national identity and decide what that identity should be, as understood by the new Canadian province. Chapter Three addresses the considerable importance placed on national unity after the tensions of the cultural revolutions during the 1960s. In the late 1970s, a Task Force on Canadian unity was established to consult with Canadians nationwide concerning national unity. Examination of this task force from the perspective of Newfoundland is the focal point of this chapter and shows how Newfoundland understood Canadian identity and the importance of national unity at that point in time in its post-confederation period.

The fourth and fifth chapters shift the focus to how Newfoundland retained a distinct regional identity while becoming part of Canada. Chapter Four addresses how Newfoundlanders understood and protected their regional identity since confederation with Canada. While much of the post-1949 period saw increased concern and interest over Canadian identity on the part of the federal government, academics, and the wider society, for Newfoundland in particular, a cultural revival spanned much of its post-confederation period and this is thoroughly covered in this chapter. The cultural revival that began in the mid-1960s demonstrated a desire for the preservation of a 'traditional' Newfoundland culture and the avoidance of fully assimilating to the Canadian ways of life. As well, statistical studies and surveys of Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward Canada from 1979 and the early 1980s are thoroughly discussed regarding the views expressed and what they signified for Newfoundland and its place in Canada. Within the province, there were increased initiatives in education, particularly on

the part of the Progressive Conservative provincial governments from the mid-1970s onward regarding Newfoundland's culture and heritage, that reflected the earlier developments in the arts scene and within the academic community at Memorial University that came to be known as the cultural revival. Chapter Five addresses the retention of Newfoundland's identity but with the focus placed on the provincial government; in particular, their utilization of the cultural revival movement to leverage political support from residents of the province, as well as for leverage against the federal government during inter-governmental negotiations, demonstrating an evolution in the province from cultural national to economic and political nationalism by the 1980s.

The final chapter covers the Meech Lake Accord and the subsequent Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future. At this time, after decades of being part of Canada, Newfoundlanders continued to have a strong sense of their distinct identity; while Canadians recognized Newfoundland's distinct identity, it was often replete with stereotypes due to a lack of knowledge of the province and its people. The combined lack of knowledge on the part of most Canadians and the federal government's apparent lack of respect for the province, allowed for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to continue to feel ostracised within Canada, enabling the persistence of its distinct identity to continue into the twenty-first century. The Citizens' Forum, also known as the Spicer Commission, released its final report in 1991, hence this dissertation's titular end date as this is when the federal aspects of this inquiry ends. However, this chapter also includes discussion of the Newfoundland and Labrador's provincial 2003 Royal

Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada, wherein Newfoundland and Labrador addressed concerns of its place in and relationship with Canada after several decades of union. While the province has never held a referendum on leaving Canada, as Quebec has done, it has shown similar levels of concern regarding its role within the country. Analysis of this commission is included as because of its significance to the understanding of Newfoundland's identity and relationship with the rest of Canada, which further demonstrates the continuation of the distinctive Newfoundland identity without an end date.

Taken together, these chapters reveal the importance of re-thinking official identities in Canada from the perspective of Newfoundland, and in Newfoundland from the perspective of Canada. A national identity, like the nation itself, does not develop in isolation. The Canadian government has long striven for the development of an official national identity grounded in a cohesive sense of national unity, but this has largely been in contrast to the regional reality of the Canadian state. In Canada, there are influences from the various regions and the interplay between them, the relationship between the periphery and the metropole of the nation, and external (international) influence, which play a role in its identity formation. How Newfoundlanders understood official constructions of Canadian identity in its post-confederation period and how they retained their distinct regional identity while becoming part of the country are the main focus in this project. Analyzing how Newfoundland understood official Canadian identity at this time provides a lens to observe how Canada's official identity was understood outside of the dominant central Canada perspective. This alternative

regional perspective provides an understanding of how the realities of Canada's regionalism and regional identities play a role in why the official national identity was not as homogenous or uniting as the federal government had idealized.

Chapter 1 – Confederation and Identities

Newfoundland emerged as a sovereign Dominion between 1854 and 1934 but its sovereignty was seriously compromised by a high degree of dependence on Britain, Canada and the United States. The union with Canada offered a financial and social security which Newfoundland could not create itself nor expect to receive from any other. The union offered the restoration of democratic institutions with a wide range of legislative authority. However, the new province soon found great national indifference to Newfoundland and the other Maritime provinces.¹

Newfoundland was an autonomous Dominion of the British Empire for 80 years, from 1854-1934, prior to its union with Canada, another former Dominion of the British Empire. The island was a nation-state, holding its own passports, currency, and governance with its own Prime Minister, permitting Newfoundlanders a sense of relative independence. At the same time, Newfoundland was heavily reliant on cooperation, especially its trade relationships from Great Britain and its dependencies, as well as the United States and Canada. During the Great Depression, Newfoundland could no longer remain fiscally solvent and its sense of independence ended in 1934 with the establishment of a Commission of Government controlled by Great Britain. The

¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John's, Newfoundland, October 27-28, 1977*, (Ottawa: Task Force on Canadian Unity, 1977), 10-11

Commission of Government remained in place until Newfoundland's confederation with Canada in 1949.

Melvin Baker used the metaphor of Newfoundland “falling into the Canadian lap” regarding the union between the two.² However, it was more that Newfoundland chose to take a seat at the Canadian table and negotiated their position rather than merely falling into the arrangement. When Newfoundland joined Canada, the island and its peoples joined a developed state with its own national identity but the new province sought to maintain its distinction within the larger nation it was joining. This chapter examines this process in two parts, with the first addressing the predominately Brito-Canadian national identity of Canada that Newfoundland merged with upon entering into confederation. The second part examines the Proposed Arrangements and the eventual Terms of Union negotiated between Newfoundland and Canada prior to their formal union, to demonstrate how the former Dominion used this process to protect against fully assimilating into the Canadian nation by preserving aspects of its identity within these formal agreements. The negotiation of Newfoundland's entry into Canada, the differences between Newfoundland's entry and others who had previously joined, and how Newfoundland sought to protect itself and maintain a level of distinction within this union will be particularly highlighted.

When Newfoundland joined Canada, it was the final step in the Canadian imperial project along its east-west axis, with Joseph R. Smallwood as the last

² Melvin Baker, “Falling into the Canadian Lap: The Confederation of Newfoundland and Canada, 1945-1949,” in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John's: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003).

Father of Confederation.³ During the ceremony on Parliament Hill, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent reportedly said that Newfoundland was destined to join Canada; when the Peace Tower was constructed in 1916 it was inscribed with the nine provincial Coat of Arms with a tenth left blank “for the day which the Fathers of Confederation had foreseen when Newfoundland would join Canada.”⁴ Since the first iteration of the Canadian confederation in 1867, the state continued its imperial endeavour by expanding further into the West and the North until 1905 (with the Easterly exception of Prince Edward Island in 1873). The Canadian government had concentrated on an Expansionist Movement during the late 19th century, in part due to their concern with American expansion into the Western frontier.⁵ Accordingly, determination to settle the West in the name of Canada sprung forth. Decades later, in the postwar period when imperialism had come to be seen by the global community as passé, the Canadian imperial project made its last push for expansion by bringing Newfoundland and its Labrador territory into the fold of confederation. While often iterated in Canadian historical

³ Raymond B. Blake, *Canadians at Last: Canada Integrates Newfoundland as a Province*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), ix. For more on the notion of the “Canadian imperial project” see: Ian McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian history,” *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 18, no. 4 (2000) and Kurt Korieski, “Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 41, no. 2 (2007).

⁴ Canada Conference '99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, March 29-31, 1999, St. John's, Newfoundland (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Council for Canadian Unity, 1990), 1.

⁵ Shannon Conway, “George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s,” *Manitoba History* no. 86 (Spring 2018), 13.

writing (and by Canadian Prime Ministers) as a fated union, such an interpretation is misaligned from the Newfoundland perspective.⁶

In the immediate aftermath of the union, there was mixed reaction within the new province regarding whether this was in the best interests of the former dominion. The official confederation ceremony at Parliament Hill in Ottawa on April Fool's Day suitably left some anti-confederate Newfoundlanders feeling like the punchline of a bad joke. It was not a simple decision for Newfoundland to become Canada's tenth province. While the island had previously been a sovereign state in the British Empire, in the years leading up to confederation Newfoundland had been under a Commission of Government overseen by Great Britain due to the inability of the island to manage its financial affairs adequately. In the mid-1940s, a National Convention took place in Newfoundland to decide how the island should go forward. The outcome was union with Canada; however, from the outset of the convention most did not consider this a desirable option.

The Newfoundland National Convention began in September 1946, with the duty to report on "various aspects of Newfoundland life" and to advise Britain on the future of the colony. Regardless of the initial intentions, the convention ultimately became a struggle between pro-confederationists and anti-confederationists.⁷ Joseph Smallwood led the pro-confederationists. During the

⁶ Canada Conference '99, Marilyn L. Thompson, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings, March 29-31, 1999, St. John's, Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Council for Canadian Unity, 1999), 1.

⁷ Thomas Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt: Documents in Post-Confederation Canadian History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 237-238 and Melvin Baker and Peter Neary, "Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada: The Memorandum Submitted by

debates, he spoke of the difficulties of daily life on the island, but focused on his adoration for Newfoundland and all the potential it had. Smallwood alleged Newfoundland was not making the kind of progress it should be and wanted the island to have more and be more, and that union with Canada was the answer. He believed that joining with another “great British nation” would mean that Newfoundlanders could continue to be Newfoundlanders by continuing to be part of the British Empire even if less independent than they had been previously.⁸ Smallwood’s biggest adversary was Peter John Cashin who advocated for Newfoundland’s return to responsible government. Cashin was highly critical of the supposed economic benefits of joining Canada and stressed that while he liked Canada, he did not feel that confederation was in the best interest of Newfoundland. He believed Canada to be “in a worse position financially than Newfoundland” at that time and that “Newfoundlanders [would] no longer be Newfoundlanders” if they were to join Canada, as they would be more permanently signing away their former independence and would subsequently acclimatize into the Canadian way of life.⁹

Both the pro- and anti-confederate supporters within the National Convention understood that Newfoundland could not go it alone, as they had “neither the population nor the resources to prosper independently,” hence the rationale behind while even the anti-confederates proposed an economic customs union between Newfoundland and Canada as opposed to a political union. The

the Newfoundland Delegation, 13 October 1948,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 33, no. 2 (2018), 459-462.

⁸ Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 237-242.

⁹ Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 242-248.

island had been financially dependent on Britain before the Second World War but the war was an economic boon for the island due to its strategic location in the North Atlantic that was ripe for the placement of American and Canadian airfields. This economic boom lasted only as long as the war.¹⁰ In the spring of 1947, the National Convention sent delegations to Ottawa and London and learned that the United Kingdom would no longer finance the island if they were to self-govern once again. Instead, the United Kingdom believed that Newfoundland should join Canada. Initially, Canada was reticent to extend the hand of confederation to Newfoundland. They knew little about the island and its inhabitants, save for some stereotypes. Moreover, they were reluctant to take aboard a potential financial burden. However, due to its mentioned strategic location, Canadian interest in the island grew in the early 1940s. It should be acknowledged that there were Newfoundlanders, such as merchants and fishermen, who would have preferred a union with the United States due to the stronger ties between the two, having more in common with the states on the eastern seaboard and their ongoing economic trade, but that preference was never made available to Newfoundlanders.¹¹

The delegation in Ottawa was to determine with the Canadian government a “fair and equitable basis” for such a union and in October 1947, the federal government approved Terms of Union with Newfoundland; Newfoundland did not make such an offer to Canada, it went only one way with Canada offering and

¹⁰ Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 235-236.

¹¹ Baker and Neary, “Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada,” 460; Baker, “Falling into the Canadian Lap,” 38; and Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 235.

Newfoundland ultimately deciding. Deciding against the Canadian offer, the National Convention advised the British government in January 1948 that a referendum was to be held to decide whether Newfoundland should return to “Responsible Government as it existed prior to 1934” or for the continuation of the “Commission of Government.” On 11 March 1948, the British government announced that the vote would contain three choices: maintenance of the “Commission of Government for a period of five years,” “Confederation with Canada,” and a return to “Responsible Government as it existed in 1933.”¹²

Public reaction to the coming referendum was divisive. Many poems and polemics were published both for and against Newfoundland’s return to Responsible Government. Views ranged from patriotic to xenophobic; from believing that union with Canada would forever change Newfoundlanders and their way of life, to a particular distaste for the French (as Newfoundlanders understood Canada to be a dualistic Anglo-French country in nature).¹³ An anti-confederate letter published in the *St. John’s Daily News* on referendum day warned voters of Canada’s desire to “get her hands on Labrador” due to its abundance of natural resources and stressed that Newfoundlanders vote for Responsible Government.¹⁴

In the end, two referendums were held due to the initial vote lacking a decisive outcome. The first was on 3 June 1948, with the return to responsible government getting the majority with 69,400 votes (64,066 for Confederation

¹² Baker and Neary, “Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada,” 460-462.

¹³ W.P. Williams, “Hero of ‘48,” *The Independent*, 5 April 1948, (St. John’s, NL: 1948), 6.

¹⁴ Statia M. English, “A Patriotic Appeal,” *The Daily News*, 22 July 1948, (St. John’s, NL: 1948), 6.

with Canada and 23,311 for the return to the Commission of Government). The choice of the continuation of the Commission of Government was “overwhelmingly rejected” and subsequently taken off the ballot for the second referendum. Held on 22 July 1948, the second vote saw 52.34% in favour of Confederation with Canada and 47.66% voting against.¹⁵ In the end, individual Newfoundlanders voted to join Canada but individual Canadians had no say in the matter. On 27 July 1948, the “Canadian government announced that it was willing to negotiate final Terms of Union with Newfoundland” and a delegation was sent from Newfoundland to Ottawa to negotiate the final Terms of Union from October through December 1948. Newfoundland presented “a lengthy memorandum” to the Canadian government on 13 October 1948 wherein Newfoundland was to join Canada “before the expiration of the thirty-first day of March 1949.” The final Terms of Union were signed on 11 December 1948.¹⁶

Anti-confederate Newfoundlanders believe that Newfoundland’s union with Canada was a conspiracy, orchestrated by Great Britain and Canada rather than decided upon by the Newfoundland people. They believed Great Britain wanted to rid itself of the island, asking Canada to take on the burden, by fashioning the referendum ballot with the option of union with Canada when Newfoundlanders were more interested in either returning to independence or continuing under the Commission of Government. Great Britain was viewed as

¹⁵ Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 234-235; and Baker and Neary, “Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada,” 462-463.

¹⁶ Baker and Neary, “Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada,” 463-466; and Paul Bridel, ed. *Documents on Relations between Canada and Newfoundland, Volume 2*, (Ottawa: Department of External Affairs, 1984), 1125-1137.

not wanting to take the risk of continued obligation to the island and arranged for the third option. This was indeed a conspiracy theory as opposed to being the reality of the situation. While it was true that Great Britain decided to place confederation with Canada on the referendum ballot, it was Newfoundlanders who ultimately decided to vote (albeit with the slightest of majorities) to join Canada. The idea of such a conspiracy began during the confederation era due to Newfoundlanders fearing that their “distinct and cherished culture could be legislated out of existence” upon joining Canada.¹⁷

Several Newfoundland historians such as Peter Neary and Jeff Webb have addressed this opinion, which continues to be popular in more recent decades. As mentioned, Canada’s interest in Newfoundland grew during the Second World War due to its strategic location in the Northern North Atlantic, and Britain appreciated this, as the two believed that a union between Newfoundland and Canada was Newfoundland’s “natural destiny.” Nevertheless, Neary argues that while Canada and Great Britain “favoured a particular outcome” for Newfoundland, and Britain had the final say on the referendum ballot, Newfoundlanders still voted for confederation when given the choice between that and a return to responsible government.¹⁸ As well, Webb argues, “although the British and Canadian governments were working toward Newfoundland’s union with Canada, no compelling evidence has been presented of a conspiracy to

¹⁷ Thorner, *A Country Nourished on Self-Doubt*, 236.

¹⁸ Peter Neary, “Newfoundland’s Union with Canada, 1949: Conspiracy or Choice?,” *Acadiensis* vol. 12, no. 2 (Spring 1983), 114-117.

rig the referendum.”¹⁹ This myth continues to be popular, as Webb posits, due to Newfoundland’s “contemporary political situation,” whereby economic hardships such as the closures of the seal, cod, and salmon fisheries “threaten the extinction of rural Newfoundland.” With much of the forces of change being outside of the control of the province, it becomes a comfort to “externalize and personalize [their] problems” by putting the blame onto others. Therefore, the rise of conspiracy around the union says more about the contemporary society than the historical situation.²⁰

Newfoundlanders were officially accepted as Canadians in name as of 31 March 1949. Yet, this new province had a history of being a sovereign Dominion in the British Empire, with all the trappings of a nation-state including a distinct national identity. The Terms of Union between Newfoundland and Canada provide documented evidence for the process of how Newfoundland negotiated its union with Canada. This process helps explain how Newfoundland sought to protect its own identity while being incorporated into the Canadian state. For example, Newfoundland used the negotiated terms to preserve elements of traditional culture and ways of life, such as preserving traditional foodways, by enshrining them in the formal agreement. The Terms of Union also provides evidence for how Newfoundland’s union with Canada differed from the previously joined provinces, which generated grievances amongst the other provinces particularly those in the Maritimes. However, such differences are

¹⁹ Jeff Webb, “Confederation, Conspiracy and Choice: A Discussion,” *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (Fall 1998), 169.

²⁰ Webb, “Confederation, Conspiracy and Choice: A Discussion,” 183.

largely consequent to the periods in which the provinces joined Canada, particularly in regards to the contemporary national priorities. The documents of Newfoundland's negotiated union with Canada provide evidence of how it used this process to protect against fully assimilating into the Canadian nation.

I: Postwar Canadian Identity

The official national identity of Canada during the period of its union with Newfoundland was predominately within the realm of Britishness, which had been with the country since its conception. From Canada's confederation era in the 1860s until the immediate postwar period, Britishness was at the centre of the Anglo-Canadian identity, which steadily shifted from the late-19th and early-20th centuries toward a more intrinsic Canadian identity. During this period, the Canadian identity has often been described as 'Brito-Canadian,' where the elements of Britishness are combined with elements that are distinctly Canadian. Brito-Canadianness sits firmly in James Belich's concept of the "Better Britain," where Canada as part of the British Empire directly imported along with British people, elements of British culture and recreated British institutions. This import of a people, their institutions and cultural markers, left an impression on Canada that would ultimately shape the very core of the state and its identity. Yet, this Britishness was intertwined with the particular facets of Northern North American life, therefore not existing as a mere reproduction of identity but rather becoming

something altogether new; an amalgamation of Britishness and something distinctly Canadian: Brito-Canadianness.²¹

In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Canada was moving away from Britain both objectively and metaphorically, but nevertheless maintained strong connections to Britain until the postwar period. British World historians, such as Paula Hastings and Kurt Korneski, have examined the Brito-Canadian identity at the turn of the twentieth century, whereby the constructions of British identity in the late-19th century applied throughout the British World “varied widely and were often ambiguous, fluid, and contradictory,” with Canada being “no exception.” In the context of Winnipeg at this time, Korneski argues that what Britishness meant to Canadians demonstrates that “the identity was pliable” and used to suit their particular situations and goals.²² Yet, while British roots largely dominated Canadian culture during the early 20th century, Hastings notes that Canada was ardently developing its own distinct culture in the period. Fundamentally, there was a “spiritual essence” central in the ideation of Britishness, which allowed for its flexible nature and adaptation to the particular contexts of the lands, climate, and peoples across the British Empire.²³

²¹ Conway, “George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s,” 12-14.

²² Conway, “George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s,” 15-16; Paula Hastings, “‘Our Glorious Anglo-Saxon Race Shall Ever Fill Earth’s Highest Place’: *The Anglo-Saxon* and the Construction of Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Canada,” in *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, edited by Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 92; and Korneski, “Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s,” 162-168.

²³ Paula Hastings, “Branding Canada: Consumer Culture and the Development of Popular Nationalism in the Early Twentieth Century,” in Norman Hillmer (ed.), *Canada’s of the Mind: the Making and Unmaking of Canadians Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007), 134; Shannon Conway, “From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s,” *Études Canadiennes / Canadian Studies* no. 84 (Summer

While the shift away from this British-based identity occurred steadily as Canada grew and matured as a country in its own right, more significant and marked changes occurred in the postwar period. Not until the 1960s did a more intrinsic official Canadian national identity develop. Canadian historians such as Phillip Buckner, José Igartua, and C.P. Champion, remark that a strong connection to Britain remained into the 1960s, but the influence from the United States during the first half of the 20th century had grown considerably during the postwar years.²⁴

The postwar period remains a central point in time where the shift in Canadian national identity occurs, in part due to the wide array of changes that arose both international and domestically. Significant transnational and geopolitical shifts began in the aftermath of the Second World War that would alter national perceptions both at home and abroad. The heydays of the British Empire were behind them, which abetted the fall of Anglo-conformity and dominance on the world stage. The emerging civil rights movements, most notably in the United States, and in the particular context of Canada, the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and the Other Quiet Revolution in English Canada by the early 1960s exemplify this.²⁵

2018), 4; Korneski, "Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s," 169; Conway, "George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s," 18.

²⁴ Conway, "From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s," 4 and Phillip Buckner, "How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Americans!," *Acadiensis* vol. 25, no. 2 (2006), 117.

²⁵ Conway, "From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s," 4 and Harold Troper, "An Uncertain Past: Reflections on the History of Multiculturalism," *TESL Talk* vol. 1, no. 3 (1979), 7-15.

With Newfoundland's 1949 union with Canada, Newfoundlanders were agreeing to join with Canada's national identity and embrace it as their own – at least in part. The shared British-based origin of both of these former Dominions made this reasonable on the surface, as the smaller of the two could rest assured in their comfort of joining with a larger nation also based in Britishness. Canada's official identity in the immediate postwar period remained firmly grounded in its Britishness, though growing steadily in its Brito-Canadianness en route to a more authentic expression of intrinsic Canadianness.

Part II: Terms of Union Between Newfoundland and Canada

The union of Newfoundland and Canada obtained approval in accordance with the schedule of the Terms of Union and was given assent on 18 February 1949. The confirmation of the union was subject to the previous British North America Acts (BNA Acts). The BNA Act, 1949, as it came to be known, replaced the Newfoundland Act, 1933, and the BNA Acts, 1867-1949 became the acceptable standard form of reference henceforth.²⁶ The argued rationale behind why Canada would want Newfoundland as a province, given that Newfoundland on two previous occasions in the late 19th century decided against union with Canada, lies in Canada's fear of further encroachment from the United States. Canada feared losing Newfoundland to the United States, as during the early years of WWII Newfoundland had embarked on a 99-year land lease with the United States. There was also a Canadian desire to attain ownership of the

²⁶ Canada, *An Act to Approve the Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1949); Great Britain, Parliament, *A Bill to Confirm and Give Effect to Terms of Union Agreed between Canada and Newfoundland*, (Great Britain: King's Printer, 1949).

fisheries rather than continue to have Newfoundland be a competitor in this area.²⁷ Yet, in the immediate postwar period, Canadian opinion regarding union with Newfoundland was weak, albeit with some concern about the would-be-province becoming a financial liability as expressed by Quebec Premier's Maurice Duplessis. Nevertheless, Lester Pearson, Canada's Minister of External Affairs, stated at the initial Terms of Union negotiations in 1947 that "the national interest requires that Newfoundland should be brought into the federation if at all possible and that the present may be our last opportunity to do so."²⁸ In June 1947, a Newfoundland delegation travelled to Ottawa to negotiate with the Canadian government and determine a "fair and equitable basis" for a union between the two. By October the Canadian government had approved the offer of a Terms of Union with Newfoundland; Newfoundland did not make such an offer to Canada, it went only one way with Canada offering and Newfoundland ultimately deciding the fate of the union.²⁹

While Newfoundland was not the first province to negotiate their union with Canada, as British Columbia and Prince Edward Island had done so in 1871 and 1873 respectively, the context of Newfoundland's entry into Canada was considerably different.³⁰ The Second World War had come to an end, signifying a

²⁷ David Mackenzie, "The Terms of Union in Historical Perspective," *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (1998), 221-222.

²⁸ Mackenzie, "The Terms of Union in Historical Perspective," 222.

²⁹ Baker and Neary, "Negotiating Final Terms of Union with Canada," 460-461.

³⁰ It should be noted that while Alberta and Saskatchewan joined Canada in 1905, the two province's did not negotiate their entry in the same way as the mentioned provinces as they had been created out of the North West Territories rather than a separate entity joining Canada. Stephen May, "The Terms of Union: An Analysis of their Current Relevance," in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John's: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 177.

geopolitical shift in terms of nationalism, independence, and British dominance; while many nations around the world began to become independent states, Newfoundland chose to become part of a larger country. In these negotiations, Newfoundlanders' goals were "straightforward," with their ultimate desire being to "return to open and democratic government and to secure Newfoundland's present and future economic situation on a national and personal level." They believed they could find this security in union with Canada, by attaching itself to a "more prosperous nation." The British tie between Canada and Newfoundland was also at the forefront for Newfoundlanders, as union with Canada should then mean that Newfoundlanders would not lose their national identity. In this sense, confederation with Canada "meant that Newfoundlanders could become Canadians without having to stop being Newfoundlanders." However, there were contentious issues to deal with during the negotiations, such as the marking of the Labrador-Quebec border, Newfoundland's debt, fisheries jurisdiction, and even the sale of margarine.³¹

At the first negotiation meeting on 25 June 1947, Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King and the Chairman of the Newfoundland Delegation Mr. F. Gordon Bradley each gave an opening address. Mackenzie King focused his address on the similarities between Canada and Newfoundland, their shared "common allegiance to the crown" and as members of the British Commonwealth with shared "British freedom" and "Christian civilization." He noted how Newfoundlanders who had previously settled in Canada contributed to "the

³¹ Mackenzie, "The Terms of Union in Historical Perspective," 223-224.

development of Canada as a nation” and how the two had already had established “business and professional relations.” Another focus for Mackenzie King was how the discussion of union “began over eighty years ago” and that the “basis of union should be of mutual advantage,” that this union would not only involve “administrative and economic change” but also that “for each of our peoples it would involve some alteration in their traditional outlook.”³²

In his reply, Bradley reminded those in attendance that the people of Newfoundland would decide in a referendum. He repeatedly used the phrase “fair and equitable basis of union” and acknowledged that this was a means for Newfoundland to become “self-supporting” once again. The envisioned solution for the problems of Newfoundland’s economy would be to join a “much larger, much more diversified, and more stable economy,” adding, “it is a very small step from consideration of economic integration to constitutional and political federation.” Bradley also referred to the early attempts at confederation, that the founders of Canada saw a “British nation stretching from St. John’s to Victoria” and (some) Newfoundlanders share in this vision. He echoed Mackenzie King’s view of a shared British heritage and allegiance to the Crown, that the relationship between the two was “already intimate and co-operative at a thousand points of contact,” and that “there may emerge a fair and equitable basis of federal union

³² Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation: Terms believed to Constitute a Fair and Equitable Basis for Union of Newfoundland with Canada should the People of Newfoundland Desire to Enter into Confederation, October 29, 1947*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1948), 23-25.

which both peoples, Canadians and Newfoundlanders, will willingly, indeed gladly, accept.”³³

On 29 October 1947, the proposed arrangements for a “fair and equitable basis for union of Newfoundland with Canada” were agreed to, based on discussions held during the meetings between representatives of the Government of Canada and delegates from the National Convention of Newfoundland between June and September 1947. Prime Minister W. L. Mackenzie King made it clear in a letter to the Governor of Newfoundland that, at that time, the Government of Canada was not prepared for any additional financial arrangements beyond what was outlined. From the start, Newfoundland would be a province of Canada “with all the rights, powers, privileges and responsibilities of a province” and this new province would include the territory of Labrador, with Canadian citizenship extended to all inhabitants. Canada would provide public and welfare services, to the extent that it did for the other Canadian provinces, and it would take over various publicly owned services such as railway, postal, customs, and public radio.³⁴

There was a variety of financial terms within the proposed arrangements. Firstly, Canada would assume Newfoundland’s outstanding debt to Great Britain, which would have been covered by Canada had Newfoundland been a province at the time, though Newfoundland would still be responsible for its national debt. Canada permitted Newfoundland to keep its financial surplus at the time of union,

³³ Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation*, 25-28.

³⁴ Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation*, 3-6.

under the condition that a third would be set aside to improve public services and not to “subsidize production or sale of Newfoundland products in unfair competition with similar products of other provinces.” The Government of Canada would pay subsidies to the provincial government. Additionally, there would be a system of diminishing transitional grants to “facilitate adjustment of Newfoundland to the status of a province” for a period of twelve years with additional terms outlining a re-assessment of Newfoundland’s financial position to be reviewed by establishing a Royal Commission “within eight years of union.”³⁵

In regards to the production of foodstuffs on the island, Newfoundland would be given special permission to continue the production of oleomargarine and other butter substitutes, so long as no such products were “exported from the Province of Newfoundland to any other part of Canada.” For natural resources, Newfoundland would be permitted their “retention [...] on the same basis as other provinces.” As well, like the other provinces, Newfoundland would have authority over the education of its population.³⁶

While these negotiations focused on protecting Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders from becoming entirely absorbed into Canada with their union, a notable clarification is required. Indigenous peoples within Newfoundland and Labrador did not receive the same consideration during these negotiations. No cultural or economic protections focused on Indigenous peoples were put into

³⁵ Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation*, 6-8.

³⁶ Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation*, 10.

place during the union between Newfoundland and Canada. Indigenous peoples have a long history of inhabiting the island of Newfoundland and an even longer history in Labrador, yet the negotiations excluded them from the consideration given to the majority white-Anglo Newfoundland population. Thus, it can be assumed they did not pass muster of being Newfoundlanders; an additional layer of ‘othering’ within a province that was ‘othered’.

During the meetings for the proposed arrangements, several subcommittees were established with one focused on the “Indians and Eskimos” of the would-be province, in order to “bring together and examine information on the numbers, economic conditions and general situation of the Indians and Eskimos of Labrador and how they would be provided for in the event of Union.”³⁷ Prior to union with Canada, Newfoundland did not have any specified agency for dealings with its Indigenous population but after confederation, the province’s Indigenous peoples would be subject to the Indian Act.³⁸ Terms of the Indian Act regarded “Indians” and “Eskimos” as one race “for the purposes of administration.” It was proposed that if Newfoundland was to join Canada, the “Indians and Eskimos of Newfoundland and Labrador would become the sole responsibility of the federal government.” Accordingly, Newfoundland’s Indigenous peoples would be “entitled to benefits” and “subject to regulations” as outlined in Appendix XI of the Proposed Arrangements; benefits and regulations such as: “free education” at Residential Schools, “free medical services,” Family

³⁷ Canada, Newfoundland, *Proposed Arrangements for the Entry of Newfoundland into Confederation*, 18.

³⁸ Adrian Tanner, “The Aboriginal Peoples of Newfoundland and Labrador and Confederation,” *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (1998), 241.

Allowance “on the same basis as [the] white population,” the exemption of land tax, and the prohibition of “intoxicating liquors” for “Indians”. As well, the appendix stated that if “Indians” wanted to be full citizens, and therefore be able to vote, they were to renounce their Indian status and thus “no longer entitled to special benefits accord to Indians.”³⁹

It was specified that the provincial governments were not required to “contribute in any way to the support of the Indian population,” though some projects involved co-operation from both federal and provincial governments with those costs “borne equally by the Dominion and the province.” There were stipulations regarding the administration of Family Allowance linked to the Residential Schools; “Eskimos” (described as those in the “Far North”) did not receive cash or cheques and instead received supplies, which the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and North West Territory Administration System would oversee. The governments involved considered this “satisfactory”. The Dominion was “responsible” for the welfare and education of “Indians and Eskimos” and retained the “control and management of their lands and property.” It was stated that the Indian Act would provide for the “compulsory education of Indian children between the full ages of seven and sixteen years,” in either the day or Residential Schools. The Dominion would also pay “tuition fees for Indian children” that went to elementary or high schools run by the province. The Residential Schools were denominational – Roman Catholic, Church of England,

³⁹ Canada, Privy Council Office, *Appendix XI: A Preliminary Statement Regarding the Position of Newfoundland’s Indians and Eskimos in the Event of Union*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1948), 102.

United Church, and Presbyterian Church – with some being church-owned and others government-owned and operated.⁴⁰

With this union, Newfoundland's responsibility to its Indigenous populations was given over to the Canadian government; Newfoundland did not seek to negotiate for better terms for its Indigenous inhabitants than what was outlined in the Indian Act. The Indigenous peoples within the new province, by not being considered within the Terms of Union, began to be understood to be something other than Newfoundlanders and not worthy of protection in the same way as the rest of the population. In negotiating the Terms of Union, Newfoundland had an opportunity to advocate on behalf of Indigenous peoples in northern North America but seemingly saw no benefit in doing so and essentially handed over a portion of its population to be wards of the federal government.

On 22 July 1948, Newfoundlanders voted by majority to join Canada based on the proposed arrangements. While the slight majority got their wish, the outspoken opposition continued after the decision had been made. On 2 August 1948, St. John's resident J.M. Connors published a letter in *The Daily News*, speaking to all Newfoundland "patriots". In considerably emotive language, Connors declared that 22 July 1948 would "stand out as the most ignominious day in the annals of our country's [Newfoundland's] long history;" that Newfoundland was divided by the referendum and "her loyal patriots bit the dust [...] at the hands of their fellow countrymen." Despite the 'humiliating' blow from Britain when Newfoundland's "God-given right" to be a country was not

⁴⁰ Canada, Privy Council Office, *Appendix XI*, 102.

restored, patriotic Newfoundlanders refused to bow to Ottawa.⁴¹ There was a considerable level of pride felt by Newfoundlanders who desired the return to independence and responsible government; they remained unshaken by those ruling over Newfoundland while residing in Ottawa.

Nevertheless, after the referendum, representatives for Newfoundland and Canada met to “settle the final terms and arrangements” for the union – the governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, and Newfoundland agreed to this.⁴² Signed on 11 December 1948, the final Terms of Union largely mirrored those outlined in the Proposed Arrangements. The prior BNA Acts, 1867 and 1946, applied to Newfoundland as the other provinces. Newfoundland would have six members in the Senate and seven in the House of Commons (out of 262 members), to be adjusted accordingly with the BNA Acts. The Constitution of Newfoundland would be revived, but subject to the terms of the BNA Acts and would be known as the Constitution of the Province of Newfoundland. As for the new provincial government, the legislature of the Province of Newfoundland was to be “called together not later than four months after the date of Union.”⁴³ The Statute of Westminster, 1931 would apply as in the other provinces and “suitable provision [would] be made for the extension of the Canadian citizenship laws to the Province of Newfoundland.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ J.M. Connors, “Calling all Patriots,” *The Daily News*, 2 August 1948, (St. John’s, NL: 1948), 4.

⁴² Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, (Ottawa: The Government of Canada, 1948), 3.

⁴³ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 4-8.

⁴⁴ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 25.

The Terms adjusted the diminishing transitional grants from the earlier negotiated \$3.5 million annually for the first three years to \$6.5 million and there would still be a review of Newfoundland's financial position within eight years of Union.⁴⁵ Fisheries laws, rules, and regulations were to "continue in force in the Province of Newfoundland as if the Union had not been made for a period of five years from the date of Union and thereafter until the Parliament of Canada otherwise provides." However, the Government of Canada would bear the costs of maintaining the Newfoundland Fisheries Board and the administration of the Fisheries Laws, but the Minister of Fisheries of Canada would be given "powers, authorities, and functions."⁴⁶ Regarding natural resources, "all lands, mines, minerals, and royalties belong to Newfoundland at the date of Union [...] shall belong to the Province of Newfoundland."⁴⁷

The regulations for the production of oleomargarine, Term 46, were essentially the same, with the stipulation that "oleomargarine or margarine shall not be sent, shipped, bought, or carried from the Province of Newfoundland into any other Province of Canada."⁴⁸ The intention of Term 46 was for the protection of a Newfoundland industry from a federal policy that would have meant the destruction of that industry, as the Canadian government's policy was to protect the dairy industry in Canada. However, due to higher costs associated with butter, combined with the island's infrastructure in regards to transporting a product with a more diminished shelf-life such as butter, meant that the oleo-margarine

⁴⁵ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 17-18.

⁴⁶ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 13.

⁴⁷ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 21.

⁴⁸ Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Terms of Union of Newfoundland with Canada*, 27.

industry was to be protected and continue.⁴⁹ Newfoundland successfully negotiated Term 46 for the protection of its local industry, as well as to circumvent a negative impact on household finances and foodways of its people.

While the period leading up to the union between Newfoundland and Canada witnessed much-heated debate, the aftermath witnessed no lessening of vitriol. On 31 March 1949, the eve of confederation, a St. John's newspaper *The Daily News*, contained letters to the editor expressing displeasure of the union with Canada. Harbour Grace resident Fanny Fiander Ryan exclaimed "horror" at Newfoundland losing its independence, while an anonymous Newfoundlander bluntly stated, "of course, in reality, we have little in common with Canadians as they are composed of French and so many others from Europe so it will be very difficult for us to adjust ourselves to Canada's way of life."⁵⁰ On 1 April 1949, a confederation ceremony took place on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and some celebrations occurred in pockets of the new province, seeing the union as a means for the continuation of Newfoundland and its people as part of Canada, believing St. Laurent's assertion that Newfoundlanders would not lose their culture and traditions in this union. However, in the capital city, it was far from celebratory as those living in St. John's were largely anti-confederate and favoured a return to self-government. There are tales of black flags flown in the city, with the most ardent anti-confederates donning black armbands and performing a funeral procession holding a casket bearing the name "Newfoundland," signifying the

⁴⁹ May, "The Terms of Union: An Analysis of their Current Relevance," 200.

⁵⁰ Letters to the Editor, "Fanny Fiander Ryan Bemoans Newfoundland's joining Canada," *The Daily News*, St. John's, March 31, 1949.

death of an independent Newfoundland. The St. John's *Daily News* published a lament on becoming a province of Canada wherein journalist Albert Perlin sorrowfully stated:

Sold by only half the people, all too willing to deny,
For illusionary profits what the future might imply.
They have bought confederation paying in the country's pride.
Let us hope their expectations will be amply satisfied.
Those who lost the fight for freedom have the greater pride this day,
Though their country's independence lies the victim of the fray.⁵¹

Following the union, the federal government published an informational booklet in 1950 entitled *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada's Newest Province*. In the foreword of this publication, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent stated "the people of Newfoundland thrown in their lot with the Canadian people and, without losing their unique identity, have become fellow citizens of a larger union," while describing Newfoundlanders as a "sea-faring people of kindred stock and similar cultural traditions." Department of External Affairs prepared this booklet shortly after Newfoundland's entry into Canada, with the intention to "acquaint Canadians more closely with the history and geography, the economic, human and natural resources of Newfoundland, and enable them better to know their fellow Canadians."⁵²

The Department of External Affairs consciously put together the publication, with many photographs and maps to better familiarize Canadians

⁵¹ Albert Perlin, "Lament," *St. John's Daily News*, 1 April 1949, (St. John's, NL: 1949).

⁵² Canada, Department of External Affairs, *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada's Newest Province*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1950), 3.

with the recently acquired territory. Its contents were oriented around physical geography, history, levels of government, the people, public health and welfare, education, natural resources and industry, labour and employment, foreign trade, and transport and communication – with the sections focused on history and natural resources being noticeably longer.⁵³ Regarding its description of the Newfoundland people, it tells of a predominately English and Irish heritage with some Scottish and French origins, noting, “the sea breeds a hardy, independent people.” Most of the population was said to be dispersed along the coastline of the province, with the largest concentration (43%) being on the Avalon Peninsula and an overall population trend of moving toward the industrial centres of the island. The children living in Newfoundland were depicted as a “healthy and happy generation of young Canadians [...] growing up in the new province.” Concerning the description of those in Labrador, it was stated that the “white settlers and the Eskimos live mainly on the coast in small settlements; the Indians are nomadic and live by hunting and trapping in the interior.”⁵⁴

In contrast to the “healthy and happy” portrayal of the people, the isolation in the more remote areas of the province was described as enabling a generational stagnation in their way of life. This isolation was further understood to negatively affect the population’s vernacular, as they were described as using “many obsolete words” and the dialect remained “much the same as it was in the days of the early settlers” in these isolated communities. As well, it was noted that religion played an “important part in the life of Newfoundland communities,”

⁵³ Canada, *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada’s Newest Province*, 5.

⁵⁴ Canada, *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada’s Newest Province*, 47-49 and 55.

albeit permitting divisions within and between communities. There was a particular focus on place names throughout the province, claiming that “Newfoundlanders have shown both imagination and humour in naming their numerous settlements,” while also touting their originality, with some of these place names being linked to feelings, sea-faring, various nationalities, among a variety of other linkage possibilities.⁵⁵ In describing the new province’s culture, generally referring to high-culture, it said, “most of the Island’s cultural activities are centred at St. John’s,” though the “other towns and outports all make their distinct and valuable contribution to the cultural life of the country.” Regarding music, it mentioned that “Newfoundland has produced a characteristic music in its folksongs and sea chanties” and that it has been the “habit of fisherfolk in many of the outports to record in song local events, especially those of a tragic nature.”⁵⁶

The image of the newest Canadians that the Canadian government sought to present to the rest of Canada was likely meant to alleviate any concerns associated with bringing Newfoundland into the union and to familiarize Canadians with the province. In an attempt to dissuade Canadians’ concern over the possible financial burden of the new province and its people, the federal government established an understanding of Newfoundlanders as the happy-go-lucky islanders, ever so slightly backward and content in their isolated rural lifestyle, complete with an antiquated dialect to go along with such a way of being. The Canadian government did not create this portrayal of Newfoundland

⁵⁵ Canada, *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada’s Newest Province*, 51-52.

⁵⁶ Canada, *Newfoundland: An Introduction to Canada’s Newest Province*, 53-55.

and Newfoundlanders, but it sanctioned this understanding amongst Canadians from the outset of the union with the production and dissemination of this informational booklet.

Conclusion

By the time Newfoundland joined Canada, Canada's national policy goals had shifted to focus on social rather than industrial developments. In 1867, John A. Macdonald's idea of confederation was sold on the ideals of a strong, vibrant economy. However, by 1949, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent's confederation ideals focused on equality of opportunity and social benefits, while maintaining full employment and a strong economy. The objectives of the federal government had changed by 1949, as such the benefits to Newfoundland were "radically different" from the other provinces during their earlier unions. Thus, Newfoundland's confederation was set in a different context, but the new province needed both social and industrial growth. As Raymond Blake iterates, in the time since 1867 the very nature of those initial promises of confederation "no longer had the same meaning."⁵⁷ The aims of confederation in 1867 were no longer the aims of the Canadian state in 1949, yet Newfoundland was decades behind in terms of industrial development and modernization; meaning that the early goals of confederation were still needed in their later-stage union with Canada. However, by the time Newfoundland joined, the federal government's aspirations and intentions had evolved to focus on maintaining the development of the country and expanding its social safety net. This played a considerable role

⁵⁷ Blake, *Canadians at Last*, 5-6.

in the newest province's integration into the state, as they needed both the early and later-stage objectives of the Canadian confederation.

Newfoundlanders opted for union with Canada, as Blake posits, “for purely pragmatic reasons” at that time.⁵⁸ Being Canadian would provide more security than independence, including the much-coveted social welfare system that they would benefit from after confederation. This union meant greater security for Canada as well, while also permitting access to abundant natural resources in the North Atlantic. The federal government was also of the understanding that the integration of the new province would be without issue because of their shared traditions of the British Commonwealth, including a generally shared language, religion, and history. However, this union meant that Newfoundland's dependence merely shifted from London to Ottawa; where once the island served as a resource base for Britain, it would continue in its role of “colonial subjugation” under Canada.⁵⁹ There would be no return to the level of independence once known prior to the Commission of Government. It was a logical reasoning, rather than such a union being fated, that permitted Newfoundland to become the tenth province of Canada.

Upon entering into confederation, Newfoundland was not just joining Canada, it was also joining the Maritime provinces to create the larger Atlantic region. The Maritimes and Newfoundland itself, as with many other regions in Canada, endure a sense of regional discontent with confederation and commonly

⁵⁸ Blake, *Canadians at Last*, 6.

⁵⁹ Sean T. Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 267 and G. A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation: Report to the Task Force on Canadian Unity*, (St. John's: Breakwater, 1979), 78.

feel as though they have little in common with the “Canadas,” having a stronger sense of attachment to their provincial identities. Newfoundland’s relationship with the Maritimes is complex, similar in nature to British Columbia’s relationship with the Prairies; they combine to create the Atlantic Canadian region but also maintain their own separate provincial as well as regional identities.⁶⁰

Some Maritimers were initially concerned about a union between Canada and Newfoundland, fearing that the potential province would be “a drain on Canada’s economy” and that jobless Newfoundlanders could “migrate to the Maritimes” for work. By the late 1940s, however, the Maritimes were seeking a more regional approach when dealing with Ottawa and saw that Newfoundland could be a part of this if the union occurred.⁶¹ The hope was that upon Newfoundland joining Canada, unity in the Maritimes would increase and the now Atlantic Canadian region would become strengthened. However, this did not come to fruition – at least not in any immediate sense. While Margaret Conrad argues that Newfoundland “differs substantially from its Maritime cousins,” it nevertheless became associated with the previously established Maritime region when it joined Canada. Yet over time, the addition of the tenth province to the earlier Maritime region became known as Atlantic Canada, although the separation of the Maritimes and Newfoundland as distinct regions and identities

⁶⁰ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 1 and 10; Margaret Conrad, “Mistaken Identities?: Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 18, no. 2 (2003), 166.

⁶¹ Corey Slumkoski, *Inventing Atlantic Canada: Regionalism and the Maritimes Reaction to Newfoundland’s Entry into Confederation*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 8 and 108.

signify that they are valid regions and regional identities in their own right, with each province having their own “distinctive cultures.”⁶²

When Newfoundland joined Canada, the federal government was not in a position to offer anything too generous that could aggrieve the Maritime provinces who were still battling Ottawa over their own terms of confederation. Because of this, Newfoundland’s terms ensured that the Maritime provinces “were made the benchmark against which to measure Newfoundland’s needs” after confederation. The Terms of Union meant the new province would be economically tied to the Maritime provinces, with Ottawa seeing Newfoundland as merely “an extension” of the Maritime region, often conflating the Atlantic and Maritime regions.⁶³

Despite this regional conflation, Newfoundland’s distinction from Canada and the Maritimes was able to continue due to the nature of the union. The benefits of the federal system meant Newfoundland retained control in many areas, such as education and local institutions, which would ensure Newfoundland’s distinct traditions, culture, and characteristics would remain in place in the province while becoming a part of Canada. Further still, Newfoundland’s decision to not join Canada until 1949 played a significant role in establishing their distinction from English Canada, due to the island’s continued direct reliance and association with the United Kingdom during the

⁶² Slumkoski, *Inventing Atlantic Canada*, 3-4 and Conrad, “Mistaken Identities?: Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region,” 165.

⁶³ Conrad, “Mistaken Identities?: Newfoundland and Labrador in the Atlantic Region,” 161-166 and Slumkoski, *Inventing Atlantic Canada*, 3-4.

same period when Canada was pulling away and becoming more attached to the United States.⁶⁴

Confederation with Canada meant that Newfoundland was joining a country that had an identity grounded in Britishness, albeit with a distinct Canadian flair not unlike Newfoundland's own distinct identity within the British Empire. The idea that the Canadian national project was (and is) "at its core an imperial endeavour," aligns with the establishment of a union with Newfoundland. The would-be province was believed to be resource-rich and unquestionably would provide worthy land in the North Atlantic, extending Canada's reach and thereby its fishery. Further still, Newfoundland was a fellow former British Dominion, meaning that those on the island, like those on the mainland, could continue the same "mode of life" that they had always known and easily become part of the same country, sharing in the same national identity.⁶⁵

When Newfoundland opted for union with Canada, it sought to protect and maintain the distinction that it enjoyed as part of the British Empire. The island was permitted to run its own affairs prior to the Commission of Government, and union with Canada would return Newfoundland to a level of independence; via the jurisdictional reality of the Canadian constitution, with the provinces largely

⁶⁴ Blake, *Canadians at Last*, 178-179 and Robert C. Thomsen, *Nationalism in Stateless Nations: Images of Self and Other in Scotland and Newfoundland*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2010), 110-111.

⁶⁵ This explanation for Newfoundland is consistent with Korneski, "Britishness, Canadianness, Class, and Race: Winnipeg and the British World, 1880s-1910s," 171-174; Doug Owsam, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 142-143; and Conway, "George Bryce and Anglo-Canadian Identity, 1880s-1910s," 15.

running their own affairs. This would be in conjunction with the comfortable security of the safety-net of the federal government, a level of security they could no longer expect to receive from Britain had they opted to go it alone. To achieve their aims fairly, Newfoundland negotiated their Terms of Union and held a referendum before becoming a part of Canada.

With the knowledge that Newfoundland would receive both a level of security and independence upon joining Canada, the pro-confederates during the National Convention and the subsequent referendum believed Newfoundland could maintain its differentiation as part of Canada. Newfoundland would control much of its affairs with its own governing authority, safeguarding the ability for the province's residents to remain Newfoundlanders culturally while also becoming Canadians in name. In the immediate aftermath of the union, the newest province became part of an enduring but rapidly changing national problem: Canada's national identity. Beginning in 1950, Canada's perennial problem of identity became a national project that saw the federal government implementing multiple nation-wide commissions and task forces to find a suitable official national identity for Canada.

Chapter 2 – Canadian Culture, Commissions, and the Changing Official Canadian Identity

The preservation and strengthening of Canadian identity and unity is the most important trust and responsibility of Parliament and of my government. That unity rests on a Canadianism based upon the two main cultural strands, British and French, enriched by the contributions of other cultural groups, and recognizing the essential contributions of all to the development of Canadian identity.¹

At the height of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism that spanned the 1960s, Governor General Georges Philias Vanier commented on the state of national identity and unity in Canada. Vanier stressed the necessity of coming to a collective understanding of Canada's identity for the sake of stabilizing national unity. In his understanding, Canada's identity should be grounded in the English and French traditions of the country, along with the recognition of Canadians who were neither English nor French. This was also the emerging conclusion of understanding of the Royal Commission. As such, Canada could no longer carry on with an understanding of itself as merely a state of the British Commonwealth; a more representative identity was needed, one that better reflected and described Canadians. In this sense, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism of the 1960s and the preceding Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences in 1949-

¹ From Governor General Georges Philias Vanier's Speech from the Throne on 18 January 1966. Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 27th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1967), 3.

1950, were as much a response to Canada's rapidly changing global context as they were to the particular societal situations within the country. Despite having joined Canada only eight days prior to the establishment of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, Newfoundland actively took up its role as a province of Canada during the commission.

The period following the Second World War witnessed a weakening of British power and, as historian C.P. Champion argues, saw Canadians "forging a new national identity of their own." Events such as the flag debate and other changes to the symbolic order of Canada are indicative of this forage into an intrinsic 'Canadianism'. The struggle of developing an intrinsic national identity in the presence of a diminishing British identity was not a problem that was unique to Canada, as the other former Dominions also dealt with this issue in the development of their national identities when departing from the more formal structures of the British model. The invention of new cultural traditions and symbols serves as a direct contrast and demarcation with the traditions of symbols of the British Empire, which was what occurred during the postwar era in Canada through the federal government's initiatives such as the flag and establishing commissions to solidify Canada's national culture and identity.² The often contentious battle between Britishness, Canadianness, and Americanness heightened during this period. The fear of Americanization was a key factor in

² C.P. Champion, *The Strange Demise of British Canada: The Liberals and Canadian Nationalism, 1964-1968*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 4-5. Also, A.G. Hopkins, "Rethinking Decolonization," *Past and Present* vol. 200, no. 1 (2008): 211-247.

Canada holding onto their formal and informal British connections during the mid-twentieth century, often using it as a stopgap measure against an increasingly influential American 'pop culture'.³

Canada's national identity was a primary concern for the federal government who claimed Canada was experiencing an 'identity crisis' in the early 1960s. While many groups and individuals within the nation were immersed in a period of questioning their identities, the federal government, academics, and the general citizenry were questioning the identity of the nation as well; questioning what made the Canadian nation and what official national identity of both English and French Canada should be. The idea of official binationalism, a dual English and French linguistic and cultural tradition in Canada, was in direct response to the Quiet Revolutions that took place in both French and English Canada in the early 1960s and an attempt to enhance a quasi-unity between the two most prominent linguistic and cultural nations ('charter groups') that comprise Canada.⁴ A leading component of the binational idea was the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, a federal government-orchestrated attempt at producing a cohesive national identity for Canada. Linguistic rights were very much a part of this commission, as well as the events that took place in its aftermath, such as a federal and provincial government initiative to establish

³ Philip Resnick, *The European Roots of Canadian Identity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 32; Paul Rutherford, "The Persistence of Britain: the Culture Project in Postwar Canada," in *Canada and the End of Empire*, edited by Phillip Buckner, 195-205, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005); and Allan Smith, "From Guthrie to Greenburg: Canadian High Culture and the End of Empire," in *Canada and the End of Empire*, edited by Phillip Buckner, 206-215, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

⁴ John Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

linguistic equality between English and French in the late 1960s, faced considerable opposition, especially in western Canada.⁵

Several historians such as Phillip Buckner, José Igartua, and C.P. Champion, highlight that Canada's close relationship with Britain remained strong into the 1960s, thereby enabling the primary identity for English Canada to retain strong elements of Britishness throughout that decade.⁶ Increased economic and cultural influence from the United States from the 1950s onward had a marked effect on the Canadian identity, simultaneously pulling Canada away from Britishness and pushing it toward North American continentalism.⁷ Despite this influence, the demise of the British identity in English Canada was a slow one that took place throughout the entirety of the first several decades of the twentieth century, with a more rapid period of decline during the 1960s.⁸

Even though the writing of traditional nationalist history was waning during the 1960s due to the shift toward socio-cultural history, historians still accepted the nation as the frame of reference and there was a growing interest in

⁵ Matthew Hayday, "Reconciling the Two Solitudes?: Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada from the Quiet Revolution to the Victoria Charter," in *Debating Dissent: Canada and the 1960s*, edited by Lara Campbell, Dominique Clément, and Greg Kealey, 231-248, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

⁶ See Phillip Buckner, "The Last Great Royal Tour: Queen Elizabeth's 1959 Tour to Canada," in *Canada and the End of Empire*, edited by Phillip Buckner, 66-93, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2005); C.P. Champion, "A Very British Coup: Canadianism, Quebec, and Ethnicity in the Flag Debate, 1964-1965," *Journal of Canadian Studies* Vol. 40, no. 3 (2006): 68-99; C.P. Champion, "Courting 'Our Ethnic Friends': Canadianism, Britishness, and New Canadians, 1950-1970," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* vol. 38, no. 1, (2006): 23-42; and José E. Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-1971*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2005).

⁷ Phillip Buckner, "How Canadian Historians Stopped Worrying and Learned to Love the Americans!" *Acadiensis* vol. 25, no. 2 (Spring 2006): 117-140.

⁸ Shannon Conway, "From Britishness to Multiculturalism: Official Canadian Identity in the 1960s," *Études Canadiennes/Canadian Studies* no. 84 (Summer 2018): 9-30.

Canada's identity, mirroring the fevered public and governmental debate of the era.⁹ For the emerging historians at the time, the perception of the nation had changed and therefore so did the writing of that history. With that being the case, analyzing the scholarly work from the period as primary documents permits an understanding of the contemporary *mentalité*. The willingness to disassociate the Canadian identity from "Britishness" and the Empire occurred largely in the late 1960s when historians became interested in new concepts believing that this would produce an outcome that bound Canadians together, although this caused splintering into specified cases in history, rather than the concept of "the nation as a whole" being the main concern.¹⁰ Canada had always been a country of different cultures and peoples, thus examining the many ethnicities that Canada encompasses was a way to deepen the understanding of the Canadian identity. Consequently, the social historians and other academics of this era played an important role in broadening the understanding of Canadian identity.

Historians have long noted the importance of the Quiet Revolution, with it spanning the decade and causing significant changes in the French-speaking society of Quebec, namely secularization, an increase in separatist political parties, and most noticeably a resurgence of nationalist Québécois sentiment. The "other" Quiet Revolution was the cultural revolution that occurred in English Canada in the same period. English Canadian identity before its revolution

⁹ Carl Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*, 2nd Edition, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986).

¹⁰ Phillip A. Buckner and Douglas Francis, *Canada and the British World: Culture, Migration, and Identity*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2006), 4; Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*, 259.

focused on maintaining a predominately British identity. The revolt against Britishness and moving toward discovering a ‘true’ Canadian identity was what took place in English Canada at this time. Discovering what that identity was, or would be, saw many government-orchestrated events such as the creation of a new Canadian flag. The flag debate that occurred in the early 1960s was a point of contention, if only because of the cultural revolutions that were ongoing. The struggle to maintain a certain level of British identity played a particular role in the flag debate, which only further riled nationalist fervour in both French and English Canada, notably in the two English Canadian camps – those who favoured the British identity for Canada and those who were searching for true “Canadianness.”

Regionalism, ethnicity, and class were prominent and growing areas of interest in academic literature during the 1960s. Ramsay Cook penned a review article in 1967 with his primary concern being Canada’s “great national malaise” – that malaise being the lack of a coherent and all-encompassing national identity.¹¹ For Cook, the problem was not a lack of interest or publication on the issue; it was the approach in the eternal search for a Canadian identity, which he saw as lacking in ingenuity. Cook suggested moving away from “deploring our lack of identity” and instead becoming concerned with “understanding and explaining the regional, ethnic, and class identities” that defined Canada.

¹¹ Ramsay Cook, “Canadian Centennial Cerebrations,” *International Journal* Vol. 23, no. 4 (1967): 659.

Decidedly, for Cook, it was these ‘limited identities’ that made Canada Canadian.¹²

This line of thinking grew from the academic publications focused on Canadian identity during the postwar period.¹³ In 1948, Vincent Massey, who would later head the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, published *On Being Canadian*. His hope for the readers was to help them “understand Canada and Canadian life,” while he spoke of unity, the “merits of diversity,” and of tolerance (while himself being anti-communist), proclaiming that Canadians “shall talk of unity until it is achieved [...] for in Canada the pursuit of unity is like the quest of the Holy Grail.” Massey’s primary concern lied in a fear of the “erosion of Canadianism,” which led him to advocate for the need to protect Canadianism against the cultural threat of American influence.¹⁴

Alistair Horne echoed similar sentiments in 1961 with the publication of his *Canada and the Canadians*. Horne believed that Canadians do not know themselves and more worryingly, that with each passing year Canada was becoming more like the United States. Given that the population of Canada was considerable ethnically and culturally diverse, Horne declared that “there is no

¹² Cook, “Canadian Centennial Cerebrations,” 663.

¹³ Scholars as “Canadianists” did not appear in significant numbers until the 1970s, when the Commission on Canadian Studies commenced under T.H.B Symons resulting in the 1976 report *To Know Ourselves*. T.H.B. Symons, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies*, (Ottawa: Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 1975); Berger, *The Writing of Canadian History*. Also see Chad Gaffield, “The Blossoming of Canadian Historical Research,” in Ruth Sandwell, ed., *To the Past: History Education, Public Memory, and Citizenship in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

¹⁴ Vincent Massey, *On Being Canadian*, (Toronto: J.M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1948), xi, 23-25, and 123-130.

such thing – if there ever was – as a ‘typical Canadian’.” This void of identity that he was describing stemmed from his position that there was a “lack of culture” in Canada and argues that in Canada “cultural life has not developed at a uniform rate,” which has ultimately led to the problems with generating a national culture.¹⁵ A most notable publication on the issue was George Grant’s *Lament for a Nation*, where he pointed to the “tragedy” of the Diefenbaker government as who to blame for Canada’s failure as a nation. In light of this Grant advocated for continentalism and lamented that Canada had “ceased to be a nation” but stressed that its “formal political existence [would] not end quickly.”¹⁶

Historian William Morton shifted perspective from his earlier work grounded in his Western Canadian roots, moving from a regional to a national focus in his 1961 publication *The Canadian Identity*. Here Morton addresses Canada and its place within North America and the Commonwealth, as well as its relationship with the United States, and how these relationships influence the formation of the Canadian identity.¹⁷ He identified three causes for the identity crisis present during the 1960s: the Quiet Revolution, the decline of Great Britain in the world as well as in Canada, and the threat of Americanization. Morton ultimately described Canadian society as having a mosaic principle, uniting the nation of Canada with its shared cultural pluralism and diversity.¹⁸

¹⁵ Alistair Horne, *Canada and the Canadians*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1961), 5-7 and 178-181.

¹⁶ George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1965), 4-5 and 86.

¹⁷ William Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

¹⁸ Morton, *The Canadian Identity*, 115-116 and 147-148.

John Porter's *The Vertical Mosaic* effectively illustrated Canada's lack of a cohesive national identity and the presence of a divide between ethnic groups in Canada. The concern of national unity in particular was defined as being Canada's "political obsession." He suggested that this obsession of national unity and the maintenance required for promoting and prolonging it, essentially overrode any other national goal in Canada. Loyalty to the region, or province, in question, trumps a national loyalty, which produces a constant reiteration of "integration and national unity" from the federal government, regardless of political stripe permitting the political dialogue to be orchestrated around "unity and discord rather than progressive and conservative forces."¹⁹ The federal government's struggle with the pull of regionalism has been a long-standing problem in Canada. With the stirrings of the Quiet Revolution, long-reigning regional tensions became increasingly problematic for Ottawa.

The historical literature at the time presented Canada's identity as a fought construct, particularly studies written during the 1960s that mirrored the anxieties expressed by the Canadian government. In May 1966, Dennis Smith, editor of the *Journal of Canadian Studies*, believed the government were to "carry [Canada] through the crisis" of identity and were responsible for ensuring that the "collective national spirit [could] endure" the test of national strength during that was felt at that time.²⁰ The federal government plays a significant role in the creation of the national identity and it does what it can to maintain a level of

¹⁹ Porter, *The Vertical Mosaic*, 368-369.

²⁰ Dennis Smith, "Editorial", *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 1, no. 1 (1966), 2.

control over the nation's identity. However, to do this it was necessary to establish an official identity that Canadians could identify with.

In the early 1960s, interest in Canadian identity and national symbols, such as a flag and a national anthem, up to that point in time were at an all-time high. Across the nation and throughout parliament this sentiment was expressed, with remarks such as “Canada is not England” professed during parliamentary debates signified the heightened importance being placed on Canada's differentiation from countries of influence.²¹ Speaking to House of Commons in September 1968 regarding the efforts to ‘Canadianize’ Canada, Auguste Choquette, Member for Lotbinière, stated “when the Prime Minister had a Canadian flag adopted in 1964, it was a step forward [...] our Canadian ideal was being strengthened; all Canadians were being asked to rally around a symbol in which they take pride,” which reflected the mentality of the era and the governments heightened concern with national identification.²²

The federal government's growing interest in fostering a unifying Canadian identity in the early postwar period, and the expectancy placed on Ottawa to address the problems of their national identity, led to the establishment of two Royal Commissions directly addressing what was perceived to be the nation's primary cultural problems at the time: American influence and English- and French-Canadian relations. Part I of this chapter will cover the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences from

²¹ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 5 (Ottawa, 1964), July 2, 1964, 4945.

²² Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 27th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1967), September 26, 1968, 2534.

1949-1950 (Massey Commission), while Part II will cover the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism from 1963-1969 (B&B Commission). The transformation of Canada's national identity from Britishness to multiculturalism during the postwar period was due in part to the outcomes of these commissions.

Using the perspective of Newfoundland's role and participation in these commissions provides a lens to observe what the newest Canadian province perceived to be the issues and the solutions for the Canadian identity crisis. How Newfoundlanders understood Canadian identity in its early post-confederation period is reflected in their participation in these Royal Commissions, where they often saw these believed national issues as peripheral to their own issues with the rest of Canada. At that time, given their relatively recent foray into joining the Canadian nation, what did Newfoundlanders make of the Canadian identity and the ongoing struggles of establishing it throughout the country? Scholars have not utilized a Newfoundland lens (nor other regionalized perspectives for that matter) in their historical analysis of the problems of Canadian national identity and unity. Yet, this particular perspective is important in that it permits a new approach to understanding these issues in Canadian society historically and present day. Addressing these commissions and developments pertaining to Canada's national identity from the perspective of Newfoundland during this period, by a close reading of documents pertaining to and constructed for the commissions, will demonstrate how these processes sought to establish a cohesive national identity and decide what that identity should be.

I. The Massey Commission

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences began in April 1949 with the final report submitted in June 1951. The Commission's mandate was "to examine and to make recommendations upon certain matters related to the arts, letters and science in Canada." On 7 April 1949, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent submitted a report to the Privy Council indicating that it was "desirable that the Canadian people should know as much as possible about their country, its history and traditions" and that it was in "the national interest to give encouragement to institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life." The Governor General approved the Order in Council on 8 April 1949.²³ Even though the commission was established a mere eight days after Newfoundland joined Canada, the new province was an active participant in the national inquiry.

Laurent appointed five commissioners, most being well-regarded academics at Canadian universities. Namely, Norman MacKenzie, the President of the University of British Columbia, Reverend Georges-Henri Lévesque, the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University, historian Hilda Neatby, and Arthur Surveyer, a civil engineer in Montreal, with Vincent Massey, the Chancellor of the University of Toronto, as the commission's chairman. These commissioners were to "examine and make recommendations" regarding a

²³ Canada, Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1951), ix-xi.

variety of cultural elements, such as what should constitute Canadian policies of radio and television broadcasting, as well as the scope of and mandate of federal government agencies such as the National Film Board, the National Gallery, and Public Archives, in regards to the essence of Canadian cultural life. The commission was to carry out this rather vague mandate as it deemed necessary and to submit “interim reports from time to time” to the federal government.²⁴ The mandate was in essence vague due to the uncertain nature of the inquiry itself; the federal government was seeking a way to define what it was to be culturally Canadian.

In the introduction to the commission’s final report, the commissioners laid forth their understanding of their task and the questions they saw as central to their inquiry. They acknowledged the many “attempts to appraise our physical resources” and that considerably less concern has been shown for Canada’s “human assets,” which are admittedly “less tangible but whose importance needs no emphasis.” The commission readily saw that “there are important things in the life of a nation which cannot be weighed or measured” but that it was their task to do so because it is “the intangibles which give a nation not only its essential character but its vitality.”²⁵ Regarding this, the commission raised the question of how to balance federal government funding for the arts and letters “without stifling efforts which must spring from the desires of the people themselves,” as

²⁴ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, xii.

²⁵ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 4.

well as how to best undertake this task with the level of diversity present in the country.²⁶

During its two-year duration, the commission travelled the country from Newfoundland to British Columbia and accepted a wide array of submissions in an attempt to gain an accurate understanding of Canadians' understanding of their national culture and what should be done to allow for a better understanding of what it is to be Canadian culturally. In total, 224 meetings were held, with 114 of these identified as public sessions. The public sessions crisscrossed the country, with each of the ten provinces having one or two meetings for a total of 16 cities hosting public sessions between August 1949 and July 1950, with most sessions held over two to three days. The meetings in Newfoundland in particular were limited to the capital city of St. John's over two days on 7-8 July 1950. In addition to the meetings, the commission received a total of 462 briefs, which included presentations where more than 1,200 "witnesses appeared before [them]." The briefs themselves were from an assortment of federal government institutions and national organizations, as well as seven of the provincial governments, and many local organizations and "private commercial radio stations." In addition to the meetings and briefs, the commission had four advisory committees on scholarships and research, museums, the national library and public archives, and historic sites and monuments. Further still, a "number of eminent Canadians"

²⁶ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 5-6.

were sought out to “prepare critical studies on a variety of subjects” as background information for the commission’s work.²⁷

The commission believed that they had before them a “complete cross-section of the Canadian population” and stated that their agenda had “been created by the public at large.” The enthusiastic response they received while undertaking their work led them to believe that “the inquiry was timely” and that Canada “was ripe for such a study.” Furthermore, the commission declared that this was clear evidence of Canada’s “economic stature and political maturity” were not enough to provide a semblance of nationhood and that these areas “must be matched by progress in another field.”²⁸

At a relative midway point during the commission, Prime Minister St. Laurent issued a letter to the commissioners on 25 April 1950 where he expressed his admiration of their work thus far and implored its continuation highlighting areas in which they might consider additional investigation. St. Laurent was “greatly impressed with the interest which the public has shown” for the commission, specifically the attendance of the public hearings and “number and variety” of the written submissions, but he also used this letter as an opportunity to beseech their advice for the Canadian government in the areas of historical monument preservation and methods for making unspecified “information

²⁷ Manitoba, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland each had meetings in one city; the remaining six provinces each had meetings in two of their cities. Cities with meeting dates outside of the 2-3 day norm were: Toronto (5 days); Montreal (4 days); Halifax (4 days); Charlottetown (1 day). Ottawa was exceptional in two regards: there were two public sessions the first 3 August – 8 September 1949 and then from 11-20 April 1950. Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 8 and 433.

²⁸ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 9.

concerning Canada” available for foreign countries. He thanked the commissioners for their work on behalf of the government and welcomed “any advice or comment” on the mentioned queries.²⁹ St. Laurent’s letter suggests that the federal government was eager to have relevant and accurate information in the cultural sphere of Canada for both domestic and international audiences, to better guide national policies and activities as well as furthering international relations both politically and culturally. It was clear that Canada could not better present itself internationally when it was so uncertain of itself at home.

The final report was presented in two parts, with the first describing “the activities and the needs” of cultural institutions in the spheres of mass media, federal agencies, voluntary bodies, and scholarship in the arts and sciences. In the second part, the commissioners provided their 146 recommendations that they believed “naturally” arose from their observations in the aforementioned areas.³⁰ In addition to the typical commission report sections of observation and recommendation, was a chapter in the report’s introductory section on the role of geography in understanding Canada. The commission used this chapter to provide analysis of a particular element that they believe played a considerable role in making Canada Canadian, which indicates the importance they placed on “the forces of geography” in the creation of the Canadian nation.³¹

²⁹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, xxi.

³⁰ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 10.

³¹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 11.

Canada was described as a “young nation” with significant conditions that it should be mindful of when “shap[ing] its course,” primarily the presence of the United States and what that means for Canada’s reality as a nation. The chapter explains that Canada contains a “small and scattered population” across a vast terrain of land with a large proportion of this population being “clustered along the rim of another country many times more populous and of far greater economic strength,” as well as most Canadians and Americans being native English speakers thereby permitting “peculiarly close and intimate relations.”³² How these factors affect Canada and the shaping of what the commissioners term “Canadianism” is questioned throughout the chapter. There was an awareness that Canadians are largely “separated by both geography and history,” which breeds a “sturdy self-reliance” in local areas, but the commissioners nevertheless claim that this fact does not dampen an attachment shared across the country. The ostensible differences both steeped in “tradition and atmosphere” between the regions “impressed” the commissioners during their travels and they believed that these differences were significant contributions to the “variety and richness of Canadian life.” They argued that it was this which would ensure a “healthy resistance” to assimilating fully into American continentalization; that it was Canada’s “sincere and unaffected regionalism” which made for a stronger civilization.³³

³² Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 11.

³³ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 11-12.

While American influence in Canada was understood to be significant, it was stressed that Canadians should be free to enjoy these “cultural exchanges.” However, the commissioners warned of the problems of the “vast and disproportionate amount” of American cultural influence in Canada as it could potentially “stifle rather than stimulate” Canadians’ creative endeavours. While it is fair to say that the American influence may irreparably alter Canadians’ perspectives and thereby falling to a quasi-continentalization of cultural attitudes it would not mean that Canadians would no longer be creative, there was just a fear of Canadians losing what it meant to be Canadian and permit a lack of differentiation between Canada and the United States in this regard. Because of this concern, the commissioners explain the rationale behind why the federal government was now “spending millions to maintain a national independence” in this regard, for without it Canada would be “nothing but an empty shell without a vigorous and distinctive cultural life.”³⁴

Getting to the heart of what made Canada’s cultural life was a vital part of the commission. The commissioners believed it necessary to seek out expert opinion on matters related to this and published a selection of the requested essays as a supplement to their final report. Massey explained that due to publication restrictions reduced their submissions to a sample of twenty-eight essays that the commissioners thought were “representative” of the essays they received and believed would be of “the most general interest” to Canadians. Essays on Indigenous artwork for example were left out, while essays on the French

³⁴ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 18.

language and English and French historiography remained, which sheds light on the audience the commission was principally representing, answering to, and thereby considered to be part of the Canadian culture that they were attempting to define. Nevertheless, Massey made clear that the views expressed in the studies were to be “attributed solely to their respective authors” and should in no way “be regarded as representing opinions of the Royal Commission.”³⁵

The “present day influences on Canadian society” was the topic of the leading essay in the published collection. Bernard Sandwell, editor-in-chief, of *Saturday Night* magazine in Toronto, and former assistant professor of economics at McGill University, was asked to prepare “a general study of the main influences which are now shaping Canadian society.”³⁶ Sandwell felt that based on the commission’s terms of reference it was “obvious” that he was meant to study “the influences which are shaping Canadian society in respect of the arts, letters and sciences, or in other words of the intellectual life and cultural character of the nation,” which he determined as excluding other notable factors such as political and economic influences. He further emphasized that you cannot merely look within a community when discussing the influences on its intellectual life but that you must consider the internal and external communications and how they influence intellectual life, which he felt were being ignored in the mandate due to the lack of directive concerning such shaping influences as “economic, social and political structure.” Sandwell believed external communications to be of “greater

³⁵ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies: A Selection of Essays Prepared for the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, (Ottawa: E. Cloutier, 1951), vii.

³⁶ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 1 and 11.

importance” for Canada than for other nations due to its “extreme youth as a single and self-conscious community, its extreme smallness in population and wealth [...], and the very mixed racial character of its population.”³⁷

Sandwell indicated that the effectiveness of Canada’s internal communications were “diminishing” due to the lack of operational uniformity throughout the nation and because of this argued that there were “two Canadian cultures, almost wholly separate [...] and with even less communication between them than each of them has with the outside cultures;” he was of course speaking of English and French Canada.³⁸ He saw this separation as a bulwark against a unified Canadian culture and illustrated this point with the apt metaphor of the construction of a walnut:

It is only after making very large allowances for this limitation that it is possible to speak of a Canadian culture at all; and whenever we speak of it as if it were a unit we must be careful to remember that its unity is the unity of a walnut – it has a single shell, but within that shell are two quite distinct formations of meat flimsily joined in the centre. The shell is the political structure of the nation, still preserving some of the softness of its unripe state as a colony, but being gradually hardened by exposure to the sun and wind and rain of a very variable international climate. The meat is the two cultures, as yet very lightly joined together, of French-speaking and English-speaking Canada.³⁹

³⁷ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 1.

³⁸ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 1-2.

³⁹ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 2.

The importance of person-to-person contact for the transmission of culture was seen as something essential but that was left principally to the realm of education. However, through mass media, cultural transmission via radio, television, and cinema was becoming more widespread but through mechanical devices rather than person-to-person contact thereby removing a vital aspect of the cultural diffusion Sandwell was advocating and ultimately allowing Canadians (especially English speaking Canadians) to become “highly receptive” the diffusion of American culture. Because of this, Sandwell stressed the importance of the encouragement for the development of the arts in Canada that should be “practised by Canadians for the benefit primarily of Canadians.”⁴⁰

Two essays on national history, focused on the recent historiography in English and French, were included in the publication, which indicated the importance the commissioners placed on the national historical narrative in respect of fostering Canadian cultural identity. Hilda Neatby, one of the commissioners and associate professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan, provided the English essay and Charles Bilodeau, professor of pedagogy at Laval University, authored the French essay. Neatby noted the contemporary failings in the writing of Canadian national history identifying a lack of biographies and a lack of “good textbook material,” as central issues. She also addressed the divide between French and English historians, stating that a lack of communication between the two and a subsequent ‘lack of a common

⁴⁰ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 3-7.

philosophy” as to why the production of “one textbook” that could effectively cover Canadian national history continued to be a difficult endeavour.⁴¹

Neatby stressed that “indiscriminate plucking from the quaint and the picturesque will not, of itself, teach the Canadian people anything of their history, or give them any sense of oneness with each other or with their past” and that the sustained interest in local rather than national history on the part of Canadians added to the difficult problem of creating a comprehensive and effective national historical account that would unite all Canadians under the same understanding of Canada. Ultimately, she concluded that at Canada was without a national history nor a “genuine national consciousness of the past” and described the foremost “problem in Canada” as a cleavage between English and French Canadians, where “two races, two religions, and two cultures” have been earnestly attempting to “create one state out of some scattered fragments of fertile soil strung along the border of another state.”⁴²

Bilodeau’s observation was not particularly in conflict with Neatby. He surmised that the recent French Canadian historiography had made notable progress but more importantly, he observed that the difference between the teaching of history in English and French Canada had led to the difference in understanding. Bilodeau emphasized that due to a more dedicated approach in teaching history at every level of schooling, as opposed to the mere three or four years in English Canada, French Canadians had better awareness of their “personnalité nationale.” He concluded by stating, “les historiens de langue

⁴¹ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 208-212.

⁴² Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 214-216.

française sauront contribuer, comme par le passe, a la survivance de leurs compatriotes et a la vitalité de la conscience nationale,” leaving the impression that English Canadians have much work left to do in the realm of inspiring the vitality of the nation.⁴³

In line with the importance placed on national history, the commission’s report contained chapters dedicated to historic sites and monuments, as well as the importance of the humanities (as a component of nation-building) at Canadian universities – given the prevalence of university-affiliated academics serving as commissioners and on advisory boards for the commission, this is unsurprising. Regarding national historic sites, according to the Parks Service reports submitted to the commission, since 1923 a total of 388 “tablets” had been placed at sites deemed to be of national historic significance. These tablets were “divided amongst the provinces,” though Ontario held the majority with 119, the Maritimes shared 122 between the three provinces, while the Prairies shared 48, Quebec had 70, British Columbia had 28, and the Yukon had only one. Newfoundland had none at the time, granted this was considerably early days after joining Canada.⁴⁴

Concerning the views of local historical societies and groups in Newfoundland, generally, they were not pleased with how little their province was represented within the designated national historic sites and thereby within the national historical narrative.⁴⁵ Despite the formal lack of recognition, the

⁴³ Canada, *Royal Commission Studies*, 229-230.

⁴⁴ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 124.

⁴⁵ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 125-126.

commissioners noted that Newfoundland was “rich in historic sites as old and even older than any in the rest of Canada.” They reported that the new province had “nearly sixty sites of general historic interest [were] awaiting the attention of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board,” such as the community of Carbonear, the believed “traditional landing place” of John Cabot on 24 June 1497. This in particular allowed the commissioners to warmly boast that “Canada's newest province proudly and rightly claims her place beside the oldest.”⁴⁶

Initially, the commissioners felt that universities were “quite outside” their mandate, most likely due to education being a provincial responsibility (and possibly wishing to avoid a conflict of interest with most commissioners being academics), but during their work they “found it impossible to ignore the role which Canadian universities play in the subjects with which [they were] formally concerned.” While undertaking their task, they quickly learned that across Canada, but particularly in the Atlantic and Prairie regions, universities were an important “centre for local activities.”⁴⁷ Additionally, the commissioners expressed their concern over the “plight of the humanities,” as academics they ardently believed that the “humanistic studies [...] should pervade the professional schools.” Further, they saw that the “financial crisis of the universities,” where Canadian universities were facing the “twin spectres of falling revenue and rising costs,” needed to be rectified to ensure their continued

⁴⁶ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 129.

⁴⁷ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 132-133.

success as institutes of higher education and development.⁴⁸ While this could be perceived as rather self-serving with most of the commissioners being career academics and presidents of universities, the commission received submissions expressing similar concerns, which reinforced their concerns on the matter, such as the brief from Newfoundland's Minister of Education, S.J. Hefferton, wherein he laid forth a request for federal funding for the province's only university.

Despite only having joined Canada several days before the start of the Commission, Newfoundland was an active participant with public sessions held in St. John's on 7-8 July 1950. However, of the 462 briefs that were submitted to the commission only eight were from Newfoundland with arts groups such as the St. John's Players and the St. John's Art Club, the provincial public libraries and museum boards, the Department of Education, and local broadcasters being those among the organizations that contributed submissions.⁴⁹ The low number of submissions from Newfoundland is not surprising, not only due to their recent union with Canada but also due to their lack of understanding of Canadian culture at that time. Having only recently joined Canada and up until that point holding perceptions of Canada as being a foreign country likely affected the participation and perspectives of those in the province.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, from the submitted briefs the importance of education for many Newfoundlanders is felt and understood. The provincial government in particular saw the commission as an

⁴⁸ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 136-137 and 141.

⁴⁹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 423-433.

⁵⁰ Letters to the Editor, "Fanny Fiander Ryan Bemoans Newfoundland's joining Canada," *The Daily News*, St. John's, March 31, 1949 and R.I. McAllister, ed., *Newfoundland and Labrador: The First Fifteen years of Confederation*, (St. John's Dicks & Co. Ltd., 1966), 12.

opportunity to stress the importance of improving the state of education in the province to raise it closer to Canadian national standards. While several arts groups in the province focused on the importance of the arts in society and culture, not only in the province but for Canada as a whole.⁵¹

Hefferton's brief from the Department of Education addressed the state of education in the province and was primarily focused on the necessity of increased federal assistance for all levels of education and in order to enable Newfoundland to meet "national standards." He stressed that the responsibility of financing education "must be shared between Federal and Provincial," especially when a province "cannot adequately justify sufficient taxation to meet the current needs." Hefferton acknowledged the good that confederation had already allowed for in terms of the federally funded family allowance which permitted an increase in school enrolment and attendance but that more funding for education specifically was needed due to the difficulty in attracting teachers, which the geographical conditions of the province and the low pay rate for teachers was to blame. He described the state of education in Newfoundland as unequal to that of the rest of Canada due to its "many isolated villages" where the students "suffer from poorly trained teachers [and] deprived of the many facilities offered of the more popular centres." With this, Hefferton reflected on Term 93 of the British North American Act which laid forth that education was under provincial jurisdiction but sought to

⁵¹ Newfoundland, S.J. Hefferton, Minister of Education, "Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences," (St. John's: 1950); Newfoundland, St. John's Art Club, "Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences," (St. John's: 1950); Newfoundland, St. John's Players, "Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences," (St. John's: 1950).

overcome this stipulation and request federal aid for education by appealing to “certain axiomatic truths” such as “every child has an equal right to education” and “irregularities of economic position or geographical situation are a State concern,” stressing it to be a national concern and thereby the federal government having at least partial responsibility.⁵²

The president of the St. John’s Art Club, Sadie L. Organ, submitted a brief on behalf of the organization in May 1950. This predominately female club had formed in 1940 with the purpose of fostering the “practice and appreciation of art not only among its own members but also in the community at large.” They undertook this effort by holding annual public exhibitions that included local artists from across the island as well as their founder Mrs. A.C. Hunter’s personal collection, in addition to holding their regular meetings, discussions, and film showings. The club saw the necessity of the arts in the country but also the importance of the arts for the provinces, insisting that the “cultural life of Canada is as strong as the cultural life of the provinces and it is only to the extent that they touch the life of the people in the provinces that the activities of such federal agencies as the National Film Board and the National Gallery can be considered successful.” They bemoaned the lack of art education in the province, the capital city of St. John’s being without an art gallery, and presented a list of nine recommendations to the commission. The foremost recommendation was that it be understood that “the cultural life of Canada is no higher than the cultural life of the provinces,” which was somewhat presumptuous given the nature of the

⁵² Hefferton, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,” 3-7 and 12.

commission. As well, it was requested that “national assistance be provided for the setting up of art centres [...] in each of the provinces not now possessing them,” with the cost being shared by the federal and provincial governments and by public subscription in the local areas. Their final recommendation was for the establishment of a “permanent Arts Council to advise the government in all matters pertaining to the enhancement of arts and letters in Canada,” but this was not to be meant in “any narrow nationalistic sense but in the broader sense where Canadian culture is seen as action and reaction upon and from all other cultures existing in the world to-day,” which more accurately represented the understanding of cultural formation and growth but was in potential conflict with the mandate of the commission.⁵³

Established in 1937, the St. John’s Players were a group who defined their purpose as promoting the “advancement of the drama in all its aspects in St. John’s in particular, and Newfoundland in general.” The club president P. Lloyd Soper and their brief committee chair E.P. Conroy submitted a brief to the commission on behalf of the group in May 1950, wherein they laid forth the work the group had done including the number of stage and radio plays they performed (with many having been written by Newfoundlanders) and workshops they had held, as well as the establishment of the Newfoundland Drama Festival that had its first run in April 1950. The group believed that they had “surmounted considerable difficulties,” such as a lack of funds and accommodation, as well as isolation in terms of professional development and instruction, and despite these

⁵³ St. John’s Art Club, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,” 1-4.

difficulties, they felt “the people of St. John’s [would] concur in the opinion that the Players [had] made a real contribution to the cultural life of [the] community.” Soper and Conroy outlined the financial needs of the St. John’s Players in order for the group to continue to benefit the province, which in addition to money to build a “community center of the arts,” also included the desire for arranging visits from other professional groups across the country to enable the exchange of ideas in this particular area of the arts.⁵⁴

Something that was noted across the country, but particularly in Newfoundland, was a negative opinion on the taxation on books. The commissioners were “impressed” with the feedback they received in regards to this issue, especially with the “surprise and even resentment” that Newfoundlanders felt, presumably as new Canadians, that books published outside of Canada were subjected to import duties. In many public sessions, it was suggested that taxes in a “well-ordered society” should not be “applicable to books which are still, in spite of radio and films, the most important means of enlightenment.” The commissioners saw that a recommendation should be made concerning book taxation, so long as it can be done “without imposing hardship upon the Canadian book-publishing industry” and believed that the federal government should rid the “sales tax on books of every description.”⁵⁵

While having received many written submissions and gathered a multitude of responses via public hearings, the commissioners admitted that most briefs they

⁵⁴ St. John’s Players, “Brief Submitted to the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences,” 1.

⁵⁵ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 245.

received were from “organized societies,” meaning that they “heard little from the citizen who represented no one but himself.” However, they deemed this to be “inevitable,” explaining that much of the substance of their mandate appealed to the interest of “organized” Canadians. Nevertheless, the commissioners specified that they were “struck by the fact” that those who attended and participated in the public hearings “spoke to [the commissioners] primarily as Canadians deeply interested in the entire scope of the vast inquiry which [the commission] ventured to undertake,” which left the commissioners with the belief that they had in fact “heard the voice of Canada” in their endeavour to define and make recommendations concerning Canadian cultural life.⁵⁶

Their final report described the work that they had been asked to do was “concerned with nothing less than the spiritual foundations of [Canada’s] national life,” what it was that comprised the “Canadian mind and spirit,” a quality they saw as inherent to what “Canadians think, and think about; by the books they read, the pictures they see and the programmes they hear.” The elements were described as the “roots” of national life and the “foundations of national unity.” Because of this, the commissioners saw the only way to complete their task was to hear from “representatives of the two Canadian cultures,” to hear their optimism that in an understanding of commonality “of the things of the mind, Canadians--French and English-speaking--can find true ‘Canadianism’.” The commissioners believed if a level of commonality was found and nurtured, and

⁵⁶ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 268.

negative internal and external influences were resisted, Canada could become “great” and becoming “one”.⁵⁷

Referring to their Terms of Reference, where they were directed to focus their attention to “institutions which express national feeling, promote common understanding and add to the variety and richness of Canadian life,” the commissioners’ inquiry led them to the understanding that these institutions were suffering from a “lack of nourishment.” They prescribed a two-prong approach of how to rectify this problem, firstly that the will of the Canadian people “to enrich and to quicken their cultural and intellectual life,” with the second being money, which they felt should be a shared effort among all levels of government from the federal, to the provincial, and the local.⁵⁸ In an effort to further stress the importance of this, the commissioners compared the necessity of military defence spending with that cultural life expenditure, stating that while Canada’s “military defences must be made secure” its “cultural defences” require equal consideration, that they “cannot be separated” in terms of their importance to the continuation of the Canadian nation. Protecting its physical, geographical integrity was seen as meaningless if there was nothing intrinsically Canadian to protect within the borders; this was undoubtedly a call to arms of sorts in terms of the fear of American cultural encroachment that was particular to the era. Nevertheless, the commissioners stressed that “more, indeed, should be done” to

⁵⁷ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 271.

⁵⁸ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 272-273.

endorse and protect Canadian cultural life and the integrity of this important national element.⁵⁹

Education was seen as vitally important and described as a way forward. A more formalized and established Canadian culture could be achieved by way of educating Canadians of their national historical narrative. With education being within provincial jurisdiction, the commissioners were adamant that their work “in no way invaded the rights of the provinces” but they hoped that it had been “helpful in suggesting means of co-operation,” due to many provincial departments of education having eagerly engaged with their process and operations across the country throughout their inquiry.⁶⁰ As addressed in the commission requested essays focused on national historical writing, Canada was without a comprehensive and uniting national historical narrative that all Canadians could agree on and understand as their shared historical narrative. However, it was never mentioned that the lack of a shared historical narrative may have been due to the regional breakdown of the country. Instead, the English-French linguistic and cultural divide was understood to be the principal cause. As such, the Massey Commission’s final report indicated that the dichotomous, bilingual-bicultural understanding of Canada remained the rule of the day in 1951.

By analyzing the commission through the lens of the new province of Newfoundland, the underlying notion of the Massey Commission as being a nation-building endeavour becomes clear. The commission outlined a way

⁵⁹ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 275.

⁶⁰ Canada, *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences*, 8.

forward in the formation of a cohesive national identity for Canada, a means of nation-building to further juxtapose itself against the cultural encroachment of Americanization during the postwar period. Canada was worried about such encroachment due to what could be perceived as a lack of distinction between Canada and the United States. In contrast, Newfoundland did not as readily share in this, having less ardently anti-American views due to a long-held trade relationship with the Maritime American States and American Air Force bases having been established in the province during the Second World War – as well as feeling more secure in the distinction of their cultural identity.

II. The B&B Commission

By the early 1960s, the Massey Commission's recommendation of defining Canadian culture and Canadianism by grounding the nation's identity in bilingual-biculturalism had not been fully realized, in that it had not gained widespread support or acceptance nor had the government sought to do so. This was largely due to the growing division between English and French Canadians and Canada's identity still being predominately under the guise of Britishness, though with the allowance of some French-Canadian flare. The Quiet Revolution in Quebec and the other Quiet Revolution in English Canada were well underway and the federal government believed Canada was experiencing a "crisis of identity." The solution would be another Royal Commission, this time focused on the state of bilingualism and biculturalism in the country in an attempt to solidify this understanding of Canadian culture and life and bolster this uniting vision for Canada. However, while this commission aimed to show that these elements of

Canadianism were felt throughout the nation, the aftermath demonstrated that the twofold bilingual-bicultural definition for Canadian culture would no longer hold any water as it was in contrast with how many Canadians felt about Canada and their national identity.

On 17 December 1962, Lester Pearson announced in the House of Commons that Canadians were anxious about the future of Canada and he expressed concern regarding the “crisis of national unity.” Pearson reminded his fellow Members of Parliament that Canada’s confederation was the “rejection not only of political and economic annexation by the United States but also of the American melting-pot concept of national unity” and that national unity was “without the imposition of racial, cultural or linguistic uniformity.” He felt the only way to alleviate the discord in the country was for English Canada to acknowledge and accept French Canada as an equal partner and to understand Canada as a bilingual and bicultural country.⁶¹ Upon becoming Prime Minister in April 1963, Pearson did not stray from this earlier rationale and established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission) the following month, appointing André Laurendeau, editor of the Montreal based newspaper *Le Devoir*, and Davidson Dunton, president of Carleton University and chairman of the CBC, as the commission’s co-chairs the following month. The commission was to study Canada’s “bicultural character,” while recognizing the “contribution of other cultures.” Pearson was intent on building a greater nation, one not based on uniformity but diversity, believing that “the greater Canada that

⁶¹ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 25th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 3 (Ottawa, 1962), 2723-2724.

is in our power to make will be built not on uniformity but on continuing diversity; and particularly on the basic partnership of English speaking and French speaking people.”⁶²

Immediately before establishing the commission, Pearson exchanged letters with each of the provincial premiers. In his letter dated 15 May 1963, Pearson references the speech he made in parliament on 17 December 1962 concerning “the problems posed, and opportunities offered, in Canada by the duality of language and culture established by Confederation.” Reminding the premiers that in this speech he recommended that a “broad and comprehensive inquiry should be conducted, in consultation with the provinces, on bilingualism and biculturalism,” which “received widespread support” in the House of Commons leading Pearson to believe this support was mirrored across the country. Pearson used the letter to ask if the provincial governments “would favour such an inquiry by a Royal Commission,” as outlined in the Terms of Reference attached to the letter. He also used this as an opportunity to inform the premiers that “any recommendations from the proposed Commission would, of course, not be binding on governments.”⁶³ Informing the provincial governments that they would not become accountable for the commission’s recommendations allowed for stronger and unanimous support from the provinces, as even in the aftermath their role would consequently be quite minimal. This ensured that

⁶² Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1963), 6.

⁶³ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report on the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1965), 163.

Pearson could successfully launch the commission the following day on 16 May 1963.

In July 1963, the B&B commission formally began its inquiry into the problematized nature of language and culture in Canadian society, with particular respect to English and French Canadians. As stated in their Terms of Reference, the commission was asked to “inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution.”⁶⁴

During his maiden Senate speech on 3 March 1964, Senator Paul Yuzyk made the earliest documented mention of Canada as a multicultural society; he addressed the “other ethnic groups” in reference to the ongoing commission and its upcoming public meetings. He described Canada as a growing multicultural citizenry that has transitioned from “paramountly British-French with a substratum of Indian and Eskimo cultures, to multicultural,” due to an increase of immigration in both quantity and scope. Yuzyk insisted that the “third element” ethnic group, those with origins neither English nor French, were a steadily growing population and based on the 1961 census would soon exceed that of the French population in Canada and the English population was decreasing in proportion as well. Because of this, he stressed the need for greater

⁶⁴ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 21.

acknowledgement and protection of these “other” cultures and languages, that they were also important elements of Canadian identity. Concerning the B&B commission directly, Yuzyk believed the term “bicultural” was not the proper concept for Canadian cultural identity, as Canada was never bicultural. While acknowledging that Canada was founded by the English and French, simplify it to those two groups alone was disingenuous to the true construct of Canadian culture and identity. The English consisted of the British, Irish, Scottish, and Welsh, while the French were French, Acadian, and Quebecois, and it was important not to discount the many Indigenous groups, thereby making Canada inherently multicultural rather than bicultural. Thus, the addition of the later immigrant groups made the idea of Canada being bicultural an even more flawed description. Ultimately, Yuzyk saw multiculturalism as a way for Canadians to remain who they are, rather than being assimilated into either English or French Canadian culture. Canadian society, as Yuzyk saw it, held principles of freedom, equality and justice for all citizens at its core, as opposed to elements of bigotry, prejudice, and discrimination. He believed these values would maintain unity within Canada and the acceptance of multiculturalism within Canada would only strengthen this unity.⁶⁵ Despite such appeals to the flawed bicultural definition of Canada, the B&B commission carried out its work in line with that dichotomous narrative.

The B&B commission published several reports with findings and recommendations. Of particular interest is the preliminary report, as it contained the differing attitudes toward and understandings of Canadian identity that

⁶⁵ Canada, Paul Yuzyk, “Senatorial Address March 3, 1964,” *Debates of the Senate*, 26th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa: 1965), 51-58.

Canadians held. The commission's intention for the preliminary report was "to bring out the contrasts in opinions" present throughout the country concerning the country's dualistic national identity.⁶⁶ The report identified several "concepts of Canada," including dualism and objections to duality, multiculturalism, the idea of "one Canada," and the concern over American presence in Canadian society. It also addressed the role of institutions and languages, in the areas of education, mass media, public services, the issue of English and French-speaking minority populations throughout the country, and the attitudes Canadians held toward the "language problem." By and large, the report focused on the "two societies" and their "two systems of explanation," although there was mention of "other cultures" it was clear that this was not the main concern. The commission used the preliminary report to outline how they were going about addressing the national "crisis", which included visits with each provincial premier and holding regional public meetings where concerned Canadians could voice their opinions, as the commissioners felt that the best way to conduct their inquiry was to centre it in a dialogue between Canadians.⁶⁷ With education also a key aspect of their Terms of Reference but being under provincial jurisdiction, the commission met with the provincial premiers to discuss this matter specifically. Co-chairmen Laurendeau and Dunton visited the ten provincial premiers between January and February 1964 and each of the provincial governments "promised complete co-operation" with the commission, as they were alleviated of any jurisdictional concerns they may have had regarding the imposition of the federal government

⁶⁶ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 41.

⁶⁷ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 5-11.

into provincial areas of responsibility.⁶⁸ With provincial matters addressed, the commission was ready to commence the regional public meetings.

Twenty-three regional meetings were held between 18 March and 16 June 1964 and individuals and groups submitted 404 briefs to the commission. The commissioners believed the regional meetings provided pertinent and eager opinions of Canadians concerned with their national identity. These meetings hosted approximately 12,000 people between daytime and evening sessions, which included meetings in all provinces, with the exception of Prince Edward Island as there was no available location at the time set for the commission's visit due to the province's centenary celebrations, as well as the "Eastern Arctic" region. The only meeting held in Newfoundland was in St. John's on 8 June 1964, where 71 people attended the daytime session and the evening session saw 150 participants. Despite the commission's intentions, these public discussions had limitations, ranging from equal representation and the location choices for the meetings being considered "somewhat arbitrary," the commissioners themselves were concerned with the risk that there would not be an adequately diverse sample. Nevertheless, the commissioners believed the opinions of those who participated were vital to their work, having heard a "wide range of opinions" and reporters were free to report what was said during evening sessions to reach an even wider audience.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 27.

⁶⁹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Volume I*, (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1967), xv- xvi; Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 26-29, 50, and 155-159.

Several themes regularly came up during the nationwide public meetings, from the idea of Canadians uniting and working together to fix the problem of their national identity as expressed by a woman in London that “Canada is a marriage of two nations [...] I think this is a problem for the whole family, and it is time that all the family get together to improve the situation [...] it is an intense national problem,” to the persistent theme of unity in diversity as evidenced by a participant in Kingston who stated they were “opposed to any ‘balkanization’ and to the idea of the ‘melting pot’[...] in the complex ethnic situation existing in Canada, the only kind of unity which can reasonably be striven for and achieved is unity in diversity: the harmonious co-operation of all ethnic groups in the Canadian country as a whole.”⁷⁰ Different expressions of Canadian identity were made known, with many expressing desire for a singular Canadian identity and often placing blame on those who identified as anything other than simply Canadian.⁷¹ An opinion the commissioners were intrigued by was from a first-generation immigrant in Winnipeg who desired the “development of a truly unique Canadian culture,” rather than a “polycultural kind of nation.”⁷²

There was some support for the bilingual and bicultural Canadian identity that the commission was primarily advocating for; in particular, a university professor in Ontario declared in a meeting held in May 1964 that for him “the preservation and strengthening of national unity must come first if Canada as a

⁷⁰ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 37 and 52.

⁷¹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 2 and 46.

⁷² Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 53.

nation, and a bicultural nation, must endure and grow!”⁷³ But there were also those who favoured assimilation, such as a man from Yarmouth who stated his dislike for “hyphenated Canadianism.” Others were more direct in their desire for cultural assimilation, indicating that it was an inevitability, such as an individual from St. John’s who in June 1964 asserted that the “standard process of history is for a minority to be assimilated or absorbed [and] what we are doing... here is to stand in the way of that process.” However, there were those who opposed this, a man from London proclaimed “for an English Canadian to say that he is a Canadian without prefix involves no sacrifice because Canada for him is an enlargement of what he knows as an Ontarian, as a Manitoban or as a Nova Scotian, but when we say that a French Canadian should be a Canadian really like us... we are asking him to make the supreme sacrifice.”⁷⁴ There were recurrent expressions of Americanization the fear of this process, as one participant warned that “we must all be interested in Canadian culture for I fear if we are not, we Canadians could soon be engulfed and drowned by the American culture.”⁷⁵ This line of thinking indicated the importance of retaining what made Canada culturally different from the United States, if only to prevent further cultural assimilation and the disappearance of a Canadian identity.

The public discussions made apparent to the commissioners how important of a role regionalism played in the framework of understanding Canadian identity. In the preliminary report, the commissioners put particular

⁷³ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 94.

⁷⁴ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 53-54.

⁷⁵ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 56.

emphasis on regionalism and what it meant for Canadians' understanding their identity. They specified that the "sense of regional or provincial identity that many English Canadians [appeared] to possess usually came out in statements which began: 'We Maritimers' or 'We Westerners'," while acknowledging this the commissioners were quick to insist that this was "never an attempt to reject wider loyalties." It was understood that "loyalty to the region or province" was not in place of loyalty to Canada, though it was noted that this sentiment sometimes differed in Quebec where it was often found that their loyalties belonged to the province rather than the country. Those who expressed regional or provincial sentiment would generally draw focus to the socio-economic factors of their locality which was where their concerns were and this "coloured [their] view of the whole Canadian situation." Many Canadians did not wish to be "lumped together indiscriminately with those Canadians who lived half a continent away," however the commissioners clarified that despite much "affirmation of uniqueness" by participants, it usually "went no further than this."⁷⁶

In March 1966, the commission published a report on the "relative importance of difference in economic status and of other factors as sources of tension between ethnic groups in Canada." The report specified a "regional planning approach" to the economic problems associated with biculturalism and requested that the commission take note of relevant information that could be

⁷⁶ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 53.

used in formulating such a framework during their national inquiry.⁷⁷ Benjamin Higgins, the report's author, surmised that regional diversity in terms of size, resources, and "historical patterns of development" created the "substantial differences" between Canada's regions. Higgins argued that in Quebec and the Atlantic region, there were people who held the position that confederation "did not bring the same economic benefits to their region as to other parts of the country." This was bolstered with the reminder that Canada differed significantly from many other countries of comparison, due to its "sharply defined regions, combined with significant regional differences in levels of living," and the reality of having a province like Quebec where approximately "30 per cent of the total population" has a "distinctive racial background, language, and culture." With these factors in mind, Higgins insisted that it was "not surprising that regional differences [...] should bring more serious political problems in Canada than in other countries."⁷⁸

The commissioners were wary of the role that regionalism and provincialism played in the formation of Canadian identity and the maintenance of national unity, as it seemingly could work in direct contrast to achieving these aims in a homogenous and uniting matter and regionalism and provincialism had the potential to embolden the rifts and division throughout the country. Nevertheless, they could not disregard what was understood to be such a vital element in many Canadians' understanding of their identities. Regionalism was

⁷⁷ Benjamin Howard Higgins, *A Regional Planning Approach to Economic Problems of Biculturalism: Report Presented to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism*, (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1966), i.

⁷⁸ Higgins, *A Regional Planning Approach to Economic Problems of Biculturalism*, 2 and 9.

another factor that led the commissioners to “the conviction that Canada [was] in the most critical period of its history since Confederation,” asserting that they were of the understanding that there was a “crisis” of national identity, that apt decisions needed to be made, and that this would either lead to a “break-up” or a “new set of conditions” for the continued existence of the country.⁷⁹

The commission decidedly put consideration into the importance of regionalism in Canada during their inquiry in part due to the opinions and views expressed across the country, but also because Canada does not just consist of its centre; its periphery is just as vital and therefore so are the contributions and understandings of this periphery in understanding the nation as a whole. The commission itself could not have existed as it had without the involvement of the input from the provinces of each region, as illustrated in the Person’s letter to the provincial premiers. Newfoundland’s premier, Joseph Smallwood, replied to the Prime Minister’s letter 20 May 1963, informing him that in the “fourteen years that Newfoundland has been united with Canada [the Newfoundland] people have come to appreciate the basic importance to the unity of our country, of good relations between the two founding faces of Canada.” Smallwood also used this as an opportunity to remind the Prime Minister that while Newfoundland was figuratively and literally far afield from the rest of Canada, the province shares “a long border” with Quebec and due to this the “problems associated with the bilingual and bicultural character of Canada” are regularly apparent in Labrador, thereby making those larger national issues close to home for some in the

⁷⁹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 133.

relatively isolated province. In closing, Smallwood approved of a Royal Commission on this national problem and avowed that the Newfoundland government was “ready and eager to make a constructive contribution to the solution of these problems.”⁸⁰

In a working paper provided by the commission in December 1963 for those preparing and submitting briefs, it was outlined that the “mainspring of the terms of reference,” and thereby the commission’s intended position, was an idea of “an equal partnership between the two founding races” and that “equality is an objective to be sought constantly in a confederative regime.”⁸¹ The only brief submitted from Newfoundland was from Memorial University’s Faculty Committee, chaired by sociologist Ian Whitaker. Whitaker was born in Nottingham, United Kingdom and joined Memorial’s Sociology Department in the 1950s, where he also co-founded and served as director for the university’s Institute of Social and Economic Research.⁸² This brief was submitted to the commission in May 1964 and it specifically referenced the commission’s working paper and its limitations. Whitaker explained that their “interpretation of the terms of reference” meant that only French and English were to be given consideration and as such, the Faculty Committee “confined” their study to the “place of these two languages and groups in Canadian life.” They saw this as limiting the scope of the inquiry and further stressed that their observation was that “neither French nor English language groups insist on a perfectly bilingual population” and thus

⁸⁰ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 164.

⁸¹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Preliminary Report*, 183.

⁸² https://www.sfu.ca/content/dam/sfu/sociology-anthropology/People/Faculty/in_memorium/Small2016Whitaker.pdf

“reject a solution that would require all Canadians to be fully bilingual.” The Faculty Committee noted that they were using the position of both having the “freedom as citizens of Canada’s newest province” as a university academics in the hope of achieving a “relatively unbiased view of Canadian Confederation.” They stated that the “problems” the B&B commission were investigating were considered “relatively alien to the province,” that it was “only in Labrador” that there were “any bilingual or bicultural problem,” in slight contrast to how Smallwood described the role of bilingualism in the province. Nevertheless, it was stressed that “accommodation must be made on all sides” and that they believed all Canadians “must learn to respect the uniqueness of the many different ways of life in the Canadian mosaic.” Whitaker noted that Newfoundland’s history had “relevance to the opinions [they held] and the suggestions [they made]” and that consideration of those “circumstances which in shaping our society have given us some claim to comprehension of a problem which, as we are Canadians, is our problem.”⁸³

Whitaker’s brief officially representing the university’s faculty addressed that Newfoundland had “developed a distinctive way of life, or culture” and that in the past those in the province “feared and resisted absorption.” He insisted that this was why Newfoundland had resisted Confederation for so long and why many of those who supported joining Canada in 1949 “believed that in so doing they were advocating a Union which would make them part of a Canada culturally strong enough to resist the encroachments of ‘American Civilization’

⁸³ Memorial University of Newfoundland, Faculty Committee, “Brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,” (St. John’s, 1964), 2-5.

and at the same time a Canada which would allow, indeed encourage, the preservation of that which was distinctively a Newfoundland way of life.” This understanding signified that those in the province at the time of Confederation were resisting cultural absorption and that Canada was a safe means of doing so, only to find that after joining Newfoundlanders had to continue that resistance.⁸⁴

Considering the context of the B&B Commission itself, Memorial University’s Faculty Committee thought there should be a “moral agreement [...] for the preservation of the essential ingredients of French culture: her faith, her language and her civil law” but did not see Quebec as a “constitutional entity” and therefore should not “claim all the prerogatives of the French people;” as Quebec was one of the ten provinces and consequently cannot have more constitutional rights than any other but recognized that Quebec had a “special responsibility to all French Canadians” as the only French majority province. They thought Quebec should not be encouraged to “claim too special a place in the Canadian Confederation, particularly on financial matters” and insisted that those in Newfoundland “are more conscious than most of the costs of Confederation.” A commonality was seen between Newfoundlanders and Quebeckers, as both “desire to maintain a distinct culture” within Canada.⁸⁵

Whitaker laid forth the recommendations of the Faculty Committee that bilingualism should be “aided in practical ways” by the federal government to “promote dialogue [...] that will lead to greater national unity and cohesiveness.” They believed a national problem required national solutions and advocated for

⁸⁴ Faculty Committee, “Brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,” 16.

⁸⁵ Faculty Committee, “Brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,” 17-18.

maintaining the integrity of both English and French languages and to help with this suggested establishing another CBC network that could broadcast “lessons, news, etc., in both languages” as well as programs from the already existing English and French networks to “encourage understanding of the second languages among adults.”⁸⁶

It was fitting that the recommendations contained in the brief from Memorial University’s Faculty Committee (comprised of Newfoundlander, Canadian, British, and American born and educated academic faculty members at Memorial University) were primarily grounded in language, it was of course a central concern to the commission and most of their recommendations were set to alleviate problems around language and bilingualism in the country. In their final report, the commission believed the position they held in the Preliminary Report, that “Canada was facing a national crisis,” remained valid.⁸⁷ This report was broken into five volumes, each addressing a specific set of issues under the umbrella of bilingualism and biculturalism, from official languages, to education, and the “cultural contributions of other ethnic groups.” The first and largest volume dealt with Canada’s official languages. Regarding keywords in the commission’s terms of reference, the commissioners noted that the terms ‘bilingualism’ and ‘biculturalism’ were “given prominence,” while others such as ‘race’, ‘ethnic group’, and “the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada,” were of “equal importance” to their understanding of their inquiry. The commissioners felt both language and culture

⁸⁶ Faculty Committee, “Brief to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism,” 19-23.

⁸⁷ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume I*, xvii.

were “truly central concepts in the terms of reference” and because of this they decidedly gave these concepts “more emphasis than the notions ‘race,’ ‘people,’ or even ‘ethnic groups’.” However, they also specified that bilingualism was only in regard to “Canada’s two official languages,” English and French.⁸⁸

The commission believed there was a “vital link” between language and culture, where “language is much more than a simple means of communication, and culture is much more than the persistence of a few psychological traits or expressions of folklore.”⁸⁹ Culture was defined as “a way of being, thinking, and feeling. It is a driving force animating a significant group of individuals united by a common tongue, and sharing the same customs, habits, and experiences” and the terms of reference signified that English and French were Canada’s two dominant cultures, as the commissioners noted, “there are the two dominate languages, there are two principal cultures, and their influence extends, in greatly varying degrees, to the whole country.” The idea of “blending” of English and French was abhorrent to the way the commissioners expressed their understanding bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada with their assertion that “bilingualism should not lead to a *blend* of two languages” and that the country’s “cultural duality cannot be taken to mean a *mixture* of the two cultures; each has its own existence.”⁹⁰

As part of the commission, a *Report on the Teaching of Second Languages in the Public Schools of the Atlantic Provinces* was published in December 1965,

⁸⁸ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism *Report Volume I*, xxi-xxii and xxvii.

⁸⁹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume I*, xxxiv and xxxviii.

⁹⁰ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume I*, xxxi.

where report supervisor Hilda Neatby described a “dismal situation” in the region. In September 1965, Lionel Orlikow, educator and academic, prepared Newfoundland’s section of the report. The study was limited to the school systems on the island portion of the province due to Orlikow’s explanation that the Iron Ore Company of Canada and the Churchill Falls (Labrador) Corporation Limited were responsible for running the schools in Labrador City and Churchill Falls respectively, meaning the schools were private institutions and outside the scope of their study of public schools in the region. However, it should be noted that there were denominational schools in other parts of Labrador that were funded by the provincial government like those on the island portion of the province. Orlikow also noted that “no time was available” to visit outport schools and the language teaching committees were centred in St. John’s, which ultimately limited the scope of this study further. With these limitations considered, it was understood that education in outport schooling was of considerably lesser quality than in the major urban centres based on their low test scores.⁹¹ Concerning the teaching of French in Newfoundland, it was seen as a “foreign language” and its objective often being missed by local educators based on Orlikow’s observations, where “biculturalism and bilingualism is a mainland issue – not one for Newfoundland.” It was also noted that Newfoundlander’s were not fond of Quebec, with particular reference made to Quebec’s publishing of maps that include Labrador as part of Quebec,” which understandably riled some officials in Newfoundland alluding to the long-standing boundary dispute

⁹¹ Lionel Orlikow, *Report on the Teaching of Second Languages in the Public Schools of the Atlantic Provinces*, (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1965), 1-3.

between Newfoundland and Quebec in regards to where the border was to be situated between Labrador and Quebec.⁹² Furthermore, with “no functional employment of the language [...] seen within the community or the province,” the principal reason for studying French was “to meet the university entrance requirement,” leaving Orlikow to see that those within Newfoundland saw little value in learning French or in bilingualism for themselves or their province.⁹³

Considering the importance the commission placed on cultural duality as being a “basic aspect of Canadian identity,” Orlikow’s observations saw that Newfoundlanders might face difficulty in adhering to their recommendations. In their final report volume on education, the commission stressed that “awareness” of Canada’s cultural duality was “essential to an understanding of Canada” and in light of this, they aimed to “ensure that all students [become] more conscious of this aspect” of the national identity.⁹⁴ However, this duality was seemingly only English-French duality, but what about the duality expressed and felt by other regions and cultural groups in the country such as Newfoundlanders’ duality of being Newfoundlander and Canadian – this was not the proviso of the commission as it went against the mandate of their inquiry. Consequently, regarding public education, the commission recommended that the teaching of each official language should be provided in elementary and secondary schools in bilingual districts as set forth by their recommendations of establishing bilingual

⁹² Orlikow, *Report on the Teaching of Second Languages in the Public Schools of the Atlantic Provinces*, 9 and 18.

⁹³ Orlikow, *Report on the Teaching of Second Languages in the Public Schools of the Atlantic Provinces*, 5.

⁹⁴ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Volume II*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1968), 4.

districts where the demand was necessary, as well as the teaching of both official languages should be offered as a subject for all grades. The report also indicated the importance of teaching Canadian history and recommended that improvements should be sought in that area as a means of fostering national unity.⁹⁵

Stepping outside the English-French dichotomy, the commission published a volume on the “cultural contributions of other ethnic groups” where they addressed the cultural backgrounds and roles of these “other” groups in Canadian history, as well as their contributions to Canadian life. Despite this being outside the bilingual-bicultural definition, it was not outside their mandate which included reference to the contributions of other ethnic groups.⁹⁶ Here the commission spoke of cultural integration, which they stressed “in the broad sense, does not imply the loss of an individual’s identity and original characteristics or of his original language and culture” and that such integration “is not synonymous with assimilation,” where assimilation “implies almost total absorption into another linguistic and cultural group.” They admit to both processes occurring in Canada but that “the individual must be free to choose whichever process suits him” but it appeared to the commission that “those of other than French or British origin clearly [preferred] integration.” They noted that most individuals with origins other than British or French tended to “gravitate almost instinctively to the Anglophone side” due to the perception of increased opportunities on the English

⁹⁵ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume II*, 299; Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume I*, 147.

⁹⁶ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Volume IV*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1969), xxv and 3.

side of the cultural divide in Canada.⁹⁷ It was also noted that those outside of British or French origin generally accepted “official bilingualism without hesitation but categorically reject biculturalism” as they understood Canada “to be a country that is officially bilingual but fundamentally multi-cultural.” Given the understanding the commission had concerning the relationship between language and culture, it would have been at odds for the commission to make recommendations of supporting cultural initiatives without also supporting the languages of those cultures and vice versa.⁹⁸ Minimal recommendations were made in regards to support for the maintenance of cultures and languages outside of English and French, however, the commission recommended that additional support be made available for additional research into the contributions of the “other ethnic groups.”⁹⁹

In the final volume of their report, the commissioners were focused on the federal capital, describing Ottawa as a “symbol of the country as a whole” and therefore the city “should express, in the best way possible, the values of the country as a whole, its way of life, its cultural richness and diversity, its social outlook, its aspirations for the future.” The commission believed it was important, for both internal and external rationale, to unite the country and to appear as a united country and because of this both official languages should have “full equality of status” in the federal capital.¹⁰⁰ With this, they proposed “a new

⁹⁷ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 5-6.

⁹⁸ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 12-13.

⁹⁹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 225.

¹⁰⁰ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism Volume V*, (Ottawa: Queen’s Printer, 1970), 3 and 96.

charter for the official languages” one that would be “founded upon the concept of equal partnership,” for English French to be the official languages of the Parliament of Canada and federal services, but also for the provinces of New Brunswick and Ontario to recognize English and French as official provincial languages.¹⁰¹ However, this sidestepped the issue that most Canadians did not identify in a bilingual-bicultural fashion. By fashioning Ottawa to be the epitome of Canadianness in this way, for example, did not speak to those in Newfoundland, nor those on the Pacific Coast or in the North for that matter.

At the outset of the commission, Prime Minister Pearson believed the only way to maintain Canadian unity was by “recognizing and glorying in [its] diversity.” He declared in the House of Commons that Canada was “greater than its parts or the sum of its parts” and that he was adamant about keeping Canada together in the face of the disintegrative elements in the country, which was part of his rationale for establishing the commission.¹⁰² Pearson was sure that the commission would be a positive force for maintaining national unity, however, many felt otherwise. John Diefenbaker as leader of the opposition was critical of the commission and was against “the setting up of the mission on biculturalism” at the outset claiming, “it would not work.” In its later stages, Diefenbaker further complained that the B&B commission had “divided [the] country as it never has

¹⁰¹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume I*, 145-147.

¹⁰² Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 5 (Ottawa, 1963), 4648 and Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1964), 2145.

been divided before.”¹⁰³ Member of Parliament Charles Gauthier believed the commission was destroying what unity Canada had and that it was actively seeking to replace it with something new.¹⁰⁴ Gene Rhéaume, member for the North West Territories, felt the commission was “doing an excellent job of inflaming racial animosity” across the country, while Robert Thompson argued it caused “more disharmony in the nation than [...] providing solutions to the problems which it was established to consider,” and Eric Stefansson thought Canadians needed to “rededicate ourselves to the concept of one nation and national unity [...] dedicate themselves to being Canadians first,” not French Canadians or otherwise.¹⁰⁵ Despite the clear disagreement about the nature and worthiness of the commission, it ran its course and fulfilled its mandate as Pearson had requested.

The commission demonstrated throughout their multi-volume report that they recommended a bicultural identity for Canada and that the ‘third force’, those with origins other than English or French, did not “exist in Canada in any political sense and is simply based on statistical compilations.”¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, the Commission declared that:

¹⁰³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 3 (Ottawa, 1963), 2440 and Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 27th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1967), 44.

¹⁰⁴ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 2 (Ottawa, 1964), 2040-2041.

¹⁰⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 26th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 4 (Ottawa, 1964), 4483; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 27th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 4 (Ottawa, 1966), 3923; and Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 27th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1967), 385-386.

¹⁰⁶ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 10.

It is in our view the term “biculturalism” covers two main realities. The first is the state of each of the two cultures, and the opportunity of each to exist and flourish. The second is the coexistence and collaboration of these two cultures within our country; that is to say, the set of conditions which will enable members of these two cultures to co-operate effectively.¹⁰⁷

Their conclusion reflected what they had set out to find, a solution to alleviate the disarray of Canadian culture and that solution was a bicultural identity. They determined that if “Canada is to continue to exist, there must be a true partnership, and that partnership must be worked out as between equals,” between the English and the French. Conversely, this did not accurately reflect what many Canadians had been describing as Canadian societal culture. While the commission presented recommendations to the federal government concerning the cultures other than English and French, it did not believe those cultures as being an essential part of the primary Canadian identity.¹⁰⁸ However, the essential dualism that the commission outline as Canada’s cultural identity was not what unfolded in the aftermath of their inquiry and final report.

The federal government launched the B&B Commission launched due to their concern for Quebec’s place in Canada during the Quiet Revolution, as it highlighted the difficulties of achieving national unity. The commission was in essence a nation-building endeavour focused on fashioning a Canadian identity that would ensure the country’s unity. However, Newfoundland held a different view of Quebec. Canada’s youngest province had historic and contemporary

¹⁰⁷ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 12 and Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume V*, 217.

¹⁰⁸ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 228-231.

tensions with Quebec, therefore was not as keen on placating what could be perceived as demands from one province (despite Quebec never demanding Canada become bilingual or bicultural). While Newfoundlanders had no desire for a bilingual Canada, they deeply understood the need for cultural protection and in this vein had sympathy for Quebec.

Conclusion

Seismic transnational and geopolitical changes in Canada transpired in the aftermath of the Second World War, specifically the “decline of Anglo-conformity” and the concurrent “rise of multiculturalism,” as noted by Harold Troper. Canadian sociologist Richard Day has described the relationship between the decline of Anglo-conformity and the increase in cultural diversity as a shift “from coercive assimilation and exclusion of races to seductive integration of cultures,” where the changing societal context in the postwar world did not take as kindly to overt exclusionary tactics.¹⁰⁹ However, scholars have emphasized that this ‘seductive integration’ only *appeared* to be more inclusive than its more forceful predecessor in that the aim remains the same: a singular (predominately Anglo) national identity. The fall of the British Empire aided the fall of Anglo-conformity, further fostering a society with less tolerance for accepting notions of white-Anglo superiority, as evidenced by such movements as the Civil Rights Movement in the United States and the Quiet Revolution in Quebec, which contributed significantly to the changing outlook of Canadian society. While this

¹⁰⁹ Harold Troper, “An Uncertain Past: Reflections on the History of Multiculturalism,” *TESL Talk* vol. 1, no. 3 (1979), 10-13; Richard J. F. Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 9.

affected society, the state still worked towards attaining a cohesive, unifying Canadian identity.

The principal takeaway from Massey Commission's final report in 1951 was that during the early postwar period Canadians lacked a focused "national consciousness" that could be the basis for a distinct national identity. Canada's formal and cultural relationship with Britain was waning at this time and American influence in these spheres was steadily growing leaving Canada to often put itself in opposition with its continental counterpart as a way to bolster self-identification.¹¹⁰ More recently, historian Steven High contends that it was the concern of American cultural encroachment combined with the necessity of the differentiation of Canada from both the United States and Britain, which acted as a facilitator to the creation of "Canadian English" during the 1950s and 1960s. High argues that group identity relies on the "narcissism of small differences" and therefore due to its proximity to the United States and their shared English language it was decided that the English Canadian language needed more concrete, formalized differentiation for protection from further North American continentalism. Thus, British English was accepted as standard Canadian English to further differentiate Canada in North America, as compared to the threat of American cultural dominance the need to differentiate from Britain, in this case, was quite weak. High concludes that such minute differences "serve as markers of

¹¹⁰ Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, eds., *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-75*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 12.

national distinctiveness” during periods of “intense national anxiety and nation-building,” such as Canada was experiencing during the 1950s and 1960s.¹¹¹

Ryan Edwardson has identified three phases of government-supported Canadian cultural identity during the 1960s: “Anglophilic nationalism” that was in keeping with Britishness but emphasized the colony-to-nation shift that was prevalent until the 1960s; the idea of a “new nationalism” in Canada during the 1960s that began as a bicultural understanding of Canada but moved to a more multicultural understanding by the 1970s; and beginning in the later 1960s a notion of “federal unity” via direct intervention from the federal government through related departments, programs, and policies took shape and formalized the government’s role in the creation of Canada’s national cultural identity.¹¹²

One such policy was multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, which Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau began implementing in 1971. In February of that year, Trudeau stated that Canada was a “multicultural country” as well as a “bilingual one” and on 8 October 1971 he announced the implementation of the policy as “biculturalism does not properly describe our society; multiculturalism is more accurate.”

This process began a few years earlier, when in October 1968 Senator Yuzyk proclaimed that based on his reading of the B&B Commission’s reports Canadians think Canada “is not bicultural but in reality multicultural” and

¹¹¹ Steven High, “The “Narcissism of Small Differences”: The Invention of Canadian English, 1951-67,” in *Creating Postwar Canada: Community, Diversity, and Dissent, 1945-75*, edited by Magda Fahrni and Robert Rutherford, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), 89 and 104; Fahrni and Rutherford, *Creating Postwar Canada*, 12.

¹¹² Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 5-6.

“official recognition should be given to multiculturalism.” Trudeau’s announcement was also in reaction to the B&B Commission’s reports, that there was to be “no official culture” and that Canada’s national unity was “founded on confidence in one’s own individual identity” and insisted that a “vigorous policy of multiculturalism [would] help create this initial confidence.”¹¹³ The policy announcement highlights several important findings concerning the Canadian identity. It indicated that Trudeau intended for the policy to clarify the national identity, stating, “Canadian identity will not be undermined by multiculturalism. Indeed, we believe that cultural pluralism is the very essence of Canadian identity.” Canadian society was no longer argued as being a bicultural entity but rather “accurately” described as multicultural, and the government was still concerned with “developing the Canadian identity.”¹¹⁴

The use of bilingualism in this policy ensured the survival of the vision of two dominant cultures, as well as seemingly appeasing Quebec and the protectionism of their language and culture. This becomes apparent in Trudeau’s statements regarding the implementation of the policy such as, “[e]very ethnic group has the right to reserve and develop its own culture and values within the Canadian context [...] to say that we have two official languages is not to say we have two official cultures, and no particular culture is more ‘official’ than another.” However, the link between culture and language is crucial. If the

¹¹³ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, vol. 8 (Ottawa, 1971), 8545 and 8581; Canada, *Debates of the Senate*, 28th Parliament, 1st Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa, 1969), 143.

¹¹⁴ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, vol. 8 (Ottawa, 1971), 8580-8581.

government only actively supported the two official languages, then they only actively supported the two (official) cultures. As stated in the announcement, “the special role of the government will be to support and encourage those cultures and cultural groups which Canadians wish to preserve,” thereby putting the onus on the Canadian citizenry to preserve their own cultures as “the government cannot and should not take upon itself the responsibility for the continued viability of all ethnic groups.” Thus, the cultures that were to be preserved would be left up to Canadians whilst the federal government would actively maintain the dual English-French cultural identity of Canada.¹¹⁵

Though the policy was intentionally framed as inclusive, it was also a policy of assimilation. Hugh Donald Forbes asserts, “official multiculturalism was to have both preservative and assimilative elements: individuals and groups were to be helped to preserve their distinctive identities, but they were also to be helped to blend into the larger Canadian whole, or at least into one or the other of its two linguistic halves.”¹¹⁶ The portion of this policy that concerns Canada’s “two linguistic halves” reinforced the “dualistic definition of Canada.”¹¹⁷ Essentially, the intention of this policy was an attempt at solving the problem of diversity, not unlike the B&B Commission itself.

¹¹⁵ Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 28th Parliament, 3rd Session, vol. 8 (Ottawa, 1971), 8581.

¹¹⁶ Hugh Donald Forbes, “Trudeau as the First Theorist of Canadian Multiculturalism,” in *Multiculturalism and the Canadian Constitution*, edited by Stephen Tierney, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2007), 30.

¹¹⁷ As Forbes states, “Canada, it seemed to be saying, was leaving behind its British colonial identity only to become a country of only *two* “races”, or nationalities, with all its other races and nationalities subordinated to them, and this was unacceptable.” Forbes, 31.

In an early reflection on the B&B Commission's final report, Howard Palmer saw that there was "considerable ambiguity [...] concerning the relationship between biculturalism and the 'other ethnic groups.'" This coupled with his understanding that the federal government had "given up on the biculturalism of the Commission," yet nevertheless implemented an official language policy that only "recognize[d] two major linguistic communities." Palmer argued that multiculturalism would not "undermine official bilingualism" nor would it be a "threat to French-Canada" or lead to "cultural fragmentation" throughout the country.¹¹⁸ The mentioned ambiguity of the report came from a message that conflictingly stated that "Canada is both multicultural and bicultural," that Canada was "basically bicultural" but that the country's cultural diversity should not be disregarded while "keeping in mind that there are two dominant cultures." But two dominant cultures does not make a country bicultural, which is why the federal government would ultimately opt for a policy of multiculturalism as biculturalism did not fit the complex mould of Canadian culture. While some French-Canadians were fearful of such a policy due to concern this it would lead to an "inevitable assimilation [...] into a pan-Canadian national culture," Palmer argued that the government intended to "break down the vertical mosaic," insisted that the policy could "only be a threat to people who

¹¹⁸ Howard Palmer, "Canada: Multicultural or Bicultural?," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* vol. 3, no. 1 (1971), 109-110.

have failed to grasp the reality of Canada in the 1970s” and with acceptance and appreciation of different cultures these fears would not be realized.¹¹⁹

Nevertheless, there was and continues to be an evident hierarchy concerning the policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. The official linkage between culture and language underpinned the direct federal government strategy for bilingualism throughout Canada. The origin of the Canadian understanding of multiculturalism as the embodiment of cultural pluralism only began with the debate of bilingualism and biculturalism in the 1960s. The increased discussion on part of the other ethnic groups in Canada regarding cultural and linguistic matters highlighted the willingness and ability of those in the “third element” (those neither English nor French) of Canadian society and accordingly emphasize their cultural and linguistic wants in Canadian society.¹²⁰ However, the policy and its framework was a way for the federal government to maintain a level of control over the collective identity and provide the citizenry with an identity, which they felt, represented a modern Canada in the face of the ‘crisis’ of identity they were forced to deal with during the period. In the end, multiculturalism within a bilingual framework did not foster the national unity that was intended with its implementation.

¹¹⁹ Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, *Report Volume IV*, 12-13; Palmer, “Canada: Multicultural or Bicultural?,” 111-115.

¹²⁰ Julia Lalande, “The Roots of Multiculturalism – Ukrainian-Canadian Involvement in the Multicultural Discussion of the 1960s as an Example of the Position of the ‘Third Force’,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* vol. 38, no. 1 (2006), 47. Also see, Eve Haque, *Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework: Language, Race, and Belonging in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

This crisis did not end in the 1970s; instead, it shifted to a crisis focused on national unity rather than identity. The federal government may have been able to alleviate some immediate national tensions concerning culture and identity by forcibly moving Canada's identity from an expression of Brito-Canadianness to a bilingual and multicultural understanding between the 1950s and the 1970s but this did not lead to national unity. Further still, relations between Quebec and Ottawa became more contentious, as evidenced by the October Crisis in 1970, when the federal relationship between Newfoundland and Ottawa was still in the early stages.

In its early decades as a province, Newfoundlanders largely felt that Canada could be united through diversity rather than attempting to create a singular Canadian identity. Since their union in 1949, the new province played a role in the multiple large-scale attempts by the federal government to create such an identity. Newfoundland, like all other provinces, was included in and contributed to the Massey and B&B Commissions. With the Massey Commission's focus on finding a singular expression of Canadian culture to ward off external influence, internal divisions and differences were understood to be problematic. This understanding would then exclude Newfoundland's cultural difference from the rest of Canada, as Newfoundlanders believed themselves to be a unique element in the Canadian state given the sentiments expressed in the ascent to their union where Canada was understood as a foreign country.¹²¹ However, given that

¹²¹ Letters to the Editor, "Fanny Fiander Ryan Bemoans Newfoundland's joining Canada," *The Daily News*, St. John's, March 31, 1949 and R.I. McAllister, ed., *Newfoundland and Labrador: The First Fifteen years of Confederation*, (St. John's Dicks & Co. Ltd., 1966), 12.

the Massy Commission began only days after their union with Canada, the new province was more caught up with understanding the country they had joined rather than pushing for a Canada that would allow Newfoundland to continue to be distinct and had not yet begun to feel anything akin to cultural erosion. Despite having recently joined Canada, Newfoundland took part in the federal commission on Canadian culture, in order to strengthen the ties between them and to ensure that Newfoundlander's voices were heard and considered.

When viewing these federal commissions through the lens of Newfoundland it is understood that Canada was preoccupied with issues that the newest province had not been concerned with. Fear of American encroachment (culturally or otherwise) and the need to accommodate Quebec were not elements of the Newfoundland psyche. The new province viewed the United States and Quebec differently than Canada; Newfoundland did not view the United States as a threat (culturally or otherwise), yet did see Quebec as an adversary both historically with the Labrador border dispute and contemporarily with the early days of tension over the Churchill Falls hydroelectric development in Labrador that was underway during the 1970s. Thus, the federal government's framing of the problem of national identity did not resonate with all Canadians. The federal government was seeking a solution to the problem of national identity, and while the solutions themselves were not an issue, the way they were framed from a federal government perspective did not speak to regions outside of Central Canada and thereby caused further issues with national identity and national unity. This then calls for a similar study of these Royal Commissions and the

federal government's attempts to rectify Canada's national identity and unity, from a Northern lens, a Pacific Coast lens, a Prairies lens; to look at this period and these national issues from other perspectives outside of Central Canada.

By the time the B&B Commission began, Newfoundland was in the midst of a cultural revival and an emergent nationalism. Newfoundlanders were ready to push for adequate inclusion in Canada rather than just fitting in. The B&B Commission's focus on how to attain a national identity that could unite Canadians (initially thought to be bilingual and bicultural). With much of the focus being placed on Quebec due to the manifestation of the Quiet Revolution and the problems of national unity that were its consequence, consideration of provincial cultural and linguistic differences that were not French were not adequately addressed at this time (nor have they since...), making the idea of a cohesive Canada evermore challenging. During the B&B Commission, Newfoundlanders presented an understanding that unity in diversity was the way forward for Canada. This position would help their situation within Canada by permitting the inclusion of difference rather than adhering to a bilingual-bicultural understanding of Canada that did not reflect all provinces, particularly their own given their historic and contemporary contention with Quebec. Following the B&B Commission and its subsequent policy recommendations, the federal government established a Task Force on Canadian Unity in yet another attempt to alleviate the issue in the late 1970s. During this Task Force, Newfoundland once again took up the position of protecting their cultural uniqueness and regionalism within the Canadian state.

Chapter 3 – The Shift from the Problem of National Identity to a Problem with National Unity

Newfoundlanders, in the past have been made to feel ashamed of their culture and dialects, but they are now demanding the right to be both Newfoundlanders and Canadians. It is only through the appreciation of the country's cultural diversity [...] that cohesiveness will be fostered.¹

The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism's recognition of far greater diversity than implied by an English-French bicultural Canadian national identity included evidence from Newfoundland. As the province matured as part of Canada, Newfoundlanders did not want to give up their Newfoundland identity despite the ridicule they experience from other Canadians. As the new province took part in the nation-wide inquiry into Canada's identity, Newfoundlanders saw that they could simultaneously hold both a Canadian and a Newfoundland identity. Ramsay Cook has provided much commentary on Canadian identity and its formation, noting in particular that identities are relational and that "regions, groups, and individuals" hold multiple identities.² Holding multiple identities should be an easily accepted notion in a country as regionally and culturally diverse as Canada. If genuinely embraced, Canada's diversity could become a uniting force and the well-known Canadian adage of

¹ Wayne Brace quoted in the Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John's, Newfoundland, October 27-28, 1977*, (Ottawa: Task Force on Canadian Unity, 1977), 17.

² Ramsay Cook, "Identities are not like Hats," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol.81, no.2 (June 2000), 264-265.

‘unity in diversity’ could become more than a phrase.³ However, the national identity crisis debate of the 1960s transmuted into a perceived crisis of national unity by the mid-1970s.

As the national unity crisis continued and heightened throughout the 1970s, it became clear that multiculturalism within a bilingual framework did not please everyone following its implementation – in particular the province of Quebec. Relations between Quebec and Ottawa became increasingly contentious at this time, with the 1970 October Crisis made this more than apparent. The federal government established the Task Force on Canadian Unity as a means to achieve national unity Part I of this chapter will provide an overview of the Task Force, both exploring its mandate and interpreting its findings. In Part II, Newfoundland’s participation in the Task Force and the province’s views on Canadian unity are explored in relation to Newfoundland’s own identity and regionalism.

National unity was a growing concern for the federal government in the postwar era, as Stephen Tomblin and Kenneth McRoberts have addressed in-depth.⁴ Tomblin underscores that national unity “has always been complicated by extensive socio-economic and political links between regions” who have differing opinions and understandings of the Canadian federation, with a “central problem” being a “lack of common sense of place or a definition that unites Canadians.”⁵

³ J.M.S. Careless, ““Limited Identities” – Ten Years Later,” *Manitoba History* vol.1, no.1 (1980), 9.

⁴ Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Stephen Tomblin, *Ottawa and the Outer Provinces: The Challenge of Regional Integration in Canada*, (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1995).

⁵ Tomblin, 22.

The Shift from the Problem of National Identity to a Problem with National Unity

This was highlighted during the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B&B Commission) during the 1960s, McRoberts sees Lester Pearson's attempt at unifying Canada as it being dualistic in nature while seeing Pierre Trudeau trying to upend that 'essential' Canadian dualism.⁶ Both Tomblin and McRobert's argue that Trudeau's national unity strategy, which encompasses the Third National Policy (the National Energy Plan) and an overarching 'pan-Canadianism' during the 1970s, as misguided by being "based on a misconception of Canada" and leaving the outer regions to see this as primarily a "central Canadian strategy, rather than a national one."⁷ McRobert's argues that the Trudeau government restricted Canadian dualism "by reducing it to language alone," as opposed to allowing it to flourish as an understanding of "two cultures, let alone societies or nations," that Canada was a singular nation "composed simply of individuals, of whom spoke English, others French, and some both languages." McRoberts further states that even though the B&B Commission did not advocate for the federal policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism, Trudeau established these policies to push his agenda for Canadian unity.⁸ Exemplifying that for Trudeau, creating a notion of pan-Canadianism where all Canadians could identify with an official national identity that was multicultural and bilingual would foster national unity.

Tomblin has outlined that regional integration has habitually been a challenge for the federal government and the "strong foundations" of provincial

⁶ McRoberts, xiii.

⁷ McRoberts, xvii and Tomblin, 50-54.

⁸ McRobert, xv.

culture plays a key role, stating in Canada “cultural and ideological differences among provinces help to explain, in part, the lack of a cohesive response to the idea of regional unity” – moreover, provinces themselves can denote a single region.⁹ Tomblin posits three approaches to regionalism in Canada: a physical/geographic understanding of the region; a historical understanding of the hinterland-heartland relationship; and an “imagined approached” described as the understanding that “ideas, perceptions, myths, and visions pull a society together or force it apart.”¹⁰ Arguably, these different approaches could be combined or layered, depending on the reality of the region in question. In the case of Newfoundland, evidence of all three approaches is readily found upon investigation.

Tomblin and McRobert’s are far from the first to make note of the challenges of regional integration and national unity in Canada. During the height of the national unity crisis in 1976, Donald Smiley addressed what he referred to as the “three axes of Canadian federalism,” identified as the relationship between Canada and the United States; the relationship between English and French Canada; and the relationship between central Canada (Ontario and Quebec) and the other regions. Smiley disagreed with the contemporary academic literature that refuted the argument that Canada was a “national community.” Instead, he argued that the English Canadian literature largely demonstrated support for Quebec nationalism, posited a two-nations approach for Canada, and saw Canada

⁹ Tomblin, 10.

¹⁰ Tomblin, 7.

as a “loose union of provinces.”¹¹ Occurring in the same context, it is unsurprising that this understanding of Canada was also generally reflected in the findings of the contemporaneous Task Force on Canadian Unity.

As Smiley’s work demonstrates, the academic literature of the 1970s reflected the political and social climate. Much of the literature was inundated with an investigation into the state of the Canadian identity and its praised ethnic mosaic, while also acknowledging the regional differences across the country regarding this. In the introduction to a published collection of papers presented at a Canadian Ethnic Studies Association conference held in Winnipeg in 1975, sociologist Leo Driedger described the Maritimes (which he defines as Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island) as being comprised of “Anglophones and Anglo-culturalism” and was understood to “represent British unilingualism and unculturalism.” Driedger argued that this was due to the combination of a history and demography that was predominately British, as well as having “very few immigrants,” which he deduced as meaning the provinces would “remain highly British.” He furthered this with asserting that the Maritime region had a minor “impact on the total mosaic” as it only held “6 or 7 per cent of the Canadian population” and it was “also highly unlikely that residents of this region [would] push for a heterogeneous mosaic,” with their “native population [being] very small, their Black population [being] English-speaking and small,

¹¹ Donald V. Smiley, *Canada in Question: Federalism in the Seventies*, (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1976), 184 and 221.

and other ethnic groups [were] hardly represented.”¹² With his investigation into the state of the Maritime region at the time, Driedger’s work helps to provide an understanding of the Maritime province’s position and influence during the national unity crisis.

Also in 1975, J.R. Miller reflected on the current cultural climate stating that in that year Canadians could “expect much talk about cultural unity, duality, and diversity” due to “another phase of the debate over immigration policy, and everything that subject implies about the Canadian identity.”¹³ He reflected on how Canada did not become assimilated during the confederation era, declaring that “rather than a society of revolution and consensus [like the US], Canada was to be a community of evolution and allegiance” and that this “society of allegiance did not require conformity to any one model.”¹⁴ Miller also signifies ‘key words’ used by George-Etienne Cartier in regarding Canada being a ‘political nationality’, highlighting that the “unity that Confederation was to produce was a union at the political level, not cultural.”¹⁵ More contemporarily, Miller provided commentary on the outcome of the B&B Commission, how in the aftermath that where “Ottawa had opted for only bilingualism, not for official recognition of biculturalism [...] it was by then evident, and becoming steadily more obvious, that the country would not accept cultural as well as linguistic duality.” Furthering the position that Canada was not a singular unit, rather it was

¹² Leo Driedger, ed. *The Canadian Ethnic Mosaic: A Quest for Identity* (Toronto: McClelland and Steward, 1978), 7 and 12.

¹³ J.R. Miller, “Unity/Diversity: The Canadian Experience,” *Dalhousie Review* vol. 55, no. 1 (1975), 63.

¹⁴ Miller, 64.

¹⁵ Miller, 65.

more of “a duality in that it had two official languages” and “a diversity in that it recognized and supported the existence of many different cultural groups.” For Miller, any notion of Canada’s unity was to be found in its “duality and diversity.”¹⁶ Miller’s early estimation of the necessity of basing Canadian unity in its diversity, speaks to the opinions of Canadians that were evidenced a few years later during the Task Force’s inquiry.

Ottawa placed considerable importance on national unity after the tensions of the cultural revolutions of the 1960s due to the inability of the federal government to establish a cohesive singular national identity during that time which such unity could be predicated on. Consequently, the Task Force on Canadian Unity began its investigation and consulting Canadians nationwide in 1977. An examination of the Task Force from the perspective of Newfoundland will be a focal point of this chapter and in doing so will reveal how Newfoundland understood Canadian identity and the importance of national unity at that point in time. The reports from the Task Force suggest that many Newfoundlanders believed that Canada could very well be united through understanding and accepting its diversity, rather than attempting to create a singular Canadian identity.¹⁷ This was primarily because Newfoundland saw itself as a key part of that diversity; distinct but nevertheless a part of Canada.

¹⁶ Miller, 78.

¹⁷ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 17.

I. Task Force on Canadian Unity

On 5 July 1977, Prime Minister Pierre-Elliot Trudeau submitted a report to the Privy Council establishing the Task Force on Canadian Unity. With this, Trudeau appointed a committee of seven individuals¹⁸ from across Canada to “enquire into questions relating to Canadian unity,” asking the committee to “hold public hearings and sponsor public meetings” to gather input from those interested in the matter and to “assist in the development of processes for strengthening Canadian unity and be a source of advice to the government on unity issues.” While the commissioners were plucked from the various regions across Canada, the Task Force itself was still central Canadian in its perspective when considering that the federal government was responsible for the creation and intent of the inquiry. Between September 1977 and April 1978, the Task Force conducted more than fifteen public hearings across the nation, as well as many regional and private meetings “to allow Canadians to [express] their views” on the state of national unity and related issues.¹⁹

The Task Force had a mandate comprised of three central foci: “to support, encourage and publicize the efforts of the general public and particularly those of (voluntary) organizations, with regard to Canadian unity,” “to contribute

¹⁸ The seven committee members appointed on 5 July 1977, were co-chairs Jean-Luc Pepin (Ottawa) and John Robarts (Toronto), as well as Richard Cashin (St. John’s), John Evans (Toronto), Muriel Kovitz (Calgary), and Ross Marks (Mayor of Hundred Mile House, BC) [P.C. 1977-1910]. Trudeau appointed two additional commissioners on 24 August 1977, Solange Chaput-Rolland (Montreal) [P.C. 1977-2361] and Gérald Beaudoin (Hull) [P.C. 1977-2362]. On 28 February 1978, John Evans (Toronto) resigned as a commissioner and Trudeau appointed Roland Watts (Kingston) to replace him [P.C. 1978-573], Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together: Observations and Recommendations*, (Hull, QC: Supply and Services Canada, 1979), 135-137.

¹⁹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *The Task Force on Canadian Unity: Coming to Terms, the Words of the Debate*, (Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1979), vii; Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 135-137.

The Shift from the Problem of National Identity to a Problem with National Unity

to the initiatives and views of the Commissioners concerning Canadian unity,” and “to advise the Government (of Canada) on unity issues.” With this mandate, the Task Force was to “develop its own initiatives and ideas,” while working “closely with the Canadian people” and bringing the national conversation about unity to all citizens of all regions. A provided timeline specified an initial phase of “listening” during visits to each province, followed by a second phase focused on “study and consultation with specialists,” with the final phase intended for the commissioners to “integrate their views” when constructing recommendations to present for consideration by the federal government, as well as the Canadian people. The Task Force outlined their role as being “committed” to the Canadian federation while recognizing that “Canada and its present federal system are under great stress” and that the very “creation of the Task Force is itself a testimony” to that stress. It is further stated that over the course of their mandate, the Task Force aimed to do four things: “to listen and attempt to understand the real concerns of all Canadians on the functioning of our social, economic and political institutions” concerning Canadian unity; while recognizing the “existence of tensions and the need for reforms,” they intended to “point out the positive aspects of the Canadians experience, both material and emotional, its flexibility and its potential for improvement;” while “hop[ing] to be able to inform the Canadian people effectively about the complex issues at stake in creating a more satisfying country;” and “to make recommendations for changes in structures, concepts and attitudes which are required in order to make out Canadian institutions more consistent with the needs of our times.” The Task

Force also specified that it was expected to “make a contribution to a better understanding and resolution of our current problems. Where these problems are more perceived than real, we intend to promote understanding. Where they are more real than perceived, we intend to promote change.”²⁰

Upon completion of their inquiry, the Task Force produced three publications in 1979 that covered their observations and recommendations, clarified the terminology used during the national discussion, and addressed the public perceptions during the inquiry. Of particular interest is the second publication, *The Task Force on Canadian Unity: Coming to Terms, the Words of the Debate*, as this sole focus of this volume is on semantics pertaining to the commission regarding the public hearings and meetings. Throughout preliminary hearings, the committee members were “struck by the degree of confusion [...] in the discussion” due to the “lack of common understanding or agreement” about the terminology and concepts being used. This led the Task Force to believe that a meaningful contribution they could facilitate was to create “a handy but comprehensive guide to the words and concepts most commonly used in the discussion of our country’s future.” Thus, the Task Force prepared a set of definitions for “general social and political terms” in an attempt to achieve clarity and consensus, so that Canadians were speaking to the same issues in the same ways with an agreed-upon understanding and that any disagreement in the

²⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 141-143.

aftermath was due to genuine difference rather than speaking to different points of understanding.²¹

The volume provided an extensive list of defined terms related to societal relationships, defining terminology such as ‘integration’, ‘acculturation’, and ‘assimilation’, as well as ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’, and a breakdown of “Native communities and groups,” such as “Indians”, Métis, and Inuit. As well, the use of “nation” and “state” were thoroughly discussed. It is made clear that “if a nation can exist without a state and if a state can serve more than one nation, it is necessary to distinguish between the two concepts,” stating that some nations are states but some are not and thus statehood is not necessary for nationhood and vice-versa. This is furthered with the understanding that “a nation is a community of persons bound together by a sense of solidarity and wishing to perpetuate this solidarity through some political means,” and that “nation” can be defined in relation to such elements as language, culture, heritage, and territory, while a “state” is a political entity.²² The Task Force also included a section defining “biculturalism” and “multiculturalism” and discussed how these concepts were contributing factors to the current “debate on Canadian unity,” demonstrating that the problems the B&B Commission addressed in the 1960s were still very apparent in Canadian society in the 1970s.²³ This volume outlined and described what the Task Force saw as possible ways to move forward regarding constitutional frameworks and the “options and variations” of such frameworks in

²¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, v-vii; Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak: The Views of the Public*, (Hull, QC: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1979), viii.

²² Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 4-6 and 13.

²³ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 8-9.

terms of political sovereignty and levels of independence, such as “sovereignty association”, decentralization, asymmetric federalism, as well as “renewed” and “restructured” federalism, and simply remaining ‘status-quo’.²⁴

In their first volume, *A Future Together: Observations and Recommendations*, the Task Force outlined some of their key interpretations and suggestions for moving forward that they developed during the inquiry. They observed that Quebec’s 1976 election of the Parti Québécois, and the upcoming Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association, was a catalyst for this investigation of Canadian unity. The Task Force furthered this with their reiteration of the warnings that the B&B Commission gave regarding the imminence of a national unity crisis as Quebec’s actions were characterized as reviving regionalism, the likes of which would surely disrupt national stability.²⁵

The volume presents three main objectives for Canadians: “diversity as a source of strength”, “to ensure the vitality of the ‘Canadian’ dimension”, meaning that “there is both an effective government and a form of loyalty and respect for citizens to attach themselves to as Canadians,” and the “adaptations of political institutions,” which the Task Force openly advocates for through “restructured federalism.”²⁶ The commissioners outline three questions they ‘tried’ to answer in this report: “How do we secure the fuller expression of duality in all the spheres to which it relates? How do we accommodate more satisfactorily the cores of regionalism that are altering the face of Canadian society? How do

²⁴ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 75-85.

²⁵ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 11-12 and 15.

²⁶ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 38-40.

we make the principle of sharing an ‘operational value’ in our country, and with and between our governments, so that duality and regionalism and the other feature of Canadians life are given appropriate recognition?” and presented four points in a response to these questions. Firstly, the approach to the problem of national unity “must be as varied and comprehensive” as the problem itself. Secondly, they understood that an “unavoidable feature of Canadian society” is that it is comprised of “variations in the strength, size, character and aspirations” of its communities. Thirdly, they were keen to ensure that “the principle of flexibility and the provision for continual adjustment” would remain regardless of any agreed-upon outcome. Lastly, they aimed to provide the federal and provincial governments with suggestions that would “increase the degree of cooperation and reduce the level of conflict” between them.²⁷ The Task Force concluded their, *Observations and Recommendations*, with their key observation being that Canada is a “vastly different” place in 1979 than it was in 1867. While not particularly nuanced nor enlightened, this observation led the commissioners to believe “that there should be a new Canadian constitution to meet the aspirations and future needs of all the people of Canada,” with a restructured distribution of powers federally and provincially which would allow for improved federal-provincial relations.²⁸

The majority of the first two volumes focused on topic matter related to the federal domain in terms of the national unity problem and possible solutions with little regard for anything decidedly marginal, such as First Nations,

²⁷ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 41-42.

²⁸ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 81 and 94.

immigrants, and people of colour. Regarding indigenous peoples, the Task Force mentioned “first Canadians” by including discussion of ideas such as the “phasing out of special status” by shifting their role federally, “Native sovereignty,” and the concept of “citizens plus”. Also addressed, are specific matters related to linguistic and socio/cultural issues, such as English/French language equality and training, as well as “Canadian ethnic pluralism.”²⁹

While most factors related to Canadian unity received somewhat limited consideration in the first two volumes of the Task Force’s report, it was clear that regionalism played a markedly important role in this debate and consequently was repeatedly featured throughout the report. The Task Force took great care to define “regionalism” as “a term with a great variety of meanings, depending on the context.” The Task Force distinguished between “regionalism as a **fact** and regionalism as a **value**,” while clarifying that “within these two basic categories many further refinements can be identified,” meaning that the specific criteria for either ‘fact’ or ‘value’ based regionalism can vary between regional designations.³⁰ In their volume *Coming to Terms*, the Task Force provided the following definitions of regionalism as a ‘fact’ and as a ‘value’:

Regionalism as a fact refers to the existence of various areas of a country or continent (or parts of either) with characteristics which distinguish them from others. These characteristics may be nature or man-made but are usually a combination of both. [...] Regionalism as a value refers to the tendency to look upon the existence of regions within a country as a positive asset and to

²⁹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 55-58.

³⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 10.

The Shift from the Problem of National Identity to a Problem with National Unity

recognize or reinforce these regions as a worthwhile feature of its political and cultural life. Movements of thought or opinion which recognize regionalism as a value may seek to strengthen regional culture, or to decentralize the activities of government, or to give the regions more effective control over the central decision-making process.³¹

The Task Force provided multiple examples of how regionalism as a fact had been understood. The Economic Council of Canada “identified thirteen major urban systems” as economic regions. They further these examples of regional division with the understanding of Canada as a unit of five regions, “the Atlantic region, Quebec, Ontario, the west and the north, or the prairies and British Columbia.” A third way of understanding Canada’s regions that they provide is by the “provinces themselves,” with this definition being “especially useful as one moves from economic analysis toward more political and social concerns because regional communities require an institutional framework if they are to become variable units which can express themselves and organize their collective life in an effective manner.” This is furthered by the notion of provincial institutions as being the “primary frameworks through which regional communities organize themselves because the provincial intuitions tend in turn to develop social networks and vested interest which reinforce the provincial focus of the region.” The Task Force contests that “regional or provincial communities of Canada then, are a complex product of geographic, economic, historical, political, social, cultural and linguistic forces.” They contend that the apparent burgeoning of regionalism that began in the 1960s was a “reawakening of a very old feature of

³¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 10-11.

Canadian life,” as Canada was “originally brought together from distinct regional communities which remain strongly attached to their local identities and which are reinforced by [a myriad of] complex institutional and social forces.” Based on their findings, the Task Force believed that “Canadian institutions attempt[ed] to reflect these realities of duality, pluralism, and regionalism.”³²

With such consideration given to defining regionalism, it suitably appeared regularly throughout their observations. The Task Force claimed there are “two kinds of cleavages in Canadian society,” duality and regionalism, where the former describes the long-standing division between English and French. They were also apt to discern that the two are merely “ways of describing the same realities from different perspectives.”³³ They found that the ‘malaise’ regarding Canadian unity was found in “all regions of Canada” and all regions would receive the “full attention” of the Task Force, though they noted that the “most pressing questions” were queried in Quebec and vowed to give those concerns “high priority.”³⁴ With this, the Task Force reflected on the “revival of regionalism” itself and believed that Quebec’s present political priorities of heightened regionalism deepened this ‘revival’. However, they contested that the Québécois dismissed “regionalism as a very significant factor in Canadian life,” describing the Québécois view of Canada as simply the “relations between French and English-speaking Canadians or between Quebec and the rest of Canada.” The Task Force posited that this view allowed for an understanding of “English-

³² Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Coming to Terms*, 10-11.

³³ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 21 and 25.

³⁴ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 141.

speaking Canada as one monolithic entity,” whereas the reality of English-speaking Canada was far from a “homogeneous society” and more so a “diverse and complex one” that was regional in nature. They furthered this complex understanding of English-speaking Canada’s regional distinction by having identified “five principal sources of diversity in English-speaking Canada: geography, history, economics, ethnicity and federalism itself.”³⁵

In the final volume of their report, *A Time to Speak: The Views of the Public*, the Task Force turned the focus to the Canadians they were addressing. The Task Force divided the volume into five sections based on topics that were frequently mentioned during the hearings: The Communities, The Search for Identity, Quebec, Economic Life, Politics and the Constitution. The sections are further broken down into chapters that are focused to more specific themes, within which the commissioners “reproduce the range of opinions and proposals which were expressed, together with selected quotations from briefs and oral presentations, in order to give the reader the ‘feel’ of contact with the participants at the hearings.” The Task Force was also apt to acknowledge their use of more general terms, such as ‘many’, ‘some’, and ‘few’, throughout the volume, as this can be quite vague.³⁶ The section titled “The Communities” is heavily focused on English and French Canadians, with four of the seven chapters devoted to them covering topics such as the “two founding peoples” and their languages, as well as “French communities outside of Quebec” and the “English community in Quebec.” Comparatively, the “native communities” are provided with a single

³⁵ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 15 and 26-28.

³⁶ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, ix.

chapter, as are the “other ethnic groups,” and “regional communities” and the issues posed by them are addressed in one chapter.³⁷

In keeping with the typical contemporary method of such nation-wide commission-led endeavours, the public meetings were “extensively covered” by both “local and national media,” with some cities having live televised coverage of the hearings. There was a rhythmic pattern to how the meetings generally unfolded, with the daytime sessions being “relatively formal occasions” when specialists and focus groups had an “opportunity to present prepared positions and answer some of [the Task Force’s] specific questions.” Whereas the “evening sessions [...] were spontaneous” events where those from the general public who participated “were heard, not only by the Task Force Commissioners and other members of the audience, but often by the much wider audiences provided by radio and television.” The Task Force described these sessions as “frank and frequently turbulent,” where every-day Canadians had the “opportunity to air their views on any number of issues” related to Canadian unity, some “express[ed] publically what they had been reflecting on for years” while others “react[ed] on the spot to what other people had just said.” In general, the Task Force was impressed with the perceived “thoughtfulness and [...] passion” the attendees expressed during the public meetings, stating that it was “readily apparent that many Canadians were aware that they had reached a crossroads in their history.”³⁸

³⁷ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, v-1.

³⁸ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, vii-viii.

II. Newfoundland's Participation in the Task Force & its Views on Canadian Unity

During the cross-country public hearings, the responses to the commissioners' questions illustrate the views of both the general populace and those with special interests in the matter. Similarly, the briefs from those in Newfoundland evidence some overall opinions on the matter of Canadian unity in the province, ranging from how those in rural Newfoundland view the Canadian unity crisis, to Newfoundlanders questioning whether they are Canadian, and even the more philosophical notions of "post-Canada" and "deconfederation" were the focus for some. The Task Force spent time collecting such evidence in Newfoundland on 27-28 October 1977, albeit only visiting St. John's.³⁹

A question posed during the public hearing in St. John's addressed the subject of duality, asking, "Is the principle of duality accepted by Canadians, particularly when defined as 'equality between the two founding peoples'? How is it understood?" An unidentified individual from St. John's responded by stating their opinion of the increased complexity of contemporary Canada:

The old notion of two nations struggling within the bosom of a single state may be have an apt description in the 1840s when Lower and Upper Canada were united and alone. But then they cajoled the Maritimers to join in their struggle, filled the west with people who knew nothing of this venerable dispute, and accepted Newfoundland to share in the sorrow and the promise. There is a French-speaking nation in Quebec, an English-

³⁹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John's*, 1.

speaking nation in southern Ontario, but I, like many Canadians, belong to
neither.⁴⁰

This unidentified Newfoundlander expressed that Newfoundlanders, like other Canadians, do not always neatly fit into the “two founding peoples” understanding of Canada, as they do not identify as simply English or French; either identifying in a more nuanced fashion or not identifying with neither English nor French at all. As well, a respondent commented on the sympathy that many Newfoundlanders felt for French Canadians and the similarity that is to be found between the two groups, expressing that “We Newfoundlanders are the best equipped to sympathize with French Canadians. For we, too, know what it’s like to be poor, despised and exploited in a land which we call our own, but which we don’t really control. We even understand Quebec’s language problems. While many Québécois feel that they must give up French in order to get ahead, we Newfoundlanders must give up our dialects. We understand the feelings of the Québécois whose French is laughed at in Paris, for our English is laughed at in Toronto – yes, and even in St. John’s!”⁴¹

The importance that some Newfoundlanders placed on the issue of Canadian unity was undeniable, as is demonstrated by a remark from an individual in St. John’s listed in an appendix to the Task Force’s final report, “I hope I haven’t taken up too much of your time, but as you see, I’m on crutches. I made a special effort to get here because Canada means a lot to me.”⁴² The Task

⁴⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 5-6.

⁴¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 86.

⁴² Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 288.

Force questioned the attendees across the country if there was a “single Canadian identity.” While the final report list no responses from Newfoundland, a respondent from St. John’s had said during the public hearing that “We preach unity, understanding and mutual respect, yet we practice the opposite. The crisis now facing Canada is no sudden or chance occurrence...unless a radical change of heart takes place in English Canada, no solution will be found.” Another from St. John’s claimed the “knowledge of our history and our cultural heritage is simply pathetic. Without this knowledge we will never understand what it means to be Canadian,” emphasizing a need for Canadians to be unified in their understanding of the country as a whole.⁴³

As mentioned, regionalism was of great importance to the Task Force, thus during the public hearings the question “How do Canadians see regionalism?” was posed. Responses from St. John’s included, “The British North America Act does not recognize nor safeguard Canada’s foundation stone – that is, regionalism.” and “Even today, after 28 years of Confederation, rural Newfoundlanders still consider themselves Newfoundlanders first, Canadians, only after that. For this island was a country, alone, for over 400 years before joining the Canadian Confederation.” A representative of the Corner Brook Status of Women Council attended the St. John’s hearing and remarked, “Too often we have heard the expression, coast to coast – from Vancouver to Halifax. I’ve often wondered if Victoria feels as left out as Newfoundland. The Newfie joke has not enhanced our image. True, Newfoundlanders tell them better than any

⁴³ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 95 and 100-102.

mainlanders, but then, it is easier to laugh at yourself than to be laughed at.”

Additionally, an attendee in St. John’s saw this as an opportune moment to address the regional problems of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s (CBC) programming by stating that “Every morning on CBC radio, we have three or four hours, three hours I think, of programming coming out of Ontario which I think only reflects what is going on in central Canada.”⁴⁴

During their time in St. John’s, the Task Force met with several special interest groups ranging from the business and labour community, political groups, media, and education and the academic community, to the arts and culture community and women’s and rural development groups. In addition to the special interest groups and private meetings held at Memorial University’s Queen’s College, there was the mentioned public meeting. The summary report of the Task Force’s trip to St. John’s provides valuable commentary from the special interest group sessions, as well as a list of “perceptions” and “recommendations” gathered from the public session. Those in attendance at the public session voiced perceptions relating to problems with the federal government failing to adequately recognize the regional structure of Canada, as well as there being genuine “differences within Anglophone Canada,” and Newfoundland specific concerns related to the “ridicule” many Newfoundlanders feel from the rest of Canada. Some felt that the question of Canadian unity was really a “war against ignorance and against racism” and expressed belief in a “bilingual Canada in a multicultural

⁴⁴ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 81-88.

context;” that said, there were those who stated that they considered themselves as Newfoundlanders first and foremost.⁴⁵

The recommendations that the public participants offered to the Task Force were that increased regional/provincial development was needed to alleviate some of the central problems associated with Canadian unity, specifying further development in the areas of fisheries and other primary industries particular to Newfoundland. It was also expressed that taxation should be equalized across Canada, as well as support for the reform of an elected and “regionally-based” Senate. Others focused on the influx of American “foreign culture,” suggesting that curbing the flow of this would “produce much cohesiveness and national maturity.” In a level of agreement with this, was the notion of “personal identity, as unity is first a question of personal dignity and respect.”⁴⁶

The briefs presented to the Task Force during the meetings at Queen’s College echoed many of the themes mentioned in the public meeting. Several key areas that cover a wide range of the frequented topics are the economy, Quebec, restructuring of the federal government (along regional lines), and culture. Of particular interest is the brief, “To be or not be a Canadian, that is the Question,” submitted by high school students, Ian Baird, Paul Blackwood, and Doug Nesbitt who speculate on the matter of whether Newfoundlanders are truly regarded as members of Canada. The students opened by stating that their purpose was to voice their “concerns as young Newfoundlanders” in regards to being Canadian,

⁴⁵ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 20.

⁴⁶ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 20-21.

furthering this with the claim that “many Newfoundlanders are now wondering if [they] have exchanged one colonial master for another” – and exchange of London for Ottawa upon joining Canada. The students continued their discussion by addressing the difficulties of applying federal programs to the province, as well as Newfoundland’s specific problems, in areas such as road improvement, as being “virtually ignored.” Additionally, they stress that the province’s “general economic problems” have received “little consideration” from the federal government, which left the students to posit “is it any wonder we wonder whether we are Canadian citizens or Canadian colonials.” They describe Newfoundlanders as lacking “pride in being Canadian,” furthering this with the notion that it is “difficult to generate pride when we are the butt of national jokes, and when we continuously feel that we are ignored and do not matter,” in the country.⁴⁷

During the ‘Business and Labour’ session, there was a particular focus on the need to address “regional economic disparities” as they were believed by some in attendance to “pose the greatest threat to the country.” George Warren of the St. John’s Board of Trade described Newfoundland as having “tremendous assets” but the problem lies in the “insular attitude of Central Canada and the federal government” as the province is “often ignored” by them. Austin Thorne, the representative for the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, agreed that “the federal system must be made more responsive to regional interests.” Mr. Thorne also stressed that the federal government was doing a disservice to national unity by “calling down the Quebec spirit of nationalism as a

⁴⁷ Task Force on Canadian Unity, Ian Baird, Paul Blackwood, and Doug Nesbitt, “To be or not be a Canadian, that is the Question: A Report,” October 27, 1977, 1-2.

negative force” and reminded the Task Force “Newfoundlanders also have a special sensitivity to nationalism drawing heavily on a very strong sense of place and community.”⁴⁸

Roger Clark, an educator presented during the ‘Education and Language’ session made accusations of Canadians preaching “unity, understanding and mutual respect, while practising the opposite.”⁴⁹ This perception echoed throughout the Task Force’s meetings in Newfoundland, often in reference to Quebec but also of Newfoundland itself. While some participants, such as provincial Progressive Conservative Party representative Charlie Power, “accused the Prime Minister of having moved too quickly to balance out the historical maltreatment of Quebec thus creating a perception in Newfoundland and elsewhere that Quebec has been favoured heavily,” others such as the representative for Voice of Women, Sally Davis, called for “a change in attitudes, especially of English-speaking Canadians toward Quebecers,” stressing that “Canadians must accept that Canada is a bi-national country” and saw constitutional reform as a means to rectify the situation.⁵⁰

Freelancer Robert Plaskin, during the ‘Media’ session, argued that the federal government’s approach to “the national unity problem is wrong” and that Canadians must accept the fact that Quebec “has been oppressed and exploited.” Plaskin furthered this in stressing that it was not only a Quebec problem, thus the real challenge was “to reconceive the idea of a Canadian nation and not merely to

⁴⁸ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 2.

⁴⁹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 4.

⁵⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 8 and 15-16.

patch up the old. To have unity, attitudes have to be changed: attitudes of all toward Quebec and toward the Maritimes; of Alberta toward the East; and of Newfoundland toward Confederation. Newfoundland feels forgotten and neglected by the rest of the country. No one seems to care.” Plaskin concludes by remarking how poorly Newfoundland is treated in the media, placing additional emphasis on his view that “no one seems to care” about Newfoundland.⁵¹

Bill Callahan, a publisher from St. John’s newspaper *The Daily News*, was also present during the ‘Media’ session, as well as the public hearing, and afterward submitted a brief regarding the “Problems on Canadian Unity” to the Task Force. Callahan directly addresses René Lévesque, arguing that the Quebec premier was “speaking for us here in Newfoundland, and for Canadians elsewhere in this country,” in regards to the lack of political control provinces feel they have as part of Canada, which Callahan furthered by stating “I do not believe we gave up or intended to ‘relinquish our sovereignty’ in 1949.” He disagrees with the Task Force’s premise as outlined in their brochure, where it is explained that they would give Quebec (and the questions it has raised) “high priority,” while stating that the “concerns of other regions of Canada ‘nevertheless... are vitally important and will be given our full attention’.” Regarding this, Callahan argues, “whoever wrote that was mistaken,” as he does not see the problems in Quebec as “more urgent than those elsewhere” and believes it antithetical for the problems of other regions “to be regarded as an afterthought,” especially when the problems are of a similar nature. The brief concludes with the recommendation of equal and

⁵¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 18.

direct representation in federal matters, including senate reform, and pushes the Task Force to suggest such solutions in an interim report.⁵²

The similarities between Quebec and Newfoundland in terms of their shared problems with the federal government and their place in the country as a whole were often mentioned during both the private and public sessions, continually presenting the issue of regionalism before the Task Force for their consideration. Lévesque was also mentioned on during the 'Education and Language' session by Harold Paddock, where emphasis was placed on the "lack of backlash to René Lévesque in Newfoundland and other deprived regions of Canada because of the similarity of the complaints and feelings between these regions and Quebec." He furthered this with the acknowledgement that Newfoundlanders "know about lost causes and about hopelessness. They know what it is like to be poor, despised and exploited in their own land" and that Newfoundlanders are "also a conquered people [...] who are being pressured into losing their dialects and culture." Paddock recommended to the Task Force that Canada should be "reorganized on a basis of six regions (Newfoundland, Maritimes, Quebec, Ontario, Prairies and Pacific) plus native states," as there was "a need for new political and economic relationships among these regions" and that the Senate should be reformed equally along these regional lines.⁵³

Recommendations of reform did not just present themselves in the form of suggested changes to the structure of the federal government, but in education as

⁵² William R. Callahan, "Statement of Problems on Canadian Unity: Based on Remarks made before the Task Force on Canadian Unity at Public Hearings in St. John's, Newfoundland, October 28, 1977", (1977), 1-6.

⁵³ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John's*, 4-5.

well. Educator Gerald Murphy spoke of the “different aims” of the schooling systems across the country and that this made the “organization and selection of Canadians content for the school curricula” difficult. He suggested that a solution could be found with increased funding for the Canadian Studies Foundation for the creation of nationwide “curriculum content” which could effectively “contribute to Canadian unity.”⁵⁴

Regarding political opinion in Anglophone Canada, political science professor Hugh Whalen presented the Task Force with a brief of a comparative study of political attitudes in Quebec and Anglophone Canada where it was found that in English Canada the attitudes were “not only more diverse but [...] generally held with much less intensity” and described “four contrasting attitudes” in English Canada. Firstly, a predominant “British conception of Canada held by a very small number;” followed by a “pluralist image of Canadian nationhood, largely multicultural in conception;” third being a “dualist image, or a ‘two nations’ concept;” and finally an image of “‘Canada just is different’.” Whalen’s conclusion regarding the “status of our uncertain national imagery” was that since it began “Canada has been a nation of separate identities with no strong integrating rhythm” and that there have been additional “stress on the system by simultaneous centralizing and decentralizing forces.” This concurrent stress came from the federal government pushing for national unity, while the regions (namely

⁵⁴ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 4.

Quebec) were pushing back for increased sovereignty – economically, politically, and culturally.⁵⁵

Culture recurrently became central in both the private and public discussions. During the ‘Academic’ session, Memorial University Professor David Alexander informed the Task Force of the similarity between Newfoundlanders and Quebeckers regarding how both are “passionate about their history, protective of their culture and very proud.” Wayne Brace, a participant in the ‘Arts and Culture’ session, stated that “Newfoundlanders, in the past have been made to feel ashamed of their culture and dialects, but they are now demanding the right to be both Newfoundlanders and Canadians” and suggested that it was “only through the appreciation of the country’s cultural diversity [...] that cohesiveness will be fostered.”⁵⁶

It was during the ‘Women’s Group’ session in particular where culture remained a central focus for the discussants. The St. John’s representative of the Federation of University Women, Janice Moores, paraphrased a recent statement made by Prof. Ramsay Cook, in stating, “it is Newfoundland which will be consigned to ‘the status of a permanent minority’.” Moores linked Cook’s proclamation with the “French-English question,” reminding the Task Force that this itself was rooted “in the regionalism-centralism issue” which Newfoundland finds itself enmeshed as the federal government had been neglecting regions by developing programs, such as fishing and transportation, that were “not designed

⁵⁵ H. J. Whalen, “Québec and Post-Canada: The Imagery of Deconfederation,” Brief presented to the Task Force on Canadian Unity, (St. John’s, October 28, 1977), 4-5; Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 10.

⁵⁶ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 10 and 17.

to fit regional realities” such as fishing and transportation. She continued by declaring the identities, both Canadian and regional, were being “eroded by the facetious, unthinking attitude of the news media and by the CBC which does not offer a cross-section of the interests, outlooks and concerns of the people of Canada.”⁵⁷

Corner Brook Status of Women representative Denise Koster informed the Task Force of the problems of ridicule and neglect within Newfoundland stating, “Newfoundland’s particular culture and heritage also have been ridiculed by their own leaders” and by contrasting the resentment of Newfoundlanders from their neglect by the rest of Canada with the resentment that Labrador had from their neglect by the “provincial government and Islanders.” Koster recommended that where “national unity is a question of attitude” increased understanding could be achieved with more recurrent publication of nationwide newspapers that were “publically owned and operated but independent of government, to better depict and represent all provinces to one another.” She followed this with the suggestion of both the CBC and the National Film Board (NFB) to produce “regional documentaries” and “decentralized programming” to further facilitate understanding between the provinces and regions, and ultimately the nation itself.⁵⁸

The views of rural Newfoundlanders did not go unheard, as the Task Force held a session that brought together the Rural Development Association and ‘minority groups’. Many of the issues that were addressed were similar to the

⁵⁷ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 8.

⁵⁸ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 8.

other organized sessions but the vantage point of those in attendance provided a somewhat different view from those of the more urban areas whose voices tended to represent the province. Max Jacobs, of the Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Development Council, pointed to the “inapplicability of national policies in meeting regional needs and problems” due to Ottawa’s inclination to deal with English-speaking Canada as a “homogeneous lump,” as this was not the case and only incensed the problem of national unity. Jacobs strengthened this with the insistence that because Newfoundland’s problems “posed no threat to national unity,” Canada was able to “ignore their plight” unlike Quebec. This unequal treatment, and lack of respect, only hampered the unity of the nation.⁵⁹

Also in attendance during this session was Cathy Pennell, a representative of the Community Learning Centre. Through her attendance and drafting of a brief presented to the Task Force, Pennell demonstrated that rural Newfoundlanders “feel sympathetic to Quebecers as they are both steeped in their own heritage and cultural traditions.” Due to a level of neglect from both the federal and provincial governments, she insisted that “many Newfoundlanders” feel they are not an “integral part” of Canada. Pennell described Canada as “harbouring resentment, snobbery and insensitivity,” providing examples of the ignorance and resentment between different cultural and regional groups where “Quebeckers ignore Acadians, Newfoundlanders resent French-Canadians in Labrador, central Canada looks down on Atlantic Canada, and Quebec resent the rest of Canada.” Albeit they did not make her list of examples, the division

⁵⁹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 6.

between rural and urban Newfoundlanders and between those on the Island and those in Labrador (never mind between the province and the rest of Canada) could also be considered as analogous examples.⁶⁰

In her brief, “How Rural Newfoundlanders view Canadian Unity,” Pennell further addressed the mentioned issues but concentrated more directly on the Task Force gaining an understanding of rural Newfoundlanders; aiming to show that they are more than their stereotype of “God-fearing, hard working” people of “noble character,” formed in spite of “the torments and the frustrations of living in the harsh land.” Pennell’s observations led her to describe the rural Newfoundlander as “steeped in the traditions of this island” and with a belief that “central Canadians, so concerned with modern image have no time” for them. She further defined rural Newfoundlanders as feeling “far removed from the centre of the action that is Canada,” as the newest and poorest province, and by continuing to “consider themselves Newfoundlanders first, Canadians, only after that.”⁶¹

In conducting his research for the brief, Pennell had travelled “all over this province” and claimed, “the only people talking about Unity are those who do not have to sweat it out day after day to keep body and soul together,” therefore the reactions to such an inquiry “range from deep concern to total indifference.” When addressing the fishermen she interviewed, they spoke of their hardships and the perceived “indifference of Provincial and Federal officials to their plight.” Regarding their feelings about Canadian Unity, Pennell insisted it was the “last

⁶⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *Summary of the Trip to St. John’s*, 6-7.

⁶¹ Cathy Pennell, “How Rural Newfoundlanders view Canadian Unity,” Brief Presented to the Task Force on Canadian Unity. (October 17, 1977), 1.

thing on their minds [...] most people here are too busy with the problem of just ‘living’ that they have no time, even if they wanted to, to discuss Canadian Unity.” Of those she spoke with, many blamed the bureaucrats for “breaking up this country – not Quebec.” In their view, Quebec and Newfoundland have their own unique heritage and culture and “both are fighting desperately to preserve them,” as a means of achieving this Pennell declares, “both provinces want an end to Regional disparity and a new deal from Confederation.” However, unlike Quebec, Newfoundland has “no ‘clout’ when it comes to threatening independence” and cannot survive alone. Some expressed concern over what would happen to Newfoundland if Quebec separated, as this would only further the physical separation of Newfoundland from the rest of Canada. The solution many rural Newfoundlanders suggested was to “take care of the Regional disparities that exist in this country” before being concerned with talk of national unity. Pennell informed the Task Force that there was an overall impression of rural Newfoundlanders as being “proud to be Canadians,” which led her to conclude that “deep in our hearts, we want Canada to survive as a nation,” but to make this possible “Confederation must be made more worthwhile, more meaningful” for all Canadians.⁶²

As mentioned, regionalism was an important issue for the Task Force. Consequently, as part of the Task Force’s inquiry, chairmen Jean-Luc Pepin and John Robarts commissioned a study to assist them in their “understanding of regionalism in general and the Atlantic region in particular.” The commission

⁶² Pennell, “How Rural Newfoundlanders view Canadian Unity,” 2-5.

requested historian G.A. Rawlyk and political scientist George Perlin from Queen's University to undertake the study – as opposed to academics working from the Atlantic region, demonstrating that despite requesting studies of the region the Task Force was still central Canadian in its perspective. In November 1977, Rawlin and Perlin presented a proposal to the Task Force where they argued that the Atlantic region was “particularly vulnerable to any major change in the constitutional *status quo*” and shared their fear of “Central-Canadian decision makers [taking] the Atlantic Provinces for granted.” In Rawlyk's opinion, “the Task Force had to deal with two fundamental and central concepts which shape the essential character of the Canadian community and which must be sensitively accommodated in order to preserve the fragile unity of the Canadian nation,” those concepts being “dualism” and “regionalism.” The Task Force found the Perlin-Rawlyk report proved to be helpful to them and their work and were “delighted” that it was “made available to a wider audience” with its publication in 1979.⁶³

Regionalism was the primary focus in the report, defined as a “largely social-psychological phenomenon [...] an important aspect of collective identity which is important to self-fulfillment and is also likely to influence perceptions of political institutions and the political community as a whole.” The “historical roots of regionalism” in Atlantic Canada were considered, as well as an examination of newspapers and public opinion “concerning Quebec, Canada and the region during the past decade,” and an analysis the attitudes of those in the

⁶³ G.A. Rawlyk, ed., *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation: Report to the Task Force on Canadian Unity*, (St. John's, NL: Breakwater, 1979), iv-v.

“economic, cultural, religious, educational and political elite” in the region, also including “grass roots level” public opinion via a sample survey.⁶⁴ The provided rationale for Atlantic Canada’s regional discontent with confederation was linked to their belief of having little in common with the “Canadas,” attachment to their provincial identities, and the contextual economic problems they helped sway the provinces in the region toward confederation. However, it was argued that in the time since joining Canada, the Maritimes had become the “most ardent and committed” region in support of confederation, which was explained by a variety of reasons from economic dependence to being able to identify as both a Maritimer and a Canadian.⁶⁵

The report also examined Newfoundland’s journey and changing views of confederation due to the difference in time and circumstance compared to the other Atlantic Provinces.⁶⁶ Rawlyk and Perlin argued that “eighteen years as a Canadian province had not undermined the strong Newfoundland sense of community and close identification with the local perspective,” and that the province’s “commitment to Canada,” was still predominately based on economic considerations. Because of this, they reasoned that Newfoundland had not “forged any strong emotional link with the rest of Canada” and instead the time since confederation had “witnessed the growth of a new Newfoundland dependence and also the continuing, almost inexorable decay of certain traditional Island values.” The authors argued that Newfoundland saw itself as the “victim of Central

⁶⁴ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, v-vi.

⁶⁵ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 1-10 and 41-42.

⁶⁶ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 78.

Canadian indifference, prejudice, and design,” thus they claimed that the “pragmatic Newfoundlanders” understood that due to their economic dependence they had “little chance [...] of determining and directing [their] own social, political or cultural priorities.” Nevertheless, Rawlyk and Perlin made clear that while “some Newfoundlanders” had been “experiencing a healthy social, cultural, and even economic ‘nationalism’, with its emphasis on the existing differences between Newfoundland and the rest of Canada,” this revelation “should not be confused with separatism,” as they had no intention of relinquishing the “tangible advantages of association with Canada for total independence.”⁶⁷

Ultimately, Rawlyk and Perlin found that “the majority of the respondents did not exhibit much overriding Canadian feeling” and that roughly “three-quarters of those interviewed felt that Ottawa did not understand the problems of Newfoundland,” which left those within the province with a “profound sense of alienation.” However, because of this alienation combined with “their sense of uniqueness,” it was found that Newfoundlanders had “a measure of sympathy for Quebec.”⁶⁸ The Newfoundlander’s perceptions of “what Canadians were like” were varied, often with references to Americans and characterizations of “Canadians as bland and ‘non-distinctive’.” Interestingly, there were also those who “argued that Canada was merely the sum of its regions.” Many of those interviewed saw confederation as “an extremely ‘good thing’” for Newfoundland, though believed that with decentralization “it could become even better [...] for

⁶⁷ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 282 and 332.

⁶⁸ Rawlyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 332-375.

all Newfoundlanders.”⁶⁹ The research Rawlin and Perlin conducted and presented to the Task Force during their inquiry detailed the Atlantic region’s response to the Task Force and provided evidence of how those in Newfoundland viewed Canada and national unity.

Conclusion

The Task Force on Canadian Unity’s final report harked back to the Massey and B&B Commissions and their findings regarding Canada’s ever-persistent and evolving identity struggle. A similar focus on the difficulties in defining Canada’s culture and the debate of whether there was a singular, dual, or multiplicity of identities and cultures within Canada, remained central throughout the reports. The Task Force repeated the Massey Commission’s finding that there were “many cultures and cultural communities in Canada” as had the B&B Commission that emphasized the “conflicting concepts” of nationalized cultures in Canada.⁷⁰ The Task Force moved past the bi-cultural and bi-national idea of Canada to conclude that it was Canada’s regions, chiefly the provinces and territories, that were the “basic building blocks of Canadian society and the logical units on which to focus a discussion of Canadian regionalism.” The idea of the provincial or territorial region was considered the most appropriate descriptor even when they are not always the “most ‘natural’ regions from an economic or

⁶⁹ Rawyk, *The Atlantic Provinces and the Problems of Confederation*, 369-380.

⁷⁰ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Time to Speak*, 95.

other point of view.”⁷¹ The region had been suitably recognized as a dividing, yet uniting, element of the Canadian state.

The prolonged national crisis that the federal government sought to rectify during the 1960s was initially understood to be a problem of national identity but by the 1970s it was seen as a crisis of national unity – due to the changing societal context of growing regionalism but also to the federal government’s realization that a solid sense of national unity was believed to be easier to achieve than a singular Canadian identity. Trudeau’s implementation of a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework did not please all Canadians nor did it alleviate the cultural tensions or disharmony felt across the nation, largely due to Canadians understanding their region and their country differently than those from other regions of Canada. For some, bilingualism played an insignificant role in their experience of Canada, while for others it was central. No one experience (regional or personal) of Canadian and its identity should be considered wrong-footed, as all of the variances were what the Canadian identity and its unity should be built upon.

Looking to Newfoundland in particular, evidence from the Task Force on Canadian Unity saw that Newfoundlanders, not unlike many others across the country, largely felt that Canada should be united through understanding and accepting its diversity – and Newfoundlanders were to be understood as a part of that diversity. By the 1970s, Newfoundlanders saw themselves as part of Canada

⁷¹ Task Force on Canadian Unity, *A Future Together*, 26-27; David Alexander, “New Notions of Happiness: Nationalism, Regionalism and Atlantic Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 15, no. 2 (1980), 31.

but also as distinct from the rest of Canada. This was not to be understood as taking away from Canada's national unity but adequately fitting in with the country, as they understood it. During this time, in 1972, the provincial government shifted from its first era, the 23-year reign of Joey Smallwood's Liberal government, to its second era under the Progressive Conservatives that lasted until 1990. This shift saw the province becoming more steadfast in its pursuit of distinctiveness within Canada, by reinforcing their sense of regional identity by more ardently cultivating and promoting their otherness.

For Newfoundland, there was no "overriding Canadian feeling" for many in the province as they more readily identified with their region. Yet, the province still very much wanted to remain a part of the country and felt a sense of hurt regarding how the rest of Canada had viewed them. Newfoundlanders believed that Canadian unity could be achieved through the understanding and acceptance of the diversity within the country and that Newfoundland should be seen as an integral part of Canada's diversity. How Newfoundlanders understood their own identity and how they believe themselves to fit (or not fit) within the larger nation, as well as how they were able to retain their distinctiveness while becoming part of Canada, play an integral role in this inquiry of understanding Canada's national identity and unity. Newfoundland provides a case in point for how to comprehend Canadian identity and Canada's issues with national unity. As Cathy Pennell made clear to the Task Force on Canadian Unity, "before one can understand how [...] Newfoundlanders react to Canadian unity, one must first understand what

[...] Newfoundlanders are all about.”⁷² What Newfoundlanders “are all about” has been made and remade in its time since joining Canada. Understanding the province’s identity formation between 1950 and 1990 evidences a dual-process of reinforcing their distinction, while also coming into the fold of the Canadian state. Through an examination of Newfoundlander’s post-confederation opinions, the province’s cultural revival movement, as well as academic and survey studies conducted during the period, this dual-process can be understood.

⁷² Pennell, “How Rural Newfoundlanders view Canadian Unity,” 1.

Chapter 4 – Newfoundland's Identity in Canada, 1949-1990

Can Newfoundlanders survive? That depends upon whether Newfoundlanders are permitted to define humanity in their own terms, in their own homes, in their own rocky bays, engaged at work they know and love, and not forced to become uni-dimensional Canadians.¹

In 1984, Newfoundland philosopher F.L. Jackson wrote a polemical take on Newfoundland culture since confederation. He stressed that Newfoundlanders needed to define their cultural identity in their own terms in order to survive as a culture. Jackson's definition of culture included the notion of "life itself in its most earthy, everyday, practical, human reality."² Thus, culture is meant to be understood in broader terms than high culture and fine arts, allowing for the inclusion of the way Newfoundlanders live their lives. It follows then that if Newfoundlanders could choose for themselves how they live their lives and how to be part of Canada, then they should have no reason to fear the loss of their cultural identity. Nevertheless, in the province's early post-confederation period it felt the need to pushback against modernizing measures that sought to alter their cultural traditions and way of life.

¹ F.L. Jackson, *Newfoundland in Canada: A People in Search of a Polity*, (St. John's: H. Cuff Publications, 1984), 115.

² Jackson further defines culture, stating: "the harder meaning of culture is something more concrete than the preoccupations of Sunday dilettantes or romantics. It refers to the whole scope of what human beings are and do. It describes the totality of the modes of working, living and thinking peculiar to a people who find themselves inhabiting a certain time, place and circumstance; who have to find their own manifold ways of mastering the conditions confronting them, and who seek to discover and maintain their humanity therein," see *Newfoundland in Canada*, 110.

In 1949, the population of Newfoundland was approximately 345,000 and within twenty years it had risen to 514,000, split between rural and urban populations.³ The relatively even distribution of the population was not a natural occurrence, as the long-reigning provincial government led by Joseph R. Smallwood had orchestrated various relocation schemes beginning in the mid-1950s. These resettlement programs were a considerable part of the provincial government-led modernization initiatives that were implemented due to the need for Newfoundland to be brought up to the Canadian socio-economic standard, as outlined in the Terms of Union. The resettlement program made direct efforts to resettle hundreds of isolated, outport communities beginning in 1953 with the provincial government program and continuing with the joint federal-provincial Household Resettlement Program in 1965. From the 1950s to the 1970s, the federal government undertook resettlement programs in various marginalized and regional pockets throughout the country. Such groups as the Inuit in the Arctic, Chinese Canadians in Vancouver, and Black Canadians in Halifax, are examples of the Canadian government's forced relocation programs and Newfoundland became another, much broader, example.⁴

In Newfoundland, these programs were aimed at relocating the widely dispersed population along the coast of Newfoundland and Labrador to centralized locations within the province to reduce costs in areas such as healthcare and education. This was the literal moving of entire communities from

³ Newfoundland Department of Public Works and Services, *Historical Statistics of Newfoundland and Labrador*, (St. John's: Division of Printing Services, 1970), 6 and 12.

⁴ Tina Loo, *Moved by the State: Forced Relocation and Making a Good Life in Postwar Canada*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2019).

their isolated fishing villages to create “growth poles” to attract industry and development. These programs were meant to rectify the financial and logistical difficulties that arose while modernizing the province and trying to meet Canadian standards of service. Initially, many people in the outports went along with the resettlement programs, especially women due to the often limited options in their isolated communities, and were incentivized by the government buyout. However, as time went on, opinions toward these programs changed.⁵ This was a complex situation. Newfoundlanders felt a level of discontent with the government-led modernization efforts, which were effectively forcing them to leave behind the lives they knew; yet they wanted to modernize, to be able to access the better quality of life, which being part of Canada offered them upon their union.

During the 1960s, Newfoundlanders' discontent with being forced to leave behind their rural lifestyle and adapt to the more modernized metropole was beginning to foster a movement that saw the rebirth of rural culture and life; this came to be known as the cultural revival. As such, the movement itself is in part reactionary to the program of modernization employed by the Smallwood government during the early post-confederation period, when modernization theory was at its peak.⁶ The cultural revival movement began in the later 1960s

⁵ Miriam Wright, *A Fishery for Modern Times: The State and the Industrialization of the Newfoundland Fishery, 1934-1968*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 47-49; Sean T. Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 246; and Noel Iverson and D. Ralph Matthews, *Communities in Decline: An Examination of Household Resettlement in Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1968), 2-3.

⁶ Wright, *A Fishery for Modern Times*, 7.

and continued until a moderate decline in the later 1980s.⁷ This revival helped further entrench the province's distinct identity during the period in which they were also acclimating to their new Canadian reality. The discussion of the ongoing cultural revival and Newfoundland identity during the period both in the academic community and wider society, as evidenced by newspapers and opinion polls, demonstrate how prevalent this movement was and the importance that it had in reiterating and strengthening Newfoundland's identity both within the province and throughout the rest of the country.

Romanticism played a key role in this cultural renaissance. Discussing Farley Mowat and his contribution to the cultural revival in Newfoundland, historian James Overton highlights the romanticism that was tied up in this movement, where Mowat believed he had "found a place and a people who seemed to him almost untouched by the modern world – an ideal base from which he would lead the revolutionary struggle to stem the tide of creeping Americanism." Whether romanticizing the culture or the readiness of the island as a place to launch a cultural revolution, the movement itself was "part of a broader social response to economic and cultural change" in the post-confederation period. Those who had grown up in this period had "their knowledge of Newfoundland culture shaped by the cultural renaissance and the Newfoundland

⁷ James Overton, "Sparking a Cultural Revolution: Joey Smallwood, Farley Mowat, Harold Horwood and Newfoundland's Cultural Renaissance," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 16, no. 2 (2000), 167 and Harry H. Hiller, "Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 10, no.3 (1987), 269.

studies movement.” Historian Jeff Webb argues that they “were the people to turn against Smallwood’s hold on power.”⁸

In addition to the fine arts arena, the cultural revival spread further afield. Beginning in 1964, the Canadian Broadcast Company (CBC) launched its now longest-running regional program, *Land & Sea*. The weekly televised program is Newfoundland based, though in 1971 a Halifax based version was introduced as well, and focuses on the more traditional aspects of Newfoundland and outport life – such as the fisheries, arts and crafts, food-ways, and folklore. The existence of this program speaks to the desire of Newfoundlanders to cultivate and promote aspects of their cultural heritage but also to educate the younger and future generations of Newfoundlanders whose only experience would be as a province of Canada. The thirty-minute show continues to this day, though suffered a brief cancellation in 1990 due to federal cutbacks at the CBC that produced “public outcry.”⁹ *Land & Sea* was revived in 1992 and remains relatively popular among Newfoundlanders demonstrating their continued appreciation of their heritage and tradition of rural life and culture.

Newfoundland’s cultural renaissance proved to be impressionable to other Canadian artists as well. Canadian pianist Glenn Gould produced a collection of radio-documentaries for the CBC from 1967 to 1977 entitled the *Solitude Trilogy*.

In 1964, the CBC had sought out Gould to inquire if he would contribute to

⁸ Overton, “Sparking a Cultural Revolution,” 170 and Jeff Webb, *Observing the Outports: Observing Newfoundland Culture, 1950-1980*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 320 and 333.

⁹ See: http://www.tvarchive.ca/database/19553/land_and_sea/details/ and <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/land-and-sea-youtube-playlist-archival-1.4461134>

Canada's centennial special programming. At that time, Gould already had the *Solitude Trilogy* in mind. As a national celebrity, Gould was given latitude to produce a celebratory project that highlighted aspects of Canada's culture and heritage. The first part of the trilogy, *The Idea of North* (1967), addressed views of Northern Canada and the last part, *The Quiet in the Land* (1977), presented a view of the life of a Mennonite community in Red River, Manitoba dealing with contemporary society. Of interest here is the second part, *The Latecomers* (1969), which addressed life in outport Newfoundland and the ongoing resettlement program. *The Latecomers* addressed Newfoundland's "physical and cultural isolation" and the object of the documentary was "to present the voices of an island isolated physically, geographically, and culturally from mainland urban culture and society." The radio documentary opens with sounds of waves crashing that continue during the interviews with Newfoundlanders describing their traditional ways of life. Particular buzzwords and concepts that are frequently mentioned are 'isolation,' 'cod fish,' 'self-sufficiency,' 'comfort,' and the notion of work as being 'one's duty'. Several of those interviewed spoke of the perceived broken promises of confederation and the difficulties that continued in its aftermath, such as underdevelopment and the resentment it had caused. One interviewee, referring to the increased government assistance by way of welfare cheques, despairingly proclaimed, "the spirit of Newfoundland has died."¹⁰ Such strongly worded sentiments expressed by Newfoundlanders in this period exhibit

¹⁰ Canadian Broadcasting Company, "Glenn Gould's Solitude Trilogy: The Idea of North," CBC Digital Archive; Canadian Broadcasting Company, "Glenn Gould's Solitude Trilogy: The Latecomers," CBC Digital Archive; Mark Laurie, "Revisiting Glenn Gould's revolutionary radio documentary, 'The Idea of North,'" CBC Radio, December 27, 2018; Meng Hu, "Glenn Gould's *The Solitude Trilogy*," The Hermitary.

feelings of loss – their culture, their independence, their way of life – and alienation from the country they had joined. While Gould's intention is uncertain, the documentary provided an outlet for the expression of some Newfoundlanders' feelings of desolation, which would be heard on a national scale.

Just as Canadian identity was under intense scrutiny and study during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, Newfoundland too was increasingly concerned with its own identity in this period. Surveys and academic studies examined Newfoundland's identity and place within Canada. These studies came from a variety of sources, some were research-based at Memorial University, while others were commissioned by the provincial government in an effort to demonstrate the progress made by the newest province, meaning their ability to meet national standards and improve the quality of life for those in the province. In addition to these studies, many individuals expressed their opinions on confederation across the period in a variety of op-eds. Each of these studies and opinion pieces provide a window into the thoughts and opinions of Newfoundlanders and those who were studying them during that time.

This chapter explores perspectives, programs, and policies focused on Newfoundland's identity during its early to mid-post-confederation period, from 1949 until 1990. A number of studies from the period reflect the increasing and generational shift toward a strengthening Newfoundland identity in the post-confederation period. In addition, a variety of opinions, editorials, and publications are examined to demonstrate the growing appreciation of Newfoundland culture and identity during the period when the province was

adjusting to the realities of also being Canadian. The cultural revival's role in pursuing Newfoundland's distinction within Canada comprises Part I of this chapter, while Part II delves deeper into the relationship between Canadian unity and Newfoundland's regional identity, with a focus on several statistical studies and surveys concerning Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward Canada

I. Academic Study as a Catalyst for Newfoundland's Cultural Revival

Researchers at Memorial University played a pivotal role in the province's cultural revival movement. The work that many academics in the humanities and social sciences at Memorial undertook during the 1950s to the 1980s was part of this movement and helped to establish it more formally. Jeff Webb, in his 2016 publication *Observing the Outports*, has chronicled the work of academics engaged in the Newfoundland Studies research program, which began in the 1950s, throughout their heyday until the 1980s. Webb's work provides a thorough investigation into the efforts of several prominent academics at Memorial during the period of the cultural revival when the academic exploration of Newfoundland became the stronghold of the province's only university. Throughout Webb's study, it is observed how the work of these academics sought to thoroughly examine and preserve Newfoundland culture, while inadvertently aiding in its revival during the period. Webb suggests that the ideological underpinnings of the Newfoundland Studies movement, and the cultural revival more generally, were "part of a broader cultural reaction to a loss of nationhood and modernization that included a folk music revival, efforts to preserve built heritage, the growth of an indigenous collective theatre, and the emergence of a visual arts scene." This

proves to be true, as the generation who were pushing this movement forward had, for the most part, grown up under Smallwood and were reacting against the provincial government's long-term modernization efforts and the effect such efforts had on the province's culture and identity. Webb notes that throughout the twentieth century, urbanization was occurring globally and Newfoundland too was attempting to urbanize and industrialize at an accelerated pace to catch up with the country that they were now a part of. During this period, in particular, Newfoundland was in the process of adjusting to "being part of Canada after more than a century of being a self-governing colony of the British Empire," with both processes leaving the cultural identity of those on the island in a state of flux.¹¹ That a cultural revival occurred during this time evidences that the new province did indeed find itself in a state of self-evaluation, attempting to redefine itself and its place in Canada.

As the years since confederation passed, how the new province was fairing since the union became a frequented topic of study. In 1966, an edited collection commissioned by the provincial government was published in the province, which documented the progress made in Newfoundland's first fifteen years as a part of Canada. The collection provided "a reasonably reliable series of impressions of various facets of Newfoundland's development" up to that point in time.¹² Premier Joey Smallwood, who praised the progress and development that the province, had made since confederation penned the foreword. He further

¹¹ Webb, *Observing the Outports*, 4-8 and 15-22. Also see Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, 261.

¹² R.I. McAllister, ed., *Newfoundland and Labrador: The First Fifteen years of Confederation*, (St. John's Dicks & Co. Ltd., 1966), preface.

mentioned the plans for continued economic growth and development for the province with the construction of the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project set to begin that year. The collection of papers was divided into three parts. First, "The Land and the People," provided a short introduction, followed by a section on the province's government including several pieces focused on education. The third and final section titled "The Economy" is particularly lengthy. The section pertains to the development of various industries in the province from forestry and mining, to fisheries and tourism, as well as developments in electric power, transportation, and communications. At first glance, this text appears to support the belief that Newfoundland was doing considerably better since joining Canada. However, there are elements within the text that show how this process was not straightforward.

An informative albeit rather short piece, "Social Changes since Confederation," by the director of Extension Services at Memorial University, S. J. Coleman, addressed the development of telecommunications and transportation in the province. He claimed that many Newfoundlanders were still choosing to live in the "traditional ways of their forefathers." Coleman also highlighted what continued to be recognized throughout the post-confederation period: Newfoundland's high unemployment rate. He discussed how technological developments had provided "modern conveniences" as opposed to the hard labour of the past. Coleman placed this development in contrast to the loss of local arts, crafts, and ways of life, such as textile production. Concerning this societal shift, he described Newfoundlanders as "mentally breaking out" from the "isolation of

outport society.” Coleman also addressed the migration of Newfoundlanders to other areas of the country in a way that can be described as ‘foreign’, by the use of such phrasing as “in Canada,” with Newfoundlanders feeling as though they were sojourning to a land altogether different from the one they knew and belonged.¹³ The reference to their cultural loss and the foreignness of the country of which they were now a part, evidences a less than idealized process of post-confederation life in Newfoundland. While many if not most in the province were happy to progress economically and otherwise, cultural loss and feeling set apart from the rest of Canada were problems that appeared early in the post-confederation period and remained.

In the late 1960s, the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Memorial University published two studies of the ongoing resettlement program. In 1968, Noel Iverson and D. Ralph Matthews’ socio-economic study, *Communities in Decline*, aimed to find solutions for improving the program; they “aimed at providing a better life and a better future for more Newfoundlanders” by moving people into a modern way of life with a “long term economic goal” of turning the “peasant, subsistence-level society into a market-oriented, industrial one.” They state that “almost no one disagreed with the idea of resettlement per se” but that there were some reservations about “certain aspects of the program” and despite the program’s insistence on a “willingness to move” many felt “coerced” into doing so. As well, they found that many of those affected had “little or no grasp” of the logistics of the program, as the program’s

¹³ McAllister, 10-12.

documentation was not considered by Iverson and Matthews to be a “wholly effective means of communicating the complexities of Household Resettlement to semi-literate outporters.”¹⁴

Anthropologist Cato Wadel's 1969 study of the resettlement program primarily focused on the change in the economic systems in Newfoundland, from the credit system to the mercantile system, to a modern market-oriented economy, and what effect this had on the households and communities in the province in respect of the resettlement program that aimed to modernize the economic system throughout the province. In studying how households and communities adapted to the shifting economic systems, Wadel observed that people felt forced into taking part in the resettlement program, as it was believed it to be the “only apparent plan for rural development in Newfoundland.” His study found that “simultaneous urban and rural development” was needed and that the outport economies needed to be revitalized. He stressed that government paternalism, by way of confederation, had brought many positive things to Newfoundland but “also brought a basic insecurity to a large proportion [*sic*] of the population, and indeed the section of the population that most strongly supported the entry into Confederation has suffered the most from Confederation.” Wadel concludes that this insecurity is not just economic, it was “rather about total social status manifested in the steady loss of one's control of the social and economic

¹⁴ Iverson and Matthews, *Communities in Decline*, 136-139.

environment, and the increasing dependence on the good-will of the Governments.”¹⁵

While both Iverson and Matthews' and Wadel's studies did not mention the potential for cultural loss as a consequence of these resettlement programs, it does not mean that it was not a consequence for those who were relocated in urbanized growth poles. These programs and the modernization that they represent, occur in the same moment that the cultural revival began to emerge. Surely this is not coincidental, as it was those in the outports who were experiencing being uprooted from their way of life and consequently at risk of losing their cultural heritage through relocation, which leaves the cultural revival to be seen as an element of resistance to this forced modernization. As such, the cultural revival was an attempt by Newfoundlanders to hold on to their culture when they were losing the more tangible elements of who they were as a people – their outport way of life.

Newfoundland academics were not the only individuals commenting on the revival, newspapers from across Canada had been observing the movement and Newfoundland's distinctive identity since the early 1960s. In January 1960, *The Peterborough Examiner* featured an article where Newfoundlanders who had moved to other areas of Canada before confederation were interviewed regarding their views of the relationship between Newfoundland and Canada. While Newfoundland had only been a Canadian province for just over a decade at this

¹⁵ Cato Wadel, *Marginal Adaptations and Modernization in Newfoundland: A Study of Strategies and Implications in the Resettlement and Redevelopment of Outport Fishing Communities*, (St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1969), 5, 133-141, and 148-149.

point, Newfoundlanders had been making a go of it in Canada for far longer. Edward Crawford, a Winnipeg lawyer and former resident of Newfoundland, surmised that “mere constitutional change” had not made “Newfoundlanders into everyday Canadians.” Crawford went on to say “whether there is a social union with Canada is doubtful [...] Newfoundland is entirely different from the rest of Canada. I was down there last September. There is no outward expression of interest in Canada. They live their own lives.” Dr. H. E. Taylor, who left St. John's in 1931 and was currently residing in Vancouver professed, “my own belief is that Newfoundlanders have a character different from that of many Canadians.”¹⁶ Later, in April 1971, *The Medicine Hat News* had an article referring to “a bit of a quiet revolution” that had been occurring in the province during the “last few years.” The piece addressed the promotion of rural and regional development initiatives in Newfoundland and how the provincial government was aiding this endeavour. The editorial also addressed the province's cultural initiatives, through the vocational training divisions of the Department of Education and discussed workshops that were to be held at Memorial University for tourists featuring ‘traditional’ crafts such as “weaving, leathercraft and rughooking” and that there would also be “cod-jigging ventures, boat rides and saltwater swimming” for tourists to take part in ‘traditional’ Newfoundland culture.¹⁷

¹⁶ “Canada's tenth province infused salty trickle into national blood,” *The Peterborough Examiner*, (Peterborough: January 12, 1960).

¹⁷ “Newfoundland a quiet revolution,” *Medicine Hat News*, (Medicine Hat: April 16, 1971).

Most notably, journalist Sandra Gwyn's 1976 article, "The Newfoundland Renaissance," brought the revival of Newfoundland's high culture to the nation's attention. Focusing on the burgeoning arts scene, Gwyn described Newfoundland as "a society turned in upon itself and threatened from outside" that was currently "undergoing the agony and ecstasy of a revolution." She indicated that Memorial University was a key player and the "crossroads and command post" for the "cultural renaissance."¹⁸ Referring to Gwyn's article, Webb explains that she "pointed to the birth of politically engaged, collectively written theatre," mentioning groups such as the comedic troupe CODCO, "the fusion of traditional music with popular music," with the band Figgy Duff serving as an example, and the "burgeoning number of painters and artists, such as Christopher Pratt and Gerald Squires." Webb argues that these developments were in part a reaction to the previous generation's "embrace of American popular culture," where a new generation sought to make a "new popular culture out of the Newfoundland folk culture."¹⁹ The out-of-province commentary on the movement evidences how the cultural revival was seen outside of the microcosm of Newfoundland, often furthering the romanticized notions of the province's folkways and traditional outport lifestyle.

Regarding the study of Newfoundlander identity, in particular, John Calhoun's 1970 doctoral thesis, *The National Identity of Newfoundlanders*, sought to find which community Newfoundlanders "identify or feel they belong to as a

¹⁸ Sandra Gwyn, "The Newfoundland Renaissance," *Saturday Night* vol. 92, no. 2 (April 1976), 40-1.

¹⁹ Webb, *Observing the Outports*, 15. Also see, Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, 261-263.

nation.”²⁰ Calhoun proposed four communities, Newfoundland, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States, each with their own “potential national identities that Newfoundland could assume.” These four communities cover the “regional, federal, imperial, and continental” possibilities for the Newfoundland identity and Calhoun reasoned that these identities can be layered stating, “it is possible that the Newfoundlander could identify with more than one community.” To determine national identity, he considered the “common and distinctive characteristics of Newfoundland,” to be historical development, geographical contiguity, language, culture, religion, and racial consciousness. He discussed communications, migration, voter participation, and military recruitment as indicators of national identity because of his belief of an “individual’s perceptions of the community and his commitment to the community” as the true indicators of national identity. Calhoun analyzed the “beliefs and attitudes” of Newfoundlanders through interviews with members of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, as well as students at Memorial University of Newfoundland and their parents.²¹ Even with his limited focus and selective sample population, Calhoun determined that “the physical isolation, the religious divisions, the regional divisions, the economic division, and the feeling of being a race apart all contributed to the development of a Newfoundland national identity.”²² He further reasoned that Newfoundlanders “through their historical traditions identify with Newfoundland” and that history itself is a “divisive factor in Newfoundland-

²⁰ John H. Calhoun, *The National Identity of Newfoundlanders*, PhD Thesis, (University of Pittsburgh, 1970), 1.

²¹ Calhoun, 10-13.

²² Calhoun, 44.

Canada relations and history has inhibited the development of an identity with Canada.” The common and distinctive characteristics of physical isolation, a common language, racial notions of separateness and distinctness, as well as cultural factors like dress, food, customs, and habits “creates this feeling of separateness or distinctiveness” that enabled the continuation of a divergent identity in the province.²³

The perception of the threat of Americanization was a concern for both Canada and Newfoundland during the mid-twentieth century. Regarding this, Calhoun asserts that both Newfoundland and Canada “have accepted the American mass culture and there is a subsequent loss of a peculiar or distinctive Newfoundland or Canadian culture.”²⁴ Calhoun’s analysis of newspapers and migration and voting patterns, point to “a joint identity with Canada and Newfoundland, as well as a national identity in transition.”²⁵ For Calhoun, when identifying with a community the “ultimate commitment of the individual is a willingness to risk his life for the community” and asked this in his interviews where he found that Newfoundlanders were “at least as willing to grant their lives for Canada as other Canadians.”²⁶ Regarding Newfoundland versus Canadian identification specifically, his interviews revealed that older generations primarily considered themselves Newfoundlanders and younger generations felt they were Canadians largely due to the creation of Canadian symbols such as the flag originating in their lifetime; Calhoun saw this as further evidence for a

²³ Calhoun, 86-88.

²⁴ Calhoun, 98-99.

²⁵ Calhoun, 135.

²⁶ Calhoun, 174.

transitioning national identity in the post-confederation period.²⁷ As well, he rightfully did not ignore the cleavages within Newfoundland, as he mentioned, “most Newfoundlanders interviewed perceive that there are differences between themselves and other Newfoundlanders,” speaking to the ‘town-bay’ divide within the province that had become heightened since confederation.²⁸ He concluded his study with the argument that Newfoundland’s identity “is in a state of transition” and that the national identity of Newfoundlanders has been “undergoing a major transformation since confederation.”²⁹ Even with his selective sample population, Calhoun’s concluding argument of Newfoundland’s identity existing in a state of transition during its post-confederation era is readily convincing given the mixed opinions on such matters across the entirety of the post-confederation period.

One research endeavour of the Newfoundland Studies program at Memorial University that particularly reflects the importance and influence of the contribution of the academic work to the cultural revival is the *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*. From the combined efforts of George Story, W.J. Kirwin, and J.D.A Widdowson, the dictionary was published in 1982 after having begun more than twenty years earlier by members of Memorial University’s English Department to study the languages, names, and folklore of Newfoundland, as

²⁷ Calhoun, 143 & 183. Also, a later 1979 study “found that 55 per cent of Newfoundlanders viewed themselves as a Newfoundlander first and that such feeling was strongest among older age groups, though it hovered just under 50 per cent for those under 30 years of age as well. At least 58 per cent saw themselves as ‘somewhat different’ or ‘very different’ from other Canadians.” Hiller, “Dependence and Independence,” 265; also see George Perlin and George Rawlyk, “Public Opinion: Results of Survey of Atlantic Residents, 1978,” (Unpublished Manuscript, Kingston: Queen’s University Archives, 1979), 3.

²⁸ Calhoun, 144.

²⁹ Calhoun, 175 & 180.

there had been no previous “critical scholarship” on such matters.³⁰ The dictionary has been described as the “most prominent effort at the university to preserve oral culture” and Webb argues that during the period the “awareness that the [*Dictionary of Newfoundland English*] was being compiled was itself a spark for the cultural revival.”³¹ In the 31 March 1979 special edition of *Weekend Magazine*, Adrian Fowler published an article on the then-forthcoming *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, discussing the “distinctiveness of Newfoundland speech” and the scholars at Memorial who were compiling it. The publication was described, for the Newfoundland population, as “an index of the absorbing regional culture.”³² Those compiling the dictionary used a variety of source material, from the over two hundred years of printed material in the province to their fieldwork of conducting and recording oral interviews across the island. Their motive of the project was to “establish the lexical record for Newfoundlanders themselves and their descendants, and for readers and scholars who need to know about the speech and material culture of the region [...] about the planting, survival and adaptation of a small group of English-speakers overseas.” It was focused to words that either originated, acquired a different meaning, or were more frequently used in Newfoundland, capturing the regional use of the English language and was “presented as a regional parallel” to the *Dictionary of Canadianisms* (1967) and the *Dictionary of Jamaican English*

³⁰ W.J. Kirwin, G.M. Story, and J.D.A Widdowson, eds. *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), v. The dictionary is now also available on the Newfoundland Heritage website: <http://www.heritage.nf.ca/dictionary/>

³¹ Webb, *Observing the Outports*, 26 and 336.

³² *Weekend Magazine*, “Forever Newfoundland,” *Weekend Magazine*, vol. 29, no. 3, (March 31, 1979), 25.

(1967). The work also explored the particular “phonetic varieties of Newfoundland speech,” which has continued to be an important area of work for Memorial’s English and Linguistic Departments.³³

Throughout the cultural revival, the movement itself was often a point of discussion on campus. In the mid-1980s, Newfoundland philosopher F.L. Jackson published two collections of essays on such topics as the cultural revival and Newfoundland’s place in Canada. Historian Jeff Webb has commented that Jackson “thought foreign-born academics romanticized Newfoundland culture” and that Jackson saw these academics as contributing to the creation of a ‘Newf-cult’, which “bore little resemblance to the real culture” of Newfoundlanders.³⁴ Jackson was indeed critical of the movement he bore witness to, commenting on the movement in his collection *Newfoundland in Canada* he proclaimed that “a good deal of the heritage-mongering in Newfoundland in recent years is nothing more than the local manifestation of a resurgence of nationalistic nostalgia that has swept the whole of contemporary society. It had the defect that it remains aloof, holed up in a romanticized past, from the realities of modern life.”³⁵ It was not that Jackson did not see a cultural renaissance occurring, he observed that there was, but he was more concerned with its portrayal and relative inaccuracies due to such focused attention on an idealized past as opposed to the natural growth of a culture and identity. Referring to culture in and of itself, Jackson proclaims that “we are of course speaking of life itself in its most earthy,

³³ Kirwin, Story, and Widdowson, *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, xii-xiii and xxi-xxvi.

³⁴ Webb, *Observing the Outports*, 339.

³⁵ Jackson, *Newfoundland in Canada*, 103-104.

everyday, practical, human reality” and questioned whether Newfoundlanders could survive the cultural shift of becoming part of Canada if they remained so backward-looking. His answer for this was that it “depends upon whether Newfoundlanders are permitted to define humanity in their own terms, in their own homes, in their own rocky bays, engaged at work they know and love, and not forced to become uni-dimensional Canadians.” For Jackson, the “conservation of Newfoundland’s cultural heritage is thus only really possible if there is also a conservation of Newfoundland’s political integrity and autonomy,” signifying that Newfoundland needed to carve out its own self-reliant place within Canada in order to move forward in their cultural identity as opposed to continuing looking backward.³⁶

In April 1985, a conference on cultural identity was held in St. John’s. The conference largely focused on the development of multiculturalism, both within the province and the whole of Canada. Considering the recent decades have been so focused to the cultural revival within the province, F.L. Jackson’s impression of the conference is reflected in his 1986 publication *Surviving Confederation*: “I went armed with a speech about Newfoundland, assuming that was the ‘cultural identity’ they meant to talk about. I found myself facing an audience concerned almost exclusively with quite another subject altogether [...] the problem of ‘cultural pluralism’.”³⁷ As such, larger-scale shifts in public policy toward

³⁶ Jackson, *Newfoundland in Canada*, 110, 115-119.

³⁷ F.L. Jackson, *Surviving Confederation*, (St. John’s: H. Cuff Publication, 1986), 26. Also see Webb, *Observing the Outports*, 25.

multiculturalism by the 1980s meant less focus was given to Newfoundland's culture within government, academic, and societal circles.

The conference participants ranged from members of the Department of the Secretary of State, several academic departments at Memorial University, various heritage societies and folk art councils in Newfoundland and Labrador, several Francophone groups in the province, the Association of New Canadians, as well as several minority cultural groups such as the Polish Refugee Committee.³⁸ In addition to the panel presentations, speakers, and discussion groups, there were also various display booths representing the variety of cultural groups in the province. The three main themes of the conference were: "our culture: in search of an identity," "how should culture be expressed and what are the barriers to that expression?," and "how might culture be best perpetuated?" The chairman, Romul Magsino expressed that the conference committee was committed to the "cause of cultural development and multiculturalism in the province" and Mike Gushue, the Regional Director of the Department of the Secretary of State, stated positively that "many people representing as many cultural backgrounds have gathered to discuss cultural identity."³⁹ Jackson, in his panel presentation, addressed Newfoundland cultural identity, specifically the "problems Newfoundlanders have as an identified culture and the problems that come with the realization that we have a culture." He described the enthusiasm toward Newfoundland culture as a "fairly recent thing" that began in the mid-

³⁸ Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Identity Conference, *Cultural Identity, Newfoundland and Labrador: Conference, 19-21 April, 1985: Report*, (St. John's: 1985), 39-45.

³⁹ Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Identity Conference, 5-7.

1960s when the island was modernizing and academics were rushing to witness the “authentic” outport culture. He also spoke to the negatives that accompany the “promoting the idea that to be a Newfoundlander is something extraordinary,” as those who promote this cultural nostalgia essentially want to preserve Newfoundland culture and prevent it from naturally evolving. Jackson furthered this by warning against those who “use cultural preservation for self serving gain,” whether as entertainment or for political advantage, which the Progressive Conservative Party had been doing for some time. He concluded by arguing that Newfoundland culture and people, like any culture and its participants, needed continued progression and evolution.⁴⁰

II. Newfoundlanders' Opinions: Confederation, Culture, and Identity

Ever since Newfoundland's union with Canada, there have been editorials and opinion pieces written, and survey studies conducted, addressing Newfoundlanders' attitudes toward confederation and its consequences. Initially, the general attitude favoured confederation as beneficial for Newfoundland but over time it came to be used as a scapegoat for many socio-economic problems in the province. Newspapers across the province and the country, evidence that confederation remained a recurrent topic in Newfoundland's post-confederation period.

On 30 December 1961, *The Daily News* boasted that the first twelve years of confederation were “revolutionary” for Newfoundland and that this was believed to be the “full period required for complete readjustment” with the

⁴⁰ Newfoundland and Labrador Cultural Identity Conference, 11-13.

termination of the 'transitional grant' from the federal government. The article remarked on the "explosive change" that occurred, where Newfoundland moved from being "one of the most primitive societies in the world of western civilization" to acquiring vastly improved services and modernization with a population that had "doubled in forty years and increased one-third at least since confederation." However, it also addressed how this progress was expensive and difficult to maintain, especially with the need to meet national standards of public services. Stress was placed on the knowledge that Newfoundland could no longer measure life by its "own standards" and were now required to meet Canadian national standards.⁴¹

Opinion on confederation went through an evolution in its aftermath. In July 1967, an *Evening Telegram* article discussed the "bitter and ugly affair" of the battle of confederation but in the aftermath when the family allowances cheques started coming in people gave up the fight and "within a few years the anti-confederates had shrunk to a handful." Yet, the provincial Progressive Conservative Party was described as having "carried the anti-Confederate stigma with it ever since and has never managed to elect more than a corporal's guard to the legislature."⁴² While anti-confederate sentiment had been expressed early on, by the late 1960s it was seen as something of the past, with the increase in standards of living through financial support directly in the homes of Newfoundlanders attitudes were believed to have changed.

⁴¹ "First 12 Years of Confederation were Revolutionary," *The Daily News*, (St. John's: December 30, 1961).

⁴² "Battle for Confederation a bitter and ugly affair," *The Evening Telegram*, (St. John's: July 7, 1967).

On 31 December 1969, *The Daily News* looked back over the twenty years since confederation. It acknowledged that Newfoundland had political and financial problems prior to union with Canada and that since confederation Newfoundland had made considerable progress in the economy as well as population growth. The migration of Newfoundlanders to other parts of Canada was noted, as well as the need for more jobs within the province. The Smallwood government notion of “develop or perish” was discussed and illustrated by the following assertion: “We Newfoundlanders must never be obsessed with the proposition that we are the only part of Canada to progress. Of course we progressed – as did all Canada, and most of the World, for that matter. But, as has been said before, we in Newfoundland had farther to go along the road to progress than did the rest of Canada, if we were to ‘catch up.’ And we have not caught up, as yet.”⁴³

This conversation carried to other parts of the country and on 11 June 1974, the *Kingston Whig Standard* in Ontario published a piece on Smallwood's account of Newfoundland's growth since confederation. Smallwood said that Newfoundland had advanced “more rapidly than any other Canadian province since confederation,” with continued progress in education, transportation, and development. Other indicators of the province's success that Smallwood mentioned were the numbers of Newfoundlanders vacationing in Florida and, according to Smallwood, Newfoundlanders were “happier, more self-confident and more optimistic now than they had been in 500 years.” He also remarked that

⁴³ “Confederation 20: a look back,” *The Daily News*, (St. John's: December 31, 1969), 2-15.

Canadians are a “level-headed, sensible people” – note the separation, or distinction, between Newfoundlanders and Canadians.⁴⁴ As time went on a level of romanticization for pre-confederation Newfoundland became more apparent. In a 1979 letter to the editor of the *Evening Telegram*, W. J. Bursey, originally from the fishing community of Baie de Verde but then living in St. John's, related this nostalgia for the old Newfoundland writing that “there were lots of good things before confederation.”⁴⁵

The anniversaries of confederation brought increased public discussion of the event. In a piece from the *Globe and Mail* on 31 March 1989, the fortieth anniversary of Newfoundland's confederation with Canada, Don Nichol, an English professor at Memorial University, discussed the ups and downs for the province since confederation and commented that “at a time of transition, doubt and promise, Newfoundland completes the curious symmetry of Canada.”⁴⁶ *The Evening Telegram* on 1 April 1989, had an article on forty years after the confederation debates discussing memories of the confederation battle by some who were there including Smallwood, as well as some of those who opposed, and how opposition to confederation still exists forty years on. Smallwood stressed that “Newfoundland's commitment to confederation is stronger and getting even stronger. Where would be we without 50 percent of our [provincial] revenue

⁴⁴ “Smallwood outlines province's growth,” *Kingston Whig Standard*, (Kingston: June 11, 1974). As well, Smallwood discussed in a Nova Scotian newspaper how “Confederation was Newfoundland's greatest gift” and further explained that Newfoundland had to “adapt to Canada” in its post-Confederation period. “Confederation was Newfoundland's greatest gift, says Smallwood,” *Amherst Daily News and Sentinel*, (Amherst: July 8, 1974).

⁴⁵ “Reflections on Confederation,” *The Evening Telegram*, (St. John's: December 9, 1979).

⁴⁶ “State of the Union,” *The Globe and Mail*, (March 31, 1989).

coming from Ottawa?"⁴⁷ Two months later on 2 June, *The Evening Telegram* published another piece further discussing how after forty years there were still anti-Confederates in an interview with anti-confederation advocate Jim White who felt that Newfoundland should have had an economic union with the United States rather than joining with Canada.⁴⁸

In addition to newspapers, surveys evidence the views of those in the province in a more measurable way. In 1979, a "Special Survey of Newfoundlanders' Attitudes towards confederation with Canada" was conducted to "explore attitudes of Newfoundland's adult population towards confederation with Canada, on the 30th anniversary of Newfoundland's entry into confederation." Weekend Magazine commissioned the survey for an editorial feature of their 31 March 1979 publication.⁴⁹ In January 1979, Data Laboratories Research Consultants in Montreal developed the questionnaire and began telephone interviews with 505 randomly selected adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador. The respondents were believed to be representative of the province's population and the questionnaire gathered opinions concerning self-identification and their feelings towards confederation.⁵⁰

The leading question asked whether Newfoundlanders considered themselves a Canadian or a Newfoundlander and the response showed favour for Newfoundland, with a result of 64.9% considering themselves a Newfoundlander

⁴⁷ "40 Years After," *The Evening Telegram*, (St. John's: April 1, 1989), 6-7.

⁴⁸ "40 Years Later: there are still anti-Confederates," *The Evening Telegram*, (St. John's: June 2, 1989), 11.

⁴⁹ Weekend Magazine, "Forever Newfoundland".

⁵⁰ Data Laboratories, *Report of a Special Survey of Newfoundlanders' Attitudes towards Confederation with Canada*, (Montreal: Data Laboratories Research Consultants, 1979), 1-2.

“first and foremost” and 34.2% considering themselves a Canadian “first and foremost,” with a remaining 0.8% listed as “other.”⁵¹ The survey posed the question of whether or not respondents would vote to join Canada if Newfoundland had not already done so and the results show an overwhelming response for joining Canada with 90.2%. Respondents were also asked how they would vote in the case of a referendum on separation from Canada, with another overwhelming majority favouring remaining in Canada with 90.9%.⁵² This response rate indicates that while identifying strongly with their province, most Newfoundlanders saw the benefits of being part of Canada even if they were less likely to identify as such. As well, those aged 45 and older were more likely to consider themselves a Newfoundlander first, while those aged 35-44 were less likely to vote for confederation and also less likely to vote to stay in Canada in 1979.⁵³ This speaks to the understanding of those who had little or no recollection of pre-confederation life in Newfoundland and therefore having a level of romanticism for that era, believing that it may have held better socio-economic conditions, beliefs that were likely passed down from the generation that lived through the WWII and post-WWII economic boom in Newfoundland.

When it came to questions pertaining to how “good” confederation had been for Newfoundland, opinions were not quite as strong, with more varied responses. A clear majority (91.3%) felt that confederation was either “very good” (41.5%) or “somewhat good” (49.8%) for Newfoundland. Overall, 42.6%

⁵¹ Data Laboratories, 3.

⁵² Data Laboratories, 4-5.

⁵³ Data Laboratories, 27.

of those surveyed identified specified gains from confederation such as economic development and a higher standard of living (20.4%) and 24.8% felt as though Newfoundland had “gained a lot” but without specifying those gains. An additional 21.7% did not deny Newfoundland having gained from confederation but “did not know” what was gained, while 7.3% felt nothing had been gained.⁵⁴ It was directly asked if they had felt that the province “gained or lost financially as a result of confederation” with a slight majority (52.4%) feeling that Newfoundland had gained “very much” (9.2%) or “somewhat” (43.2%) financially, while 42.6% felt the province had “neither gained nor lost financially” because of confederation.⁵⁵ Those who saw confederation as having been a “very good thing” for Newfoundland “increases steadily with age” as they have living memory of pre-confederation Newfoundland and the socio-economic difficulties of that period.⁵⁶ Regarding feelings of loss as a result of confederation, 62.6% felt nothing had been lost and an additional 11.1% did not deny any losses but “did not know” what might have been lost. However, 20.1% of those asked identified specific losses such as “culture and identity” (6.1%) and “independence” (5.6%), and an additional 2.1% felt “many things” had been lost without specifying the losses.⁵⁷

Addressing culture directly, it was asked whether they had personally “gained or lost culturally as a result of confederation.” The results were relatively mixed, with 49.5% feeling “neither richer nor poorer culturally since

⁵⁴ Data Laboratories, 7.

⁵⁵ Data Laboratories, 9.

⁵⁶ Data Laboratories, 27.

⁵⁷ Data Laboratories, 8.

confederation,” 14.9% feeling either “somewhat poorer” (12.9%) or “much poorer” (2.0%), and 34% feeling either “much richer” (5.5%) or “somewhat richer” (28.5%), likely due to the ongoing cultural revival at that time. Pertaining to the province rather than the personal, it was asked whether Newfoundland had “lost some of its cultural traditions since confederation.” Again, responses were mixed, with 17% describing “severe losses in cultural traditions,” 39.1% reporting “some losses,” and 42.5% feeling “no losses at all.” With this, it was also asked whether they felt this was a “good or bad thing,” with most respondents who felt the losses were “severe” feeling it was a “very bad thing” (70.6%) or “somewhat bad” (21.8%). Those who felt there were no cultural losses unsurprisingly felt this was “very good” (70.6%) or “somewhat good” (28.4%). Respondents who felt “some” cultural loss were across the board, with 15.7% feeling this was “very bad,” 56.9% feeling it was “somewhat bad,” and 23.4% feeling it was “somewhat good.”⁵⁸ The youngest respondents were most likely to feel personally somewhat poorer culturally since confederation, giving an indication of why the cultural revival occurred when it did.⁵⁹ As well, the survey also asked participants where in Canada they would like to live, with 80% choosing Newfoundland. British Columbia came in second with 9.5%, a 3.6% total for the other Atlantic Provinces, and Ontario (3%), the Prairies (2.1%), and Quebec (0.3%) receiving relatively low responses.⁶⁰ Despite any socio-economic hardships that were felt, most respondents still preferred a life in Newfoundland compared to the possibility of life in another province.

⁵⁸ Data Laboratories, 10-11.

⁵⁹ Data Laboratories, 28.

⁶⁰ Data Laboratories, 12-13.

On the province's thirtieth anniversary of confederation, *Weekend Magazine* published a special issue focused on the island-province with the cover showcasing a father and son pair of fishermen in an outport community and inside large red coloured lettering declaring: "90% of Newfoundlanders are glad they joined Canada." This was not a Newfoundland publication, as the magazine was primarily based in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. However, this special issue appeared in the St. John's *Evening Telegram*, among other major newspapers across the country. The feature article looks back at confederation and claims that when Newfoundland joined Canada "it did so reluctantly, for it has long had its own identity." This piece incorporated the survey data collected by the Data Laboratories Special Survey, highlighting that 65% of surveyed Newfoundlanders considered themselves Newfoundlanders first and Canadians second and that 56% of those asked felt some loss of cultural traditions since joining Canada, however, 63% felt this cultural loss was not because of confederation itself. Smallwood, the former Premier of Newfoundland and 'father of confederation' was quoted stating, "There's an emerging nationalism here, a passionate Newfoundland patriotism. I'm surprised that there's anyone in Newfoundland who considers himself a Canadian first." As Smallwood himself was rather nationalistic this was not particularly surprising, especially considering that this was during the height of the ongoing cultural revival. Somewhat conversely, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is quoted in the piece stating, "Thirty years of experience with Canada's unique form of federalism has clearly strengthened Newfoundlander's belief that they got a fair deal when they entered confederation. Canada also got a good deal

when it joined with Newfoundland.” This statement, while appealing to Newfoundland's pride in agreeing that Canada benefitted from the addition of the island-province, is not entirely accurate as there was mixed opinion on Newfoundland feeling as though it “got a fair deal” with confederation.⁶¹

Within this special edition, there was a biographic article, “The Day I became Canadian,” where Al Pittman reminisces about 1 April 1949, when the then eight-year-old child learned that while he was a Newfoundlander the day before today he was Canadian. Pittman discussed that he later learned of both the protests and celebrations regarding the event, but remarked that people in his community that morning did not seem to be aware that anything had changed; that they were no longer just in Newfoundland but in Canada. Pittman describes Canada as “a most foreign place” to Newfoundlanders before 1949, and in the immediate post-confederation period he reasoned that Newfoundlanders “got used to thinking of Toronto [rather than Boston] as the new mecca, and in time we got used to Canadian money, Canadian stamps, Canadians cigarettes and candy and the rest. But it took many of us a lot longer to get used to being Canadians” and further remarked that many still think of themselves as Newfoundlanders. He goes on to say that Adrian Fowler of Corner Brook (who was three at the time of confederation) told the Task Force on Canadian unity in 1977, “I have feelings of intimacy for Newfoundland that I can never have for Canada, which by comparison is an abstraction and claims my allegiance only by law. I am a Newfoundlander first, Canadian a very distant second.” Pittman discussed that

⁶¹ Weekend Magazine, “Forever Newfoundland,” 3.

during the 1950s and 1960s there was “an anxious urge to emulate ‘the mainland’,” as Newfoundlanders had poor opinions of themselves during the immediate post-confederation period, seeing themselves as “an inferior people exiled by history to live inferior lives on an ugly rock in the Atlantic Ocean. They rejected their own music, their dances, their speech, their occupations, their customs, their history and their heritage.” However, by the 1970s there had been a reversal in that trend of rejecting their culture with a turn to presenting the ‘proud Newfoundlander’ and fully engaging in the ongoing cultural revival – “suddenly we became part of a country we hardly knew, and just as suddenly the government exhorted the people to abandon their old ways and adopt the new” but the people of Newfoundland had long grown tired of this message.⁶²

Moving out of the island-proper and into topics related to the cultural milieu that affected wider Canada, two articles addressing aspects of migration and the fishery are also included. More than 50,000 Newfoundlanders had migrated to Toronto in the thirty years since confederation and an article by Harold Horwood addressed how these migrants “comprise one of the city’s most distinctive minorities,” discussing how they still engage with their traditional culture by preparing and eating Newfoundland dishes and singing outport folk songs. This piece provides evidence of how Newfoundlanders in the rest of Canada, like other minority cultural groups throughout the country, sought to protect and continue their culture; poignantly keeping their culture alive during a time when back home it had been simultaneously eroded by provincial

⁶² Weekend Magazine, “Forever Newfoundland,” 4-7.

government-backed modernization and consequently reinvigorated by the cultural revival.⁶³ Patrick O'Flaherty covered the issue of the seal hunt and the related animal rights movement, concerning how this was affecting the Canadian economy and fishery regulations. O'Flaherty stated, "I don't want to give you the impression that we want to break our union with Canada. On the contrary. After three decades as Canadians, Newfoundlanders have formed an attachment to this great country, and the next 30 years may we see the province take its place as a full partner within confederation. But not this. Our destiny is not to become assimilated into some melting pot."⁶⁴ This statement effectively demonstrates the position that while Newfoundlanders, in general, were content with being part of and working with Canada, they were not willing to part with their culture and tradition in order to do so.

Opinions and attitudes about confederation and post-confederation matters provide some evidence of Newfoundlanders' understandings of themselves in relation to Canada. As well, provincial and federal elections provide a measure of the general attitudes toward each level of government, which also contribute to our understanding of Newfoundlanders' political consciousness at that time. Between 1979 and 1982 there were several studies in the province regarding elections that were held during that period, surveying voter opinions not only on topical political and electoral matters, but also how they identified – as Newfoundlanders, as Canadians, or both.

⁶³ Weekend Magazine, "Forever Newfoundland," 8-10.

⁶⁴ Weekend Magazine, "Forever Newfoundland," 22-24.

In the spring of 1979, there were back to back federal and provincial elections in Newfoundland followed by yet another federal election early in 1980. Memorial University's Department of Political Science, in conjunction with the Institute of Social and Economic Research, used these elections to study voter attitudes province-wide. Approximately 6500 questionnaires were mailed to a selection of participants from the provincial voter list in July 1979, with a second questionnaire mailed in February 1980. About 1600 were completed and returned in 1979 and about 1660 in 1980, with the final results tabulated from the 835 participants who answered both surveys. The sample was believed to be relatively reflective of the population of Newfoundland, an exception being the "proportion of respondents with post-secondary education exceed[ing] the provincial average" and the results of the surveys were "considered to represent accurately the views of all voters" in the province. The survey showed "measures of interest [in elections] are substantially lower for the federal campaign, supporting the proposition that Newfoundlanders are most concerned about the provincial political arena." As well, a noted issue for Newfoundlanders during the 1980 federal election was the province's offshore oil ownership claims. The survey addressed the province's political culture, ultimately finding that Newfoundlanders were "less trusting and confident about government than most Canadians."⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Mark W. Grasser, "The Newfoundland 1979-80 Elections Study: Summary of Results," Department of Political Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980), 1-4.

In 1982, Memorial University political scientist Mark Grasser, conducted another survey study in order to understand the reasoning behind the outcome of the 1982 provincial election, arguing that Peckford had called the 1982 election because he wanted to “obtain a ‘mandate to negotiate’ offshore oil jurisdiction with the Federal government.” Those who participated in this survey were also participants of both the previous 1979 and 1980 survey studies. The central concerns were two-fold, firstly discovering if Premier Peckford’s “mandate” on the offshore oil dispute was the reason for the Progressive Conservative election victory and secondly, discerning whether there was “a mood of ‘nationalism’ among Newfoundlanders, and if so, what were its dimensions and proportions.” With this secondary focus, this survey addressed questions concerning Federal-Provincial relations and Newfoundland nationalism due to “assertions of Newfoundland rights and priorities in constitutional and economic spheres” at that time. Regarding opinions about the federal and provincial governments and the future of Newfoundland, 55% of respondents felt that assistance from Ottawa was necessary for a better future and 75% saw “most of Newfoundland’s present problems [as] the results of bad decisions by provincial leaders over the years.” While evidently there was support for the federal government, there were also those who felt differently as 14% of the respondents felt “Newfoundland has lost more than it has gained from confederation,” with 19% agreeing that “if separation from Canada is necessary to gain control of [its] resources, then Newfoundland should separate,” and 52% believed that “the government in

Ottawa is more interested in what they can get out of [Newfoundland] than it how to help [the province] develop.”⁶⁶

Interestingly, there was a direct question pertaining to a Newfoundland versus Canadian identity, which asked participants how they think of themselves in regards to both identities. The results reflect considerable identification with Newfoundland with 99% of the respondents including it in their response, but the breakdown is more telling. Those who considered themselves “a Newfoundlander only” totalled 8%, “a Newfoundlander first, then a Canadian” at 42%, and “a Newfoundlander and Canadian equally” at 43%. Only 7% considered themselves “a Canadian first, then a Newfoundlander” and the remaining 1% as “Canadian only.” This is quite demonstrative of not only Newfoundlanders holding a dominant Newfoundland identity across the population, but also that most were adopting a Canadian identity alongside – either considering it equal to their Newfoundland identity or at least significant enough to consider placing it within their defined identity, next in line to being a Newfoundlander. As well, a section of the survey addressed the particular notion of “Newfoundland distinctiveness.” Of those who participated, 53% believed that “only a Newfoundlander” could understand their problems and 95% saw studying “Newfoundland culture and way

⁶⁶ Mark W. Grasser, “The Newfoundland 1982 Election Study: Summary of Results,” Department of Political Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982), 1-4. Also, a 1980 study found that “Newfoundlanders were more likely to identify with their own province than even Quebecois, and that Newfoundlanders had the lowest level of satisfaction with federal treatment of their province,” as quoted in Hiller, “Dependence and Independence,” 265-266; see Michael D. Ornstein, Michael Stevenson, and A. Paul Williams, “Region, Class and Political Culture in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science* vol. 13 (1980), 252.

of life” as something that “should be required” in high school education.⁶⁷ While having adjusted to the reality of being Canadian in the 1980s, Newfoundlanders still held on to their distinctive identity and continued to place considerable importance on maintaining that identity.

Conclusion

By 1990, Newfoundland's population had grown to approximately 573,000, not remarkably higher than it had been twenty years earlier.⁶⁸ This slowed growth was due to the interwoven problems of high unemployment and its effect on increased outmigration and decreased immigration. In January 1994, *Maclean's* published their tenth annual year-end poll, which contained some interesting insight into the mindset of Canadians from coast to coast. Respondents were asked various questions, such as which province they would like to live in with the results showing the majority of each province choosing their own province. However, despite the preceding decades having been focused on reinvigorating their pride in their identity, Newfoundlanders were quite middle ground in choosing their own province landing at 67%, a far cry from the 93% of British Columbians who chose their own province. But given the result of 51% of Newfoundlanders feeling that their province was a “worse place to live than a decade ago,” largely due to the mentioned issues of high unemployment, it is not astonishing. Even with this acknowledgment, Newfoundlanders still readily identified with their province considerably more than the national average with

⁶⁷ Grasser, “The Newfoundland 1982 Election Study,” 4.

⁶⁸ Newfoundland Department of Public Works and Services, *Historical Statistics of Newfoundland and Labrador*, (St. John's: Division of Printing Services, 1990), 5.

only 39% of Newfoundlanders identifying as “Canadian”, with the national average being 72%, and 57% of Newfoundlanders identified with their own province whereas the national average was only 22% regarding such an identifier.⁶⁹

James Overton argued in 1979, that the occurrence of an increased nationalism in Newfoundland was part of the postwar climate of anticolonial movements combined with the more direct reaction to the increased development in its post-confederation period, which saw a process of “rapid integration into the Canadian economic and political systems” under the Smallwood governments. When the increasing development in the province was not as successful or as evenly distributed as had been hoped by the people of Newfoundland, it led to the questioning of confederation and the process of development itself. This development, including the resettlement programs used in the isolated fishing communities, began to be seen as a process of modernization that was hindering Newfoundlander's culture, heritage, and values. Consequently, there was a “renewal of interest in rural life and folk culture (art, music, customs, crafts, theatre, speech) and local history” with most of this revival of “local culture [being] directed by, and intended for, the consumption of the new urban middle class, a class which – paradoxically – was created by the very process of modernization that has been (and is) regarded as a threat to the traditional culture.” In the midst of the cultural revival, Overton tied the movement to a rising neo-nationalism in the period and an embrace of cultural stereotypes, such

⁶⁹ Ross Laver, “How We Differ,” *Maclean's* vol. 107, no. 1 (January 1994), 8-11.

as the “distinctive breed” of the “hardy Newfoundlander,” to create and reinforce attachment to their national identity.⁷⁰ This attachment is often tied to the particular notion of Newfoundland's feelings of inferiority within Canada. Joan Sullivan, in her 2018 publication *Game*, has investigated this further, covering the 1974 finale of the popular televised high-school team game-show *Reach for the Top* where, for the first time, the winning team was from Newfoundland. The winning team from Gonzaga High School in St. John's were a newsworthy item back home the province and their win on the national game show was a moment of pride for those Newfoundland, proving that they were every bit as good as the rest of Canada.⁷¹

Such feelings of inferiority were a significant factor in creating such intense attachment to Newfoundland cultural identity during the revival. In 1982, folk singer-songwriter Bruce Moss first wrote and recorded on his solo album *The Islander*, which included the since popular anthem “The Islander”.⁷² The lyrics speak of a man with considerable pride in and intense loyalty to Newfoundland, with such exaltations as the song's chorus: “I'm a Newfoundlander born and bred / And I'll be one 'til I die / I'm proud to be an Islander / And here's the reason why / I'm free as the wind / And the waves that wash the sand / There's no place I would rather be / Then here in Newfoundland.” With the same intense loyalty, the

⁷⁰ James Overton, “Towards a Critical Analysis of Neo-Nationalism in Newfoundland, in *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Canada*, edited by Robert J. Bryan and R. James Sacouman, (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1979), 223-230.

⁷¹ Joan Sullivan, *Game*, (St. John's: Breakwater Books Ltd., 2018); “Newfoundland News Highlights: June 1 to August 31, 1974,” *The Newfoundland Quarterly* vol. 71, no. 1 (November 1974), 25.

⁷² Thank you to Newfoundland folk singer/songwriter Chris Andrews of *Shanneyganock* for taking the time to speak with me about the origins of this song, allowing me to credit the original writer and performer. August 8, 2018.

song's verses address some of the political hardships the island province has dealt with such as the Labrador boundary dispute with Quebec and the offshore oil dispute with the federal government.

Writing in 1987, Harry Hiller spoke of the "intense loyalty" Newfoundlanders have toward their province and how it is "without parallel among English-speaking people in Canada." He indicated two possible origins for this loyalty, the province's previous independence which he described as being lost under "questionable circumstances" due to the close-call referendum that brought them into confederation with Canada that overtime had been combined with continued episodes of grievance due to underdevelopment, and the second being grounded in the "uniqueness" of Newfoundland and this being compounded by a lack of immigration that led to an insular, concentrated populous of largely home-born Newfoundlanders within the province well into its post-confederation period. Newfoundlander's stronghold on remaining in their otherness, as a means to cultivate and promote their cultural identity, has led to using language to further reinforce their distinction, such as the labelling of "outsiders as 'Come-From-Aways' (CFA)," labelling those from other parts of Canada as "mainlanders", and the use of "bay-talk" as a way of demonstrating that you belong in a "one of us" mentality. Given that Hiller was writing in the mid-1980s when the provincial government was using education as a means to further indoctrinate Newfoundlanders in the knowledge of their 'traditional' culture and heritage, he discussed the role of the intelligentsia in the emergent nationalism of the period, describing it as a "confluence of cultural nationalism with economic

nationalism,” with a mandatory “three years of instruction in Newfoundland society and culture in high school,” and the popular “Ode to Newfoundland” anthem that was “taught in the school system and is sung at all public events, with or without the Canadian national anthem,” all of which further reinforced Newfoundlanders differentiation from the rest of Canada. He also offered the World War One battle of Beaumont-Hamel as “perhaps the best symbol of the distinctiveness between Newfoundland and Canada,” which is why the federal government’s encouragement of Canada Day celebrations in the province “seems strangely disrespectful and somewhat alien” to Newfoundlanders in the post-confederation era.⁷³

On 1 April 2019, the 70th anniversary of Newfoundland’s confederation with Canada, the CBC radio talk-show Cross Talk discussed the anniversary providing commentary which demonstrated that even several decades after confederation Newfoundlanders still typically identify as Newfoundlanders before identifying as Canadians.⁷⁴ This is not surprising, as other provinces with strong provincial identities, such as Quebec, demonstrate a similar pattern; though none feel as strongly about identifying provincially as Newfoundlanders.⁷⁵ The reasoning behind this continued regional identification in Newfoundland in the decades after confederation cuts across several lines of explanation from contemporary global trends to specified local matters. Much of the postwar period saw increased interest and concern over Canadian identity from the federal

⁷³ Hiller, “Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland,” 266-271.

⁷⁴ Cross Talk, “70th Anniversary of Newfoundland’s Confederation with Canada,” CBC-Radio, 1 April 2019.

⁷⁵ Laver, “How We Differ,” 8-11.

government, academics, and the wider Canadian society. However, in Newfoundland, a cultural revival spanned much of this period. The revival began in the mid-1960s and verified a desire for the preservation of a 'traditional' Newfoundland culture and the avoidance of fully assimilating to the Canadian way of life. Developments in the local arts scene and within the academic community at Memorial University fostered the preservation and revival of Newfoundland's culture. A level of dissatisfaction with confederation is evident behind this movement, despite an awareness of the socio-economic benefits confederation had brought to Newfoundlanders. Newfoundlanders held on to their 'traditional' culture in an attempt to ensure their differentiation from the rest of Canada.

Newfoundland's cultural revival was in part a response to the Smallwood government's pressured modernization to meet Canadian standards, as well as a bulwark against assimilating into the larger spectre of North American continentalism, by fostering their distinct cultural identity. This revival was encumbered with a romanticized and mythologized notion of the past due to the difficulties of the post-confederation era.⁷⁶ While the cultural revival began as a more spontaneous movement partially fueled by academic work being done at Memorial University, the change of government from the long-reigning Smallwood Liberals to the Progressive-Conservatives (PCs) in the early 1970s further demonstrated how this was playing out across multiple levels. The PCs utilized this movement, reflecting Newfoundland society, for a host reasons –

⁷⁶ Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, 267.

from appealing to voters, to using the rising neo-nationalist sentiment as a bulwark against the federal government. Hiller argues that a “nascent ethnicity” was emerging in Newfoundland during this time and that the “provocateur” of this emergent ethnicity was “the changes in the structure of the society” with the “most fundamental change [having been] the shift from a small fishing economy to an urban social world.” This rapid modernization pressurized the cultural identity to manifest into a movement of cultural nationalism in an effort to hold on to their traditional way of rural life and folk culture that was in direct contrast to the societal change that was occurring.⁷⁷ The Newfoundland government continued to utilize and push this rhetoric of nationalism throughout the 1970s and 1980s to remain distinct from the rest of Canada.

⁷⁷ Hiller, “Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland,” 265-271.

Chapter 5 – The Newfoundland Provincial Government: Culture, Nationalism, and Identity, 1949-1989

The conservation of Newfoundland's cultural heritage is [...] only really possible if there is also a conservation of Newfoundland's political integrity and autonomy.¹

As much as Newfoundland philosopher F.L. Jackson considered Newfoundland's culture, he also contemplated the province's particular political situation. Newfoundland had chosen to become part of Canada but it was previously a nation in its own right and Newfoundlanders continued to hold on to their particular cultural nationalism after the union. Due to some Newfoundlanders having the living memory of having been their own country before joining Canada, as well as the continuation of cultural nationalism throughout the province, Jackson noted the need for increased autonomy akin to a level of decentralized federalism. Jackson believed that only through increased sovereignty, by way of having additional control over its affairs, would Newfoundland be able to ensure its cultural survival. Both the cultural and the political realms would need to work together to ensure the survival of Newfoundland's identity.

Post-confederation Newfoundland between 1949 and 1989 can be divided into two distinct political eras: the Smallwood Liberals (1949-1972) and the successive Progressive-Conservative (PC) governments of Frank Moores (1972-

¹ F.L. Jackson, *Newfoundland in Canada: A People in Search of a Polity*, (St. John's: H. Cuff Publications, 1984), 119.

1979) and Brian Peckford (1979-1989) – with the Liberals under Clyde Wells taking the reins again in 1989.² The Smallwood governments are characterized by their initiatives geared towards the progress and modernization of Newfoundland, while after such long-held opposition status the PCs made change when they took to leading the province. While continuing a mandate focused on economic and social development, the PCs steadily shifted the narrative of progress and modernization to one of increased self-reliance and reinvigorating ‘traditional’ Newfoundland culture and identity. In this way, the PC governments used the ongoing cultural revival to bolster support and demonstrate their juxtaposition with the long-reigning Liberals who had been in power since confederation. The Moores and Peckford governments pursued this endeavour through the usual methods of intergovernmental relations and policy platforms, but more intriguingly they did this through their use of language when describing Newfoundland itself (and its relationship with Canada and the federal government) and by funding initiatives that supported the ‘traditional’ and distinct Newfoundland culture they were describing.

Throughout the Smallwood government era, establishing and strengthening ties with Canada was necessary for becoming an integral part of the national fabric. However, this did not eliminate contention between the province and the country, which is apparent in the occasions the provincial government addressed the Terms of Union in the aftermath of confederation. While the narrative changed from one of progress and modernization to increased self-

² Tom Rideout held the leadership of the Progressive-Conservatives, and consequently was briefly the Premier, between 22 March and 5 May 1989.

reliance and reinvigorating a ‘traditional’ Newfoundland culture under the PCs, this did not mean that the Smallwood governments were without any notion of retaining Newfoundland’s regional culture and often used language that supported this understanding and occasionally pushed for initiatives that reinforced the province’s cultural identity. With that said, progress and modernization were the buzzwords and mandate of the Smallwood governments.

As discussed in the previous chapter, much of the cultural revival was seemingly in reaction to the early provincial government-led modernization initiatives, in particular the resettlement programs. However, it would be mistaken to portray the Smallwood government as being anti-cultural, and it would be erroneous to portray Smallwood’s character as anything less than a Newfoundland (cultural) nationalist. Historian James Overton has described Smallwood as a “key figure in these developments,” as his government had “created the policy framework and the institutions within which the growing interest in Newfoundland culture and history would flourish.” Upon becoming president of the Newfoundland Historical Society in 1966, Smallwood declared “much of our heritage would disappear unless the older generation acts quickly to preserve it,” which he made valiant efforts with establishing Memorial University.³

Smallwood considered the development of Memorial University an important part of developing Newfoundland culture, as he “imagined the university in industrial terms and considered it a locus for perpetuating an

³ James Overton, “Sparking a Cultural Revolution: Joey Smallwood, Farley Mowat, Harold Horwood and Newfoundland’s Cultural Renaissance,” *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* vol. 16, no. 2 (2000), 199. Also see: Newfoundland Quarterly, “The New Newfoundland Quarterly,” *Newfoundland Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 2 (1966).

awareness of Newfoundland life where no such locus had existed before.”

Additional measures taken by the Smallwood government include “Come Home Year 1966,” which was a “scheme [...] to induce thousands of expatriate Newfoundlanders to visit the province” and regale in the “characteristic milieu” of the island. The event “created a link between public funding and the arts” and solidified the “idea that traditional outport life could be commodified and marketed.” As well, the creation of the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John’s was the province’s “major centennial project,” which the Smallwood government decided to construct with “the federal government’s contribution from the Canadian Centennial Fund.” After Smallwood, the Progressive Conservative governments of Moores and Peckford “took new measures based on an appeal to nationalist sentiment” and as Ronald Rompkey has mentioned, “the government of Brian Peckford was the first to openly embrace the arts as an expression of the provincial character.”⁴

Not just in direct arts policies alone, the tourism industry in the province relied heavily on a particular portrayal of the cultural heritage of Newfoundland and by 1970, the government became increasingly interested in tourism for economic development. The imaginary of Newfoundland used in the tourism industry, Overton argues, was “not invented just for tourists [...] The same totems, icons, and images highlighted for tourists came to be seen as the essential

⁴ Ronald Rompkey, “The Idea of Newfoundland and Arts Policy since Confederation,” *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 14, no. 2 (Fall 1998), 269-272.

symbols of Newfoundland national identity.”⁵ While the revival itself had been dying down for several years, in 1992 the provincial government outlined its Strategic Economic Plan with proposals that “constituted perhaps the broadest attempt ever made to bring cultural life within the ambit of the provincial government” that was set to invigorate development in the areas of tourism and culture predicting that Newfoundland could be a “cultural region,” demonstrating that the government was not yet ready to throw in the towel in terms of using culture to differentiate itself on the national level as well as to bolster a nationalist pride within the province.⁶

The context of Newfoundland’s post-confederation period witnesses much interaction between the cultural, economic, political, and governmental spheres that occurred within and across each of these levels of society. These societal spheres need to be considered together, whereas typically they have been dealt with separately. The linking of the cultural revival movement to the provincial government, during the PC era in particular as they were actively reflecting society, is key for understanding how Newfoundland pursued distinctiveness in Canada by cultivating and promoting its regional identity by way of its ostracisation within the country.

This chapter analyses the role the Newfoundland provincial government played in the preservation of Newfoundland’s regional identity from its union

⁵ Sean T. Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador: A History*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 265; James Overton, *Making a World of Difference*, (St. John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1996), 17 and Roger Bill, “Culture vs. Policy vs. Culture: The Evolution of Cultural Policy in Newfoundland and Labrador, 1967-2007,” *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 24, no. 1 (2009), 106.

⁶ Rompkey, “The Idea of Newfoundland and Arts Policy since Confederation,” 266.

with Canada in 1949 until the 1990s. Part I covers the Smallwood era from 1949-1972, while Part II addresses the Progressive Conservative era of Moores and Peckford from 1972-1989. As discussed in the previous chapter, a number of studies from the period reflect the increasing and generational shift toward a strengthening Newfoundland identity in the later post-confederation period. With this in mind, publications from the Newfoundland government and political parties, as well as the proceedings of Newfoundland's House of Assembly and intergovernmental documents, are examined to demonstrate the growing appreciation of Newfoundland identity in the period when the province adjusting to the political reality of being a Canadian province. From these documents, it is demonstrated that the provincial government used the cultural revival to its advantage, both at home and during contentious negotiations with Ottawa, to garner support at home and help maintain Newfoundland's cultural and political distinction within Canada.

I. Progress & Modernization: The Smallwood Era, 1949-1972

On 1 April 1949, the first Newfoundland provincial government was put in place with 'Father of Confederation' Joey Smallwood at the helm. From the outset, when the new provincial government formed there was "great importance" placed on the creation of a governmental department for economic development, as well as a desire to develop tourism in the province, and even discussion of a "Buy Newfoundland" campaign throughout the province. As well, fisheries management was now under federal control and caused increased concern with the industry for the province, which was evident from the early post-confederation

days. These measures and concerns demonstrated that even within the initial years of confederation, and under the Smallwood confederation-endorsing government, there was evidence of difficulties with having lost a level of independence and the push to create or maintain what independence they could.⁷

In March 1950, the *Times Survey of Canada and World Trade* had an interview with Smallwood addressing Newfoundland in 1950 and the effects of its “changed status” since confederation. He was quoted as saying, “Newfoundland has realized her destiny by entering the union of Canadian provinces as a full partner.” Smallwood described Newfoundland as being “well off” in its year since confederation because of Canada assuming most of the island’s debt upon joining. He further discussed his desire to develop natural resources in an effort to keep people in Newfoundland rather than having them continue to migrate to other provinces for economic opportunities.⁸ While confederation had created a cycle of continued prosperity in the early years of the union, it was often mentioned that “not all Newfoundlanders enjoy the standard of living to which, as Canadians, they are entitled,” which was a leading cause of the pattern of outmigration in the period.⁹

⁷ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 29th General Assembly, 1949,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70) and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 29th General Assembly, 7 March 1951,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

⁸ “Newfoundland in 1950: Effects of Changed Status,” *The Times Survey of Canada and World Trade*, (March 1950), 15.

⁹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 7th Session of the 30th General Assembly, 14 March 1956,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 7.

On 10 January 1958, *The Daily News* had a statement from Premier Smallwood on the government's plan for centralization as a means to improve social services and the standard of living in the province. Smallwood reassured the people of Newfoundland that at present the government was surveying residents of isolated coastal communities to measure the level of willingness to move to more populated centres to improve conditions across the province. He clarified that that "Government has no centralization plan" but that there may be one in the future, depending on the outcome of the information they were gathering. The realities of the isolated communities in question, with the lack of schooling, services, and roads were not permitting a reasonable, modern way of life for those residents nor in keeping with the province's obligations to meet Canadian national standards for such services. Smallwood stressed that the government would "try to work out a plan of helping" those who wish to move to a "bigger and better" settlements, but only for those who "wish to move."¹⁰

Referring to a First Ministers' conference in January 1950, Lieutenant Governor of Newfoundland Sir Leonard Outerbridge described the Newfoundland ministers during the conference as taking a "strong stand against any change that might weaken the important minority rights written into the Terms of Union of Canada and Newfoundland."¹¹ The Newfoundland government believed the Terms of Union were "not finalized in 1949" and would not be until the Royal Commission tasked with carrying out Term 29 completed their mandate and steps

¹⁰ "Premier's statement on Centralization," *The Daily News*, (St. John's: January 10, 1958).

¹¹ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 2nd Session of the 29th General Assembly, 15 February 1950," *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1949-70).

were taken to implement their recommendations.¹² By 1954, the provincial government had formally begun the work necessary to carry out Term 29 of the Terms of Union, to “review the effect of Confederation upon the finances of Newfoundland as a Province of Canada,” by appointing and formulating the Royal Commission to carry out this task.¹³ In the provincial government’s opening Speech from the Throne on 20 January 1958, Lieutenant Governor Campbell Macpherson proclaimed that the first era of confederation was over, as the eight years had passed that were required for the establishment of the Royal Commission as described in Term 29, but the next era had yet to begin as the Commission’s work was not yet complete. He further stated that the second era of confederation would mean better public services and further economic development of the province’s natural resources.

As well, a decision made at a previous First Ministers conference is mentioned, where the Atlantic Provinces were to be given “special adjustment grants” from the federal government to address the “backwardness of the four Atlantic Provinces in relation to the rest of Canada,” regarding the economy and their particular financial positions. This was welcomed news for the Newfoundland government and strengthened the goodwill between the two levels of government, which also left the provincial government feeling as though the outcome of the Royal Commission would be favourable in terms of financial

¹² Newfoundland, “Opening of the 7th Session of the 30th General Assembly, 14 March 1956,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 3.

¹³ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 30th General Assembly, 24 March 1954,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

beneficence for the province.¹⁴ However, this would be short-lived. In his February 1959 opening Speech from the Throne, Macpherson expressed that the Canadian government's Royal Commission's recommendations were not generous enough to bring the public services up to par in the province.¹⁵ In his closing speech later that year in July, he stated that the Newfoundland government was "concerned over the legislation recently adopted by the Parliament of Canada in connection with the implementation of Term 29 of the Terms of Union between Newfoundland and Canada. In their view, this legislation is an inexcusable violation of Term 29. It is their policy to seek by all proper means the restoration of Term 29 in its full original meaning."¹⁶ The provincial government was intent on ensuring that what had been agreed to during the negotiations that brought Newfoundland into Canada were honoured in full, thus allowing Newfoundland to acquire all the benefits they believed to be entitled to when they joined Canada.

Montreal's *Gazette* on 31 March 1959, contained an article covering the dispute between Prime Minister Diefenbaker and Premier Smallwood regarding the matter, stating "no one believes for a moment that Newfoundland, which has received so many benefits from its union with Canada, is in the least contemplating secession," while acknowledging that there was considerable

¹⁴ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 2nd Session of the 31st General Assembly, 20 January 1958," *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1949-70).

¹⁵ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 3rd Session of the 31st General Assembly, 23 February 1959," *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1949-70).

¹⁶ Newfoundland, "Closing of the 3rd Session of the 31st General Assembly, 28 July 1959," *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1949-70).

tension. The problem between the two was regarding the financial assistance outlined under the Terms of Union that was set to end in 1962. Smallwood felt that Diefenbaker was not treating Newfoundland fairly and dramatically proclaimed that he would resign if it meant that the Prime Minister would treat Newfoundland more favourably in this regard. The article discussed how the Terms of Union were vague concerning how and when the “special assistance” would end and what would happen after 1962, further commenting that Canada had given Newfoundland a considerable amount of money and perhaps Smallwood’s government had not “made the best use” of it.¹⁷

The opening Speech from the Throne of the thirty-second general assembly in April 1960, Macpherson described the government’s continued concern with the “grave problem of Term 29” but that they were abstaining from further action until the upcoming Dominion-Provincial Conference.¹⁸ At the July 1960 Dominion-Provincial conference in Ottawa, Premier Joey Smallwood wanted to “present Newfoundland’s case under Term 29 of the Terms of Union that united Newfoundland and Canada into one country.” However, he said, “I must decline emphatically to do any such thing” as the conference “can decide nothing with regard to Term 29.” Though Smallwood did go as far as to declare, “I cannot forebear at this point to remind this Conference that what happened in 1949 was not the absorption of Newfoundland by Canada. It was not the annexation of Newfoundland by Canada. It was rather a case of two of Her

¹⁷ *The Gazette* (Montreal: March 31, 1959).

¹⁸ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 32nd General Assembly, 20 April 1960,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

Majesty's Dominions [...] deciding of their own free will to unite themselves into one country." He stressed the mutually desirable union between them "for Canada could never achieve her destiny while the great Island of Newfoundland and its great territory of Labrador remained outside of Canada's national boundaries." In addition, he stated, "It would, so some of us thought, give Canadians considerable added self-respect to see the independent-minded Newfoundlanders throw in their lot with them. It would enhance Canada's status a little in the eyes of the world. It would complete the dream of the great Fathers of Confederation who saw a nation existing from sea to sea. It would be one of the few cases in this century of a whole people voting in a secret ballot to join their nationality to that of another country," reminding those across the country what was achieved through the most recent confederation installment and what this meant for Canadian unity, while simultaneously providing a reminder of what Newfoundland had given up in doing so.¹⁹

For Newfoundland, joining with Canada was an "obvious" advantage as they would no longer be going it alone financially, as well as the benefits of social security and a "reduction in the costs of living" and that "union with Canada would restore responsible government to Newfoundland." Smallwood surmised, "It would be good for both. There were no disadvantages at all to either. But that was only at first sight," as he explained that Newfoundland lost revenue that originally came from customs and excise duties and taxes which now went to Ottawa. The union, while making the people of Newfoundland "more

¹⁹ Joseph R. Smallwood, *Text of Address by Hon. J. R. Smallwood, Premier of Newfoundland, at opening of the Dominion-Provincial Conference, Ottawa, July 1960*, (Ottawa: 1960), 1-3.

prosperous,” also “bankrupt” the provincial government. Canada needed to “find some way of providing more financial assistance for the government of the new province” in order to maintain a balance regarding the standards of private living and public services – the diminishing Transitional Grant from Ottawa would be the solution for this. However, this was an uncertain answer; hence, the outlining of Term 29 regarding the appointing of a Royal Commission within eight years of the union to review the finances of the province to determine what sorts of additional accommodation might need to be made for the province to maintain appropriate standards in line with the other provinces. The Royal Commission was mandated to “determine and recommend to the Canadian government the amount of additional financial assistance which the negotiators themselves had not determined when the Terms proper were being drafted.” Smallwood remarked that on 25 March 1959 the Prime Minister put a five-year limit on the Commission’s recommended annual financial assistance, which greatly displeased Smallwood, as he was not consulted on the matter.²⁰

Smallwood relayed that the Royal Commission had recommended “eight million dollars a year for each of the years up to March 31st, 1961, but this amount was to be reduced in each of those years by the small amounts remaining of the Transitional Grant. The Royal Commission also recommended that eight million dollars a year be paid each year thereafter. The Prime Minister and his colleagues decided otherwise,” without consulting Newfoundland. He further remarked that the province was “shocked and stunned” by this unilateral decision. Once again,

²⁰ Smallwood, *Dominion-Provincial Conference, Ottawa, July 1960*, 4-8 and 13.

Smallwood reiterated “this matter is entirely outside the scope of authority of the Conference,” as it was “exclusively between the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland.” In closing, he implored, “I hope that no one in Canada will suppose that because Newfoundland has this one grievance she is disgruntled or dissatisfied with her decision to unite herself with the great Canadian nation [...] there are no regrets, and there are no recriminations. We are intensely proud to be Canadians.”²¹

Concerning the discussions of the “constitutional future of Canada” during the late 1960s, Lieutenant Governor Fabian O’Dea remarked of “Newfoundland’s determination to play an honourable part in the great task of preserving the unity of Canada” regarding legislation to make French equal with English in the House of Assembly and Parliament.²² Despite being relative newcomers to Canada, the Newfoundland government were keen to revel in the “precious privilege of Canadian citizenship” and for the nation’s centennial in 1967 they had created a Confederation Centenary Committee to “prepare plans for and to encourage the participation of Newfoundland in the fitting observance of these celebrations.”²³ In addition to celebrating being Canadian, the Newfoundland government also celebrated the province during the 1960s, regaling of a “Come Home Year” project set for 1966 in conjunction with the launch of a “long-awaited tourist and

²¹ Smallwood, *Dominion-Provincial Conference, Ottawa, July 1960*, 13-17.

²² Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 34th General Assembly, 21 February 1968,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

²³ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 34th General Assembly, 30 November 1966,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 3 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 33rd General Assembly, 14 February 1964,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 4.

travel enterprise,” as well as inculcating a sense of Newfoundland pride with the planned ceremonies to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Beaumont-Hamel on 1 July 1966.²⁴ Balancing a sense of pride and belonging to both Canada and Newfoundland were not seen to be at odds with one another.

Throughout the 1960s, *The Daily News* in St. John’s published annual pieces discussing how the year had been for Newfoundland politically, economically, and otherwise. In 1961, the continued progress since confederation was the primary theme with advances in education, communications, the opening of Memorial University’s new campus, and development in Labrador listed as key evidence of such progress. While acknowledging that it had been a difficult year for the fishery and forestry sectors, it highlighted how the tourism sector was doing well. These annual updates typically included a rather propagandist message from Premier Smallwood. In the 1961 edition, Smallwood stated, “there was much too much unemployment amongst our people” but also that “hundreds of people this year had their ancient isolation destroyed for them by the opening of new roads. Hundreds more had the blessings of electricity brought to them.” Smallwood ended his message declaring that “our wonderful march to greatness, commenced with the coming of Confederation, will continue.”²⁵

²⁴ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 33rd General Assembly, 12 January 1966,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 9 & 13 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 34th General Assembly, 30 November 1966,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70), 4.

²⁵ “Year of Advances and Reverses in Newfoundland,” *The Daily News*, (St. John’s: December 30, 1961).

The Daily News reported that 1963 “was another year of progress for Newfoundland.” While unemployment was still high and increasing stress on public services from the continued “population explosion,” there had been “advances in education, health and roads.” The problems within Newfoundland were said to “exist in a province that has made more progress in the past ten years than in all the previous years of Newfoundland’s history” and “in spite of them, the year is ending on the most promising note of the whole confederation period.” The message from Smallwood again focused on continued economic and natural resource development, as well as the intent to rapidly expand electricity in rural areas, and new schools and hospitals were planned to be built. He finished by saying the “next year will see the biggest programme of road building and paving ever known on this Island.” Smallwood routinely promised continued progress for the province, to further reinforce his decision to push Newfoundland towards joining Canada and that this action would not be in vain.²⁶

In March 1968, the *Evening Telegram* published an article on the federal government’s equalization policy. Provincial Minister of Justice Alex Hickman felt the new policy would provide the “last clear chance for rapid sensational development in Newfoundland” and that this policy “does not envisage Newfoundland going to Ottawa with hat in hand and hopefully expecting to receive a few crumbs from the federal government.” Rather, this policy “constitutes a recognition by the people of Canada that they have an obligation to

²⁶ “1963 Was Another Year of Progress for Newfoundland,” *The Daily News*, (St. John’s: December 31, 1963).

see to it that the blessings of a confederacy exist from Vancouver to Bonavista.”²⁷

Later that year, *The Daily News* reported there had been a “reversal of the political tide” regarding the new Liberal federal government, it was believed there now was a “less flexible attitude in Ottawa towards aid to the provinces... [and] much of what happens in Newfoundland may be influenced by the decisions of the Federal Government, particularly in the area of the correction of regional disparity.” It is with this statement we can see a shift in the provincial government’s attitudes concerning what the role of the federal government should be regarding Newfoundland’s socio-economic development.²⁸

In reflecting on the progress made in the province since confederation, while also highlighting Newfoundland’s much longer history, Lieutenant Governor O’Dea stated in the opening of the third session of the 34th general assembly that “these have been the most wonderful twenty years in our nearly five centuries of history as a people.” The Newfoundland government felt that the federal government should help the province become more self-sufficient and in advocating for the new federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion, the provincial government declared that the ambition of all Newfoundlanders was to have the province “quickly become independently self-supporting,” which the

²⁷ “Policy of equalization ‘completely new principle,’” *The Evening Telegram*, (St. John’s: March 14, 1968), 23.

²⁸ “1968: A dramatic year in Nfld.’s provincial history,” *The Daily News*, (St. John’s: December 31, 1968).

provincial government believed this federal department could help make possible.²⁹

At the twentieth anniversary of confederation in 1969, *The Daily News* published its annual review looking ahead to the problems facing the 1970s and describing 1969 as a “year of economic and political trauma,” with the economy still vulnerable and further industrial development still needed. There was a fallout regarding the joint federal-provincial outport relocation program that had been in place since 1965, with the “total depopulation of once prosperous and well-populated” areas and employment in the relocation centres being limited, as well as the burdensome cost of moving and mortgages for those who had previously owned their homes. Conversely, there was a slowing of this scheme as the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) planned to review the viability of the program. As well, slowed population growth due to outmigration, largely because of the scarcity of jobs, was becoming an increasing concern for the provincial government and the viability of their plans for economic development.³⁰ In the last stage of the Smallwood government’s reign, it was understood that the province “must resolutely reject permanent dependence on Ottawa as a principle means of our existence.”³¹

²⁹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 34th General Assembly, 24 February 1969,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

³⁰ “Imponderables to face in 1970,” *The Daily News*, (St. John’s: December 31, 1969).

³¹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 34th General Assembly, 18 February 1970,” *Speeches from the Throne: 20th to 34th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1949-70).

II. Increased Self-Reliance & Cultural Revitalization: The Progressive-Conservative Era, 1972-1989

After the 1972 provincial election, Frank Moores became Newfoundland's first Progressive Conservative premier. This change in leadership from the long reign of successive Smallwood Liberal governments to a new era of PC leadership saw a shift in priorities for the province, from a preoccupation with progress and modernization to a focus on self-reliance and a renewed emphasis on developing Newfoundland's unique cultural identity. From the outset, the Moores government took the position that they believed "the people of this Province are eager to accept the challenge of change but will, with equal vigor, defend our life style as a treasured heritage unique within the family of Provinces that make up our great nation."³² In the opening of the first session of the new PC government, they made clear that progress for Newfoundland should not be incompatible with its heritage and that such a rich heritage should only be seen as an enduring element of the Canadian nation.

In 1974, the provincial government declared that they were entering a "new era of Federal-Provincial relations" during the province's twenty-fifth year in Canada and celebrations were planned to mark the occasion. In keeping with cherishing Newfoundland's heritage, the Moores' government worked with the federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion to establish a General Development Agreement to facilitate development in all areas of the province,

³² Newfoundland, "Opening of the 1st Session of the 36th General Assembly, 19 April 1972," *Speeches from the Throne: 36th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1975).

enabling the continuation of rural areas rather than merely allowing the larger urban centres to continue to develop at the cost of those rural areas.³³ This era saw an increased focus on government initiatives in cultural affairs with the completion of the Arts and Culture Centre in St. John's, as well as continued funding for the development of the Newfoundland museum.³⁴

Tourism was another area where the PC government saw they could further revitalize Newfoundland heritage. Increased attention was given to this industry, with the government insisting that the "warmth and hospitality" of Newfoundlanders was the industry's "greatest asset."³⁵ Newfoundland's uniqueness was at the centre of this tourism development, as Lieutenant Governor Gordon A. Winter specified, "the cornerstone of our tourism policy is to preserve, enhance, and market an image of uniqueness. Newfoundland is truly a vacation with a difference. Our scenic, cultural, and historical attractions are unique in North America." With this mentality, the creation of a model fishing exhibit was planned which would include "a typical home, surrounding buildings, and a fishing stage, all in conjunction with a gift shop and a restaurant with a traditional

³³ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 3rd Session of the 36th General Assembly, 30 January 1974," *Speeches from the Throne: 36th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1975).

³⁴ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 4th Session of the 36th General Assembly, 26 February 1975," *Speeches from the Throne: 36th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1975), 15.

³⁵ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 1st Session of the 35th General Assembly, 1 March 1972," *Speeches from the Throne: 35th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1972).

menu,” further reinforcing such ‘traditional’ Newfoundland ways of life and cultural heritage for both visitors to the island and those who called it home.³⁶

Regarding Newfoundland regaining some semblance of self-reliance, the PC government was concerned with the continued dependence on federal government transfer payments. Lieutenant Governor Winter declaring evidenced this, declaring:

Let us be wary of the danger of building our economic house on the sands of transfer payments, unemployment insurance and other government assistance programs. They offer only temporary benefits. They must not be allowed to replace our self-reliance, dedication, or ingenuity, or to quench the independent spirit that has marked Newfoundlanders for centuries.³⁷

The way forward would be to focus on resource development within the province, while achieving better deals with the federal government pertaining to resource ownership. In the opening session of the first post-Smallwood government, Lieutenant Governor John A. Harnum stated that the government acknowledged mistakes of the past administration in the areas of resource development and were looking forward, particularly with the offshore oil and gas potential. The new government wished to establish a provincial policy of basic resource development where “all base resource sources – will be, as is our birthright, the property of the

³⁶ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 37th General Assembly, 4 December 1978,” *Speeches from the Throne: 37th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1979), 8.

³⁷ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 37th General Assembly, 6 March 1978,” *Speeches from the Throne: 37th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1979), 7-8.

people of Newfoundland.”³⁸ Premier Moores later reiterated this sentiment during his opening statement at the First Ministers Conference in April 1975, stating that “ownership of resources by the provinces is one of the main cornerstones of Confederation and that because of this the provinces have the right to receive the revenues accruing from that ownership” and that anything less “undermines the whole basis of Confederation.”³⁹

The Moores government wanted to “avoid a protracted legal dispute with the Government of Canada concerning ownership of the Province’s offshore resources” and in 1973 announced it was working with the Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotian, New Brunswick, and Quebec governments to “negotiate with the federal authorities” on such resource ownership issues and further stressed that Newfoundland was a “special case with respect to rights off its coastal areas.”⁴⁰ In March 1978, during the opening of the third session of the thirty-seventh General Assembly of Newfoundland, Lieutenant Governor Winter referred to the Supreme Court of Canada hearings “with respect to the offshore jurisdiction” that was set to begin later that year. Winter stated that the government was “confident that these hearings will resolve in our favour, confirming our moral and legal right to manage the resources which we brought with us into this great Confederation.” This was the key issue for the Newfoundland government, and why they believed

³⁸ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 35th General Assembly, 1 March 1972,” *Speeches from the Throne: 35th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1972).

³⁹ Frank D. Moores, “Opening Statement by the Honorable Frank D. Moores, Premier of Newfoundland, at the First Ministers’ Conference, Ottawa, April 9-10, 1975,” (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1975), 3.

⁴⁰ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 36th General Assembly, 31 January 1973,” *Speeches from the Throne: 36th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1975).

themselves a “special case” – the offshore resources came with Newfoundland into Canada and therefore the province should have a right to the potential revenue.⁴¹ A focus on ensuring that Newfoundland benefitted appropriately from its natural resources and the contention with Ottawa concerning this remained throughout the decade. It was not just in the areas of oil and gas that the province fought with the Canadian government but the fisheries as well, with the provincial government arguing that the federal government “must act decisively and unilaterally in gaining control of the fish stocks” on the continental shelf and which left the Newfoundland government feeling as though the Canadian government was failing the province in this regard.⁴²

In November 1978, Moores presented a “Statement on Regional Development” at the First Ministers Conference on the economy in which he described the situation of regional development within Canada as making the various regions fits “into the mould” of national policy “whether they fit or not.” He further deplored the state of affairs, insisting that it was “time to recognize that Canada is not a homogenous country” and that policies need to be developed with the regions in mind rather than having the regions adapt to a policy that does not fit their particular situation. Moores advocated for policies and programs that would “help regions help themselves,” as despite Newfoundland having “more than kept pace with the nation” since confederation it still was a “long way from

⁴¹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 37th General Assembly, 6 March 1978,” *Speeches from the Throne: 37th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1979), 3.

⁴² Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 36th General Assembly, 26 February 1975,” *Speeches from the Throne: 36th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1975), 2 and 19.

parity” and he believed more “effective regional policies” could provide a solution.⁴³

The Progressive Conservative Party’s platform for the 1979 provincial election outlines the vision the party’s new leader Brian Peckford had for Newfoundland for the 1980s, asserting that “a strong provincial government is essential to the preservation of our heritage and our position as an equal in Confederation” and focusing on “social and cultural potential” as a key element of a “strong and prosperous economy” would be central in a re-elected PC government.⁴⁴ The PC government under Peckford’s leadership was oriented around promoting Newfoundland cultural traditions and heritage, which is consistently presented throughout the publication. The platform outlines an intention to promote in-province travel to Newfoundlanders through its proposed “See Newfoundland and Labrador First” program. It stressed that the PC party did not want to see those in rural Newfoundland forced to move for access to public services and a better quality of life.⁴⁵ There is also a focus on education, whereby “educational programs must increasingly help to build an awareness of the value of our culture, our traditions and our heritage.” It is mentioned that the PC party was “growing increasingly aware of the need to preserve our rich heritage, to keep it alive and thriving” and intended to establish a Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council. As well, the platform highlighted that a Peckford government would

⁴³ Frank D. Moores, “Statement on Regional Development by the Honorable Frank D. Moores, Premier of Newfoundland, at the First Ministers’ Conference on the Economy, Ottawa, November 1978,” (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1978), 1-4.

⁴⁴ Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland, *The Way We Want to Grow: the Peckford Government’s Program for the ‘80s*, (St. John’s: Progressive Conservative Party, 1979), 3-5.

⁴⁵ Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland, *The Way We Want to Grow*, 10 and 13.

“bargain hard for the powers necessary to allow us to move forward as an equal partner in Confederation – powers in relation to fisheries and off-shore oil that were consistently denied to us by the Liberals in Ottawa.”⁴⁶ In the 1980s, Peckford furthered a continuation of the themes of self-reliance and a revitalization of Newfoundland culture that began under Moores.

With the goal of becoming an equal in confederation, the relationship between the Newfoundland and Canadian governments was a priority for the Peckford government. Two key examples of this were the debate around constitutional reform and the continuation of the battle of offshore resource ownership rights for the province. In the opening to the first session of the Peckford government, Lieutenant Governor Winter stated, “while it is clear that our entry into Confederation cannot be questioned, there is a growing realization that the present structure of Confederation does not allow this Province to realize the full economic benefits of its own resources or to adequately promote the enhancement of our unique cultural heritage.” The government was certain that Newfoundlanders wanted to “assure their future as a distinct society” and that this “can only be achieved” by Newfoundland having “adequate control” of its “marine resources – fisheries and offshore oil and gas.” Winter further proclaimed that if Newfoundland is to “move forward, there must be constructional change and a new attitude in Ottawa towards the role that this Province, indeed every Province, is to play within our Confederation” and the need to “break this vicious

⁴⁶ Progressive Conservative Party of Newfoundland, *The Way We Want to Grow*, 16-23.

cycle” of depending on Ottawa was necessary, not only for Newfoundland to become more self-reliant but also to be seen as an equal in confederation.⁴⁷

In May 1980, Peckford released a discussion paper on “Major Bilateral Issues” between Canada and Newfoundland wherein he addressed the issue of economic inequality between the province and the country as a whole, as there was an 86% disparity between Newfoundland and the national average. Peckford laid forth an argument that confederation had not been successful for Newfoundland and claimed “Canada as a nation cannot survive if there are permanently rich and permanently poor provinces.” He furthered this with the province’s inability to take control of its future to “create the type of cultural, social and economic society which [they] deem desirable” due to the federal government having ownership of the continental shelf and thereby its natural resource revenue. Peckford insisted that Newfoundland merely wanted the “same degree of control over our development which other provinces now enjoy and take for granted.”⁴⁸

Later in July 1980, Premier Peckford issued a statement via the executive council that he had previously sent to Prime Minister Trudeau, which stressed that he and the rest of Newfoundland were looking forward to the “process of constitutional reform” and that it would bring a “new air of confidence and equality” to Canada. Peckford felt that constitutional reform should be open to

⁴⁷ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 38th General Assembly, 12 July 1979,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 1-2.

⁴⁸ A. Brian Peckford, “Discussion Paper on Major Bilateral Issues: Canada-Newfoundland,” (St. John’s: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1980), 3-7.

areas of grievance from other provinces; while not lessening the importance of Quebec's linguistic rights, other province's rights were important as well. He underlined that "just as we recognize Quebec's special linguistic rights and its inherent veto over that matter, so too do we expect and deserve a similar positive response to our deep interest in matters such as the offshore and fisheries. We ask for a similar respect for our position as to the treatment of these matters in the constitutional process."⁴⁹

A few weeks later on 18 August 1980, the Newfoundland government published a document regarding their position on constitutional change. Peckford begins with the insistence that Newfoundlanders are very much concerned with the state of affairs in their home province but also as "loyal and proud Canadians, [they] also have a deep attachment to [their] country, its people and institutions." Within the document, the provincial government outlines four points of "fundamental importance" concerning constitutional change, namely: parliamentary democracy, balanced federalism, equality of opportunity for provinces and people, and consensus.⁵⁰ Their official position was one of full support for "major changes" in the Canadian confederation and sought to approach the constitutional discussions in a "positive, constructive and cooperative manner." Several principles of Newfoundland's constitutional position were outlined, ranging from support for the entrenchment of "democratic

⁴⁹ Government of Newfoundland, Public Statement from the Executive Council, (St. John's: July 7, 1980).

⁵⁰ A. Brian Peckford, "Towards the Twenty First Century – Together: The Position of the Government of Newfoundland Regarding Constitutional Change," (St. John's: Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1980), 1-3.

rights and fundamental freedoms,” to the inclusion of a statement of “principles which constitute [a] common Canadian heritage,” and the recognition of the continental shelf as being considered “in the same manner as resources located on land.” One principle, in particular, highlighted the importance the Newfoundland government placed on the recognition of culture, stating their support for an “increased provincial role in communications so that the unique culture of Newfoundland and of other provinces can be preserved and strengthened in the Canadian context.” The provincial government felt that as the “newest province and as a people cherishing their own identity and values as well as sharing the Canadian ideals,” they felt confident about constitutional change and what it would mean in the “larger context of Canada’s national life.”⁵¹

The following month during a Federal-Provincial First Ministers conference on the constitution, Peckford presented a statement regarding offshore resources that continued to double down on his steadfast position of its importance to Newfoundland’s development as a province, while asserting, “strong provinces make a viable nation.” His resolve that resources should be owned provincially, regardless if on land or in water and “must be accorded the same constitutional treatment” was furthered by his position anything less would be “to suggest there are different classes of provinces, some of which are more legitimate than others.” Peckford drew on previous constitutional amendments in 1912 (increased the size of Ontario, Quebec, and Manitoba) and 1930 (resource ownership transferred to Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba) regarding natural

⁵¹ Peckford, “Towards the Twenty First Century – Together,” 40-44.

resources for other provinces to support his stance and made a point of noting that Ontario “owned and controlled the underwater resource of the Great Lakes” since confederation in 1867.⁵²

In a province-wide address on 20 October 1980, Peckford highlighted issues with the proposed constitutional changes discussed at a recent conference in Ottawa. He felt the proposed changes would affect the “most vital aspects of life” in the province, namely “the right to educate our children in our own way, and the sanctity of our Labrador boundary.” If the constitutional proposal that was being discussed at that time was to go ahead the Peckford government would not accept the proposals and called on all Newfoundlanders to stand against it.⁵³ Later in February 1981, the provincial government was opposed to the federal government’s introduction of the Constitution Act, 1980 into the House of Commons, as Newfoundland wanted equality of the provinces and felt the reform went against the 1949 Confederation agreement, leaving the provincial government to ultimately see the constitutional proposal as “unCanadian,” with the centre becoming stronger than the periphery.⁵⁴ In this statement, the province is insinuating that it is more Canadian in its outlook than the Canadian government, a strongly worded sentiment in this contentious period of

⁵² A. Brian Peckford, “Notes for a Statement on Offshore Resources by the Honorable A. Brian Peckford, Premier of Newfoundland and Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, at the Federal-Provincial Conference of First Ministers on the Constitution, Ottawa, September 8-10, 1980,” in *Federal-Provincial Conference of First Ministers on the Constitution, Ottawa, September 8-10, 1980*, (Ottawa: The Conference, 1980), 1-3.

⁵³ Government of Newfoundland, “Province wide address from Premier Peckford,” (St. John’s: October 20, 1980).

⁵⁴ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 38th General Assembly, 25 February 1981,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 8.

intergovernmental relations that illustrates the tactic the Newfoundland government was using to battle the federal government and demonstrate that while they had pride in their distinction they too were proudly Canadian and wanted those Canadian ideals upheld.

On 11 June 1981, Premier Peckford gave a statement in the House of Assembly on the “contribution of the province of Newfoundland to the federal government and other provinces,” in response to statements made that insinuated Newfoundland received more from confederation than it provided. Peckford stated, “the general conclusion reached is that we should accept our role in the nation as the most “have not” province and live off the generosity of the rest of the nation.” He was adamant to demonstrate how Newfoundland was making a “very significant contribution to the rest of the nation and there is absolutely no reason for us to feel we are living off the rest of Canada and, hence, that we cannot assert our views on major issues.” Peckford clarified that his comments were not “anti-Canadian or anti-federal government,” only that he wanted to insist that Newfoundland received the same benefits as other provinces but because it was a “have not” province, it did receive more in terms of equalization payments. With that being the case, he furthered that Newfoundland contributed to the nation in the way of taxes, the “massive contributions” to Quebec via the Upper Churchill, and by paying high tariffs for goods produced in Ontario and Quebec, thereby showing that Newfoundland “is not a drain on the rest of the nation” and is “contributing just as much to the nation as we are receiving.” Peckford

concluded by declaring that he is proud “that as Canadians living in Newfoundland we contribute very substantially to the nation.”⁵⁵

In October 1981, a pamphlet was issued to those living in the province from Premier Peckford and the Government of Newfoundland addressing the Supreme Court judgement of the Constitution Act. The pamphlet stated, “if the Constitution Act passes, we have no more guarantees!” and warned that with the proposed constitutional changes the Terms of Union could be unilaterally changed without the consent of Newfoundland. Upon heading into another constitutional conference, the Newfoundland delegation had “two key points” in mind: the protection of the Terms of Union and offshore hiring regulations. An additional information sheet provided to the public outlined how a new constitution “based on a formula put forward by Premier Peckford” would ensure that “no changes to our Terms of Union can be made without our consent.”⁵⁶ By May 1982, what the Newfoundland government had been fighting for became “enshrined” in the new constitution, as it “fully recognizes the equality of the Provinces” and “reinforces the concept of a federal state within which sharing amongst all Canadians is embodied.” The new constitution “accepts and reaffirms provincial natural resource ownership and control” under Section 109 of the BNA Act, with Lieutenant Governor W. Anthony Paddon further stating that the provincial government “has had to take action to confirm ownership and control of

⁵⁵ Government of Newfoundland, “Ministerial statement from Premier Peckford,” (St. John’s: June 11, 1981).

⁵⁶ Government of Newfoundland, “On the Supreme Court Judgement on the Constitution Act,” (St. John’s: October 1981); Government of Newfoundland, “The New Constitution: How are our rights protected?,” (St. John’s: November 1981).

Newfoundland's resources to protect the rights of our people. In this Newfoundland is unlike the other Provinces." Paddon went on to say that the provincial government "demonstrated its willingness to resolve the offshore ownership dispute in the Canadian tradition of negotiation," suggesting that in regards to this Newfoundland was once again described as being more Canadian than Canada. When the negotiations began the federal government "gave only lip service to its stated intention to put ownership aside" and treated Newfoundland as a "subordinate rather than an equal partner" and the Newfoundland government would not accept this unCanadian behaviour.⁵⁷

Back in January 1980, the executive council released a statement from Premier Peckford in which he was correcting "misimpressions in the press" regarding his meeting with Prime Minister Joseph Clark. Peckford clarified that Newfoundland "already owns" its offshore resources and that the Prime Minister acknowledged this and "thus deserved the support of all Newfoundlanders." He went on to say that Prime Minister Clark was "'confirming' the Province's rights, not 'giving' us what we never had."⁵⁸ Peckford was referring to Section 37 of the Terms of Union, which outlined that the resources belonging to Newfoundland shall remain to belong to the province. In the opening of the fourth session of the thirty-eighth general assembly of Newfoundland, referring to the provincial government's position against the Trudeau federal government during the

⁵⁷ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 1st Session of the 39th General Assembly, 10 May 1982," *Speeches from the Throne: 39th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1984), 2-5.

⁵⁸ Government of Newfoundland, "Public Statement from the Executive Council," (St. John's: January 9, 1980).

offshore dispute, Paddon stated that “the well being of Canada as a nation is the sum of the states of well being of its constituent parts, the Provinces of Canada,” implying that what was good for Newfoundland was in turn good for Canada.⁵⁹

The provincial government’s stance regarding the dispute with Ottawa over offshore ownership was that without Newfoundland joining Canada in 1949, Canada would have no claim to natural resources in the province. The Newfoundland government believed it was unfair that this had become a legal issue as the “Western Provinces were given their resources by the Federal Government in 1930,” therefore “one would think that a parallel exists today for Newfoundland and Labrador to be treated in the same fair and equal manner.” What the provincial government desired was the same level of “fair revenue sharing” and joint management of its resources.⁶⁰ In a ministerial statement from Premier Peckford regarding offshore resources in April 1984, he expressed that Newfoundland was not getting the same kind of agreement as Alberta and Saskatchewan had and provides a reminder that “Canada would not have the continental shelf today if it was not for Newfoundland. Canadians resident in Central Canada and Canadians resident in Western Canada own and manage their resources. We are not even asking for that. All we are asking is that Canadians living in Newfoundland have a real say in management and a fair share of

⁵⁹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 38th General Assembly, 11 March 1982,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 7 and 15.

⁶⁰ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 39th General Assembly, 3 March 1983,” *Speeches from the Throne: 39th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1984), 5-6.

revenues.” It is in this statement where Peckford provides his well-known phrase: “Some day the sun will shine, and have not will be no more.”⁶¹

During 1983 and 1984, Peckford held a national tour giving speeches regarding the offshore dispute. In a speech, “The Offshore: Sharing Sea to Sea,” delivered to the Canadian Club of Ottawa on 9 May 1984, Peckford presented the “moral case to the court of public opinion.” He stressed, “this great country represents a delicate weaving of regional cultures and strengths into a vibrant national fabric. The strength of Canada is the strength of its parts. The energy, vigour and creativity that is Canada is contributed by all the people in all regions across this land.” Peckford acknowledged that the context of when Newfoundland joined Canada differed from when the other provinces did and consequently led to different issues arising between the province and the federal government but that “you cannot solve those problems by abandoning the principles that brought this nation together.” He concluded his speech by envisioning a more united Canada without the regional squabbles and focused on the collective interest of the nation.⁶²

The decision of the Supreme Court of Canada about offshore resource ownership was unfavourable to the Newfoundland government, arguing it put Newfoundland in an unequal position compared to the other provinces and it needed redress to ensure the “equality of Canadians.” In March 1984, Lieutenant Governor Paddon declared that the provincial government “reaffirms its

⁶¹ Government of Newfoundland, “Ministerial statement from Premier Peckford,” (St. John’s: April 17, 1984)

⁶² A. Brian Peckford, Premier’s National Tour, “The Offshore: Sharing sea to sea,” *Address to the Canadian Club of Ottawa*, (May 9, 1984), 2-4.

conviction that this Province will take its proper and rightful place as an equal partner in Canada only when the Canadian tradition of provincial ownership rights over its natural resources is recognized.”⁶³ The Atlantic Accord came into being on 11 February 1985, solidifying the revenue sharing for offshore petroleum and thereby permitting the Newfoundland government to see their province as more equal to the other provinces. The Accord gave the Newfoundland government a “tool with which to make our Province and its people proud and prosperous contributors to the Canadian Confederation” and signified a “new era for the Province” that would surely bring about the self-reliance the PC governments sought.⁶⁴

Part of the Newfoundland government’s push for resource development and ownership was to increase employment in the province, as unemployment had been a growing issue. In the early 1980s, the unemployment rate in the province was “twice the national average” and a Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment was established in 1985 to address this recurrent issue.⁶⁵ The Newfoundland government established the Commission, chaired by Doug House, to “investigate all aspects of employment and unemployment in the Province of Newfoundland.” The Commission held “42 public meetings in all regions” of the

⁶³ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 39th General Assembly, 12 March 1984,” *Speeches from the Throne: 39th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1984), 7 and 16.

⁶⁴ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 40th General Assembly, 25 April 1985,” *Speeches from the Throne: 40th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1988), 1-4.

⁶⁵ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 37th General Assembly, 2 February 1977,” *Speeches from the Throne: 37th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1979), 2 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 4th Session of the 38th General Assembly, 11 March 1982,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 14.

province, in addition to “many informal meetings with groups and individuals,” and was given “216 briefs and verbal presentations.”⁶⁶

The Commission took eighteen months to fulfill its mandate and visited forty-one communities to hold the forty-two public meetings. Unemployment at the time was between a quarter and a third of the population and the explained reason for this was a combination of lacking education, a reliance on the government, and lacking initiative in creating employment. Job opportunities were being lost for not fitting in with a “particular set of beliefs,” the mindset of Newfoundlanders, and there was a need for “a ‘made-in-Newfoundland’ approach” to solving the issue. The Commission recommended a “new vision” of doing away with past ideations of a “highly industrialized Newfoundland,” as it was now seen as not viable due to a “small local market” that was “distant from major urban markets.” It was also mentioned that the province struggled from being “too dependent upon outside ownership of its major resource industries” and that should be rectified going forward.⁶⁷

The report criticized the romanticized view of the past that some had suggested Newfoundland return to, such as the “independent self-sustaining fishing outports,” as that pre-confederation outport life was in reality a difficult period which many who lived it were quick to forget. Though, it is mentioned that the traditional outport way of life benefitted those during periods of unemployment through self-sufficiency, though this is not the case for those in

⁶⁶ J.D. House, *Building on Our Strengths: Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment*, (St. John's: The Commission, 1986), 13.

⁶⁷ J.D. House, *Summary Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment*, (St. John's: The Commission, 1986), 2-3.

urban centres. The report highlights the Canadian welfare state and industrialization as having “left Newfoundland outports in danger of becoming rural welfare communities.” The Commission advocated looking forward into the “post-industrial age” where these communities would “have to develop into modern communities” and therefore a “revolution” was needed in terms of education and culture. Going forward they prescribe a plan of “building on our strengths” arguing that “flexibility, adaptability, occupational pluralism, home production, the rhythm of a seasonal life-style, household self-reliance [were] all integral to Newfoundland society.” It addressed that while the Newfoundland population was growing, its job market was not and that the oil and gas industries cannot “solve [Newfoundland’s] economic problems.” The Commission report outlined a “21 point programme for employment creation,” which highlighted areas such as the “benefits from oil and gas,” “revitalizing the inshore fisheries,” tourism, improvements in education, “promoting provincial development,” and that Native peoples and those living in Labrador need specialized and tailored programs moving forward.⁶⁸

In the Commissions’ aftermath, the provincial government’s “Week in Review” for 24-31 March 1988, included a release from the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Ron Dawe who commented on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment. Dawe noted, “the Commission had criticized the government for adhering to a policy of “non-

⁶⁸ House, *Summary Report of the Royal Commission on Employment and Unemployment*, 4-10, 14-17, 20-24, and 29-31; also see House, “Appendix VII: Recommendations,” *Building on Our Strengths*, 492-515.

alignment” with the Maritime Provinces – to the detriment of initiatives of potential mutual benefit.” He also said, “Newfoundlanders want a government which pursues a distinct and separate identity within Confederation. Many ‘Atlantic’ regional initiatives do not benefit this province but rather concentrate economic activity in Halifax or Moncton.”⁶⁹ While criticizing the Commission, Dawe reinforced the PC government position of Newfoundland distinctness as being a priority, yet failed to recognize that the Commission had often focused on Newfoundland’s uniqueness when addressing the issue of unemployment in the province.

While the PC governments of the 1970s and 1980s focused on self-reliance and becoming equals in confederation, they were as adamant about preserving the distinct culture and heritage of the province. In the opening session of the Peckford government, Lieutenant Governor Winter advocated that the “preservation of our heritage and culture” was of considerable importance to the government, as well as supporting artists who have “helped preserve our heritage,” while acknowledging that all Newfoundlanders embrace and continue to engage with their culture. The government felt that the “arts community must now be encouraged more than ever to chronicle our past, analyze our present and portend our future” and planned to introduce a bill to incorporate a Newfoundland

⁶⁹ Government of Newfoundland, “Week in Review: March 24-30, 1988,” (St. John’s: March 31, 1988).

and Labrador Arts Council to further “encourage the preservation and public awareness of cultural heritage” throughout the province.⁷⁰

Even though the Newfoundland government was intent on developing its natural resources, it was also mindful to be “ever vigilant to ensure that such developments do not overwhelm those standards and values which constitute, in essence, what we are as a society.” This was furthered by Winter stating that the Newfoundland “social environment is, if anything, more complex and intricate than any natural eco-system, encompassing as it does our heritage, customs, traditions, cultures and social institutions.” Moreover, it was seen as “essential that we maintain our collective sense as a distinct society within Confederation and that we promote a lively debate upon our past, present and future.” Winter mentioned the adoption of a provincial flag and the importance of such a flag to cultural significance, as the “distinctive provincial flag” would “link our collective identity.” As well, Winter expressed that the “freedom and right to build a strong Province is not considered inconsistent with a strong, united Canada,” alluding to economic self-sufficiency and how this will also help to pursue Newfoundland’s distinction within Canada.⁷¹ During the opening of the third session of the thirty-eighth general assembly, the Newfoundland government is described as having an “ultimate goal of a vibrant, rural society” and in need of

⁷⁰ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 38th General Assembly, 12 July 1979,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 8-9 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 38th General Assembly, 17 December 1980,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982).

⁷¹ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 38th General Assembly, 28 February 1980,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 3-4 and 11-14.

a “stimulating and enlightened cultural policy.” It was believed that the “cultural uniqueness and individuality of [the] Province [was] as important as material benefits. For this reason, [the] Government [was] committed to preserving the Newfoundland heritage and developing artistic creativity.”⁷² Throughout its mandates, the Peckford government was keen to “nurture and develop [Newfoundland’s] unique heritage” and continued to view “cultural expenditures [as] an investment in the well-being of our people and therefore should be funded even in the severest of restraint periods,” remaining to “preserve Newfoundland’s heritage, individuality and cultural uniqueness.”⁷³

As mentioned, Peckford highlighted throughout his political platform his desire to see Newfoundland heritage taught in schools across the province. Since joining Canada Newfoundland had used textbooks that were produced in and for central Canada. This changed in the 1980s when Robert Cuff and Royston Kelleher’s *A Journey of Discovery: Living in Newfoundland and Labrador*, a grade three social studies textbook, was developed by the provincial Department of Education with assistance in research and development from the federal Department of Communications. The text, published in 1989 and used at least into the late 1990s, is an example of Peckford’s intentions for teaching Newfoundland

⁷² Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 38th General Assembly, 25 February 1981,” *Speeches from the Throne: 38th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1982), 1 and 18.

⁷³ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 39th General Assembly, 12 March 1984,” *Speeches from the Throne: 39th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1984), 15; Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 40th General Assembly, 25 April 1985,” *Speeches from the Throne: 40th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1988), 17 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 3rd Session of the 40th General Assembly, 26 February 1987,” *Speeches from the Throne: 40th General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1988), 23.

heritage in provincial schools.⁷⁴ According to the teacher's resource book, the program's key concepts include: identity, diversity, interdependence, citizenship, culture and multiculturalism, migration, and nation and province. The major understandings focus on the similarities between Newfoundland and Canada in terms of people's needs and how they are met, as well as how communities change over time. Some of the specified goals included: developing "a sense of identity with other Newfoundlanders and Canadians" and "to reinforce [...] pride in our way of life and faith in our future."⁷⁵

Six chapters highlighting different communities comprise the content of the text with the final chapter comparing the capital cities of St. John's and Ottawa, designed to "place the province of Newfoundland and Labrador within its Canadian context."⁷⁶ There are many pictures throughout the text, showcasing a variety of areas, peoples, and industries throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. There are also several maps throughout, often indicating the case study communities in relation to one another to foster connections between communities across the province. Also worth noting, there is no content on the Indigenous peoples of Labrador in the chapter on Labrador City, nor is there any mention of any Indigenous peoples across the island. Themes of isolation and relocation are discussed in relation to Fogo Island and a summary of a typical

⁷⁴ Robert Cuff and Royston Kelleher, *A Journey of Discovery: Living in Newfoundland and Labrador*, (St. John's Harry Cuff Publications, 1989).

⁷⁵ Robert Cuff and Royston Kelleher, *A Journey of Discovery: Living in Newfoundland and Labrador*, Teachers Resource Book, (St. John's Harry Cuff Publications, 1989), 7.

⁷⁶ Cuff and Kelleher, *A Journey of Discovery*, 5 and Cuff and Kelleher, Teachers Resource Book, 126.

Newfoundlander's day included "traditional" dishes such as toutons and molasses, fish and potatoes, and fishcakes.⁷⁷

This textbook is an indicative example of the shift in education to reconnect Newfoundlanders with their traditional heritage and cultural identity that was not provided by earlier post-confederation curricula. At this time, the cultural revival had been ongoing for more than 20 years and had no effectively made its way into the curriculum by way of the Progressive-Conservative government's use of this movement in their political platform for the province. By focusing on the youth in the province, the provincial government's initiatives in education concerning a reinvigoration of 'traditional' Newfoundland culture could become more long-lasting by reconnecting a generation of Newfoundlanders who never knew life on the island without also being Canadian.

Conclusion

In 1988, Newfoundland scholar James Overton provided commentary on Newfoundland culture toward the end of the cultural renaissance, questioning the cultural revival itself. He described regionalism as being a central concern in Canada during the 1980s in relation to the "powerful current of regionalist sentiment" that had been occurring in Newfoundland since the 1960s, which he described as having "economic and political dimensions."⁷⁸ Overton argued that Smallwood's philosophy of "develop or perish" and his government's policies of modernization and industrialization were "destructive of outport life and folk

⁷⁷ Cuff and Kelleher, *A Journey of Discovery*, 90.

⁷⁸ James Overton, "A Newfoundland Culture?," *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol. 23 (Spring 1988), 6.

culture,” which spawned the movement itself though acknowledged that it was “largely a phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s,” that gained increased support when Peckford became premier in 1979. He posits that many “lament the loss of a distinctive way of life rooted in the outports” and “complain about the destructive effects of mass culture and North American values on ‘traditional culture’ and attempt to preserve and revive this unique culture,” indicating that this is not simply a Newfoundland problem but one for any cultural or regional identity that varied from the centre. Overton also clarified that Newfoundland culture was not homogeneous and that the province had a “number of sub-cultures.” However, these sub-cultures “retain the idea of an overarching Newfoundland culture” grounded in the “key assumption of the revival,” which claimed the existence of “a distinctive Newfoundland culture, way of life, ethos, character, soul, or ethnic identity” and that this “unique culture centered on the outports has been undermined by industrialization, the welfare state, urbanization, and the introduction of North American” since confederation and because of this “Newfoundland culture is now threatened with extinction.”⁷⁹

In 1972, Newfoundland’s Progressive Conservative governments began increasing their initiatives pertaining to Newfoundland’s culture and heritage. These efforts, combined with the preceding developments in the arts and academic communities, helped solidify the cultural revival and safeguard Newfoundland’s culture. Moreover, the provincial government emphasized the promotion of Newfoundland’s distinctive regional culture to its advantage in

⁷⁹ Overton, “A Newfoundland Culture?,” 6-10.

intergovernmental issues throughout the period. Newfoundland's cultural nationalism in its early post-confederation period evolved and combined with a level of political and economic nationalism during the 1970s and 1980s under the PC government.⁸⁰ Confrontations between the provincial and federal governments at this time fueled the cultural revival and further encouraged Newfoundland's "emergent nationalism", while the provincial government's incorporation of this sentiment prevented hardliner separatist activity from gaining any ground in the province at a time when it was ripe for such movements.⁸¹

Newfoundland's economic development was tied to its natural resources; the successive provincial governments readily acknowledged this, with it often becoming a point of contention between the Newfoundland and Canadian governments as the jurisdictional lines became muddled with offshore oil and gas exploration.⁸² By the 1980s, the difficulties between the two levels of government were at an all-time high, with Premier Brian Peckford representing the generation of Newfoundlanders who were disappointed with their experience of being the "newest Canadians," feeling as though Newfoundlanders had not joined Canada but surrendered to it. The battle between Newfoundland and Ottawa concerning jurisdictional rights and offshore oil exploration led to Peckford's hardened 'anti-

⁸⁰ Harry H. Hiller, "Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* vol. 10, no.3 (1987), 266-272; James Overton, "Towards a Critical Analysis of Neo-Nationalism in Newfoundland, in *Underdevelopment and Social Movements in Canada*, edited by Robert J. Bryan and R. James Sacouman, (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1979), 223-230; and Mark W. Grasser, "The Newfoundland 1979-80 Elections Study: Summary of Results," Department of Political Science, Memorial University of Newfoundland, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980), 1-4.

⁸¹ Hiller, "Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland," 265-271.

⁸² Raymond B. Blake, *Canadians at Last: Canada Integrates Newfoundland as a Province*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 183.

Ottawa' stance during the period. As well, Labrador's natural resources and economic development were involved in these disputes, as the Newfoundland government saw fit to use resettlement in Labrador to dispossess the Innu of their rights and physically move them away from areas of natural resource development, arguing that the resettlement provided them with better services. This process meant increased assimilation and dispossession of Labrador's indigenous populations and for the exploitation of natural resources in the region by the Newfoundland government; ironically these were the same colonial practices that the provincial government was intent on avoiding from the Canadian government.⁸³

How Newfoundland pursued their distinct identity while becoming part of Canada lies in the continued effort to revive and promote their 'traditional' culture and praise their differentiation from the rest of Canada. When the province's academic community began a program of studying Newfoundland in the 1950s and the provincial government began endorsing Newfoundland's culture and heritage more ardently in the 1970s, it solidified the distinct identity of the province that would hold strong against the current of assimilation into the larger Canadian and North American identities. Newfoundland is not alone in their use of culture when they feel their identity is threatened by Canada politically, economically, or otherwise, Quebec is also well-known for this pattern of utilizing their 'otherness'. In its post-confederation era, Newfoundland was balancing "their traditional sense of identity with a newly acquired sense of

⁸³ Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, 266-267 and 248-250; Hiller, "Dependence and Independence: Emergent Nationalism in Newfoundland," 260-263.

otherness” that was bestowed upon them when they joined Canada and the measures they took to safeguard this balance are evidenced by the cultural revival itself and the provincial government’s backing of this movement.⁸⁴ The provincial government’s focus shifted from progress and modernization under Smallwood, to maintaining and reinvigorating ‘traditional’ culture under the Moores and Peckford governments of the 1970s and 1980s. The increased government support for the ongoing cultural revival in the period is demonstrated by their use of language regarding the province, as well as funding and policy initiatives in the areas of culture, education, and tourism.

Newfoundland pursued distinctiveness while becoming a Canadian province by reinforcing a sense of otherness through its post-confederation cultural revival. Increased provincial government support of the cultural revival from the 1970s onward further strengthened this endeavour by establishing policies and programs that were used to help preserve Newfoundland cultural and regional identity. Moreover, the successive PC governments of the 1970s and 1980s used the cultural revival for their political advantage during elections and negotiations with the federal government, which further bolstered nationalist sentiment in the province during contentious episodes with Ottawa. The surveys, studies, and expressed opinions from the post-confederation period indicate a growing number of Newfoundlanders considering themselves distinct from the rest of Canada, as well as a level of discontent with having joined with Canada.

⁸⁴ Pat, Byrne, “The Confluence of Folklore and Literature in the Creation of a Newfoundland Mythology within the Canadian Context, in *Canada and the Nordic Countries in Times of Reorientation: Culture and Politics*, edited by Jørn Carlsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University, 1998), 64-67.

The cultural revival and the provincial government's endorsement and use of it was in part a reaction to this discontent, as well as a way to remain distinct from the rest of the larger nation they had become a part of, which carried on well into its post-confederation period and in more recent decades has seen a second wave revival both for cultural and political gain under the Progressive Conservative government of Danny Williams in the early 2000s.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ Cadigan, *Newfoundland and Labrador*, 287-297.

Chapter 6 – From the Meech Lake Accord to Renewing & Strengthening Intrastate Relations: Newfoundland and Canada, 1987-2003

Disunity may be a permanent part of a definition of Canada – past, present and in the future [...] Substantial proportions of people – majorities in Quebec and Newfoundland – express a stronger attachment to their own province than to Canada.¹

In January 1990, *Maclean's* published their sixth *Maclean's/Decima* poll, an annual survey of “national opinion.” Journalist Carl Mollins commented that the poll showed “profound and even bitter divisions among Canadians, not only over their definitions of Canada and what it should be, but also between language groups and regions.” Newfoundland and Quebec were clear examples of provinces and regions that more readily identified with their locale, rather than with the amorphous Canadian identity. Mollins reminded readers that Canada has had a long history of being “preoccupied with trying to define itself in more than territorial terms,” and this was yet another iteration of the same story.² While the problems of national identity and national unity have transformed over time to reflect contemporary challenges such as the Quiet Revolution and the shift toward multiculturalism in Canadian society, intrastate relations within Canada continued to be unstable toward the end of the twentieth century.

¹ This *Maclean's* article was written in the context of the Meech Lake Accord and based on the results of the 1990 *Maclean's/Decima* poll. Carl Mollins, “An Uncertain Nation,” *Maclean's* vol. 101, no. 1 (January 1990), 12-13.

² Mollins, “An Uncertain Nation,” 12-13.

The saga of the Meech Lake Accord, the intended amendments to the 1982 Constitution, was a most prominent and consequential event during the 1980s. During the same period was one of Newfoundland's most contentious episodes with Ottawa: the 1985 Atlantic Accord. During the negotiations, Newfoundland's premier, Brian Peckford, came to be on side with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney due to their agreement of strong and economically vibrant provinces making for a strong, cohesive, and united Canada.³ This understanding led to Peckford eventually being agreeable during the Meech Lake Accord negotiations, with his government ratifying it on 7 July 1988.⁴

The Meech Lake Accord negotiations continued after Peckford, plaguing much of Clyde Wells' early premiership, as he was an ardent critic of the Accord. However, there were other items of importance in Wells' mandate. During the opening session of the new Wells government, the recent fortieth anniversary of Newfoundland's confederation with Canada was mentioned in relation to the reality that the province "has yet to succeed in becoming a full participating province of Canada" as the gap between the province and the rest of Canada was widening. Outmigration was also becoming a problem for the province largely due to limited options in employment, which meant that the population,

³ Raymond B. Blake, *Lions or Jellyfish: Newfoundland-Ottawa Relations Since 1957*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 318.

⁴ Melvin Baker, "History of Newfoundland and Labrador: Summary of Chronology of Events," in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John's: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 22.

particularly in rural areas, was dwindling.⁵ As well, leading up to the 1992 cod moratorium that had devastating consequences for the province both economically as well as culturally, the provincial government pushed the federal government to address the issues in the fishery. Initially, the Newfoundland government suggested that the federal government “take immediate steps to end foreign over fishing in our waters” but ultimately blamed Ottawa for the crisis in the fisheries, as it was the federal government’s jurisdictional responsibility to address the problem in the first place.⁶

The disagreements over the Meech Lake Accord led to increased tensions between Quebec and English-speaking Canada, this was furthered when Manitoba failed to ratify the Accord by the 22 June 1990 deadline by asking for an extension and Wells’ insistence of holding another legislative vote after having become Premier in 1989.⁷ This led to the further negotiated Charlottetown Accord that was put to a nation-wide referendum in 1992, which was ultimately defeated. These failures to successfully negotiate constitutional amendments that could be embraced nation-wide created the context for the 1995 Quebec sovereignty referendum to take place, where the outcome may have kept the country together

⁵ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 41st General Assembly, 25 May 1989,” *Speeches from the Throne: 41st General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1993), 1-2.

⁶ Newfoundland, “Opening of the 1st Session of the 41st General Assembly, 25 May 1989,” *Speeches from the Throne: 41st General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1993), 10 and Newfoundland, “Opening of the 2nd Session of the 41st General Assembly, 8 March 1990,” *Speeches from the Throne: 41st General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John’s: Queen’s Printer, 1993), 2.

⁷ The Newfoundland legislature had initially ratified the Meech Lake Accord on 7 July 1988. Baker, “History of Newfoundland and Labrador: Summary of Chronology of Events,” 22.

but with an increasingly tense relationship between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

On the eve of Newfoundland's 50th anniversary of confederation, historian Sean Cadigan argued that Canada should not be blamed for the "problems caused by flawed fisheries policies and failed development programs," as those policies and programs (or their predecessors) had been established prior to confederation. The establishment and expansion of the welfare state in Newfoundland was the "piecemeal effort" employed to address these issues, and are largely why confederation occurred in the first place. Thereby, Cadigan infers that the post-confederation era is more akin to an "extension" rather than a "break" with the pre-confederation era in terms of policy, and thus the province should cease scapegoating their socio-economic problems by placing the blame on confederation with Canada.⁸ In contrast, the Chairman for the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, Vic Young, claimed that there remained to be a "widespread feeling that Ottawa [had] squandered the rich resources Newfoundland possessed when it joined Canada in 1949 [...] continuing economic and social disparities within a cycle of dependency were not the expectations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians [sic] when they joined Canada."⁹

The period from the late 1980s to the early 2000s contained many significant events in the formation of both Canadian and Newfoundland identities:

⁸ Sean T. Cadigan, "Missed Opportunity: The Rock at Fifty," *The Beaver* vol. 79, no. 1 (February/March 1999), 6-7.

⁹ Shawna Richer, "Newfoundland endorses staying in Canada," *Globe and Mail*, July 3, 2003.

the Charlottetown Accord, the Cod Moratorium, the 1995 Quebec referendum, and Newfoundland's 500th Anniversary of "discovery" (Cabot 500) in 1997.¹⁰ This chapter focuses on the key moments of the 1987 Meech Lake Accord, particularly the subsequent 1990 Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future (the Spicer Commission), and the 2002-2003 Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada. The first part of this chapter will focus on the Spicer Commission in the aftermath of the failed Meech Lake Accord and what this turn of events meant for Canadian identity. Here is where the federal and national inquiry into Canadian identity will end, as the second part covers Newfoundland and Labrador's Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, providing an analysis of how Newfoundlanders and Canadians understood Newfoundland, its identity, and its place in Canada at the beginning of the 21st century.

Part I: The Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future

In the spring of 1987, the Meech Lake Accord, referring to a series of amendments to the 1982 Constitution Act, was negotiated and the Peckford government was in agreement with the proposed changes. However, when Clyde Wells became Premier in 1989 the new Liberal government changed their stance and were decidedly against it, believing that the proposed amendments had gone too far in accommodating Quebec's wants during the constitutional debate. As well, the Wells government had the aim of Newfoundland being a "full participating partner" in the Canadian state, suggesting that the Accord would not

¹⁰ Baker, "History of Newfoundland and Labrador: Summary of Chronology of Events," 24.

permit this level of partnership.¹¹ The Meech Lake Accord was a frequented topic in the news in the province and nationwide until its demise in 1990. This was also the time when a devastating crisis in the Atlantic cod fishery was looming, which would upend Newfoundland's economy and society.

In the St. John's *Sunday Express* on 22 October 1989, Michael Harris contributed an article addressing the ongoing squabbles concerning the Meech Lake Accord, opening with the statement "there is a new Central Canadian arrogance in the air" and continued to discuss how the federal government's stance was that Premier Wells would back down if the pro-Meech Lake alliance was strong enough to win over the other provincial detractors: Manitoba and New Brunswick. Harris went on to clarify that Newfoundland's position was not anti-Quebec and that signing on to the Accord would downgrade Newfoundland's status in Canada, given that the Accord was "fundamentally wrong" because it would deny that "every citizen of Canada has the right to expect equality with every other citizen in the land, regardless of where he or she lives." He concluded by stating that Newfoundland "is every bit as distinct a society in a cultural sense as any other place in Canada, including Quebec."¹² The notion of Newfoundland being "every bit as distinct a society" was a strongly held position for many Newfoundlanders during the battle against the Meech Lake Accord, demonstrating a level of enthusiastic support for Premier Well's position during the negotiations.

¹¹ Newfoundland, "Opening of the 1st Session of the 41st General Assembly, 25 May 1989," *Speeches from the Throne: 41st General Assembly of Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Queen's Printer, 1993), 14.

¹² Michael Harris, *The Sunday Express*, (St. John's: October 22, 1989).

The “Week in Review” for 2-8 November 1989, issued from the provincial government’s Executive Council, provided a statement from Wells where he tabled a constitutional proposal that was “an alternative” to the Meech Lake Accord, which he would present at the upcoming First Ministers Conference. While the former Peckford government accepted the Meech Lake Accord, Wells felt it would have “disastrous consequences” for Newfoundland and the nation as a whole. He argued the Accord “would prevent forever the achievement of a proper economic and political future for the province. [...] It would as well prevent Newfoundland from ever becoming a full participating province of Canada.” Wells stressed that he wanted to accommodate “the special concerns of the Quebec government” and “willingly support[ed] the 1982 Constitutional reforms” but insisted that the Accord went too far in accommodating Quebec’s wants, which would ultimately hurt the other provinces in the process. Wells was against the creation of a “special legislative status” for Quebec, as well as the restrictions on federal spending power, as Newfoundland needed a “strong central government” for the delivery of equal “social and economic programs” and he did not want provinces opting out of cost-shared programs because it would negatively affect other provinces.¹³

With Newfoundland and Manitoba withholding ratification of the Accord before the 22 June 1990 deadline, the Meech Lake Accord failed. In its aftermath, the relationship between Quebec and “the rest of Canada” had grown increasingly tense. Quebeckers were not the only people to have been left “feeling betrayed

¹³ Government of Newfoundland, “Week in Review: November 2-8, 1989,” (St. John’s: November 9, 1989).

and rejected,” as Indigenous groups had opposed the Accord due to the issue of “native self-government” having never been resolved during the First Ministers’ Conferences on the new Constitution between 1983-1987. During this time, tensions had continued to rise between particular Indigenous groups and the federal and provincial governments, most notably during the Oka Crisis during July-September 1990.¹⁴ It was clear that once again Canada was in the midst of a national unity crisis. Thus, before the 1992 Charlottetown Accord, the federal government put a commission in place to consult with Canadians about their views on the future of Canada with the hope that this could better inform future constitutional amendment negotiations. The Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future, also known as the Spicer Commission, was established on 1 November 1990 with an announcement from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney in the House of Commons who appointed former Commissioner of Official Languages Keith Spicer as chairman. The commission was to submit by 1 July 1991 a report “on the results of the consultations with Canadians on the future of Canada.”¹⁵

In his 1 November 1990 announcement, Mulroney referred to the problematic situation as “urgent” and “serious”. His creating of the commission was to begin a nationwide “dialogue” and to aid in the creation of a “consensus about Canada and our future.”¹⁶ The commission’s mandate listed “specific objectives” that largely revolved around “ensuring that the views of Canadians

¹⁴ Keith Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report to the People and Government of Canada*, (Ottawa: Supply and Services Canada, 1991), 15.

¹⁵ Wendy F. Porteous and Keith Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management Development, 1992), 1.

¹⁶ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 15; Order in Council PC 1990-2347; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 34th Parliament, 2nd Session, vol. 11 (Ottawa: 1990), 15004-15023.

from all regions, from all linguistic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and from all walks of life [were] obtained,” were able to “meet and discuss both shared Canadian characteristics and interests, and the identity and concerns of specific regions and groups.” It was also stated that such meetings were to be held “in each province and territory of Canada.” The mandate made clear that a key concern was to ensure the participation of a “broad spectrum of Canadians of all ages, origins, regions, and walks of life,” that this was to be unlike traditional Royal Commissions in terms of intentional and innovative approaches in their outreach.¹⁷

The self-proclaimed intention of the Citizens’ Forum was to try to “help a country hoping to make sense of itself.”¹⁸ Their outlined intentions for creating such a “broad spectrum” nationwide conversation between Canadians ultimately led to the “most widespread popular consultation ever held in Canada,” according to Wendy Proteous’s report on the Forum’s consultative process.¹⁹ There was a wide array of techniques used to reach as many Canadians as possible for the duration of the commission, such as a toll-free line, English and French television advertisements, response forms, and information packages for public discussions, all intent on “getting the message out” to as many Canadians as could be reached.²⁰ From 7 November 1990, the toll-free “idea line” in both English and

¹⁷ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 149-150; Proteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 3.

¹⁸ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 30.

¹⁹ Proteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 1.

²⁰ Proteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 9-13.

French was in operation, even before the commissions' main headquarters were occupied on 11 November.²¹

Public discussions began in Saint John, New Brunswick kicking off a Maritime blitz of meetings on 8 January 1991 and ended on 30 April 1991 with the final blitz taking place in the North West Territories (NWT), notably after the release of the interim report *What We Have Heard So Far* in March 1991. The public discussions in Newfoundland did not take place until March 1991, despite the earlier meetings held across the other Atlantic provinces; meaning that Newfoundland, along with the NWT, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, did not have their views included in the interim report.²² The public group discussions were facilitated with the help of information packages. These packages were revised and reissued with new material in February 1991 because participants had described the points of discussion as too “long”, “detailed”, “directive”. The outlined discussion points highlighted the Forum’s mandated intentions, focusing on, among other things, regionalism in relation to national identity and unity, official languages, cultural and ethnic diversity, and “relations among the aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples.”²³

On 31 May 1991, the commission “stopped counting” group discussions in order to be able to publish their report by the 1 July 1991 deadline. By that time, 7,681 group discussions had been held with 180,667 Canadians having participated. However, it is stated in the report that “a large number of groups

²¹ Porteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 35.

²² Porteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 3-36.

²³ Porteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 3 and 13.

held discussions and never got around to filling out the group report or sending it in” and a survey run by regional organizers for the Forum found that many groups (as high as 50%) who had received discussion kits “never sent back” a report, thereby permitting the commission to estimate the total numbers as being closer to 13,000 group discussions with 315,000 participants. With this consideration, the commission stated that approximately 400,000 Canadians had participated in the Citizens’ Forum in one way or another. This included a wide variety of submissions aside from the public group discussions. The toll-free “idea line” received 75,069 callers, there were 7056 briefs, letters, and individual reports, and “thousands of pieces of art” including short plays and skits, songs, and “hundreds of poems,” were received by the commission.²⁴

It was noted that there was low participation of francophone Quebecers, making up only 11.2% of the overall participant total (approximately 45,000 participants). In addition, the commission commented that they “did not hear from as many aboriginal peoples as [they] would have liked.” However, the Indigenous peoples that participated “tended to meet in groups of their own, on their homelands,” with many reacting “to the Forum with suspicion, as a people who have been ‘commissioned-out,’ with no real hope of resolving their grievances.” On this last remark, the commissioners seem to have missed the very point they were attempting to inquire about. If the commission intended to “help a country hoping to make sense of itself,” the apprehension and suspicion Indigenous peoples may have had towards yet another *Canadian* commission was a

²⁴ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 16-22.

fundamental concern for many within the “broad spectrum” the Forum was attempting to reach.²⁵

Keith Spicer submitted the Citizen’s Forum’s final report on 27 June 1991. The report was given the subtitle *To the People and Government of Canada*, speaking to the intentions of the commission on their report.²⁶ Spicer specifies the central issue of the Forum as “reconciling [Canada’s] two main communities,” meaning English-speaking and French-speaking Canada and further stated that a federal language policy and a “culturally strong Quebec” are both needed for the “vitality of French-speaking communities” throughout the country. This sentiment was reinforced by his insistence that both language policy and Quebec culture need “firm and unambiguous backing” from the federal government.²⁷

In addition to English and French Canadian relations, Spicer emphasized that Indigenous peoples were also of “high priority” during the consultations. The foreword of the report spoke to the need of improving relations with First Nations, specifically in regards to “teaching” settlers how to “respect” the land, as well as their approach to settling differences and what Canada as a nation can learn from this. Spicer further stated that “with their rich and varied culture, aboriginal peoples can bring [Canadians] to a deeper sense of spirituality about our life and destiny in Canada.” It is indicated in these remarks that the commission believes that Canadians have much to learn about Canada from those who were in Northern North America for far longer than the settler population, but it is also

²⁵ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 24-25.

²⁶ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, i.

²⁷ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 3-4.

clear that it is Indigenous peoples who are responsible for teaching Canadians how to better the nation. As well, it would appear that the First Nations groups are being considered rather homogeneously and the focus on what they can do for Canada rather than how Canadians can improve and better relations with them, making this a rather one-sided partnership.²⁸

Another point of importance found throughout the commission was constitutional reform; given the context of the commission's creation, this was unsurprising. Throughout the Forum, citizens continually reiterated their want to "feel directly involved in constitution-making" and many desired Senate reform. Spicer specified in particular that a Triple-E (equal, elected, effective) Senate should be considered more seriously and that the Northern Territories needed more representation in Ottawa.²⁹

Spicer and the other commissioners found a "deep similarity of values and ideals among Canadians" and stressed that while the more direct "loyalties and interests every province and territory wishes to protect vary," all areas and peoples "should be free to protect them in different ways, adapted to local realities," in each region and every province and territory across the country. The ideals of: "freedom and dignity in diversity, with openness to all cultures and races; a sensitive democracy; social solidarity; an orderly, safe society; a clean environment; the often unspoken idea of North; a peace-supporting, more independent role in an increasingly interdependent world; a yearning to love [the] country in any way each individual chooses, without apology," were the elements

²⁸ Spicer, *Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future*, 4-5.

²⁹ Spicer, *Citizens' Forum on Canada's Future*, 5-6.

that were echoed throughout the commissioners work. Ultimately what they were hearing spoke to “the right to be a Canadian in different ways, times and places, or not very much at all.”³⁰ This was what they heard was to be Canadian and how Canada should be understood for the future.

The final report described the Citizens’ Forum as a “probing consultation and dialogue,” reminding Canadians that those who participated in the Forum “were not selected randomly by a computer; they took part because they *wanted* to talk about their country and Canada’s future.” The report stated that the commission would “never know exactly how many people the Forum reached,” nor could they accurately measure its “impact on the country,” however they believed “in its own way, the Forum worked.”³¹ The immediate “impact” of the commission on the federal government saw an announcement for “the creation of a Royal Commission on Aboriginal Affairs,” which Spicer indicated had been requested long before the creation of the Citizens’ Forum. As well, the as the commission came to a close the May 1991 Throne Speech stated “that Quebec’s unique character must be affirmed and that the interests of the West, the Atlantic provinces, Ontario, the North and the aboriginal Canadians must be recognized,” that Canadian unity must be rebuilt and the “acrimony, apathy and incomprehension that undermine Canada’s unity” must be overcome.³²

The Spicer Report, as it is also known, was broken into two main sections: what the commissioners heard from Canadians and what the commissioners

³⁰ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 7-8.

³¹ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 22-24.

³² Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 30; Canada, *House of Commons Debates*, 34th Parliament, 3rd Session, vol. 1 (Ottawa: 1991), 2.

thought about what they heard. During the public group discussions, the participants were asked, “what they felt were the major issues facing Canada in the coming years.” From these discussions, the commissioners determined there to be seven “major issues”: Canadian identity and values; Quebec and Canadian unity; official languages; “aboriginal issues”; cultural diversity; the Canadian economy; and responsible leadership and participatory democracy.³³

According to the commissioners, participants “focused a great deal” on what it meant to be Canadian, though often by making comparisons with the United States to differentiate between the two. In the report, the commissioners provided a list of what they determined to be “core values” that had been “very strongly” expressed by participants across all regions and commonly understood to be “essential elements of Canadian society.” This list included: “belief in equality and fairness in a democratic society,” “importance of accommodation and tolerance,” and “support for diversity.”³⁴ In addition to Canadian values, participants also understood Canadian identity to be comprised of its “unifying institutions,” which were often described as symbolic, such as the CBC, Canada Post, the RCMP, VIA Rail, and even transfer payments, as well as considering its regionalism as a part of this institutionalized Canadian identity.³⁵

Canadian identity, and the cyclical issue of diversity and unity, was a frequent topic of discussion. A participant from Braeside, Ontario queried that “most of the world can describe us better than we can describe ourselves [...]

³³ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 33.

³⁴ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 34-35 and 40-41.

³⁵ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 45-50.

perhaps because to re-define our identity over and over IS a part of our identity. Painful at times but perhaps the better for it. [...] Canadians have an identity. Part of it must be our belief that we all have an equal right to be different.”³⁶ Notably, a participant from the Yukon remarked, “few Canadians have experienced Canada coast to coast, and so many Canadians don’t comprehend the different cultures found with Canada.” National programs focused on interprovincial exchange (such as the Katimavik program) was often spoken of as a way to overcome the lack of understanding between Canadians. However, the commission felt that based on what many of the participants expressed, “unity will not come from government programs to promote it; it will stem from our people themselves as we discover our commonalities, our shared history, what we’ve built together.”³⁷

In regards to regionalism, culture, and societal distinction, the report indicated that the “forces of regionalism in Canada [had] often been portrayed as stronger than, and detrimental to, the forces of unity,” however the commissioners stated that in their estimation this was not the case, at least “outside Quebec.”³⁸ Many participants who understood this to be the case, with one participant from Newfoundland having said:

I do not see any conflict between having a strong national culture and strong regional cultures – it is false thinking to make the distinction between these, for the two exist in a complementary way and have a symbiotic relationship. Strong regional cultures make for a strong nation (but) we certainly need to strengthen our ways of meeting with

³⁶ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 50.

³⁷ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 46.

³⁸ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 46.

and speaking to each other across the different regions and for this we need effective systems of transportation and communication.³⁹

While a participant from North York, Ontario agreed, “Quebec is a distinct society within the nation,” they also clarified that “so are many other parts of Canada.” They saw that Quebec (and other such distinct societies within Canada) were a “society is in terms of culture, language, etc, but not in terms of rights and responsibilities,” thus demonstrating the limits that some Canadians felt towards such groups – that societal distinction and relative separateness is permissible but the line is drawn when it came to different privileges and responsibilities to the state.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, Indigenous land claims were seen as a “top priority” for many who took part in the discussions. A participant from Ontario believed that settling “Indian and Inuit land claims” should be “a first priority” of the federal government. Participants from Manitoba, British Columbia, and Newfoundland echoed this sentiment.⁴¹

A common theme in regards to cultural diversity was a “desire to see an end to ‘hyphenated Canadians’” and see a more unified Canadian citizenry in light of this more ‘streamlined’ understanding of what it was to be Canadian. Many participants considered multiculturalism problematic for Canadian unity, such as a participant from Oakville, Ontario who believed that “multiculturalism is by itself divisive [...] we spend too much time being different and not enough being Canadian.” Some who participated were dismayed by the focus on the

³⁹ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 48-49.

⁴⁰ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 53.

⁴¹ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 80.

plethora of origins and cultures that comprise Canada “rather than embracing a uniquely Canadian national character” with one participant claiming that the Canadian government was “promoting multiculturalism to the detriment of a true Canadian identity” and that while “new Canadians” should be permitted to “practice their own culture and language in the confines of their community [...] the government must make it abundantly clear to all immigrants that to become a Canadian citizen, their foremost loyalty must be to Canada and its laws.” Conversely, compared to English-speaking Canadians, French-speaking Canadians were “less likely [...] to focus on multiculturalism policy as a barrier to cultural unity,” likely due to their own minority status within the country.⁴²

It was the failure of the Meech Lake Accord that “triggered” the Form’s establishment, but upon undertaking their work, the commissioners found that Canada was once again “in a crisis [...] of identity, a crisis of understanding, a crisis of leadership.” Based on what they heard from participants, the “most arresting thing of all” was the “tension between” unity and the differing prerogatives of various groups within Canada, which were “perceived as posing great threats to their sense of being a country.” While it was made clear that a change was needed that would allow Quebec to “feel more comfortable within the Canadian family,” the vast majority of those who participated, Québécois or otherwise, “strongly preferr[ed] Quebec to stay” in Canada. In the report, Spicer advocated for Quebec remaining in Canada, stressing that “Canada without

⁴² Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 85-88.

Quebec would be subject to possibly intolerable pressures to fissure along north/south lines.”⁴³

Participants recurrently raised issues concerning Indigenous peoples, such as their place in the constitution, land claims disputes, and whether self-governance would conflict with the “sense of being one country.” The report addressed the building “anger” in Indigenous communities and that a “failure to deal promptly with the needs and aspirations of aboriginal peoples will breed strife that could polarize opinion and make solutions more difficult to achieve,” and that this would only hinder any chance of Canadian unity.⁴⁴ Moreover, Spicer declared that the commissioners agreed “with the great majority of Canadians to demand prompt, fair settlement of the territorial and treaty claims of First Nations people, to secure their linguistic, cultural and spiritual needs in harmony with their environment.” They also expressed their support for First Nation’s self-government, of which Indigenous peoples should be central in this process, and that the department of Indian Affairs, as well as the Indian Act itself, “be phased out as self-government comes into reality.” It was stressed Indigenous peoples should be recognized both in terms of their history and their contributions as the “First Nations of Canada.”⁴⁵

The commissioners used their report to urge the federal government to “review and coordinate its thinking” regarding national symbols and institutions “to give them more evident importance, and to avoid the impression among

⁴³ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 113-114 and 120.

⁴⁴ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 114-120.

⁴⁵ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 127-128.

Canadians that they are losing their sense of country.” This appeared to be especially concerning for English-speaking Canadians’ sense of Canadian unity. It was further suggested that a new constitution should be framed with a preamble that would enshrine “simple, eloquent words that explain Canada’s past, its identity and values, and Canadians’ free commitment to the future.” As well, the commissioners felt that all Canadians should “accept that Quebec should have the freedom and means to be itself – a unique society with its own distinctive place in a renewed Canadian family.”⁴⁶ Ultimately, the commissioners recognized that Canadians “do not know enough about [themselves]” and that this needed to be rectified, otherwise it would “continue to cripple efforts” made toward Canadian unity. A proposed solution was found in educating Canada’s youth: “We believe that Canadian students deserve a better understanding of their country’s history, embracing all regions, at a much younger age.”⁴⁷

In regards to the importance of the role of young people in determining Canada’s future, part of the commission was a joint program of the Citizen’s Forum on Canada’s Future and the Canadian Teachers Federation: the Students’ Forum. From this, a report was published but not incorporated into the Citizens’ Forum final report and was published separately. The “School Kits” were issued in March 1991 and the Students’ Forum began that month.⁴⁸ Approximately 106,393 students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 in 4,575 classrooms participated

⁴⁶ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 122-124.

⁴⁷ Spicer, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future*, 129-130.

⁴⁸ Porteous, *Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future: Report on the Consultative Process*, 36; Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *Young People Speak*, (Ottawa: Citizens’ Forum on Canada’s Future, 1991), 34.

formally (in that they submitted classroom reports but based on their best estimates more than 13,000 classrooms and 300,000 students participated). Other considerations in terms of participation, were that by and large Quebec students were not represented as the Centrale de l'enseignement du Québec and the Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers of Quebec "turned down [the] invitation to participate," which consequently saw only 8% of the contributions being French, which included both "francophones [sic] students and from French immersion students." Moreover, only 3% of the total participants were from Newfoundland, while 47% of the participants were from Ontario. A marked difference between the Citizens' Forum and the Students' Forum was the "optimism and hope for the future" shown by the children who participated, demonstrated in their support for "bilingualism and multiculturalism to a far greater extent than do their adult counterparts" and their ardent belief that "Canadians can solve their disagreements by talking more to each other."⁴⁹

The Citizens' Forum's *Young People Speak* publication was heavily reliant on direct quotes from students (and some teachers) on themes central to the Forum, such as cultural diversity, Quebec, languages, and "Aboriginal issues." The students who participated spoke frankly and earnestly about their understandings and concerns relative to Canada's future. Some responses were rather personal, such as a student from Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, specified "I don't like the language I am learning because I am Ojibway and I would like to

⁴⁹ Canada's Future and the Canadian Teachers' Federation, *Young People Speak*, 2-3 and 39.

learn my language.”⁵⁰ Others focused more on the potential rupture of the country, such as a Grade 12 student from Pasadena, Newfoundland, who saw Quebec independence as something that “would obviously disrupt the Canada we know today [...] Quebec’s unique culture, along with the unique cultures of Newfoundland, the Mohawks etc., make up Canada, each part giving its own merits individually. It is therefore necessary to, as Canadians, come to an understanding of each other’s cultures and maybe to suffer a little to appease Quebec; or as the famous Quebec phrase, ‘Québec est un vrai pays’ may become a reality.”⁵¹ Another Grade 12 student from Leading Tickles, Newfoundland, stressed particular concern for the importance of communication between Canadians:

I believe that it is important that all Canadians, from Newfoundland to British Columbia, communicate with each other and try to understand how each specific region of Canada lives [...] If we can all understand one another’s culture, we will understand their views and stands on important topics [...] I believe that there are several ways in which this communication could occur. One way would be through the use of the mail such as magazines. Each month one magazine could be published about a certain region of Canada and distributed throughout all of Canada [...] Another way to increase communication would be the use of textbooks in school dealing with each region of Canada instead of Canada as a whole. Another way still, would be to have people visit the schools in each region, who know about the different regions and could answer any

⁵⁰ Canada’s Future and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *Young People Speak*, 13.

⁵¹ Canada’s Future and the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, *Young People Speak*, 18-19.

questions students have to ask. The Government could also sponsor more exchange trips between schools of different provinces in Canada.⁵²

The commissioners' recommendations from the Citizens' Forum report that had particular relevance for youth were included in the publication. A leading recommendation being: "Canadian students deserve a better understanding of their country's history, embracing all regions [...] such deeper understanding should include the history and cultures of aboriginal peoples and ethnocultural peoples" and the materials used to teach such history should be "prepared in consultations with Canada's first peoples" for a more historically accurate "description of the role of the aboriginal peoples." The commissioners further recommend that provinces outside Quebec should consider a common history, at least in part," which left any sense of properly understanding Canadian regionalism in question.⁵³

Newfoundland always played their part in the national Royal Commissions and Task Forces oriented around Canada's national identity and unity, but always maintained their stance of the importance of regionalism and embracing Canada's unity in diversity. When observing the Spicer Commission with a Newfoundland lens, it appears that the commission gave the province short shrift. This is not entirely surprising as Newfoundland had been one of the two provinces that held out during the Meech Lake Accord. With that said, twelve years later the province would hold their own Royal Commission to assess their place in Canada on their terms.

⁵² Canada's Future and the Canadian Teachers' Federation, *Young People Speak*, 9-10.

⁵³ Canada's Future and the Canadian Teachers' Federation, *Young People Speak*, 34.

Part II: Newfoundland's Place in Canada at the Dawn of 21st Century

The late 1990s were a celebratory time for Newfoundland. In 1997, the province celebrated its 500th anniversary of European discovery by John Cabot in 1497, and in 1999 reached its 50th anniversary of confederation with Canada. The Canada Conference was held in St. John's at the end of March and was used as an "anchor event of the Soiree '99 Celebration," which marked the "50th anniversary Newfoundland and Labrador's entry into the Canadian Confederation." The Newfoundland government had asked both the Council for Canadian Unity and Memorial University to "organize a national conference" to launch the province's anniversary celebrations and to "explore, debate and celebrate Canada at the dawn of the new millennium and Newfoundland and Labrador's place within the Canadian federation." The conference took place at Memorial University's St. John's campus, with notable guest and keynote speakers Stéphane Dion, John Ralston Saul, Gwynne Dyer, and Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.⁵⁴

The introduction of the conference proceedings addressed the idea of Newfoundland as having been destined to join Canada. This was exemplified with the proclamation Louis St. Laurent had made during Newfoundland's confederation ceremony on 1 April 1949, of when the Peace Tower was constructed in 1916 it was inscribed with the Coat of Arms of the nine provinces with a tenth left blank "for the day which the Fathers of Confederation had

⁵⁴ Canada Conference '99, Marilyn L. Thompson, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings, March 29-31, 1999, St. John's, Newfoundland*, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland and the Council for Canadian Unity, 1999), i-iv.

foreseen when Newfoundland would join Canada.”⁵⁵ It was also noted that it had been 100 years since Wilfred Laurier’s “famous prediction” that the “20th century would belong to Canada,” which was the focus of Dyer’s keynote that argued while the 20th century may not have belonged to Canada the way Laurier had envisioned perhaps the 21st century would.⁵⁶

The conference was oriented around the broad themes of history, “accommodating our difference,” “prosperity and responsibility,” and “Canadians in the broader world,” with workshops accompanying each theme.⁵⁷ A panel focused to “identity and unity” offered particular insights from academics, as well as Chief of Miawpukek First Nation Misel Joe who commented on the difficulty of seeing Newfoundland’s 50th anniversary of confederation with Canada as celebratory as “Aboriginals were not consulted or included in the decision,” further stressing that “before we can build something powerful, we have to understand from where we have come. When we have done that, we can build a nation.”⁵⁸ While speaking to a different aspect of a similar issue, fellow panellist Thomas d’Aquino stated that “the idea of Canada is greater than the sum of its parts and is more than a coming together of provinces and regions; there are a Canadian people and personality. This is a country where the individual parts and whole are allowed to express themselves and to grow.”⁵⁹ Creating a unified nation required more than stating as such, consultation with all who would become part

⁵⁵ Canada Conference ’99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 1.

⁵⁶ Canada Conference ’99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 34.

⁵⁷ Canada Conference ’99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 28.

⁵⁸ Canada Conference ’99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 12-13.

⁵⁹ Canada Conference ’99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 11.

of that nation was required, as was acknowledging and accepting difference.

Without these elements, a unified nation and people is unattainable.

The guest and keynote speakers spoke to both Newfoundland's confederation with Canada, as well as the nature of the Canadian nation. Dion and Chrétien, as federal politicians, catered more to the positive aspects of the union between the two with Dion's mention of Newfoundlander's "strong sense of [provincial] belonging" and that "the soul of Newfoundland through Confederation became a part of Canada and enhanced that federation." Chrétien stated that the "Confederation between Newfoundland and Canada represents a union of two free and democratic peoples, each with its own unique history and tradition," which was "negotiated between two sovereign countries" who saw "a chance to combine strengths, to make something new and better for their children and future generations." Sidestepping the purely political slant, John Ralston Saul considered Canada as an "atypical experiment" due to the "astonishing role culture has played in its development as a country; the triangular nature of its structure (Aboriginal, Francophone; Anglophone) [...]; its diversity, multiculturalism and complexity."⁶⁰

While reflecting on Newfoundland's confederation with Canada, as well as the Canadian nation writ large, the Canada Conference gave an indication of where Newfoundland was believed to fit within Canada and how the nation of Canada was understood at the turn of the 21st century but in a more formalized and federally minded tone. However, a few years later Newfoundland and

⁶⁰ Canada Conference '99, *History in the Making: Conference Proceedings*, 32-35.

Labrador's 2002-2003 Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada employed a different approach. The Canada Conference was a federally minded affair, focused to the centre looking outward, whereas the provincial Royal Commission flipped the perspective to the hinterland looking toward the centre. The Royal Commission underscored the tenor of the average Newfoundlander and Canadian relating to Newfoundland's place in Canada. After the marked celebrations of confederation and discovery in the late 1990s, the province of Newfoundland embarked on a process of understanding its place within the wider state; a process that voiced concerns from those in the province and demonstrated a lack of understanding from those in the rest of Canada.

The Royal Commission launched on 3 June 2002, thereby beginning its "task of reflecting on and examining [Newfoundland and Labrador's] place in Canada." While it had been 53 years since the province entered confederation, it had yet to find "its rightful place in Canada." The provincial government believed that it was "time to assess" where the province stood in Canada, as there seemed to be a "serious gap" between the "hopes and expectations" that Newfoundland had during the confederation era versus the reality of life in the province in the early 21st century. Chairman Vic Young, along with commissioners Elizabeth Davis and James Igloliorte, were given a mandate to "conduct a critical assessment of Newfoundland and Labrador's strengths and weaknesses and to bring forward recommendations on how best to achieve prosperity and self-

reliance,” with the objective of “renewing and strengthening [Newfoundland and Labrador’s] place in Canada.”⁶¹

From the very beginning of the commission, the self-assumed “otherness” of the province is reminded and highlighted, as the commission’s initial consultation document it remarked that the particular union between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada was “unique in at least two very important aspects.” Firstly, that the province was the “only country ever to join Canada,” and secondly, that it was the only province “to join by way of a popular referendum.” As well, the perceived “otherness” that is believed to be placed onto the province is also established with the insistence that Newfoundland has been a “Canadian metaphor for isolation, poverty and dependency.” The commission questioned if that metaphor was “an outdated view” and whether or not the province had moved “beyond this image in the eyes of [their] fellow Canadians.”⁶²

The consultation document highlighted the concern of losing the sense of a distinct Newfoundland people, where Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were said to “have a unique sense of place and a distinct and deep love for their Province,” yet many vacate the province due to the habitually poor job market and economic conditions. Consequently, several key issues and concerns the commission identified as part of their mandate and research program were

⁶¹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Our Place in Canada: Consultation Document*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2002), i-1.

⁶² Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Our Place in Canada: Consultation Document*, 2.

“prosperity and self-reliance”; “populations and demographics”; rural areas; natural resources; “equalization and resource revenue sharing”; and a “sense of place.” At the outset of their exploration, the commission had noted the need for the citizens of the province to reengage their sense of pride, as well as to encourage development and growth within the province.⁶³

It was crucial for the commission to gather the informed viewpoints of those throughout the province, thus in addition to the consultation document, an information pamphlet was made available to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians advertising and explaining the mandate and goal of the Royal Commission. This pamphlet featured a list of issues that were affecting Newfoundland and Labrador pertaining to its union with Canada (such as the province paying “some of the highest taxes in the country” but struggling to “provide social programs comparable to the rest of Canada”) and questions what this meant regarding the province’s place in Canada. As well, a list of key questions concerning the province “working toward prosperity and self-reliance” was included for the public’s consideration. Lastly, a list of the dates and locations of the public consultations was featured, along with encouraging the submission of written responses, as well as all forms of artistic expression, related to feelings held toward the commission, its mandate, and the province’s place in Canada.⁶⁴

⁶³ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Our Place in Canada: Consultation Document*, 4-8.

⁶⁴ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2002).

The commission established a set of “five concurrent processes” that would permit a wide and informed foundation for their assessment, namely: province-wide public consultations; formal written submissions; “a series of roundtables on focused issues;” meetings with both provincial and federal ministers; and a “formal research program consisting of thirty research papers.” The public consultations were conducted from 30 September 2002 until 27 January 2003, with 25 meetings that crisscrossed the province. Over 1400 people participated in public consultations, as well as 560 students. Additional sessions were held with women’s groups that saw more than 170 participants, and the commissioners also “met with representatives of each of the aboriginal groups on the Island and in Labrador.” It was the participants at the public meetings who “set the agenda” and the topics the people themselves considered “most important” were: health care; education; transportation; fisheries management; employment; the “cultural of out-migration;” the urban/rural divide; equalization; having “more influence in Ottawa;” and “Labrador’s contribution to Newfoundland.”⁶⁵

Published in February 2003, the commission’s main report, *Our Place in Canada*, outlined a ‘foundational pathway’ for the province moving forward in renewing its relationship with the rest of Canada. The report outlined the province’s background as part of Canada, presenting its expectations upon entering into confederation and an overview of its then 54-years as part of Canada. The commissioners identified particular understandings regarding

⁶⁵ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 1-3.

Newfoundlanders and Labradorians expectations of confederation, that not only would the people of the new province be full Canadian citizens but also “that they would share the living standards enjoyed by all Canadians, and that their province would have the financial resources to support these standards,” which had since proven to not be the case. As well, it was the understanding of the new province during the negotiations of the Terms of Union that “finding its place in Canada was a task that could not be fully addressed by formal constitutional arrangements or guarantees.” Rather, the province’s “full participation in the federation” was to be addressed on an ongoing basis of intergovernmental policy decisions throughout the course of the union. It was this understanding of Canada “as a work in progress” that reminded the commissioners of the “importance of a positive, respectful and constructive relationship” between both levels of government, which in turn led them to establish a ‘pathway to renewal’ based on a “way of thinking” that would ‘mutually benefit’ Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada.⁶⁶ Confederation between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada was seen as the nation finally becoming “complete from sea to sea to sea.” Nevertheless, throughout the commission, it was reminded that the province was not well known or understood across the country, and that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians wished to “ensure that all Canadians know [their] rich history,

⁶⁶ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Our Place in Canada: Main Report*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 18-19.

rejoice in [their] uniqueness and understand [their] challenges,” and that it only then could the province “feel that Canada is made complete by [its] presence.”⁶⁷

The final report included a supplementary document focused on what the commissioners heard from Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. The volume, *What We Heard*, opened with a poem composed by 15-year-old student Anne Gregory that she submitted to the Royal Commission. In the poem, entitled “Under the Waves,” she expressed the sorrow of the exodus of many from the island, as well as her fierce optimism for a better future where this would no longer be the norm, avowing: “My hope is that one day, in the not too distant future, we will flourish again.”⁶⁸ The topic of outmigration was one of the most prominent themes that came to light during the public discussions and via the individual submissions to the commission, other notable themes were Labrador and Indigenous issues and Newfoundland stereotypes.

As mentioned, the commission met with women’s groups and those meetings had shone a different light on the issue of outmigration. Whereas during the public discussions outmigration was usually spoken of as an economic concern, during the women’s meetings a fuller picture of the issue was seen where discussion of the emotional, mental, familial, and cultural aspects were addressed. A participant testified to the nuanced difficulties associated with this prevalent issue when they said, “It breaks your heart to see your children leave, but it breaks

⁶⁷ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, vii.

⁶⁸ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, i.

your heart even more to see them stay in an environment where they have no opportunity.”⁶⁹

After the cod moratorium in 1992, more than 60,000 Newfoundlanders and Labradorians had left the province within a decade seeking better job opportunities.⁷⁰ This was significantly affecting the mentality of those in the province and permitting a generation of young people to grow up feeling as though leaving their home province was inevitable and synonymous with adult life, as a student had said, “we love home, but we have no choice but to leave.” This was exemplified when students were asked, as part of the commission’s work, to draw what they felt represented “what was happening in [the] province” and a young student from New Wes Valley drew a U-Haul “because it was such a prevalent sight in her own community.” For youth, there was “crucial importance” placed on their “attachment to Newfoundland and Labrador as their home.” Concerning how the rest of Canada viewed the province, young people felt “there was an overriding view” that those in the province were “badly misunderstood though looked upon with affection.”⁷¹

The Innu, Inuit, Labrador Metis, and Mi’kmaq who engaged with the commission left the commissioners with the impression that Newfoundland and Labrador could not “effectively renew and strengthen its place in Canada without understanding, renewing and strengthening the relationships between the Province and aboriginal peoples.” Indigenous people in attendance often remarked, “that

⁶⁹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 5.

⁷⁰ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 14.

⁷¹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 6-7.

they were abandoned by the process leading to Confederation” and ever since they have been “involved in a struggle to find their rightful place not only in Newfoundland and Labrador but in Canada.” A participant in Nain, Labrador held the belief that “principles such as respect, dignity, land rights, self-determination, sharing and mutual support [...] need to be applied in daily life within the Province and within Canada.” At the time of the commission, the population of Newfoundland and Labrador was approximately 521,200, with Labrador’s sharing a significantly smaller portion of that with their approximate population being only 28,200. With that said, there was a “strong undercurrent of alienation” expressed throughout Labrador. This was reinforced by a “general feeling of being unappreciated” by the island portion of the province, as indicated by a participant who claimed that “Labrador feels as ignored by the Government in St. John’s as Newfoundland and Labrador feels ignored by the Government in Ottawa.”⁷² This statement made clear that for many Indigenous people within the province, it was not just the province’s relationship with Canada that needed reconsideration and renewal, but also its relationship with those who were within the confines of the province.

Newfoundland stereotypes were another frequented topic during the public discussions, as well as in the survey poll studies conducted for the commission. While stereotypes can be of a positive and negative nature, the main concern was with the negative stereotypes associated with Newfoundlanders. For example, during the commission’s visits to schools, they had “heard countless stories [...]

⁷² Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 8 and 15.

about the ignorance [students] faced as part of their cross-cultural experiences with other Canadians.” As well, at a public discussion a participant specified that the “ignorance is not only expressed in Newfie jokes, the repetition of which consolidates an already dismal view of our people, but in the surprise often expressed that someone from Newfoundland is so educated, articulate, and not wanting to party all the time.” The commissioners relayed that while it was the case that many Canadians associated Newfoundland with negative and “outdated stereotypes,” it was typically coming from those who were unfamiliar with the province, and in contrast, “those who know Newfoundland and Labrador will hold the most favourable view of the province.”⁷³ While this may have been the case, it was of little solace to those who felt personally afflicted by the negative stereotyping from those in the rest of Canada.

In March and April 2003, as part of the commission’s research program, two separate survey studies were conducted: a national poll conducted by POLLARA Inc., which telephone surveyed 1275 adult Canadians outside of Newfoundland and Labrador and a provincial poll conducted by Ryan Research and Communications, which telephone surveyed 1000 adults residing in Newfoundland and Labrador.⁷⁴ The purpose of POLLARA’s national poll, “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Place in Canada,” was to “explore attitudes and perceptions among Canadians living outside of Newfoundland and Labrador” in regards to issues such as the image of the province as a part of Canada; perceptions of the province’s contributions to Canada (and of Canada’s

⁷³ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 54.

⁷⁴ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 197.

contributions to the province); federalism; “representation in the federation”; and the socio-economic status of “rural and urban communities.”⁷⁵ Within the poll’s resulting report two key themes emerged. Firstly, that while Newfoundland and Labrador is “well-known” it is not “known-well” across the country, especially in the most Western provinces of British Columbia and Alberta – though it was demonstrated that Quebec had the “lowest level of familiarity and opinion” of Newfoundland and Labrador. Secondly, despite this, there existed a “strong foundation of respect for the province and empathy for its place within Canada,” with the polling results revealing “a positive attitude towards Newfoundland and Labrador as Canadians feel that it is a vital part of the country, and that the federal government does not give it the respect it deserves or the financial support to which it is entitled.”⁷⁶

Key findings from the polling results saw 72% of respondents agreeing that “smaller provinces and territories are often ignored by the federal government in the interest of larger provinces.” Regarding Canadians perceptions of Newfoundland and Labrador, in particular, only 34% believed that the federal government treated the province “respectfully” – compared to 67% feeling that Ottawa treated their own province with respect. A majority of respondents in Central (Quebec 69%; Ontario 65%) and Western (Alberta 60%; British Columbia 51%) provinces felt their provinces contributed more than

⁷⁵ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and POLLARA Inc., “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Place in Canada,” *Our Place in Canada: Main Report*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada, 2003), 471.

⁷⁶ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and POLLARA Inc., “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Place in Canada,” 473.

Newfoundland and Labrador, while the Prairie and Atlantic Provinces held a “more modest assessment of their province’s contribution.” Further still, 34% of Canadians polled were not able to “identify in their own words Newfoundland and Labrador’s greatest contribution to Canada,” while 26% cited aspects pertaining only to the fisheries as the province’s greatest contribution.⁷⁷

A total of 72% of respondents viewed Newfoundland and Labrador as “culturally distinct from English Canada,” including 21% who “strongly” felt this way. For the Canadians surveyed, the most common “top-of-mind” impressions of Newfoundland and Labrador ranged from the poor state of the fisheries (26%); that they are “nice people” (16%); the “poverty” associated with the island (14%); while 17% were tellingly “unable to think of a response.” This led into the issue of stereotypes associated with the province, with the most commonly cited being that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were “uneducated/stupid/unskilled/unsophisticated” (21%); that everyone were fishers (9%); that the people of the province were predominantly “unemployed/poor/lazy/a burden to Canada” (6%); but also that the people were “nice/warm/kind” (5%). The commonly known stereotypes that respondents tended to believe held “at least some truth” were that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians “tend to be friendly/nice/warm/kind” (94%); that “they are all fishers” (75%); and that “they have accents” (67%). Regarding the inclusion of the province within the country, a total of 88% of those surveyed felt that “Canada is *better* with Newfoundland and Labrador,” only 2% stated that the

⁷⁷ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and POLLARA Inc., “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Place in Canada,” 474-476.

country was “*worse* for the inclusion” of the province and the remaining 10% declined to take a position on the matter.⁷⁸

As mentioned, the province-wide poll conducted by Ryan Research and Communications surveyed 1000 adults living in Newfoundland and Labrador, with 92% of the respondents having been born in the province. The purpose of this poll was to “investigate satisfaction with the province’s place in Canada [and] with the province’s relationship with the federal government,” as well as to gather feedback on the “strengths and weaknesses of the province that should be focused on or addressed in order to achieve prosperity and self-reliance in the future.”⁷⁹

An interesting takeaway from the poll was that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians noted a “distinction between ‘Canada’ and the ‘Federal Government’,” which saw respondents having more “positive associations” toward Canada and more “negative associations” toward the federal government. They reportedly valued the Canadian contribution of social assistance programs and universal health care, as well as placing considerable value on “being part of a democratic society.” Nevertheless, 18% of respondents felt that confederation had not been “a good thing” for Newfoundland and Labrador, and 12% felt that the province “should leave Canada.”⁸⁰

⁷⁸ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and POLLARA Inc., “Newfoundland and Labrador’s Place in Canada,” 476.

⁷⁹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, “Provincial Opinion Study,” *Our Place in Canada: Main Report*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada, 2003), 389 and 461.

⁸⁰ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, “Provincial Opinion Study,” 389, 393, and 438-439.

Concerning the level of satisfaction with the province's place in Canada, a third of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were dissatisfied with their place in Canada, predominately due to their perception of how the federal government treats the province. Approximately 84% believed that the province is "often ignored" by the federal government and that Ottawa is not doing enough to support the development of the province, leaving 52% to feel dependent on Ottawa and 42% feeling the federal government neglected to treat the province with respect.⁸¹ The perception Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have of how the Canadian government treats them, as ignored and without an appropriate level of respect, negatively affect their self-perception as a part of Canada. This in turn mirrors their perceptions of how Canadians view Newfoundland and Labrador, with 88% of those who participated "perceived that other Canadians have stereotypes about Newfoundlanders and Labradorians." The stereotypes that were most frequently mentioned by provincial respondents were "lazy/don't work/don't want to work" (46%) and "stupid" (45%). There were also repeated mentions of "not educated," "ignorant," and "friendly."⁸²

The perception of respect for the province, in general, was a priority for the commission and subsequently the province-wide poll but as was the notion of respect for Labrador itself and the Indigenous peoples in the province. Only 39% of respondents felt that Indigenous peoples within the province were "treated with

⁸¹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, "Provincial Opinion Study," 390-393.

⁸² Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, "Provincial Opinion Study," 392-393 and 430.

dignity and respect” by the province.⁸³ Regarding Labrador’s treatment by the provincial government, only 27% of respondents felt that it was “treated fairly.” Of those who responded that Labrador was not treated fairly, 56% lived in Labrador.⁸⁴ These results reflect the sentiment that Labrador often feels the same way toward Newfoundland that Newfoundland feels toward Ottawa.

The commissioners found that on the island of Newfoundland a clear majority of “young students proudly considered themselves Newfoundlanders first and Canadians second” and in Labrador, the majority “considered themselves Labradorians first, Newfoundlanders second, and Canadians third.” Despite the preference for local identification, the commissioners noted that “there was great affection expressed for Canada and great pride about being Canadian.” Yet, this was in contrast to the “consistent feeling that there [was] a lack of respect, on the part of the federal government and other Canadians, for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador and for the contributions they have made to Canada.” As remorsefully expressed by a participant who reportedly said “there is a sense [Newfoundlanders and Labradorians] gave up [their] nationhood only to become just another part of Atlantic Canada.”⁸⁵

The main takeaway from the commission was that the province had been “struggling through the severe impact” of such compounding issues as the “unbearable loss of its fishery resource and the unfolding demise of its rural

⁸³ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, “Provincial Opinion Study,” 394 and 452-453.

⁸⁴ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada and Ryan Research and Communications, “Provincial Opinion Study,” 394-395 and 455-456.

⁸⁵ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 6, 9-10.

fishing society”; persistently high rates unemployment and out-migration combined with and the “lowest birth rate in the country”; a “weakened” economy and “inability to utilize its own oil revenues for its own economic prosperity”; and the “failure of the federal government to treat the province as an equal partner in Confederation.”⁸⁶ Due to these compounding factors, those in the province often felt “ignored, misunderstood and unappreciated” by the federal government and other Canadians. Newfoundlanders and Labradorians were also significantly concerned about the future of the province, believing that “prosperity and self-reliance [was] not achievable” for them within Canada. Though the commissioners were quick to point out that this concern “should not be mistaken for regret or loss of hope,” and that a majority of those within the province believe the province’s circumstances and its “relationship with Canada” could change for the better.⁸⁷

The commission believed that this change could occur by ensuring that “other Canadians understand Newfoundland and Labrador, its challenges and opportunities, and the important contribution it makes to Canada.” Essentially, the commission saw that an “improved image” could be a clear “measure of the pathway to renewal’s success,” and that the “province’s image will improve as its place in Canada improves.” To do this, Canadians would need to “hear and understand [the province’s] story,” and to achieve this, the commissions saw that those in the province needed to know their own story – by “celebrating [their] culture” and “working to educate and inform Canadians” about Newfoundland

⁸⁶ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *What We Heard*, 16.

⁸⁷ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 2.

and Labrador, which was understood to be “vitally important” for the eradication of the stereotypes associated with the province and its people.⁸⁸ Yet, regarding the Indigenous peoples of the province, the commissioners stated that they “must get the respect that can only come from the knowledge of belonging, recognition and legitimacy.” However, the blame is squarely put on the federal government by explaining that “for too much of this province’s time in Canada, the federal government has avoided its constitutional and fiduciary responsibilities” to the Indigenous peoples of the province” and recommending that it “must place greater emphasis on bringing clarity to the rights and entitlements” of the Indigenous peoples within the province.⁸⁹

The final report indicated that the province wanted to move forward in confederation, with “a partnership of mutual benefit” and without cause for separating from Canada, but would no longer accept the status quo. The commission saw the province as wanting to work together with the federal government, but with a “new way of thinking and relating” to each other.⁹⁰ The way forward for the renewal of the relationship between Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada was to be “built on the expectation that new accommodations can be reached based on fairness, equity, dignity and respect.” It was itemized that these “accommodations are not only between the two governments but involve Newfoundlanders and Labradorians pulling together to put an end to Labrador alienation; to meet the challenges of rural sustainability; to

⁸⁸ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 56.

⁸⁹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 55.

⁹⁰ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 142-144.

make social inclusion a way of life; to give young men and women the freedom to remain in or come back to the province; and to accept responsibility for the decisions necessary to put the province's fiscal house in order.”⁹¹ Ultimately, the commission found that while Newfoundland and Labrador felt a level of disconnect and disrespect from the rest of Canada and the federal government, these issues could be overcome if it was so desired by those within the province – it would be up to them to improve their position within the country in which they felt set apart from.

Conclusion

Heading into the twenty-first century the relationship between Newfoundland and Canada was at a crossroads. The province remained steadfast in its provincial allegiance, while official Canadian identity continued to be precariously juxtaposed to regional identities. The period saw several key events take place in the province, most notably in 2001, Term 1 of the Terms of Union between Newfoundland and Canada was amended to change the provincial name to Newfoundland and Labrador signifying a step forward for the province demonstrating unity between the island and mainland portions of the province, as well as prompting Ottawa to recognize this as well with the amendment.⁹² The new century brought with it a reassessment on the part of Newfoundlanders and the provincial politicians, who were uncertain of the province's place in Canada and how the two should move forward – together.

⁹¹ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 151.

⁹² Baker, “History of Newfoundland and Labrador: Summary of Chronology of Events,” 25.

According to a 2003 provincial poll, 72% of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians “considered themselves to be a ‘Newfoundlander or Labradorian’ first,” while only 24% “considered themselves to be a Canadian first.” Of those who “considered themselves a Canadian first,” 56% were born outside of the province.⁹³ This is not a particularly surprising result, as the Spicer Commission demonstrated that regions were understood to be fundamentally important in regards to Canadian identity and the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada saw Newfoundlanders and Labradorians feeling set apart from and as ‘less than’ the rest of Canada. The results from a 2003 national poll indicated a “lack of familiarity with the province” across Canada, yet 89% of respondents agreed that “Newfoundland and Labrador is as vital to Canada as their own province/territory.”⁹⁴ While Canadians may not have known the province and its people well, overall they felt it was an equal member of the country.

In a paper conducted for the Royal Commission, G.C. Blackmore explained that Newfoundlanders and Labradorians developed their “sense of place” in part to the “natural setting,” such as the physical space and length of time spent there, as well as a “psychological/spiritual/social belonging,” but also due to “ancestral history.” This ultimately created an identity based in “strength and resilience,” as well as “defiance, persistence, pride, self-reliance, tolerance, loyalty, adaptability, creativity, distinctiveness, [and] passivity.” In its post-

⁹³ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 390 and 397.

⁹⁴ Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, *Main Report*, 473 and 527.

confederation era, there was a “loss of self-confidence,” due to its financial dependence on the federal government and a feeling of “powerlessness” concerning the lack of control over natural resource ownership and development.⁹⁵ There was a notable sense of cultural loss in Newfoundland and Labrador, which led to a “culture of blame” in the province. Blackmore felt that what was needed was a renewal of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians “sense of place,” suggesting that this could be achieved by the provincial government renewing “its commitment to the promulgation of the heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador,” as well as national history including “the history of Newfoundland and Labrador into the pre-history of the Canadian State.”⁹⁶ On the other hand, Jerry Bannister, in his paper to the commission, contended, “nationalism cannot be ignored as a cultural and political force in Newfoundland and Labrador.” Newfoundland nationalism, like in “other post-colonial societies [...] carries with it the noble rhetoric of liberation but also the parochial seeds of tribalism and the danger of racism.”⁹⁷ Given the island portion of the province in particular having a relatively homogeneous population, concern for a heightened level of such cultural and political nationalism was warranted.

On 2 July 2003, a news conference took place concerning the commission’s report. Elizabeth Davis, one of the commissioners, remarked “the

⁹⁵ G.C. Blackmore, “Sense of Place: Loss and the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit,” in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 347-354.

⁹⁶ Blackmore, “Sense of Place: Loss and the Newfoundland and Labrador Spirit,” 357-367.

⁹⁷ Jerry Bannister, “The Politics of Cultural Memory: Themes in the History of Newfoundland and Labrador in Canada, 1972-2003,” in *Collected Research Papers of the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada*, (St. John’s: Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada, 2003), 121 and 151.

whole Canadian federation needs to change [...] Never, in recent memory, has there been such an opportunity for this country to renew itself to better respond to the hopes and dreams of Canadians.” The report was a balance of these more aspirational intentions with more tangible takeaways, such as Newfoundlanders wanting the federal government to improve the fisheries and ensure that the province received “more benefits from the offshore oil and gas industry.” In response to the commission’s report, Premier Roger Grimes told reporters that Newfoundland’s contentious interactions with Ottawa, “almost every single time,” were in response to “a dismissive action by the government of Canada [...]. So really, it’s a call to the government of Canada to say, ‘Take Newfoundland and Labrador and its issues more seriously, treat us as partners and let’s work through issues together.’”⁹⁸

In the aftermath of the Meech Lake Accord, Canada was again questioning its identity but continued to find some semblance of solace in its diversity. After more than 50 years as part of Canada, Newfoundlanders still had a strong sense of their identity and Canadians saw Newfoundland’s identity as well, though often replete with stereotypes due to a lack of knowledge of the province. The combined lack of knowledge on the part of most Canadians and the federal government’s apparent lack of respect for the province, Newfoundland and Labrador continued to feel ostracised within Canada. This continued feeling of ostracisation aided the province in its persistent pursuit of cultivating and promoting a distinct regional identity into the 21st century.

⁹⁸ Richer, “Newfoundland endorses staying in Canada.”

Conclusion: Re-engaging with Canada's 'Limited Identities'

In January 1990, Carl Mollins of *Maclean's* magazine wrote, "disunity may be a permanent part of a definition of Canada -- past, present and in the future." While acknowledging that Canada has perennially "preoccupied with trying to define itself," Mollins discussed the outcome of a *Maclean's* annual poll that found significant "and even bitter divisions among Canadians, not only over their definitions of Canada and what it should be, but also between language groups and regions." Reading this, combined with the additional information that the majority of those in Newfoundland and Quebec held a much stronger attachment to their province than to Canada led me to more deeply consider the issue of regional identification within Canada and the problems this creates for Canadian identity and unity.¹

Canada's difficulties with attaining a unified national identity bring to mind Ian McKay's notion that Canada is an ongoing project.² Rather than a finished product awaiting discovery, Canada is an ever-evolving entity – which includes its identity, as well as how to understand that identity. In the older historical writing of Canada, Canada's regions were understood as impediments in the colony-to-nation process, upholding the "romantic quest for the attainment of a unified nation-state with a genuinely national culture." In this line of thought, confederation and national policies of railroads and tariffs were depicted as Canada's "triumph over regionalism," with the country moving toward its "proper

¹ Carl Mollins, "An Uncertain Nation," *Maclean's* vol. 101, no.1 (January 1990), 12-13.

² Ian McKay, "The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History," *Canadian Historical Review* vol. 81, no.4 (2000).

destiny.”³ However, this is not the history of the Canada that exists; such a history requires Canada's regions to be understood as integral to the state rather than impediments to its formation.

When I began this project, I wanted to better understand why the federal government's repeated attempts to achieve a cohesive identity for Canada had failed. Conversely, I wanted to know how Newfoundlanders retained a sense of identity that was distinct from the rest of Canada while becoming Canadian. Previous research had provided the understanding that Canadian identity had been repeatedly redefined throughout its history, but how would better understanding the Newfoundland-Canada relationship in this regard change these established understandings of both Newfoundland and Canada in the post-1949 period? It first appeared that there was a conceptual problem with Canadian national history. The dominant central Canadian perspective portrayed a grand narrative of Canadian history that is not reflective of the history of the Canadian state. As such, employing a perspective outside of the typical central Canadian variant was a way forward. Moving the region from topic to framework established a new way of thinking about Canada's national history; it reconceptualized the problems of national identity and unity.

The regional perspective was not the only conceptual aspect that needed reorienting. When working with a Newfoundland perspective, very quickly the timeline of Canadian history came to be a problem. The term “post-confederation” in Canadian history is understood as post-1867. Yet, when

³ William Westfall, “On the Concept of Region in Canadian History and Literature,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol.15, no. 2 (Summer 1980), 4.

considering Newfoundland this timeline does not fit and terminology becomes cumbersome. Confederation may have begun in 1867 but it certainly did not end at that time; Newfoundland joined as the last province in 1949 and when considering the territories, Nunavut did not become an official Canadian territory until 1999. So, the confederation period continued until 1949 (if only considering the provinces) and as such, a reorientation of the timeline of Canadian history that was hinged on a post-1949 period became the timeframe considered in this project. With a different way to understand the country, both in terms of temporal and regional perspective, Canada became a reframed entity.

In addition to conceptual issues with understanding the problems of forming a cohesive national identity, there was an evidence problem. A significant problem with the usual central Canada perspective when addressing national identity formation is that the evidence used is central Canada and federal government focused. As such, while addressing national, federal government documents from a Newfoundland perspective, material focused on Newfoundland was used. Such evidence, both national and Newfoundland-based, was systematically examined, closely read and analyzed, to put forth an understanding of the difficulties of attaining a cohesive and uniting Canadian identity—an understanding that saw regionalism as the answer to the quandary, rather than the reason for it.

When considering the federal government's efforts to understand and prescribe a suitable Canadian identity, the Massey Commission, the B&B Commission, the Task Force on Canadian Unity, and the Spicer Commission, all

point to a similar issue with regionalism being a problem rather than a solution. Ultimately, it was the federal government's framing of Canada's problems with identity and unity that did not resonate with all Canadians. The problems were framed from a central Canadian (and federal government) perspective, which caused the continuation of the problems concerning Canadian identity and unity. Utilizing a perspective that only speaks to and for a particular region of Canada cannot and does not speak for all of Canada. As such, this calls for more studies from a variety of regional perspectives in Canada, using a Northern lens, a Pacific Coast lens, a Prairies lens, and so on, to examine national issues from perspectives outside of central Canada and the federal government.

Concerning the understanding of Newfoundland's identity during its post-confederation period, it was evident that by and large the historiography of the Newfoundland-Canada relationship was too separated in terms of culture and politics. My research demonstrates that the culture and politics of Newfoundland are considerably tied, often working in tandem with one another. From the start, Newfoundland sought to protect itself within its political union with Canada by addressing cultural matters within their Terms of Union. The interweaving of culture and politics continued throughout its post-confederation period, witnessing the cultural revival and the provincial government both playing a role in the process of Newfoundland's continued cultural differentiation that further entrenched the stronghold of the provincial identity over a Canadian identity for those in the province. This is evidenced in the province's 2003 Royal Commission, which served as a purpose-driven reflection that indicated even after

decades of being part of Canada, Newfoundland (and Labrador) is set apart from the rest of Canada, for better or for worse.

Coming to an understanding of Newfoundland's othering, both self-othering and imposed by other Canadians, has been a considerable takeaway from this research. As the province pursued its distinctiveness within Canada, it has cleverly held on to its ostracisation as a reason to cultivate and promote its regional identity. Engaging with this perceptive of Newfoundland being othered and choosing to other itself from the rest of Canada has led to a deeper understanding of how the province retained a separate sense of self while becoming a part of Canada. This separation and layering of identity do not mean that unity is improbable for Canada, just that understanding and acceptance of regional difference is required for a proper understanding of Canada, Canadian identity, and unity.

Undertaking this research led to considerable reflection on my part, as I hold a dual Newfoundland-Canadian identity. Recognizing that I identify this way is not new, I have always identified as both a Newfoundlander and a Canadian. While living in Newfoundland, identifying in such a way rarely demanded any consideration. However, upon relocating to Ontario identifying as a Newfoundlander has occupied my thoughts more than I would care to admit. This preoccupation with my Newfoundlander identity has only been partially because of this project, it more-so stems from being confronted with assumptions from other Canadians of who Newfoundlanders are and how I should best handle such situations.

When outside of Newfoundland I am often seen, labelled, and used as “the” Newfoundlander; I suddenly and undesirably become the spokesperson of a group that I am also accused of not emulating enough. Over the years, I have often grown tired of being “the” Newfoundlander (or even “a” Newfoundlander, when it is the only word used to describe me) and long to be back on the island where I am no longer seen as a Newfoundlander because everyone is one (aside from the Come From Aways of course). It is an onerous task to be (repeatedly) expected to represent a population as if it is a faceless, homogenous mass without complexity or nuance. This is especially true when I question “what” or “who” I am. While I never question being a Newfoundlander it often becomes a question of whether or not I’m “Newfie” enough to those from the ‘Rest of Canada’, and possibly even to those back home.

Living in Newfoundland it would be a rare exception to be told “you don’t sound like a Newfie” or “you don’t look like you’re from Newfoundland.” In Ontario (and Quebec and British Columbia), these are things I have heard more than a handful of times. What is directly said and indirectly meant by these questioning phrases is stereotyping and bordering on insulting, yet repeatedly caused a reaction that led to questioning my own identity. If others do not recognize me as a Newfoundlander, am I really a Newfoundlander? Am I enough of a Newfoundlander to claim the identity? When I visit my family in Newfoundland (what I feel is and call my home) and line-catch cod out on the Atlantic with my step-dad, or make toutons with my mom, or ‘go for a burn’

down to Brigus with my sister, would others see me as living my cultural identity or merely being performative?⁴

The insinuations I have often encountered in parts of Canada outside of Newfoundland, that to be a Newfoundlander is to look or sound a certain way, seems to be a standing commentary on the long-held and continuing differentiation between Newfoundlanders and other Canadians – both imposed on Newfoundlanders by other Canadians and hinged on as a means of self-othering by Newfoundlanders themselves. Nevertheless, this research and my years spent living in Canada outside of Newfoundland have strengthened my attachment to my home province and my Newfoundlander identity, particularly re-embracing the Newfoundland vernacular and cadence that schooling and assimilationist tendencies had attempted to rid me from since my earliest years. This project has forced me to re-engage with my own limited and layered identities, primarily as a Newfoundlander and as a Canadian, reconciling that to be a Newfoundlander is to be a Canadian and that this is not a problematic notion.

During the autumn of 2002, Newfoundland and Labrador's Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening Our Place in Canada held a public consultation meeting in Nain, Labrador. A statement from Labrador Inuit President William Barbour addressed the necessity of Canada (the federal government, as well as all Canadians) to respect minority nations and cultural groups that are part of the larger state, for the continuation of Canada. He said: "The essence of building a common future together requires dignity and respect.

⁴ Toutons are a traditional Newfoundland dish of fried bread dough. The expression "go for a burn" means to go for a leisurely, purposeless drive.

If Canada cannot treat Québec, Newfoundland and its Aboriginal peoples with dignity and respect, Canada cannot hold together as a nation.”⁵ In other words, if the federal government could not work with the various components of the Canadian state, from First Nations and Indigenous peoples to the Québécois, to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians, the future of the country would be unstable at best. This prediction was echoed in the outcome of the 2019 federal election that revealed vast cleavages in the national fabric as leaders in Alberta (and to a lesser extent Saskatchewan) re-ignited Western Separatist inclinations.⁶

As Canadian philosopher James Tully observed, there are “diverse and overlapping ways of participating in and identifying with Canada, from forms of nationhood in the cases of Quebec and the First Nations (including Métis, Indians and Inuit) to acting in accord with one’s first culture in public in the case of multicultural citizens.”⁷ Newfoundland’s relationship to Canada from 1949 to 1991 illustrates that there is no agreed-upon singular, national culture or narrative. For this reason, the various minorities, cultures, and regions, which combine to create what we know as Canada, should not be seen as detracting from national unity. Tully explained that the problems surrounding identity and unity in Canadian society over the course of its history suggest that the “recognition and affirmation of the culturally diverse identities of modern citizens does not lead to

⁵ An excerpt from William Barbour, Labrador Inuit President, during the public consultations for the Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada held in Nain during the fall of 2002. Royal Commission on Renewing and Strengthening our Place in Canada, *Our Place in Canada: Main Report*, (St. John’s: The Royal Commission, 2003), 50.

⁶ Shannon Conway, “An Anniversary, an Election, and Resurgent Regionalism: The Canadian Nation-State in 2019,” *Active History*, 18 November 2019.

⁷ James Tully, “The Crisis of Identification: The Case of Canada,” *Political Studies* vol. 47 (1994), 78. Also see Charles Taylor, “Shared and Divergent Values,” in G. Laforest, ed., *Reconciling the Solitudes* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1993), 155-186.

disunity and disintegration of modern national states.” He instead believed the opposite to be the case, with the “movement towards disunity and separation in Canada [being] caused by the failure mutually to recognize and accommodate the aspirations of Quebec and the First Nations along with the demands of the other cultural groups.”⁸ The history of Newfoundland in Canada suggests that re-engaging and updating the concept of ‘limited identities’ is the best way forward for understanding Canadian identity(ies) and ensuring national unity.

Re-invigorating the Importance of ‘Limited Identities’

As documented in the preceding chapters, the federal government began a lengthy period of introspection concerning Canada's national identity and unity beginning with the Massey Commission in 1949. This self-interrogation of identity hit a peak during the 1960s, when the federal government attempted to mould Canada's national identity as an expression of biculturalism and bilingualism. At the same time, Newfoundland as a new province began its own introspection concerning identity formation, with the cultural revival in full bloom in the mid-1960s. It was in this context that Ramsay Cook and J.M.S. Careless' put forth the concept of ‘limited identities’ in Canadian historical writing, arguing in the late 1960s that Canadian identity was comprised a many smaller, more defined identities and that was what united Canadians.⁹

⁸ Tully, 95.

⁹ Ramsay Cook, “Canadian Centennial Cerebrations,” *International Journal* vol. 23, no. 4 (1967) and J. M. S Careless, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 50, no. 1 (1969).

More recently, historian Bryan Palmer has argued that Canada lost a national identity in the 1960s and then failed to put a new one in its place.¹⁰ The old, British-based identity no longer fit what was required for Canada's national identity as the emerging social and political movements during the 1960s challenged the outmoded British-based state model. Palmer further claimed that while the fragmenting of society led to an inability to realize a new national identity, the apparent lack of unity and societal cohesiveness was itself what caused the uncertainty of Canada's identity.¹¹ Palmer goes on to argue that increased American influence, both economically and culturally, as well as the role of the media, labour activism, youth protest, anti-Americanism, the Quiet Revolution, and First Nations activism, all led to the difficulty in forming a national identity in the 1960s.

As the evidence about Newfoundland and Canada reveals, however, there is a more compelling case to be made. The 1960s did not mark the end of Canadian identity; rather the era marked the transformation, or a new understanding, of Canada's identity. When Palmer claimed the 1960s signalled a "failure to secure a truly different national identity," what is arguably meant here is the failure in forming a homogenous, united identity – not that the previous Brito-Canadian identity was all that homogenous, or a uniting force in Canadian society.¹² Palmer's perspective of the 'irony' of the period, with the 1960s being a decade when the federal government was consumed with forming a united

¹⁰ Bryan Palmer, *Canada's 1960s: The Ironies of Identity in a Rebellious Era*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 5.

¹¹ Palmer, 19-21, and 429-430.

¹² Palmer, 24.

national identity but ultimately failing to produce such an identity, failed to notice what did emerge. The notion of 'limited identities' replaced the previous, largely homogenous, national identity with an understanding of a multitudinous Canadian identity. While no longer having the appearance of homogeneity, this understanding of Canadian identity at least had the potential to be felt nation-wide and represent the nation as a whole. Instead, the federal government worked to put into place an identity of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework.

It should be noted that the most recently constructed Canadian national identity is best described as 'official multiculturalism'. The concept of official multiculturalism is multiculturalism in its 'elite' form, meaning the version entrenched in the state and codified in law, as opposed to the 'popular' form of simple cultural pluralism. Consequentially it is from above, by the central government rather than its citizenry, that multicultural practises are promoted and subsequently permeated throughout society. Official multiculturalism is not cultural pluralism; rather it is a means by which a cultural hierarchy can flourish and the marginalization of less dominant cultures can in effect be mandated.¹³ The marginalization occurs primarily with multiculturalism being placed within a bilingual framework, which predicates that English and French remain at the pinnacle of Canadian society, thereby marginalizing those neither English nor French by placing them lower in the linguistic and cultural hierarchy of the state. However, the popular, or vernacular, understanding of multiculturalism is cultural pluralism – the valuing of unity in diversity is a prime example of this popular

¹³ Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender*, (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000), 5-6.

understanding. As such, multiculturalism has had a lasting effect in Canadian society and has become a “cornerstone of Canadian identity.”¹⁴

Importantly, the concept of ‘limited identities’ differs from multiculturalism. Not only does the concept refer to a wider array of identifying spheres than the cultural but it also does not necessitate a hierarchy of culture or a specified national identity, where multiculturalism is used in this way. If the notion of a singular expression of Canadian national identity is left behind (whether Brito-Canadian, bilingual-bicultural, or multicultural within a bilingual framework), the country could move forward in terms of how Canadians identify and understand one another.

As illustrated by Newfoundland's post-confederation experience, the concept of ‘limited identities’ is manifestly important in the understanding of the Canadian struggle for identity. This struggle represents a disembarking from the goal of a singular identity for Canada and instead allows for the conception of a more encompassing and true form identity. In 1967, Ramsay Cook insisted that Canadians “should continue to try to understand [themselves],” further declaring that “an unexamined nation is not worth living in.” Though he was careful to note that in terms of trying to understand Canadians, the “frame of reference” was

¹⁴ May Chazan, Lisa Helps, Anna Stanley, and Sonali Thakkar, eds., *Home and Native Land: Unsettling Multiculturalism in Canada*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2011), 6. Julia Lalande suggests that the discussion surrounding bilingualism and biculturalism in the 1960s is the origin of the modern understanding of multiculturalism as the embodiment of cultural pluralism. This increased discussion on part of the other ethnic groups in Canada regarding cultural and linguistic matters highlighted the willingness and ability of those in the third element of Canadian society, and accordingly put emphasis on their cultural and linguistic wants in Canadian society. See Julia Lalande, “The Roots of Multiculturalism – Ukrainian-Canadian Involvement in the Multicultural Discussion of the 1960s as an Example of the Position of the ‘Third Force’,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* vol. 38, no. 1 (2006), 47.

wrong. Cook saw that instead of “constantly deploring [Canada’s] lack of identity, [Canadians] should attempt to understand and explain the regional, ethnic and class identities,” and that it is within these more limited identities “Canadianism is found, and that except for [...] over-heated nationalist intellectuals, Canadians find this situation quite satisfactory.”¹⁵ J.M.S. Careless’s 1969 article, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” explored Cook’s initial concept of ‘limited identities’. Continuing the perennial problem of Canada’s lack of national unity or identity, Careless asserted that this problem is thoroughly evident in the historiography, with the ‘wishful thinking’ of a cohesive national identity being present in many works of Canadian history.¹⁶ According to Careless, the “nation building approach to Canadian history” only expressed a Canada that has yet to be, not the one that is; which helps explain the mentality of the 1960s as a “natural consequence” of this understanding.

Careless insisted that “Canadians interpret their nation-state” through their more limited identities of region, culture, and class. With this, he made clear that more examination of the roles of these ‘limited identities’ in the country as a whole was needed, especially regionalism where it has remained “prominent and distinctive in Canadian history” and has only seen to become further developed in Canadian society. Careless furthered that the more “differentiated provincial or regional societies” were more pronounced than any larger uniting ‘scheme’ in Canadian society. With this, he believed that region-building rather than nation-building was the “true theme” of Canada’s twentieth century, yet for Canada “the

¹⁵ Cook, “Canadian Centennial Celebrations”, 633.

¹⁶ Careless, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” 1.

whole may indeed be greater than the sum of its parts, producing through its internal relationships some sort of common Canadianism.”¹⁷

The history of Newfoundland reminds us that Canada has always been a nation with difficulties in identity formation and unity, in large part due to the sway of regional identities. English Canadian historiography prior to the 1960s had striven to portray a national historical narrative of a nation-building process where regionalism served only as a detractor from its natural destiny of a singular, united nation. However, much of that historical writing was predominately produced in central Canada. For generations of historians, the central Canada, largely Ontarian, identity has been used for and assumed as the Canadian identity. As such, the “Canadian” perspective is largely the Ontario perspective, which is really just a regional perspective – the central Canadian region. As historian Phillip Buckner declares, the historians who portrayed this regional, Ontario, identity as the Canadian identity, have really just been “historians in or of Ontario [...] unwilling to accept [...] that they are just as much regionalists as those working on the history of Atlantic Canada.”¹⁸

By the 1980s, the historiographical debate of ‘limited identities’ in Canadian historical writing had begun to wind down, with even Cook and Careless concluding that “as a tool of analysis, ‘regionalism’ is a concept whose time has gone.”¹⁹ However, up until that point in time the region was not properly

¹⁷ Careless, “‘Limited Identities’ in Canada,” 3, 6, and 9.

¹⁸ Doug Owsram, “Intellectual History in the Land of Limited Identities,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* vol.24, no.3 (Fall 1989), 115 and 122; Phillip A. Buckner, “‘Limited Identities Revisited: Regionalism and Nationalism in Canadian History,” *Acadiensis* vol.30, no. 1 (Autumn 2000), 11.

¹⁹ Ramsay Cook, “Regionalism Unmasked,” *Acadiensis* vol.13, no.1 (Autumn 1983), 141.

being used as an analytical tool, it was used far more as a topic. As evident in the case of Newfoundland, the utility of the region as a perspective of the national experience was and remains underutilized in Canadian historical writing.

Consequently, there is a need to re-engage with the concept of 'limited identities' as a whole, and in the case of this work, the region specifically.

While Newfoundlanders have a more defined and recognizable identity than the elusive Canadian identity, this need not be problematic for the state. A region can have a more limited (defined) identity, while the larger state is comprised of the entirety of those regional (among other) identities. Such an equation means that the wider national identity contains many more factors but that does not need to diminish its cohesiveness. Canada and its identity can be a sum that is greater than its parts.²⁰

Re-engaging with the concept of 'limited identities' as a means to better understand Canadian identity pushes for needed change in the historical narrative. This work utilizes the limited identity of the region to explore how this change can work. The research undertaken and the narrative it has created adds to and revises the Canadian national historical narrative by using a (different) regional perspective to examine a national issue. The regional perspective used was from Newfoundland, but the examination of nation-wide issues of identity and unity can be re-examined via other regions to more fully flesh out the understanding of Canadian national identity, unity, and regionalism within the country. Using a

²⁰ Careless, "'Limited Identities' in Canada," 9.

Newfoundland perspective to counter the central Canadian perspective challenged the grand narrative of Canadian history, illuminating its inaccuracies regarding regionalism as problematic for national identity and unity. In this way, Canada can become a reframed entity, when reconsidering the timeline of Canadian history by exploring the post-1949 as the post-confederation period, as well as moving region from topic to analytical framework in national historical inquiries. Regarding the Newfoundland region, in particular, this work brings together the cultural and political spheres of post-confederation Newfoundland history, as well as interjecting the province into the historiography of Canada's national identity and unity problems. Learning that Newfoundland's dual relationship with othering, both self-imposed and projected onto, aides in the development and continuation of its regional identity has permitted an understanding that regional identities are not created nor exist in a vacuum. Canada pushes Newfoundland's identity on to it, as much as the province projects it outward, adding to the spectrum of limited identities that comprise Canada's overarching identity.

When Cook and Careless called for abandoning their concept of 'limited identities' as a way of understanding Canada and Canadian identity it was a misstep since the concept remains centrally important in such inquiries. In 2000, twenty years after calling for abandoning the concept, Cook recognized the need for continued engagement with 'limited identities' as he was "convinced that the building blocks for [...] new Canadian history are studies of 'limited identities'."²¹ As such, there is a need to re-engage with limited identities, particularly with our

²¹ Ramsay Cook, "Identities are not like hats," *The Canadian Historical Review* vol.81, no.2 (June 2000), 263.

understanding and approach to the region and regionalism regarding Canadian identity formation. There is a continued need for studies of 'Canada' and 'Canadians' in relation to Canadians within Canada; studies of Canada *and* Newfoundland, Canada *and* Quebec, Indigenous *and* Canadian, and so on.²² If we re-engage with a 'limited identities' approach in understanding Canadian identity, then the various regional (and otherwise) identities do not detract from any sense of a cohesive Canadian identity and national unity. An official Canadian identity that embraces Canada's many limited identities would work in tandem with them rather than against them, which in turn would increase the likelihood of a strengthened sense of national unity. Thus, we need to re-engage with 'limited identities', not only historiographically and historically but presently, to better understand Canada, Canadians, and Canadian identity in the past, present, and into the future.

²² A new study looking at Canada and Newfoundland women during the Second World War is such an example. Sarah Glassford and Amy Shaw, *Making the Best of It: Women and Girls of Canada and Newfoundland during the Second World War*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2020).

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