



4.47 Millertown with the Mary March River in the background, c. 1901

The most notable sawmill town was Millertown, established in 1900 by Lewis Miller with the immigration of 60 Swedish timber harvesters and their families. Miller built a rail line to link the operation to the main line, over which lumber was transported to Lewisporte for export to international markets.

TOPIC 4.3

Forestry

What impact would the forestry industry have on society in Newfoundland?

What were the risks, if any, to establishing a forestry industry in Newfoundland?

Introduction

The island of Newfoundland contains approximately 3.6 million hectares of productive forest concentrated mainly in the western and central areas. Labrador has approximately 5.2 million hectares of productive forest. With the construction of the railway, some forest resources on the island became more accessible for commercial exploitation. As the interior of the island opened, the establishment of sawmills was the first large-scale **commercial activity**.

Early Forestry

Although intensive harvesting of trees was not undertaken until the nineteenth century, our forests have played a significant role in the lifestyles of indigenous people of Newfoundland and Labrador for millennia. Adaptations to our environment such as toboggans, snowshoes, kayaks, weapons, and shelters depended, to a large extent, on forest products. Many medicines were also derived from trees. For instance, roots, leaves, and bark were sometimes used to make anti-inflammatories and antiseptics.

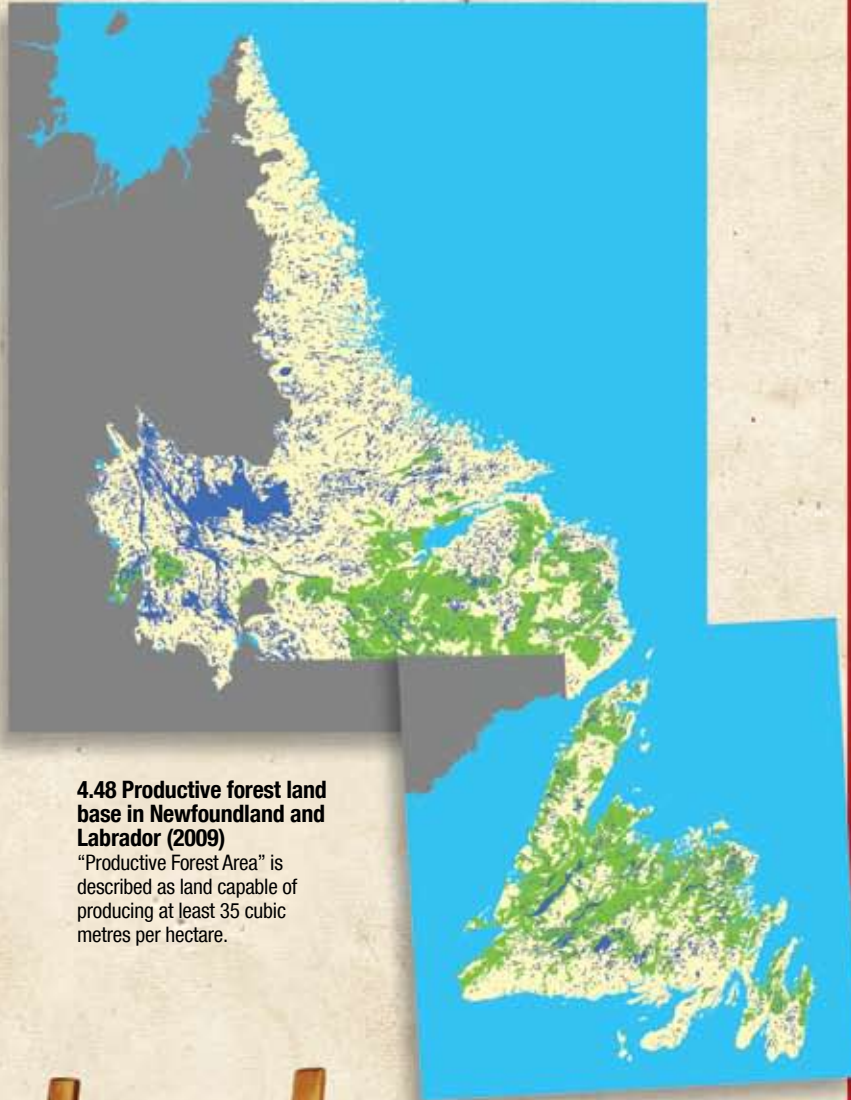
Early European settlers and migratory fishers used forest resources primarily for fuel and for the construction of stages, flakes, wharves, boats, and houses. In addition, dried fir bark was sometimes used to cover fish during the curing process. It became a tradition for fishers to regard the coastal forest zone as their reserve to which they had free access. This tradition became incorporated into law in the *Crown Lands Act* of 1930, which specified a three-mile (4.8-kilometre) coastal limit for the use of fishers.

Changing Economic Patterns

The use of forest resources began to shift from primarily subsistence to commercial activities in the late 1800s. In 1875, the Government of Newfoundland passed a *Crown Lands and Timber Act*, which intended to promote the sawmilling industry in the colony. Most subsequent sawmills were small enterprises that produced lumber for local use. But there were also a few large-scale operations that produced lumber, mostly white pine, for export. The first large-scale sawmill was built at Botwoodville

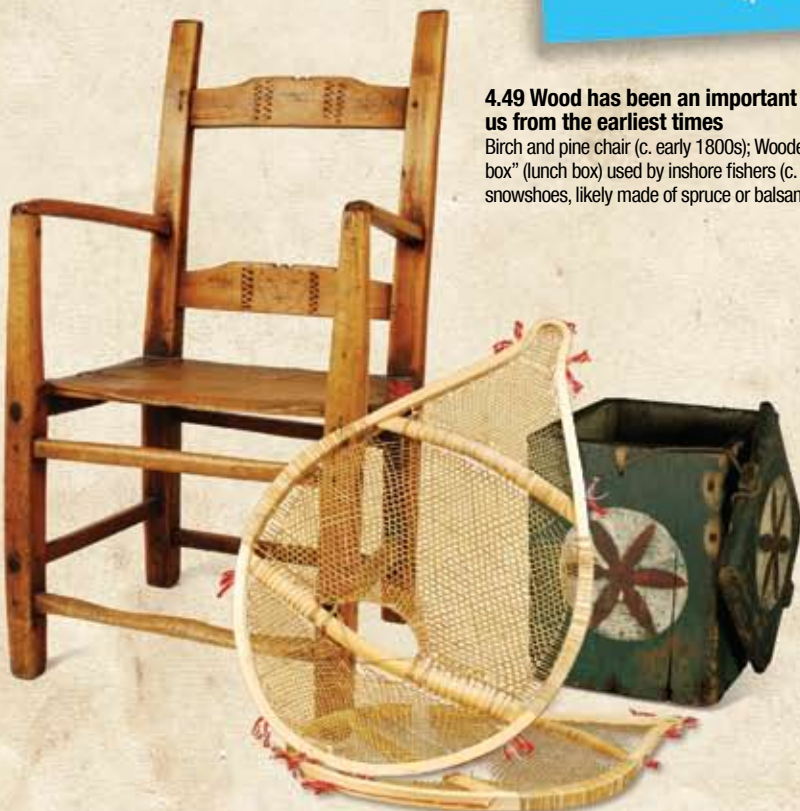
Although true on the island, a commercial forestry in Labrador didn't really take off until the 1970s. The potential of Labrador's forests was recognized in the early 1900s, but development was stalled by the boundary dispute with Quebec, plus the difficulties of getting forest products to market.

(Botwood) in 1890. Other mills followed in the communities of Terra Nova, Soulis Brook, Gambo, Gander Crossing, Glenwood, Millertown, and Badger. By 1901, there were nearly 200 sawmills in operation that employed 2400 workers and produced \$480 000 worth of lumber annually. However, lumber exports declined considerably in the 1920s, due to a depletion of pine resources and competition for timber with paper mills.



4.48 Productive forest land base in Newfoundland and Labrador (2009)

"Productive Forest Area" is described as land capable of producing at least 35 cubic metres per hectare.



4.49 Wood has been an important resource for us from the earliest times

Birch and pine chair (c. early 1800s); Wooden "grub box" (lunch box) used by inshore fishers (c. 1900); Innu snowshoes, likely made of spruce or balsam fir (c. 1970)

EARLY DEFORESTATION

Prior to the late 1800s, locally produced lumber could not keep up with the demands of a growing population and was in short supply. It has been calculated that a settlement of 40 families could clear an area of five square kilometres in less than two generations to meet the need for fuel alone. This is evidenced in reports prior to 1700, noting that the coastal forests around popular harbours were retreating. By 1892, lumber had to be imported from Halifax for the reconstruction of St. John's after the Great Fire.

... the New-found-land yeeldeth such great blessings from God ... yet many of our English Nation ... as it were, tread them under their feete ... upon their arrivall yeevly to that Countrey, doe cut downe many of the best trees they can finde, to build their stages and roomes withall, for their then necessary ... and destroying many others ... in few yeeves, I feere, that most of the good timber trees neere the Sea-side, where men use to fish, will bee either felled, spoiled or burned ...

— from *A Discourse and Discovery of Newfoundland* (1620)



4.50 Man sawing wood with bucksaw, Newman Sound, Bonavista Bay, 1939

**Why would governments negotiate freehold agreements? Although these arrangements brought little direct revenue to government, the economic impact of employment in pulp and paper mills was significant.*



4.51 Pulp beaters in pulp and paper mill, Grand Falls, c. 1913-17

4.52 Loading pulp at Botwood, post-1915

The forest industry benefited communities economically in a variety of ways. For example, Botwood became the shipping port for imports to and exports from the mill in Grand Falls.



Economic Results

After 1910, pulp and paper production began to dominate the forest industry. To stimulate growth in this industry, the government offered **land tenure** agreements to companies. In these agreements, the companies assumed the primary responsibility of managing lands in return for the right to benefit from their resources – although the tenured lands still technically belonged to the government. There were three forms of agreements:

1. **Freehold Agreement** – a recipient was entitled to exclusive possession of the land.*
2. **Leasehold Agreement** – a recipient had the right to use the land, forests, minerals, and water in exchange for a low annual rent to be paid to government.
3. **Timber Licence** – a recipient could claim property rights on the forest resource only.

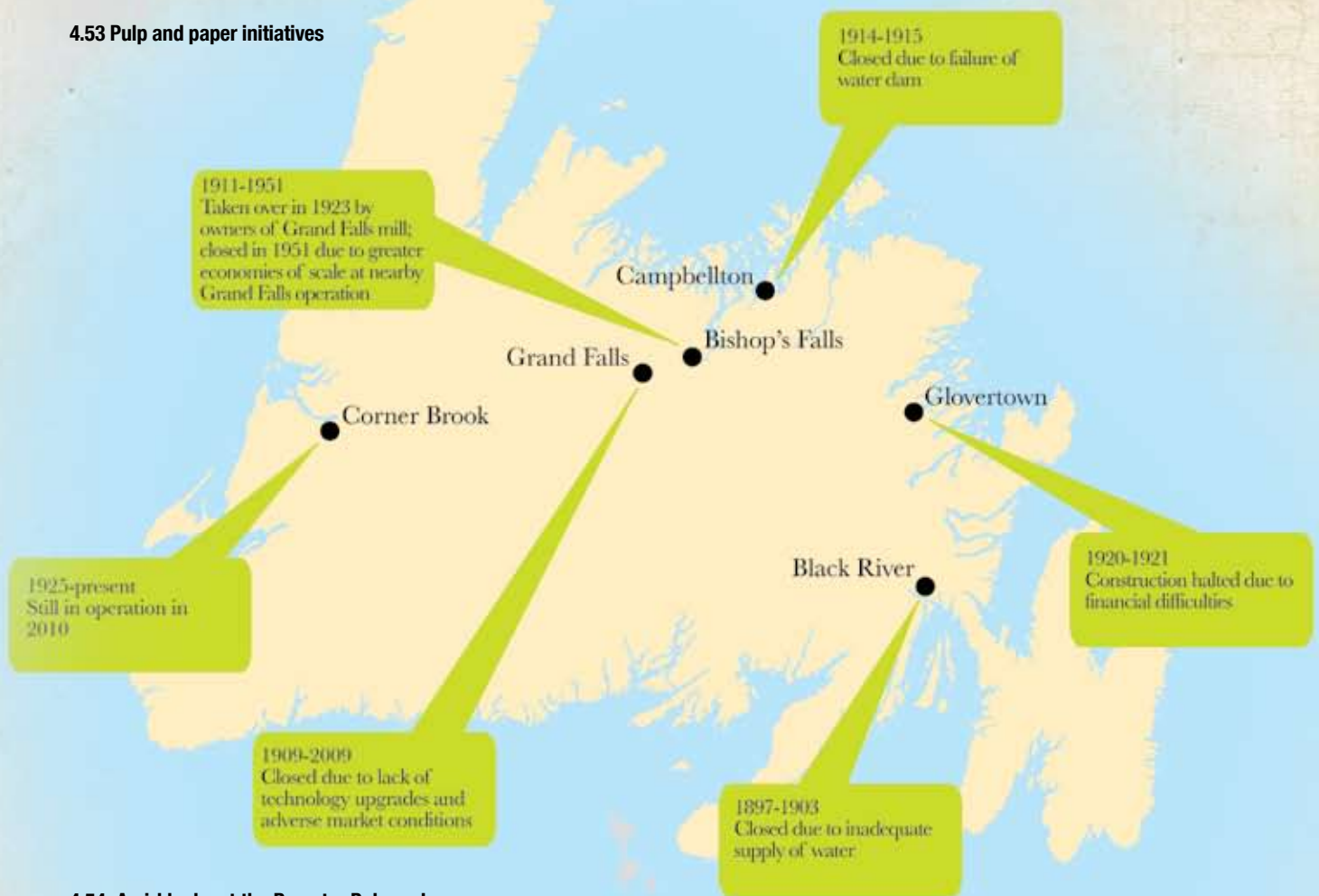
At the beginning of the twentieth century, the potential of Newfoundland's forest resources began to attract international attention. In 1903, brothers Alfred and

Harold Harmsworth expressed interest in the island's forests and investigated the possibility of establishing a pulp and paper company at Grand Falls. The Harmsworths were moguls in the newsprint publishing industry in Britain, and the Newfoundland venture could provide them with a secure source of newsprint. In 1905 they formed the Anglo-Newfoundland Development (A.N.D.) Company. Two years later they began construction of a mill, a powerhouse, and a **company town** at Grand Falls. The mill began production in 1909.

Another large mill was established at Corner Brook in 1925 by the Newfoundland Power and Paper Company, but was quickly sold off to the International Power and Paper Company.** In the early years of operation, the Grand Falls and Corner Brook mills employed more than 1000 workers each. Unlike the fishery, which experienced variance in fish availability and was based on a system of credit, pulp and paper mills (and related wood-harvesting operations) brought steady work and wage-based jobs. In 1935, approximately five per cent of the total workforce was employed in the forest industry.

*** At one time, this was the largest mill in the world. It was taken over in 1938 by Bowater-Lloyd. Today it is run by Kruger International.*

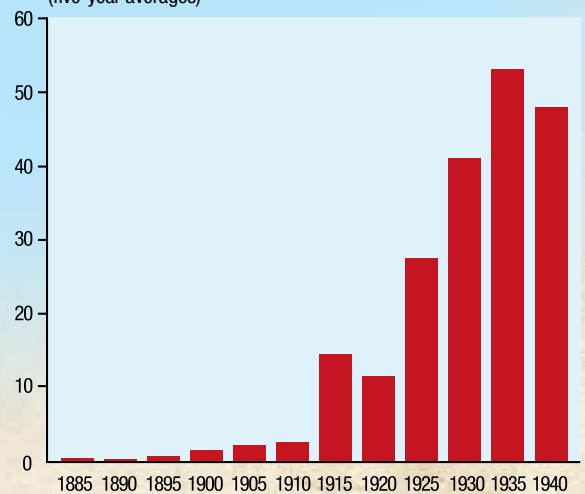
4.53 Pulp and paper initiatives



4.54 A girl looks at the Bowater Pulp and Paper Mill, Corner Brook, c. 1939



4.55 Forestry exports as a percentage of total exports (five-year averages)

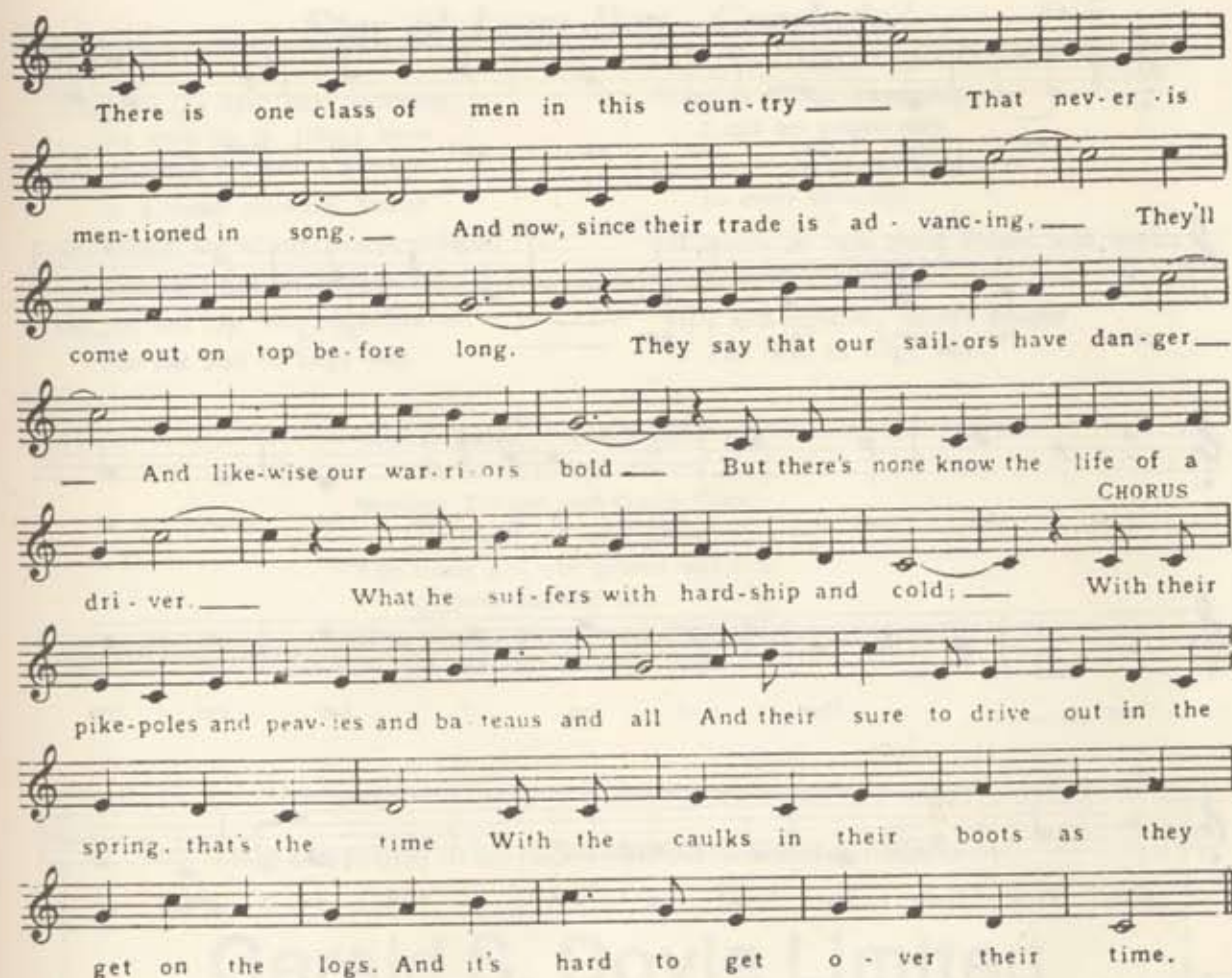


Experiencing The Arts

Now that you have created your title, you need to turn your attention to researching your area of interest, creating the outline for your story, and brainstorming to establish a

lyrical palette of words and phrases that might be used in your composition. Be sure to continue recording your ideas in your notebook.

The Badger Drive



There is one class of men in this coun-try — That nev-er is
men-tioned in song. — And now, since their trade is ad-vanc-ing, — They'll
come out on top be-fore long. They say that our sail-ors have dan-ger. —
— And like-wise our war-ri-ors bold — But there's none know the life of a
dri-ver. — What he suf-fers with hard-ship and cold; — With their
pike-poles and peav-ies and ba-teaus and all And their sure to drive out in the
spring, that's the time With the caulks in their boots as they
get on the logs. And it's hard to get o-ver their time.

Billey Dorothey he is the manager, and he's
a good man at the trade;
And when he's around seeking drivers, he's
like a train going down grade,
But still he is a man that's kindhearted, on
his word you can always depend,
And there's never a man that works with him
but likes to go with him again.

I tell you today home in London, *The Times*
it is read by each man,
But little they think of the fellows that drove
the wood on Mary Ann
For paper is made out of pulpwood and many
things more you may know,
And long may our men live to drive it upon
Paymeoch and Tomjoe.

The drive it is just below Badger, and every-
thing is working grand.
With a jolly good crew of picked drivers and
Ronald Kelly in command.
For Ronald is boss on the river, and I tell you
he's a man that's alive,
He drove the wood off Victoria, now he's out
on the main river drive.

So now to conclude and to finish, I hope that
ye all will agree
In wishing success to all Badger and the A.N.D.
Company.
And long may they live for to flourish, and
continue to chop, drive and roll,
And long may the business be managed by
Mr. Dorothey and Mr. Cole.

John V. Devine.

4.56 "The Badger Drive"

is a Newfoundland folk song which describes
the lumber drive near Badger. The lyrics of this
ballad speak of the experiences of individuals who
worked in this sector of the forest industry.

**Many of the loggers were fishers who worked as loggers for extra cash.*

Impact on Lifestyle and Culture

Those who worked as loggers* harvesting timber for pulp and paper mills endured tough working conditions. These loggers worked for contractors, who in turn worked for paper companies. Each season, the companies paid the contractor a fixed sum of money to harvest a specified amount of wood on company land. From this, the contractor had to pay himself, run the camps, feed the loggers, and provide them with shelter. Often, the company did not pay the contractor enough money to both earn a profit and adequately provide for all of the loggers' needs. As a result, many contractors tried to increase their own earnings by spending as little as possible on the loggers' food and housing.

For six to nine months of the year, many loggers lived in dirty, leaky, drafty, and

over-crowded bunkhouses in the woods. Food was poor and no pay was given for time off work due to work-related injuries. Many workers from outport communities engaged in logging from the fall to early spring, returning to the fishery in the summer. Working conditions for those in the mills were much better than conditions endured by loggers and, with the development of company towns, workers were able to return to their own homes after a day's work.



4.57 Loggers' camp, central Newfoundland, date unknown

The structures behind the loggers would have been their living quarters while at camp.



4.58 Loggers working on a log jam, central Newfoundland, c. 1913-17

Questions:

1. It can be argued that the development of the forest industry was the opening of a frontier.
 - a. What might have been the three greatest challenges faced by workers?
 - b. What were possibly the greatest benefits for workers?
2. The text states that by 1920, lumber exports had declined considerably. However, the data on page 311 indicates that exports for the forest industry continued to increase. How do you account for this?
3. The Government of Newfoundland rented land to pulp and paper companies as opposed to obtaining revenue from **royalties**. As a consequence, this industry brought little direct revenue to government. What were the advantages and disadvantages of taking this approach for government? For business?
4. What were the three most significant ways in which the culture/lifestyle of a company town differed from that of an outport?

((((DIMENSIONS)))) OF THINKING)))) SIGNIFICANCE

——What can be learned from this experience?——



4.59 Grand Falls, c. 1917



4.60 The interior of A.N.D. Pulp and Paper Mill, Grand Falls, c. 1909-1929

In the social sciences we sometimes consider specific examples to be significant because they are revealing — they shed light on a type of experience. The story of Grand Falls is such an experience, as it highlights the strengths and weaknesses of company towns.

Most Newfoundland and Labrador fishery-based communities grew in an “unplanned” way. However, as the colony’s economy diversified in the early twentieth century, a number of new communities were built by companies to serve their production needs. Some towns, such as Gambo and Millertown, were built around sawmills; others, such as Tilt Cove in Notre Dame Bay, were built around mines. Clarenville was built as a railway centre and a few small settlements grew around other railway stations. Some natural-resource industries were established in or near existing settlements. Others were established in unpopulated areas of the interior, most notably Buchans and Grand Falls.

The site for the Grand Falls pulp and paper mill was chosen because of the availability of a large supply

of lumber, the potential to develop inexpensive hydroelectricity, and its close proximity to the deep-water port of Botwood. The Anglo-Newfoundland Development (A.N.D.) Company opened the mill in Grand Falls in 1909. It also planned, built, and managed the town of Grand Falls as private property. Only company workers and their families*, along with the owners and operators of a small number of private businesses, were allowed to live there. The A.N.D. Company built a school, hospital, and churches, and paved streets. It also built houses for its workers and provided water, sewer, electricity, and telephone services at a time when such services were not readily available throughout the colony. Living in a company town also offered other benefits; the A.N.D. Company wanted to address the social needs of its workers and

**This was true of some other company towns, as well. For example, the father of one of this text’s authors died while he was an employee living in a company town. When this happened, his family was ordered to leave.*

*Through a series of mergers, Price Brothers and Company became Abitibi Paper Company Ltd. in 1974 and AbitibiBowater in 2007.

thus supported several sports, music, and drama clubs. An uninhabited wilderness at the turn of the twentieth century, by 1911 Grand Falls had a population of 1634.

The growth of Grand Falls also resulted in other settlement in the region. Unregulated settlement arose in the area outside of the company town, in what later became known as the community of Windsor. Without the A.N.D. Company's financial support, housing and community services (such as sanitation) in this area were inferior to those in Grand Falls.

Grand Falls remained a company town until 1961, when new owners (Price Brothers and Company*) relinquished its control of the community, and Grand

Falls became an incorporated municipality. The mill continued to be the main employer for the area. In 1991, the towns of Grand Falls and Windsor amalgamated to form Grand Falls-Windsor.

In December 2008, AbitibiBowater released a statement concerning the imminent closure of the pulp and paper mill in Grand Falls-Windsor, citing high operating costs. In response, legislation was introduced in the same month in the House of Assembly to return the water rights originally granted to the A.N.D Company to the province. The mill produced its last roll of newsprint on February 12, 2009, putting 750 men and women out of work.



4.61 An article from *The Evening Telegram*, Oct. 11, 1909



4.62 An article from *The Telegram*, Feb. 13, 2009

Questions:

1. How did the development of the community of Grand Falls benefit the colony of Newfoundland? Which benefit was the most significant? Why?
2. Given the closure of the mill, what challenges does this create for the community that has existed for over a century? Which challenge is the most significant? Why?
3. What can be learned from this experience?