

Population

Why would the population of the province fluctuate?

What is the trend of population change in your community? What might be the impact of this trend?

Introduction

According to the 1901 Census, Newfoundland had a population of 220 984, including 3947 people recorded in Labrador. The population continued to increase through the first half of the twentieth century, despite significant emigration to Canada and the United States. The geographical distribution of people also began to change in response to push and pull factors in the economy. Thousands of people chose to leave their homes and relocate to regions that presented better economic opportunities.

Relocating Within the Fisheries

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the vast majority of people in Newfoundland and Labrador still

lived in communities along the coast and made their living through the fishery – 70.6 per cent of the working population. However, the fishing grounds of the east coast had become overcrowded and families found it increasingly difficult to make a living in this industry. Consequently, people in some of the long-established fishing communities left their homes in search of less populated bays where there would be less competition for fish. In each of the census years between 1891 and 1935, the population of the Harbour Grace, Carbonear, and Port de Grave districts consistently decreased* while the population of the St. George’s and St. Barbe districts on the west coast consistently increased.

**Some of this population decrease also may be attributed to out-migration.*

4.73 Population dynamics by district, 1891-1921

District	1891	1901	1911	1921	% Change
St. George’s	6 632	9 100	11 861	13 556	104
St. Barbe	6 690	8 134	10 481	12 176	82
St. John’s West	15 251	18 483	20 550	23 739	58
Twillingate	16 780	19 453	22 705	26 320	57
Fortune Bay	7 671	8 762	9 989	11 272	47
Bonavista Bay	17 849	20 557	22 894	24 754	39
Burin	9 059	10 402	11 616	12 579	39
St. John’s East	20 776	21 512	25 135	28 419	37
Fogo	6 700	7 570	8 257	9 134	36
Burgeo and La Poile	6 471	7 011	7 793	8 645	34
Placentia and St. Mary’s	12 801	15 194	16 099	16 472	29
Trinity Bay	18 872	20 695	21 788	23 422	24
Bay de Verde	9 708	9 827	10 213	10 666	10
Ferryland	5 853	5 697	5 793	6 015	3
Harbour Main	9 189	9 500	9 471	9 262	1
Labrador	4 106	3 947	3 949	3 774	-8
Carbonear	5 765	5 024	5 114	4 830	-16
Port de Grave	7 986	7 445	6 986	6 545	-18
Harbour Grace	13 881	12 671	11 925	11 453	-18
Total	202 040	220 984	242 619	263 033	30

4.74 Population dynamics by district, 1921-1935

District	1921	1935	% Change
Humber	4 745	15 166	220
Grand Falls	9 227	14 373	56
White Bay	6 542	8 721	33
Labrador	3 774	4 716	25
St. John’s West	24 791	29 565	19
St. Barbe	5 634	6 662	18
St. George’s-Port au Port	8 822	9 748	11
Harbour Main-Bell Island	13 619	15 017	10
St. John’s East	23 010	25 321	10
Burgeo and LaPoile	8 645	9 293	8
Fortune Bay and Hermitage	10 540	11 334	8
Fogo	9 224	9 590	4
Trinity South	10 688	11 088	4
Burin	10 293	10 668	4
Twillingate	8 591	8 798	2
Trinity North	12 701	12 766	1
Placentia and St. Mary’s	8 504	8 454	-1
Placentia West	9 667	9 575	-1
Green Bay	8 401	8 257	-2
Bonavista North	12 605	12 319	-2
Bonavista South	12 149	11 753	-3
Harbour Grace	8 196	7 563	-8
Ferryland	7 367	6 682	-9
Port de Grave	9 991	8 750	-12
Carbonear-Bay de Verde	15 307	13 409	-12
Total	263 033	289 588	10



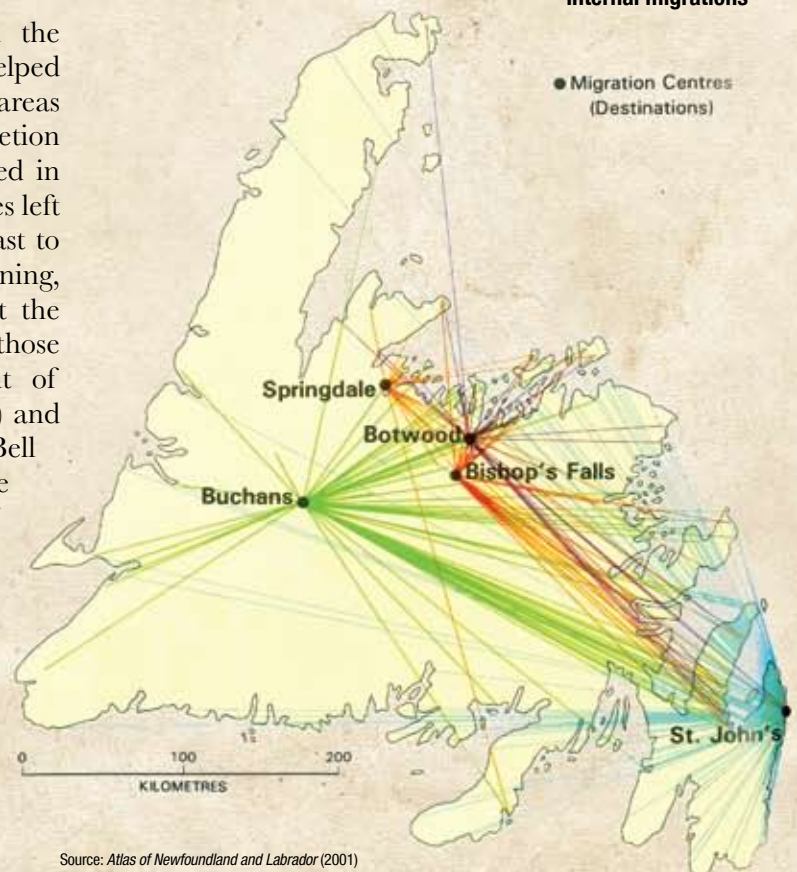
4.75 Making the most out of little space, Pouch Cove, c. 1934-38

Population growth in communities dependent on ocean resources sometimes led to a shortage of available land along the waterfront and overcrowding.

Relocating for New Industries

The diversification of the economy through the establishment of resource-based industries helped create employment opportunities for families in areas not associated with the fishery. After the completion of the railway, the numbers of people employed in these new industries quickly increased. As families left the overcrowded fishing grounds of the east coast to find employment in agriculture, forestry, and mining, new communities began to appear throughout the interior of the island and in regions close to those primary-resource industries. The development of pulp and paper industries at Grand Falls (1909) and Corner Brook (1923), and mining operations at Bell Island (1895) and Buchans (1928) made those locations popular destinations for thousands of Newfoundlanders in search of employment. For example, between 1921 and 1935, the district of Humber (in which Corner Brook is located) increased by 10 421 people – a population increase of 219.6 per cent.

4.76 Selected 20th century internal migrations



Source: *Atlas of Newfoundland and Labrador* (2001)

GIRLS WANTED.

Mr. George Gaulton, a Newfoundland-lander who has been working with the Dominion Cotton Company for eight or ten years, is now in Newfoundland authorized by the Company to bring back with him a number of girls from 15 years up, to work in the Company's mill at Windsor N.S. Mr. Gaulton states that the Company will pay the girls' board until they are able to earn enough to pay it themselves, and this, it is expected, they will be able to do after two or three month's work. There are at present about 250 operatives in the factory at Windsor the majority of whom are girls who earn from eight to ten dollars a fortnight; whilst some make as high as twelve and fourteen dollars. The hours are from 6.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. with an hour for dinner, and Saturday afternoon off from 12 noon. Some girls have been in the employ from eight to twelve years. They enter into a contract with the Company agreeing to give two weeks' notice of intention to leave, whilst the Company on their part agree to give two weeks' notice if they do not require the girls' services. Mr. Gaulton states that the work is very clean and that the factory is run on the best possible principles. He has gone to Burin, his native place, and expects to get some girls from there. He also says that there are at present some families from Burin working in the factory.



4.77 Opportunities abroad

(left) Young women could contribute to the family income by taking jobs in Canada and the United States and sending a portion of their wages home. This ad is from *The Daily News*, March 8, 1902.

4.78 SS *Portia*, St. John's, c. 1890s

In addition to the railway, the coastal boat service and steamers that stopped in St. John's on the way to and from New York were used by people relocating for work.

Emigration

In addition to internal migration, the colony* also experienced out-migration, both temporary and permanent (See fig. 4.79 below), in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Just as the railway made it easier for people to relocate for work on the island, it also made it easier for people to leave Newfoundland for work. Many Newfoundlanders found seasonal and permanent employment in Canadian and American fisheries, on farms and construction sites, and in mines and manufacturing plants. In some cases, North American companies recruited Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to work abroad.

Young women also emigrated to obtain jobs in domestic service in New England. They would then send portions of their income back to their families in Newfoundland and Labrador. This was part of a survival strategy that families employed in order to adjust to downturns in the traditional economy. The daughter's wages would supplement the entire family's income.

Emigration had important economic and social consequences for Newfoundland and Labrador as author R.A. MacKay noted in his book *Newfoundland: Economic, Diplomatic, and Strategic Studies* (1946):

While it has no doubt tended to drain off some of the more enterprising and energetic youth, it has provided an outlet for 'surplus' population, often a serious problem in a non-industrial area with limited natural resources. Emigration has also

kept Newfoundland in closer touch with developments on the mainland, seasonal workers and returning Newfoundlanders bringing back with them an acquaintance with the industrial techniques and tastes for standards of living of Canadian and United States communities. The national income has also been increased by emigrant remittances, both in the form of contributions to the family at home by those who had emigrated, or in the form of savings brought back by returning workers.

4.79 Newfoundlanders living in Canada and the United States according to Census Records, 1911-1941

Canada		United States	
Year	Number of Residents	Year	Number of Residents
1911	15 469	1910	9 311
1921	23 103	1920	13 342
1931	26 410	1930	23 971
1941	25 837	1940	21 361

Interpreting Data

Take a look at the table above. Although at first glance, it appears that the number of Newfoundlanders going to Canada and the United States is increasing throughout the years illustrated, the reality might be very different. Census data records residents of a country for a given year. This means that the figure for 1921 most likely includes some of the individuals recorded in 1911. The actual increase of Newfoundlanders living in Canada between 1911 and 1921 is 7634. In 1941, there were fewer Newfoundlanders in Canada than in 1931.

Source: R.A. MacKay (ed.), *Newfoundland: Economic, Diplomatic, and Strategic Studies* (1946)

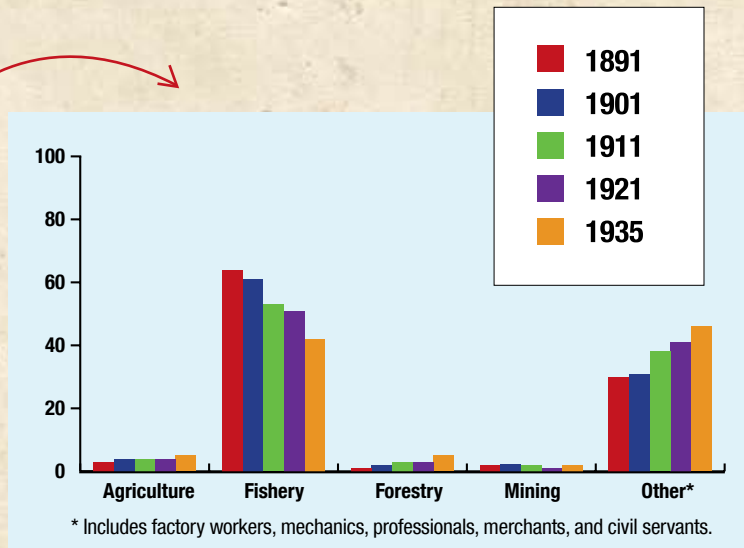
* Similar patterns of internal immigration and emigration were occurring at the same time in the Maritime Provinces of Canada

Was it Enough?

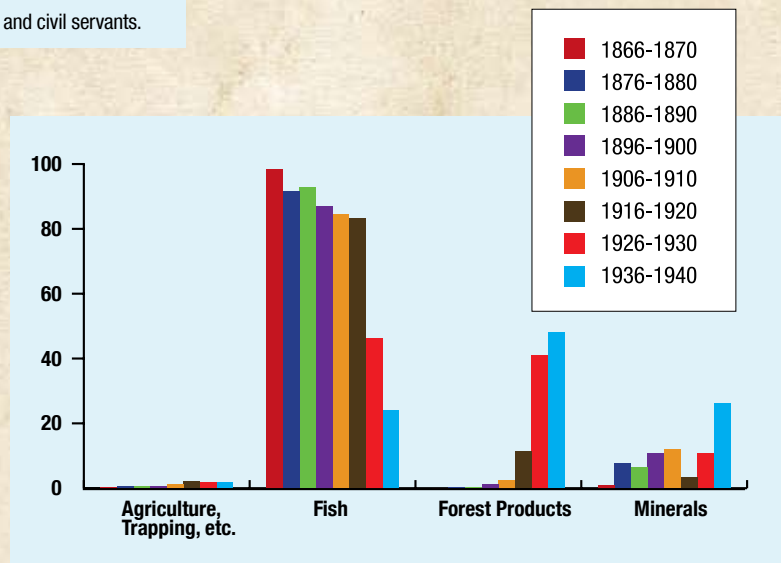
The economy of Newfoundland and Labrador diversified through this period, benefiting from Whiteway's policy of progress, the construction of the railway, the opening of the interior, and the development of land-based resource industries. The opportunities created by these industries, combined with increased accessibility created by the railway, resulted in the internal and external movement of people. However, the numbers of people involved

with the fishery remained high, despite the fact that the economic significance of the fishery declined relative to other economic sectors. This has led some historians to ask the question: Did the development of land-based industries do enough to diversify the economy and decrease the colony's (and individuals') dependence on the fishery?

Dominance of fisheries employment - Note how this data compares to the information in fig. 4.11 on page 289 in lesson 4.1. What changes do you note?



4.81 Commodities – percentage share of value of exports, 1866-1940
Growing Significance of Non-Fisheries Exports



Questions:

- There were a variety of push and pull factors that influenced a person's decision to migrate within Newfoundland and Labrador. Identify these factors. Which might have been most significant? Why?
- What is the trend today in relation to internal migration? What might account for this? (See chapter one, page 55.)
- Consider how our economy diversified between the 1880s and the 1930s.
 - How did the significance of the fishery change during this time period?
 - Rank the economic sectors in terms of: (i) percentage of exports, and (ii) employment.
 - What are the top three economic sectors in terms of employment today? (See chapter one, page 46.) In terms of having an economically diversified economy, is the current distribution of employment by sector positive or negative?