

The Resettlement of Pushthrough 3

Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment

Introduction

At a public meeting on 7 April 1969, residents of Pushthrough elected a Resettlement Committee. The Committee then circulated a petition to all householders. Those that signed the petition indicated their desire to move. Their signatures also indicated that they intended to request financial assistance from the Government of Canada and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the *Fisheries Household Resettlement Act* to cover the cost of relocation. The petition was completed on 25 April 1969 and forwarded to St. John's by William Simms, the chair of the Pushthrough Resettlement Committee. Each person who signed the petition was required to complete a form called the Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment. This form provided considerable information about the people of Pushthrough.



The Resettlement Committee in Newfoundland

The Newfoundland Fisheries Household Resettlement Program, as the program was officially called when Pushthrough was resettled, was administered by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. It was, however, a federal-provincial programme; the

federal government paid nearly three-quarters of the cost of resettlement of Pushthrough and other communities; the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador paid the remainder. In Ottawa, the Industrial Development Branch of the Department of Fisheries and Forestry was initially involved until the Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) was created in 1968. Don Jamieson was the Member of Parliament for Pushthrough in the Constituency of Burin-Burgeo after Chesley Carter was appointed to the Senate in 1966. Mr. Jamieson eventually became Minister of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. In Newfoundland, officials in the Office of Premier Joseph R. Smallwood and those in the Department of Fisheries played key roles before responsibility passed to the Department of Community and Social Development.

Federal-Provincial Committees

Resettlement was overseen by a Federal-Provincial Fisheries Resettlement Subcommittee consisting of five representatives from the federal government and ten from the provincial government. This group was responsible for the policies and regulations that governed the resettlement process. One of its responsibilities was ensuring that petitions and the Notifications of Intent to Relocate that were received from communities like Pushthrough were reviewed to ensure that proper procedures had been followed. The Committee also ensured that people who moved from

communities like Pushthrough were relocated to towns where they had better opportunities for employment and access to a level of public services such as health care and education better than those that existed in Pushthrough.

Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment

When each household in Pushthrough signed the petition indicating her desire to resettle, she also completed a Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment. It was on the basis of this information from householders, together with other documents, including the petition, a report from the Pushthrough Resettlement Committee, and reports from a Rural Development officer that the Resettlement Committee of Newfoundland assessed the application for resettlement.

Although I have not reviewed the files of all of the householders who moved from Pushthrough that are stored at the Provincial Archives Division in St. John's, it seems that most people had completed the form, Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment, sometime between the beginning of April 1969 and the end of July 1969.

One Brief Form, Lots of Information

My mother, Minnie Blake, completed the Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment on 6 May 1969. It was another 5 weeks, 12 June 1969, before our neighbour who lived closer to the water than we in **The Bottom** completed his application. Grandmother Eliza Garland completed her application on the same day, 12 June, but Grandmother Caroline Blake filled out her application on 11 July 1969. I am not sure why the dates are so varied.

The Notification of Intent to Relocate/Request for Employment was a single-page application form. It contains a wealth of information that could be used to paint a detailed portrait of the people who were relocated from communities such as Pushthrough. To the best of my knowledge this has not been done for any of the communities that were resettled.

Householder Information

The one-page Notification of Intent was divided into several sections. The first asked for basic householder information: name, age, marital status, occupation, expected occupation after move, and social insurance numbers. My mother did not give a social insurance number. SINs had been first issued in 1964 as a client account number in the administration of the Canada Pension Plan and other government programs such as employment insurance. Only those employed outside the home had a number and my mother did not have one.

Members of Household

The second section required the listing of all members of the household. Each head of family had to register the name of each family member, state the relationship to householder, list the age of each, identify those who were in school both before and after the move, record the grade level of each, and provide the type of work each member of household was engaged in if not in school and the type of work to be engaged in after the move. This section also asked each applicant to identify any member of household who was eligible for assistance or training under the Manpower Mobility Programme. The Government of Canada's Manpower Mobility Program, announced in May of 1965, consisted of loans and grants for workers who moved within Canada to find

work. Some who resettled received additional grants under this programme. Minnie Blake said yes to this question as two of my older brothers, Eric and Roland, would have qualified.

Next Location

The third section asked a number of questions about the impending relocation. The first question in this section asked if the householder's name appeared on the original petition for assistance under the Fisheries Household Resettlement Programme. My mother said yes. The second asked if household was applying to move to an approved growth centre, or if applying to move as widow, "incapacitated" [this I believe is an incorrect spelling of incapacitated], or elderly. After 1965, Newfoundland's policy of resettlement was designed to encourage the growth of larger towns with the necessary infrastructure to develop a centralized and industrial fishery that would replace much of the inshore fishery. These were called growth centres.

The government had also approved a number of smaller towns that could receive people from resettlement communities. These areas, it was believed, enjoyed a favourable potential for development and provided some employment opportunities. The resettlement program also permitted householders, such as widows, handicapped persons and the elderly, to relocate from isolated communities and to apply to the Fisheries Household Resettlement Committee in an individual capacity, in the same manner as individual applicants wishing to resettle to fisheries growth centres.

Identifying Householder: Worker or Other

My mother applied as a widow as our father, Benedict (Ben) Blake, had died in an industrial

accident in the construction of the hydro-electric facility in Bay d'Espoir several years earlier, in 1966. She listed six family members: Mary, Eric, Roland, Hayward, Lloyd, and I, Raymond. I was 10.

As there were two surnames, Lilly for the three oldest, and Blake for the three youngest, she added a note of explanation in the margins. The three oldest were from her first marriage. Her first husband, Samuel Lilly, had died at the age of 39 from cancer, and she later married my father, Ben, who also died at the age of 39.

One can only imagine what other valuable information can be gleaned about the history of Newfoundland families and Newfoundland life and society generally from the hundreds of such applications that were completed at the time of resettlement.

Do you Need Mortgage Assistance?

The third section asked four additional questions. One, where were they moving? For us, it was Hermitage. Two, would the householder be moving his present house, building, buying or renting? We bought a modern and recently renovated large four-room house with water and sewage connections in Hermitage from Oliver Francis who had relocated to Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, where he worked as an engineer on the deep-sea trawlers. The resettlement story of those like the Francis family who moved out of Newfoundland is another dimension of resettlement that we have not investigated. Three, would the householder be applying for a \$3,000 or \$1,000 Mortgage as supplementary assistance toward the cost of a building lot.

Many householders who moved from places such as Pushthrough discovered that acquiring

land in their new communities on which to build their homes was costly and often in short supply. Many of the receiving communities, such as Harbour Breton, Fortune, and Milltown, had to construct serviced lots to accommodate the newcomers. This was an expensive undertaking. Serviced lots averaged between \$3,500 and \$4,000. Combined with an estimated cost of \$12,000 for the construction of a home, the cost of housing emerged as a potential deterrent to the government's centralization plans. With family annual incomes averaging around \$3,600 dollars many households could not sustain a mortgage necessary to purchase a home.

To help deal with the problem, the resettlement agreement was amended in 1965, authorizing supplementary assistance up to \$3,000 for those householders from Pushthrough and other communities to purchase a serviced lot in a designated fishery growth centre such as Fortune. Those moving to smaller areas, such as Hermitage, were eligible for \$1,000 towards a building lot. Because she was purchasing an existing home, she did not check any of the boxes seeking mortgage assistance. Grandmother Garland was one of few householders that checked "Rent" for her accommodations in her new community. She lived with us after she moved to Hermitage.

The final question in the third section of the Notification of Intent was expected travel and moving cost. Minnie Blake provided an estimate of \$300; Grandmother Garland listed \$100 and Grandmother Caroline Blake provided an estimate on \$300. One of our neighbours who relocated to Fortune suggested that his travel and relocation costs would be \$300.

My mother said in her application that she would not consider any locality other than

Hermitage where she could purchase an existing house. She said many time after she left Pushthrough that she would never have managed the building of a new home. I suspect she would have managed just nicely.

Personal History Required

The final section of the Notification of Intent to Relocate asked a series of questions about the householder's personal history. First, applicants were asked about their level of education. My mother, Minnie, listed Grade 3 as last grade completed, the same level as Grandmother Blake. My Grandmother Garland did not attend school ever. One of our neighbours listed Grade 9 which he completed in 1932, in the midst of the Great Depression. My sister Mary had completed Grade 11 and was teaching when we left Pushthrough. I was in Grade 5.

Questions were also asked about training completed, licences or certificates held, machines and equipment applicant could operate, and any disabilities.

Delay in Approving the Pushthrough Petition

The Resettlement Committee for Newfoundland had to review the petition and the information provided by householders in their Notification of Intent to Relocate.

As it began the review process, the Committee realized that something was amiss with the applications from some householders in Pushthrough who had applied for financial assistance to relocate. Even the new Anglican clergyman, Reverend William Noel had to get involved to help clear matters up.

Next: Approving Pushthrough for Resettlement