

# Special Projects, Extended Commuting and the Precarious Production of Value in Newfoundland and Labrador

Lachlan Barber

(Presented by Barb Neis)

June 5, 2015 – Ottawa

Canadian Association of Work and Labour Studies

# A wave on the TCH



# Context: Modern Newfoundland

- Mobile work is not new (fishing, care work, military, construction, etc.)
- What is new about contemporary forms and patterns of work-related mobility?
- Historical context: Joey Smallwood's vision



*Prowse – Fishing for cod on the  
Banks from a doris (1895)*

Contemporary patterns and forms of employment-related geographical mobility in Newfoundland, that find some of their most legible expressions in the movements of workers to and from and between large-scale construction projects, are rooted in mid-twentieth century vision to build a modern society and economy

# Industrial construction



Long Harbour – a “special project” site

- Remote locations
- Labour sourced from far away
- Extended daily commuting and overnight stays are common
- How does capital input translate into movements on the ground to and between project sites?

- Global Production Networks (GPN)
  - Intellectual lineage: World Systems Theory, Global Commodity Chains... but a network-based approach
- How is value created and captured in the production process... manufacturing, extraction (Bridge, 2008)
- Our interest:
  - Labour in the GPN
  - GPN in productive tension with place

Following *Kelly, P. F. (2013). Production networks, place and development: Thinking through Global Production Networks in Cavite, Philippines. Geoforum, 44, 82–92.*

# Special Project Orders (SPOs)

## APPLICATION PROTOCOL SPECIAL PROJECT ORDERS

### Introduction

A **Special Project** is an undertaking of construction works designed to develop a natural resource or establish a primary industry that satisfies the legislative requirements of the *Labour Relations Act (Act)*.

A **Special Project Order (SPO)** is issued pursuant to section 70 of the *Act* and is intended to provide labour relations stability. It establishes a labour relations regime that is uniquely tailored to the specific requirements of the project. The collective agreement, which is in effect for the duration of the project, prohibits strikes and lockouts. The legislation can be found at <http://assembly.nl.ca/Legislation/sr/statutes/101.htm>.

### Criteria

In order to qualify for a special project designation a construction project must meet the following criteria:

- 1) A construction of works that develops a natural resource or establishes a primary industry,
- 2) A construction period that exceeds two years; and
- 3) Includes all ancillary work, services and catering relating to the undertaking or project.

### Or

- 1) A construction or fabrication of works that occurs at the Bull Arm site; and
- 2) Includes all ancillary work, services and catering.

## J. Smallwood in 1968

*“There are so many competing opportunities for the money lender to put his money in, that he is not going to take risks that he does not have to take. If he thinks he is taking a big risk to lend money to a project, where there will be labour troubles, lock-outs, strikes, stoppages, for one reason or another, so as to destroy the economic viability, the financial viability of that project, then that project is not going to be able to sell its bonds.”*

(J. Smallwood, Hansard, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1968, p. 2978)



# SPO projects since Churchill Falls

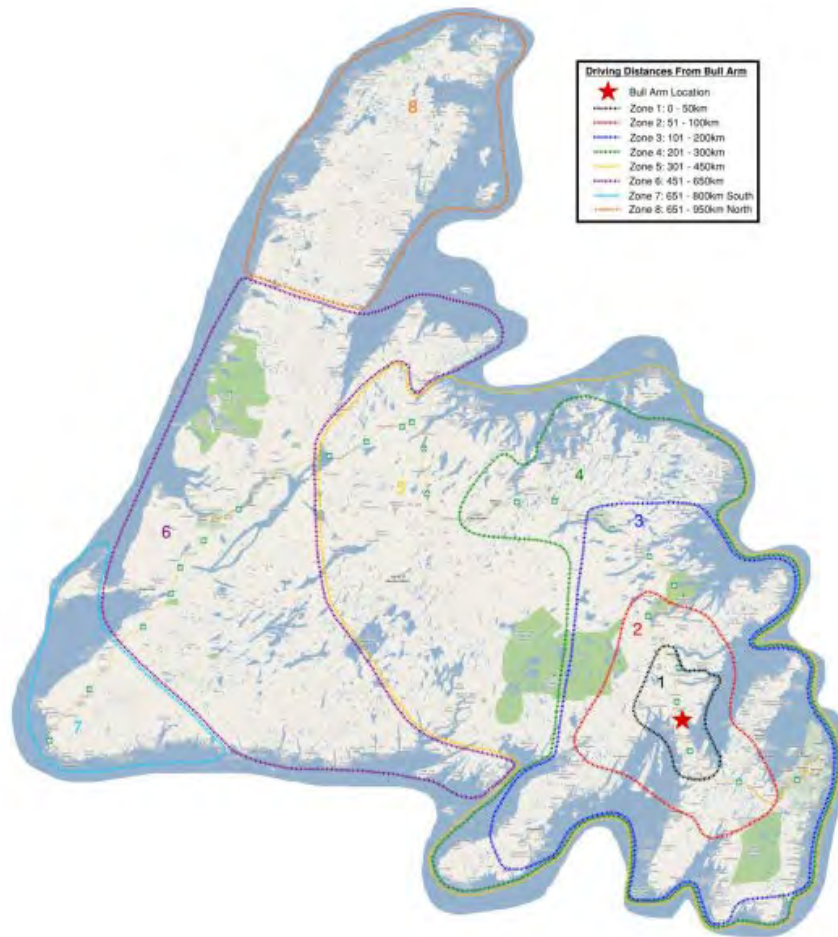
<b>Project</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Churchill Falls	Hydro Energy	1967-1975	Labrador
Hibernia	Offshore Oil (GBS)	1990-1997	Newfoundland
Terra Nova	Offshore Oil (FPSO)	1997-2002	Newfoundland
Voisey's Bay	Mining	2002-2005	Labrador
Long Harbour	Nickel Processing	2009-present	Newfoundland
Hebron	Offshore Oil (GBS)	2011-present	Newfoundland
Muskrat Falls (Lower Churchill)**	Hydro Energy	2013-present	Labrador
Maritime Link	Hydro Energy	2014-present	Newfoundland

\*\* Includes separate orders for the transmission line and generating station

# The Hebron Project



# The Living Out Allowance (LOA)



Map of Hebron travel zones

*“A worker, whose PRINCIPAL RESIDENCE is located outside of zones 1 and 2 and who opts not to live in the camp, shall receive a Living Out Allowance... The Living Out allowance shall be one-hundred and twenty dollars (\$120.00) per day worked, increased by four dollars (\$4.00) on May 1, 2012 and each subsequent May 1 through to the end of the project.”*

# Fast money, fragile living

*“Young people are buying houses and they’ve got two cars in the driveway, and they’ve got all their toys, and they’re taking trips ... I saw that out west as well but **a very fragile way of living.**” (KI Interview # 14)*

*“Some guys are okay with the 30,000 dollar truck, right? Some guys want something a little bit nicer. You know what I mean? **You could pay your house off doing what we do, pretty quickly... if you didn’t spend it on trucks and cars and quads and ski-doo’s**” (Trades Interview #3)*

*“**You’ve gotta work.** If you’ve got a mortgage and you’ve got a sixty thousand dollar truck, and you’ve got the toys everything like that, that’s not for free. **You’ve got to be able to pay for it**” (KI Interview #3)*

# Conclusion





Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada

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The On the Move Partnership is a project of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research at Memorial University. On the Move is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Research & Development Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and numerous university and community partners.

Le partenariat en mouvement est un projet du Centre *SafetyNet for Occupational Health & Safety Research* à l'Université Memorial. En mouvement est subventionné par le Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada, par la *Newfoundland and Labrador Research & Development Corporation*, par la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, ainsi que par de nombreux partenaires et universités.