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ISSUE : [Issue 32](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1982/8/1

control over their fishing business. They had a lot of money invested in the fishing industry. They provided--when they first settled--they provided ships, they provided equipment, they provided, well, all of the necessities of life, you know, to the people. People could go there, and if they needed nails, they could get nails; if they needed a little bit of paint, they could get paint; if they needed flour, they could get flour; or if they needed a pair of shoes, they could get it there at Robin. And it was the only place. So, they had a lot of money invested. And their only fear at that time was to lose control. (Of the people or of the fish?) Both. If they lost control of the people, their idea was that they would lose the fish. It was the creation of a monopoly, where you have to prevent competition. So in order to prevent competition, you have to exercise a very, very strict control. (But was it good business practices?) Definitely. To them at that time, it was good business. They weren't bad people--they were all good people--I knew quite a lot of them, particularly on the Gaspé coast-- they were all good people. But to them it was business--it was good business. And at the time, when they started, and for a hundred years, it was good business. It became bad business in later years, because they were so convinced of their own set of principles that they were very reticent to change any of their methods. And when the fishing industry started to change in nature and complexity, both in fishing gear and in fishing plants, the Robins were left behind. For example, the whole Robin establishment had been built on dried and salted codfish. Now, even up to the '30s and '40s, even to the late '40s, they couldn't see anything else but dried cod, their eternal dried cod and salt cod. When the whole fishing industry was going towards freezing, they were still with salt. Everybody else on the Gaspé coast, the province of Quebec, was building freezers all around the coast. Not for the Robin. The Robin were still salt cod and dried cod. That's what they did in Cheticamp and that's what they did in Arichat and that's what they did all around the Gaspé coast. They could not change. To the point that they were simply pushed to the side of the road. And they had to completely get out of fisheries-- and they did--they're not in fisheries any more. They're not interested in fish any more, because they could not compete, because they could not change their old principles. They had been so good to them for a hundred years. When they realized that they had to change, it was too late--there were too many people ahead of them. So, they got out of the fishing business and they concentrated on their stores. Now, for a number of years, they had had the same problem with their stores. Their stores were the old 18th and 19th century stores. Now there again, it took them a long time before they realized that that wasn't the type of stores that were in the future going to succeed. So they almost failed--almost. They were on the brink of failure for a number of years. As a matter of fact, in 1938, just before the war, you could have bought all the property of Robin Jones and Whitman in Cheticamp for \$30,000. It was for sale. Land, wharf, sheds, stores, everything. For \$30,000, They were on the brink of failure. Then, the Whitman group in Halifax was instrumental in trying to get some modern ideas in their business operations, in



their store operations. And it was a result of that-- but that's recent--it was as a result of that that you have a beautiful Robin store here in Cheticamp, But that's new. And it's quite successful, (What changed that system of debt that the fishermen had been kept in? What broke that?) Well, the only thing that could break it, and did break it, was if another fish buyer came with cash and gave them a little bit of cash. On the Gaspé coast, the cooperatives did that. (That's not till the 1930s.) Right. But here in Cheti? camp, their first real competition came with Fr. Fiset, the parish priest. Fr, Fi- (3)