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(I spoke to one fisherman who fished for both Fr. Fiset and Robins. He said that Fr. Fiset didn't want to pay him money, preferred, "Come to the store, take it from the store.") The old fisherman was right. Fr. Fiset was after competing with the Robins. Now, he didn't want to pay cash to his fishermen so they could go to the Robins and buy stuff. Because that would have been working to build up the Robins outfit. So he said, "Look, you need flour for this winter, you need this, that, for the] winter--I have it at the L store"--instead of giving in cash. And there was another reason, which is not very often said: Fr. Fiset was afraid of the problem of drinking in Cheticamp. Now the old fishermen, not all of them were drunkards, but they all liked their rum. And Fr. Fiset was against that, against liquor, you know, against alcohol. He was afraid that if he gave them too much money, that's where it would go. So it's hard to make a comparison between Fr. Fiset and the Robins. The business practices were comparable, you know. You still hear today a lot of people saying, "Fr. Fiset was just as bad as Robins." In some way, yes. But in other ways, he organized competition against the Robins. Automatically jacked up the prices, for both, prices paid to the fishermen for the fish. You know, that was inevitable. When I went to the Gaspé coast--that was in 1938--the Robins were paying \$1.25 for 228 pounds of cod, to the fishermen. And not only that. On their wharves they had two sets of flags--one black and one red. When the fishermen came ashore from the fishing banks, if, at the end of the wharf, there was a red flag, then they could land their fish, and the Robins would take it. If the flag happened to be black--no fish today. It was absolute misery. That was the situation without competition. (I take it neither Fr. Fiset's method nor the Jerseymen's was acceptable to you.) No, not as a business philosophy. It was the philosophy of the time but, you know, naturally I was against it. But the cooperative idea had been in the background here in Cheticamp for some time. As a matter of fact, long before St. F. X. started the Antigonish Movement, a group of salmon fishermen in Cheticamp had set up their own little organization to sell their salmon. But that was a luxury item, that was an easier thing to sell, because it was always in very high demand. But they actually got a much higher price for their salmon because they had organized themselves. And they processed their salmon and they took care of it and they sold it. It was done in the open. But that was only a very small percentage of the fishermen in Cheticamp. But the idea was there, the whole idea of cooperatives for their fish. It was just a question of somebody who could help them organize. The majority of the fishermen, when we started, couldn't even think of it, because they were so completely controlled economically. They were in debt. They weren't--like Fr. Coady said--"masters of their own destiny." And it was the same here as it was on the Gaspé coast when I went there. They were all deadly afraid of what would happen to them. All right, it's all right, we set up our own cooperative-- who's going to give me flour next winter? Who is going to provide me with molasses next winter? And that's the only argument that the companies had. All right, all right, do what you want. But when you need a pair of shoes, don't come to me. Or when you



need a bag of flour come next March. You'll go and find your agricultural rep, see if he buys you flour. You know, that's the kind of argument they had. So it wasn't easy. (You came back to Cheticamp in 1934. Was there awareness of the world depression here?) Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes. There was not only poverty--because Cheticamp was a relatively prosperous village at one time, CAPE BRETON in Glace Bay MINERS' MUSEUM Special arrangements can be made for group tours of the museum. Research, conference, and meeting facilities are also available. To inquire, phone: (902)849-4522 MR. TIRE LTD. 267 Prince Street Sydney The Radial Tire People Specializing in mAiMKim '??'??" • JMjiji and the World Famous Bandag Re-treading Fully Equipped Mobil Unit PHONE: 539-5670