

[Page 8 - With Alex John Boudreau, Cheticamp Island](#)ISSUE : [Issue 32](#)

Published by Ronald Caplan on 1982/8/1

bought the property. And then, we had to fix up the store. It was all done voluntary services. We decided that we were going to open in the spring. One of the group was appointed manager, Leo Cormier. Now, we got together and we drew up the first order for groceries, what we were going to have in the store. But then, we had no money. So we had to bargain for credit. We finally got it from Cape Breton Wholesale. And our first order, when we opened the store--\$420. (That stocked the shelves?) Yup. But no--the shelves, we had only one, one, one thick. Nothing behind! But that's how it started. Last year's business at the Co-op was over 3% million. And then, when the store was started, we also set up almost immediately a fishermen's organization, and brought all the fishermen's organizations together under the one head--that was Cheticamp Cooperative Society Limited, comprising a corner store and a fish plant, all on the wharf. We were following the example of the old companies, Robin Jones and Whitman, where they would have the store and their wharf and their fishing plants. So we were copying. (So then did everybody come to the store?) No, no, no, not immediately. It doesn't happen that way. It's gradual, it's gradual. But there was already quite a group of fishermen involved in their cooperatives. That wasn't too difficult. It was already quite advanced. (Did you have anything to offer that the other stores were not offering? Were you giving cheaper prices, anything?) No, no. We had to sell faith. That's about all. Because one of the principles of cooperation is that you don't undercut prices. You sell at going prices. And if and when there is a profit, you give it back to your patrons, to the proprietors. So, we started out that way. (Stated simply, what were the business principles that you tried to get across?) Well, the business principles of the cooperatives are simple. It's democratic control. It's control, for example, by the fishermen of their own affairs. It's redistribution of the profits, whatever they may be, according to their patronage of their cooperative. The profits go back to the fisherman. So much a pound for fish. That's what they call the "patronage rebates." The ownership would stay with the fishermen, and the control would stay with the fishermen, and the profits would go back to the fishermen. (And was this the kind of work that you did along the Gaspé coast, as well as here in Cheticamp?) Right, right. (Couldn't have been easy.) Wasn't. Wasn't. Particularly on the Gaspé coast. Because on the Gaspé coast it was a new idea. And the Robins, even in 1938, had a pretty stiff control. Particularly on the Bay of Chaleur, which is the best fishing ground. On the north shore of the Gaspé coast, they were getting a little bit of competition. But on the southern shore it was awful, it was still their own kingdom, (What would you do?) Oh well, it's a long story. By this time (1938) I was at Ste. Anne de la Pocatière, at the School of Fisheries. I knew that if we were going to do anything, I had to have local leaders. And I had to teach them the principles,

ENTERTAINMENT CENTRE OF CAPE BRETON
Joe's Warehouse The Food Emporium
Cape Breton's Newest and Largest Restaurant SPECIALIZING IN AGED PRIME CUTS OF ROAST BEEF & STEAKS & ONE OF THE MOST UNIQUE SALAD BARS IN THE MARITIMES!
& Smooth Herman's Lounge You will be surrounded by a collection of



some of Cape Breton's finest antiques. Live Entertainment Nightly 424 Charlotte Street 539-6686 539-0408 RESTAURANT LOUNGE BANQUET FACILITIES ARE AVAILABLE ii BETTER THAN EVER IN '83 Throughout Nova Scotia, young athletes are working diligently for the 1983 Canada Winter Games. From February 17 to March 2, 1983 more than 200 Nova Scotians will work to build upon our strong foundation of sport strength when the Canada Winter Games are staged in the Saguenay Region, Quebec. Each athlete deserves our support and enthusiasm! We're preparing to be Better than ever in '83"! iJEUX iCANADAI iGAIVIESk Department of Culture, Recreation and Fitness Hon. R. Fisher Hudson, Minister (8)