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Anyway, I suppose I've always been to a certain extent a nationalist. I have very strong roots. And I never appreciated, particularly at that time, the complete ignorance--particularly of Dr. Coady and the St. F. X. people--of the French language. Not the French people, the French language. There's a whole background to that story. That was in the '30s and '40s. St. F. X. and the whole Antigonish establishment, including the Bishop, had become sincerely convinced that there was no need for any French language in the Diocese of Antigonish. And I personally heard Bishop Morrison saying, "It's hard enough to teach religion in one language without trying to teach it in two." Now, that was a sincere belief--that there was no need for the French language in the Diocese of Antigonish--or in Cape Breton Island. Or anywhere else, for that matter. It wasn't necessarily anti-Acadian or anti-French. It was--a complete ignorance and complete neglect of the necessity of French Acadians to conserve and preserve their cultural language and background. Dr. Coady, Bishop Morrison, the whole darned bunch at Antigonish. Old Fr. Jimmy Tompkins was the only one who always maintained that there was room for the French language in the Antigonish Movement. I had set up, oh, dozens of study clubs, little groups here and there--most of them couldn't even speak English properly. Dr. Coady, whom I admired, tried to appoint a fellow from Mabou who couldn't speak one word of French to direct my study clubs in English. Which I couldn't just accept. And I told him I couldn't accept. My answer was, "I'm going to meet him and tell him to stay home." Oh boy, that was quite a fight, because Dr. Coady was not an easy man to deal with. But I didn't do that on my own. All my people, and the priests, from the top down, were completely against that, because they knew in English it wouldn't do a damn thing for us. So anyway, he didn't come. (And the literature of the Antigonish Movement--was none of it in French?) None of it, not at that time. No, they didn't believe in it. (And yet they wanted to reach people in Cheticamp?) Yeah. But they were convinced whatever reaching they needed they would do in English just as well as in French. And I was convinced otherwise. At that time--and I'm not exaggerating-- 70% of the people of Cheticamp and St. Joseph du Moine did not understand English. They understood a few words. But not to read a pamphlet and to discuss. Those study groups were discussion groups. (Coady did make speeches here.) He did--I couldn't stop him. People went to hear him. He was a beautiful speaker. (If you had to say yes or no, was the formation of co-ops in Cheticamp part of the Antigonish Movement, what would you say?) Yes. It is part of the Antigonish Movement. (But you also give the sense that what happened here in Cheticamp was more done on your own. It wasn't the Antigonish Movement sending someone out to organize Cheticamp and that person was successful.) No. Except that Cheticamp profited from the atmosphere that was created by the Antigonish Movement. And we used most of the literature published by Antigonish, most of which I translated for my study clubs. It was Antigonish literature mixed with some of the literature I had brought home from Quebec, particularly on the caisses populaires. To this day the people of Cheticamp



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