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Parade of Concern for Sydney Steel A Conversation with Fr. Wm. Roach about the 1967 l/larch On Friday, Oct 13,1967 • the day we call "Black Friday" • Hawker-Siddeley and DOS- CO announced the closure of the Sydney steel plant. Fr. William Roach was at that time a Field Worker with the St. Francis Xavier University Extension Department. We talked to him in January 1990, on the day the Nova Scotia government wrote off the steel plant's debt. After over 25 years of government management, this seemed an? other step toward the sale of the steel plant to a private owner. Fr. Roach had served on the Citizens' Steering Committee that led to the Parade of Concern, November 19th, 1967 • the culmination of pressure that forced the provin? cial government to take over the steel plant that Hawker-Siddeley had abandoned. We came to Fr. Roach with questions about private and public ownership, the Com? mittee's plans in those days, etc. This is what we learned: (Fr. Roach, did you know that Black Friday- was coming? Was closure in the air in the community?) No, no. Not at all. Not at all. Perhaps it should have been. But it wasn't. And there's a few reasons for it. Coal was so much on our minds, that steel was not a concern. See, the "Donald Report" came out (a Royal Commission called The Cape Breton Coal Problem, headed by Dr. J. Richardson Don? ald) . I think it was in 1966. Black Friday was '67. And Donald recommended the clos? ing out completely of the coal industry. • P/RATES At the Parade of Concern, 1967 And the coal industry was a much bigger employer: Glace Bay, Wa? terford, and the Northside. And I think it was to close out about 971. the last coal mine. But Donald was very strong in recommending measures to offset the so? cial im? pact. He was very good on that respect. And there was no ques? tion about it, it was as a result of Dr. Don? ald's sug? gestions on the social impact--and then, our pressure--that brought about DEVCO (Cape Breton Development Corporation). Now. if DEVCO didn't work, a lot of it would be more our fault than anybody else's. The concept was good. And it certainly did a lot of good since it came on the scene--DEVCO. Everything wasn't perfect, but I don't know what we would have done without it. And then, because of DEVCO, and because of people like Bill Marsh and others putting pressure on Allan MacEachen, who was sort of the godfather around here--that's when Lingan was opened, some years later. And the whole coal industry turned around completely. 37