



How Newfoundlanders Got the Baby Bonus

Edward Roberts

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Every Newfoundlander and Labradorian knows that Joey Smallwood was “the Father of the Baby Bonus.” He told us so in his own inimitable style—many, many, many, many times. But is that really how Newfoundland’s mothers got their cheques? Or is it another Imperfect Moment from our past—one where the story is simply wrong or incomplete?

Did Adolf Hitler ever fight the Royal Newfoundland Regiment during the First World War?

Why did William Coaker, champion of Newfoundland’s fishermen, throw an inkwell across the House of Assembly at Alfred B. Morine?

Did Newfoundland really try to sell Labrador to Canada?

Were the 1949 Referendum ballots counted honestly, or did we become Canadians because of a fraud?

Was Rockwell Kent a German spy?

What is the true story of the loss of the SS Diana, a Newfoundland sealing vessel?

And what did Edward, Prince of Wales—later the Duke of Windsor—really think about St. John’s? Edward Roberts, long and passionately interested in Newfoundland history, wrote fifty “Past Imperfect” newspaper columns to answer these and other questions from the mists of our past. He answered all these questions, and more. He revealed the real reason why the famed Blue Puttees wore blue leggings, and not the khaki of the British Army of their day. He demolished the myth that the Pink, White, and Green was Newfoundland’s national flag. And he tells how and why 50,000 mothers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador got their first baby bonus cheque in April 1949, just three weeks after Confederation. Joey Smallwood got the credit, but he didn’t do the work.

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