

Transcription of Interview with Morace Dale (andrus. Dale)

Mr. Dale is 'old enough to vote.'

b.Framingham, Massachusetts.

father was born in New Brunswick.

he was four when they moved here. moved to Nappan.

his father was farming at Nappan. prosperous farmer.

started coal mining at 14 at Fenwick.

started to work at 1914.

two seams of coal at Fenwick. the top seam and bottom seam.

on the west side they used to have to use ten foot booms for props.

thick seam of coal.

bench--eight, ten inches of stone at the top of the bench.

store it up in back of the props.

he defends the value of Fenwick coal. Springhillers knew that if they went deep enough, they'd be into the Springhill coal. same coal as the Springhill. it was a good grade of coal.

had a little mine at Little Forks--real good coal.

Jimmy Sutherland was manager of the Tingley mine.

35 or 40 workers at the Fenwick mine. his first job was as a "putter." Used to go in and load coal, shove the box out to the bottom, turn it around on the sheet and they'd bring it around on the bank.

shoving boxes away in.

no haulage system in the levels. just the slope.

haulage system run by steam.

two boxes on a rake. couldn't have been a very strag hoist.

run the pumps for awhile. also a chain-runner. you rode up on the box, at the bankhead threw the chain off to one side.

boxes went right along to the tipple.

--also worked up at River Hebert. Victoria Coal Co.

'It was awful low....You crawled up the wall on your hands and knees, and you laid on your side and shovelled the coal.'

wal was 200 feet long. 7 or 8 men on that. each got a certain amount. cleaning off about 27 feet or so. coal cutters at work.

back shift lay the pans, 3 o'clock shift moved the machines up, first shift actually cut the coal.

paid \$3.50 a day in 1918.

--mine at Fenwick: just driving in the levels, then drove heads up for airways. bord-and-pillar, sort of.

lived in Strathcona. m.1921.

'And we had a gentleman in the union and he'd listen to whatever was said and who said it, and just before the meeting was closed, he'd get up and walk out. And he'd go to the boss and tell the boss all what they were going to come after him for, and when they'd go and explain to him what it was they wanted, the boss said, He already knew.'

[the informer was a member of the union.]

'And by golly, one night--the fellow used to sit at the door. He wasn't there, and they got me to sit down at the door. So I sit. When the meeting was pretty well over; he gets up and starts to come out, and I just walk over and I say, "Where are you going?" He says, "I'm going out," he says. 'The meeting's pretty near over.' I said, 'You get permission up there for to go?' 'No.' 'Then,' I said, 'Go and get permission. If you don't get permission you go back there and sit down, you're not getting out this door.'

--fellow wouldn't go and ask.

--next day he got yelled at by the manager. he hollered at him because he wouldn't let that fellow go.

--claims that he threatened manager. with a bar.

--story may be apocryphal but illustrates something about his attitudes.

--told with delight about the threatening of the mgr.

--this incident is said to have occurred during the 1930s.

moved across the River from Strathcona.

worked at the Sweet Cake and the Bright Light.

worked at Strathcona for 2 or 3 years.

all in all, was in R.Hebert until 1937.

there from 1922 to 1937,

working quite steady through the 1930s.

'They were all strangers to us.'--his wife's estimate of R.Hebert society.

had a union meeting every week. most everyone came.

weren't interested in taking part in theatres, dances, etc. had children then--couldn't take them any where.

'It's a dirty, dirty job coal mining...We scrubbed every day to keep the house clean...Used to go out at three o'clock, while he was working there, I was working in the house, scrubbing and cleaning.'

--her analysis of the women's role in the mining town.

--her father was a coal inspector--Herbert Perry.

checking around Cumberland Co.

'Quite a place in there one time. Now it looks like a ghost town.'--comment on Chignecto.

she was born in Chignecto.

gibrrx her grandfather had a store in there and a poolroom.

foreigners in company housing.

her sister and her used to clean up the school at Chignecto. b.1904.

--had this job at age 14.

her Dad used to farm--had a cow, pigs, hens. same time hwas mning chal.  
--after he died her mother kept it up.

worked as a fireman in the hospital after he left the mines.

death of her father in a hunting accident--nine girls and three boys in the family. all left to her mother to bring up. she kept every one of them in the family.

--to keep the family going she raised potatoes, had strawberries.  
--she basically took over the farm.

used to get up and work at 4 a.m.

--Blight Mine. had no electricity.

--four double houses in at the Blight Mine.

--some people from Chignecto worked in that mine; others from Springhill.

--a certain reserve about foreigners on the part of Mrs. Dale.

can remember John the Jew and Simon the Jew who had stores.

'He worked at every little thing he could get at.'

--cooked in the woods.

--informing on the union at R.Hebert--went on for a year or more.

--after the famous incident it was up to him to tend the door for the union again.

--a lot of little union locals in the R.Hebert district.

'Well, I figured that it was working for us men.'--his attitude for the men.

'When you had so many scabs, what could you do?'--verdict on why the union didn't work perfectly.