

THE LABRADOR INSTITUTE OF MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
& THE COLLEGE OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC

present

LABRADOR/ANS ON FILM

2014-15 SEASON

SCREENING #3: THE STRUGGLE OF THE LABRADOR

Perhaps a better title for this month's program could be borrowed from Louie Montague's recent memoir, *I Never Knewed it Was Hard*, as it suggests the peculiar shift that happens in the reckoning of our own histories. From the vantage of our present moment – which we tend to perceive as offering qualitatively better material circumstances – the past is often understood to have offered less but, somehow, left us more fulfilled. Across generations, the tendency is exacerbated. Our parents and grandparents constitute societies that we will inevitably interpret as being more authentic as ours, due in no small part to the conditions under which they laboured. There is a reason we look to Them Days, so to speak. As living products of history, our struggle is to avoid the trap of nostalgia, to attempt to see our and our ancestor's labours for what they are so as to understand our present more accurately. With that in mind, in this program we offer two (of a great many) films that isolate and examine the relatively recent struggles of Labradorians.

Introduction to Labrador (25 mins, Memorial University of Newfoundland Extension Service, 1970) Prods. Harvey Best and George C. Story.

As the summary film for *Labrador Film Project 1969*, *Introduction to Labrador* is at once both less and more than the sum of its parts. Largely made up of footage from the remaining films in the project, the overview it provides is, necessarily, cursory. But at the same time, this piecemeal composition provides a portrait of life on the South Coast that has yet to be replicated in quality or scope. Watching this now, it is difficult to comprehend that such material circumstances persisted as late as 1968, the year in which most of the project was filmed. But the form exacerbates that disbelief. The black and white film stock, tight angles and grainy images suggest even more historical distance.

Labrador: A Battle For Survival (26 mins, Mid-Canada Communications, 1981)

While the action-news styled approach reads as dated now, this piece asserts its relevance for two reasons. First, is its specificity. Its cursory introduction and conclusion aside, the substance of *Labrador: A Battle for Survival* reveals the acute structural problems of Labrador's governance. Second is its context. We really know nothing about this piece other than the information contained within it. Again, the approach suggests it was created for television but the issues it addresses suggests it might have been commissioned. The company,

Mid-Canada Communications, was a division of Northern Cable, which was based in Sudbury and served a number of communities throughout northern Ontario.

Coordinated by Morgon Mills

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