INTERVIEWER: Dianne Zieman

DATE: March 29, 1972
TIME: 50 minutes.

Interviewed Mr. Rowan Hutchison as I had heard that his family had a summer cottage down on the site of the old Fort; as well, he is a local businessman, and I hoped he would have some comments and suggestions re present conditions in New Liskeard. Found the interview quite disappointing; Mr. Hutchison seemed to find the questions highly personal although an effort was made to minimize the interview questions and time involved. If he had been more willing to remember early incidents, would have been a great source of information on the old Fort.

Mr. Rowan Hutchison was interviewed at his office at 18 Armstrong St., New Liskeard - R.T. Hutchison Real Estate; 647-4341. Mr. Hutchison, Senior, came up here at an early age. Rowan Hutchison was born in Toronto, although his home was in New Liskeard. He attended New Liskeard Public School (early teachers - Mrs. Lawson and a Miss Hoggs who is now Mrs. Burns and lives in Kirkland Lake) and Upper Canada College in Toronto.

Early impressions:

a) Transportation - streetcar (electric cars) ran from Cobalt to New Liskeard; doesn't remember when it was discontinued. Some cars; many horses and wagons then.

b) Industry - Hill, Clark & Francis; Wabi; Eplett's, which was smaller but going. Northern Telephone.

c) Recreation - skating arena, although at that time, they skated more on the lake ice. Church groups, Cubs and Scouts.

d) Entertainment - Grand Opera House where Canadian Tire now is - remembered seeing Black Beauty at a tender age. Doesn't know what else the Opera House would have been presenting.

e) Jobs - generally speaking, there were jobs for the kids of his age group when they finished school. Was and is essentially a farming community, due to the little clay belt north of town. More small mines and lumber companies than there are now. Some of the lumber companies were bought

e) Continued .... out; others burned. McCamus and McKelvie had a lumber company down on the Wabi.

Present opinions:

Educational facilities - have spent far too much money on it - actually, they have gone mad! Doesn't say that because education is unimportant, but because they have gone overboard. He is old-fashioned - thinks that present schools are not strict enough. Kids don't spell very well; just seem to "do their own thing". Children are now asked to decide what their life will be when they are still in public school - far too young then to make such long-range decisions. Regionalization has been expensive - they've cut out little wooden schools which were peanuts to support - perhaps not as good as larger ones now.

Economic setup - fairly good, although jobs for fairly competent people are certainly hard to get. Many applications for few positions.

Job opportunities , training and wages - the wages are slightly lower. Doesn't think that there are as many job-training facilities here as there are "below". Probable factor is that there are less industries to employ them. The technical schools (one in Kirkland Lake) seem to have done pretty well. Actually, it depends upon the individual boy or girl and their desire to work for something. A kid that has enough drive will go places.

City facilities - generally speaking, they are less in this area.

Private enterprise - present economic state - dread of takeovers. Probably could encourage more industries - doesn't really know, although more promotional work and advertising, plus tax rebates for secondary industries in the north might help. Freight rates are very high - a disadvantage in competition with Toronto. Ontario government owns O.N.R. - it's supposed to lose money. The telephone company makes money.

Recreation - pretty good in New Liskeard for a town of its size; perhaps now there isn't as much for kids in their early teenage years. Badminton and curling are available.

Changes - medical staff could be increased; doctors are always hard to get and the existing staff is really too busy to furnish a patient with all the individual attention he might need. Hospital facilities are not adequate as they are. Higher taxes, expecially water rates, affect real estate costs. The town seems to be growing here and there - fairly steadily for some reason.

HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Hutchison, Sr., and Mr. McCamus bought the old fort land and buildings from the Hudson Bay Company. They used it as a summer place for their families - the Hutchisons stayed in what had been the store; their guests would stay in the other buildings. He remembers about 9 or 10 buildings at that time. Pretty old structures - square nails, which would have been shipped up by canoe.

The trading post had big French style dormer windows, pine finishing; two-storey - some old chairs and things, benches, weather vane, fur presses, war canoes, etc. They found some old Hudson Bay records in the attic, re trading furs for flour, etc. - the attic was full of stuff. The shoreline has receded considerably - he no longer goes there - doesn't like to see it now. Believes that his father sold to a lumber company, and then the Oblate Fathers owned the site. As a child, he knew which buildings were what. The factor's house was ~~was~~ on the point.