

When the RCAF took over Gander- what happened to the civilians?

The airport in Gander was operational by the end of the summer of 1939 - but no one seemed in a rush to make use of it, even though the Second World War had already started.

Hitler's preparations for the invasion of France changed the scenario. On 10 February 1940, a reconnaissance party of senior RCAF officers landed in Gander. Ottawa sent a formal offer on 14 June 1940 to the Governor of Newfoundland to station air and ground forces at Gander.

This offer had been previously discussed, was expected and promptly accepted. In a matter of days, five aircraft of 10 Bomber Reconnaissance Squadron, operating Digbys, arrived under command of S/L Carscallen and a battalion of infantry had disembarked at Botwood, part of which was en route for Gander.

One year later, 01 April 1941, the RCAF took over responsibility for the operations of the airport, which previously had been run basically by civilians, mostly Newfoundlanders.

Several months later, on 01 August, the RAF took over the Ferry operations in its own corner of the airfield. It as well absorbed the civilians, quite often meteorological and radio-communications staff, who previously did the same job.

It is easy to confound the two operators who took up new responsibilities in roughly the same period. The lists attached apply however only to civilians who stayed on to work with the RCAF.

MARCH, 1941

MAINTENANCE PAYROLL

<u>NAME</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>AVERAGE SALARY PER MONTH</u>	
T.L. Lannon	Mechanic	133.00	Per Month
T. Hammond	Bus Op.	115.00	"
G.W. Collins	do	115.00	"
H. Saunders	Mechanic	115.00	"
C. Tavernor	do	115.00	"
A.J. Baker	Carpenter	107.00	"
H. George	do	91.00	"
W. Parmiter	Boiler Op.	111.00	"
E. Woodford	do	111.00	"
E. Flynn	Plumber	120.00	"

F.G. Chafe	Electrician	160.00	Per Month
R.J. Mercer	Sr. Power House Op.	125.00	"
Wm. Clouston	Power House Op.	115.00	"
K. Morgan	do	115.00	"
W.J. Dooley	Electrician	115.00	"
J. James	Power House Op.	115.00	"
J. Heppern	Power House Op.	115.00	"
Wm. Morrissey	Assistant Fireman	75.00	"
A.W. Tulk	Storekeeper	104.18	"
A. Cose	Cook	80.00	(net) "
P. Sweeney	2nd cook	52.00	" "
R. Parsons	Cookes	40.00	"
B. Wareham	do	40.00	"
A. Cole	Sanitary Man	68.50	per month

G. East	Speeder Op.	100.00	Per Month
A. Crane	Labourer	120.00	"
R. Fewer	Blacksmith	91.00	"
C. Pippy	Labourer	100.00	"
E. Butt	do	100.00	"
R. Woodford	do	75.00	"
A. Kelly	do	75.00	"
W.J. Tremblett	do	92.00	"
A. MacDonald	do	85.00	"
T. Rose	do	95.00	"
H. Crane	do	65.00	"
H. Wells	Fire Truck Op.	102.00	"
W. Mercer	Truck Op.	88.00	"
J. Bradbury	do	95.00	"
Mark Brett	Watchman	85.00	"

<u>NAME</u>	<u>POSITION</u>	<u>SALARY</u>	
Mr. T.M. McGrath	Operation Officer	158.34	Per Month
" C.S. James	Clerk	125.00	"
" Gerard Flynn	"	105.00	"
" John J. Cochrane	"	91.68	"
" E.S. Spencer	Works Supt.	183.33	"
" Geo. Bradbury	Teleprinter Op.	75.00	"
" N. Richards	"	75.00	"
" H. Earle	"	75.00	"
" H. Moores	"	75.00	"
" Franklin Lenge	"	85.00	"
" C. O'Keefe	"	75.00	"
" Wm. George	"	75.00	"
" Thos. Shortall	Head Bedroom Steward	70.00	"
" A. Kelly	Bedroom Steward	55.00	"
" Paul Laidley	"	50.00	"
" Ralph Power	"	50.00	"
" Francis Stoyles	Labourer	55.00	"
Dr. Knapp	Visiting Dr.	100.00	"
Mr. Neill	Accountant	200.00	"
" Brett Pugh	Teleprinter Op.	79.16	"

The highest paid was Dr Knapp at 200\$/month but for only one visit per week from Grand Falls. (Office and quarters shown 1937)



The next highest paid was the accountant, Mr O`Neill, followed by Mr BS Spencer, Works superintendant, and Mr Fred Chafe, electrician.

As can be seen, workers in general and tradesmen in particular earned fairly decent salaries for the time, esp as compared to going wages in many parts of Nfld.