



Interview on Fogo Island: Colin Low, left, one of the two originators of the technique.

the deprivées, as well as with and between other groups. This ability, says Miss Michaels, who has been project manager throughout for O.E.O., is "one of the most important contributions that the effort can make in a country where communication, rather than resolving conflict seems to have become distorted into a means of encouraging it."

The Fogo concept was an outgrowth of the National Film Board's Challenge for Change program, designed to experiment with the use of film in bringing about better communications among Canadians.

It was thought that Newfoundland might offer fruitful ground for such an experiment because it was believed

that many of the desolate "outport" fishing communities there were no longer economically viable. The provincial government was engaged in a program of resettling the villagers to inland communities with planned economies.

Fogo was chosen because it was representative of the problems, because parts of the island were searching for a way to do *something* for itself, and because it had a resident extension field worker from Memorial University who was a native of the island and knew it well. (Similarities between the Alaska and Newfoundland experience recently led the community and technical "directors" of the Alaskan unit to spend some time with the

staff and crew of Memorial's Extension Service in Newfoundland and Labrador.)

Filming began on Fogo in the summer of 1967. A cross section of the community was selected and filmed. People talked of their problems, personal and civic—the fishing, youth leaving the island, governmental indifference, poverty, welfare, and religious strife with its effect on education.

Low found that without exception no one tried to "ham it up," that people expressed themselves simply, honestly, and with great dignity. Not all the filming was sombre: Fogo children at their play, a wedding and its gaiety, and a house party were among the subjects.

Mr. Low learned that when the films were shown to the people it was not wise to present an unrelieved ration of problems. He found it best to start and end an evening's screenings with something lighter, preferably film that in showing some aspect of their lives reflected the islanders' cultural heritage, permitted them to draw pride from their children, or identified their common interests.

It was also found to be critically important—on Fogo, and elsewhere since then—that the screenings not end on a note of tension or abrasion but rather on a positive plane conducive to continuing the process and promoting change. After mass community viewings the citizens would stay and discuss what they had seen. In the six-community rural experiment, this "afterplay" was also put on film.

Mr. Snowden believes that the films gave the people of Fogo an understanding of themselves and their neighbors. They learned in many cases that the opinions of their neighbors were closer to their own than they had suspected. They learned that their neighbors had valid points even when they were in total disagreement, and that there was often a chain of logical reasoning behind these points and not just blind prejudice.

The results, says Mr. Snowden, were that for the first time on an island or community basis, people showed an inclination to sit down and work out their problems, to try to overcome poverty, and to settle the school difficulties.

Members of the Provincial Government viewed the films at a special screening. They found themselves criticized. But more important, they found the people of Fogo had little