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# “The CCF is not a ‘Class’ Party”: labour, politics, and their unification at the Lakehead, 1944-1963

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“The CCF is not a ‘Class’ Party”: Labour, Politics, and their Unification at the Lakehead,  
1944-1963

By

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## ABSTRACT

““The CCF is not a Class Party”: Labour and Politics at the Lakehead, 1944-1963” is a study of the organized labour movement in the Lakehead from 1944 to 1963. This study analyzes the new sophistication of the organized labour movement and labour’s relationship to politics in a period of rapid change for the Lakehead. ““The CCF is not a Class Party”” argues that, between 1944 and 1963, the organized labour movement and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) at the Lakehead underwent parallel structural developments against the backdrop of conservative social forces in the postwar period that, by the end of the 1950s, necessitated a merger of the two formally distinct entities. The amalgamation of labour and politics, resulting in the formation of the New Democratic Party (NDP), is best examined through the political career of Douglas Fisher, who first represented the CCF and, later, the NDP in Port Arthur. The debate surrounding the ‘New Party’ idea in the late 1950s at the Lakehead is reflective of the uneasy relationship between labour and politics that had formed throughout the postwar period.

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## Introduction

Bruce Magnuson, a communist labour organizer who emigrated to Northern Ontario from Sweden in the interwar period, found his greatest success in the organization of the 1946 Northern Ontario bushworkers' strike. A nearly three-week long labour dispute that paralyzed Northern Ontario's economy, Magnuson recounted the strike's conclusion in his autobiography, writing: "I will always remember that day in early November of 1946, when I stepped off the train in Timmins and was hoisted onto the shoulders of the strikers outside our headquarters on Algonquin Avenue, where our cook had baked a big cake to celebrate a first real province-wide contract between our union and the Ontario Forest Industries Association..."<sup>1</sup> Magnuson, the former president of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union (LSWU) Local #2786 (Port Arthur), served as the regional organizer for the 'Lumber and Saw' in the Timmins area at the time of the strike.<sup>2</sup>

The bushworkers' strike began on 12 October 1946 when a reported 5,000 workers, mainly from the Lakehead (collectively Port Arthur and Fort William, present-day Thunder Bay) and the surrounding area, walked off the job.<sup>3</sup> The strike had been waged primarily over the LSWU's inability to win union certification, but other striker concerns included increased wages, free hand-tools, and the abolition of double-decker bunks.<sup>4</sup> After over two weeks of tripartite negotiations between the union, the various management groups, and the Canadian federal

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<sup>1</sup> Bruce Magnuson, *The Untold Story of Ontario's Bushworkers: A Political Memoir by Bruce Magnuson* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1990), 77.

<sup>2</sup> The Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union is referred to as the 'Lumber and Saw.' The most thorough scholarly analysis can be found in Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987) and Douglas Thur, "Beating around the Bush: the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union and the New Political Economy of Labour in Northern Ontario, 1936-1988" (Master's Thesis, Lakehead University, 1990).

<sup>3</sup> *Port Arthur News Chronicle* (hereafter *PANC*), 12 October 1946; Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 145.

<sup>4</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (hereafter TBMS), A.T. Hill Fonds (hereafter ATF), Series A17/2/2, Letter to the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council from A.T. Hill, 19 October 1946; Thur, "Beating around the Bush," 103-105; Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 144.

government, the parties signed a collective agreement on 30 October 1946 that met every demand made by the strikers, and, five days later, most had returned to work.<sup>5</sup>

The 1946 bushworkers' strike is Northern Ontario's equivalent to the 1945 Ford strike in Windsor, as both strikes appeared to ignite their respective region's post-Second World War labour movement.<sup>6</sup> The strikes in Windsor and throughout Northern Ontario marked dramatic shifts in union-management relations that signaled a new era of industrial relations, marked by unprecedented union self-determination. The strike in Northern Ontario interlaces well into the broader pattern of postwar Canadian industrial relations, known by historians as the "postwar compromise" or "postwar settlement."<sup>7</sup> The compromise occurred through the passage of the *Wartime Labour Relations Regulations (PC 1003)* on 7 February 1944, the core tenets of which were later enshrined in federal legislation through the 1948 *Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act (IRDIA)*. In Ontario, similar legislation passed before the 1944 Order-in-Council; later, to modernize the legislation as jurisdiction over labour began transitioning back to the provinces from the federal government after the war, the Province of Ontario passed the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* in 1950.<sup>8</sup> Ontario's new *Act*, though distinct, generally mirrored the *IRDIA*.

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<sup>5</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 147.

<sup>6</sup> For more information on the 1945 Ford strike, see Herb Colling, *Ninety-Nine Days: The Ford Strike in Windsor, 1945* (Toronto: NC Press Limited, 1995) and Irving Martin Abella, ed., *On Strike: Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada, 1919-1949* (Toronto: James, Lewis & Samuel, 1974).

<sup>7</sup> It has also been called "Canada's Wagner Era" and "Canadian Fordism." The first title reflects the similarity in legislation between *PC 1003*, the *IRDIA*, and the United States of America's 1935 *Wagner Act*. Though there certainly are similarities, a significant difference is outlined by Taylor Hollander, who argues that, in contrast to the *Wagner Act*, "PC 1003 rose above the fray of class relations to promote the general welfare of the country. The emphasis was on process – on achieving peace and stability – not on basic rights." See Taylor Hollander, *Power, Politics, and Principles: Mackenzie King and Labour, 1935-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 208. It is also referred to as Canadian Fordism because it propelled Canada into a new era of industrial relations anchored on a Fordist approach to mass production (and consumption), with a Taylorist division of labour. For more information on Canadian Fordism, see Don Wells, "The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Auto Worker Local in the 1950s," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 147-173.

<sup>8</sup> For a thorough analysis of the 1950 *Ontario Labour Relations Act*, see Charles W. Smith, "The Politics of the Ontario Labour Relations Act: Business, Labour, and Government in the Consolidation of Post-War Industrial Relations, 1949-1961," *Labour/Le Travail* 62 (Fall 2008): 109-151.

The postwar settlement is defined by the legally entrenched right of union recognition and bargaining by employers, but which only could occur through bureaucratized channels within the Canadian state apparatus. Workers successfully earned the right to recognition and bargaining in 1944, and as importantly, succeeded in finding consistent financial support through the 1946 Rand decision.<sup>9</sup> As a consequence of more accessible pathways to recognized bargaining units and increased financial security, the volume and density of unions rose dramatically in the postwar period, with registered union members in Canada increasing from 359,000 to 831,000 members between 1939 and 1946.<sup>10</sup> Though organized labour made obvious gains in the postwar period, negative elements intrinsic to the postwar compromise also worked to harm the labour movement. While changes ensured that labour would have more leverage than ever before both in the workplace and Canadian affairs, the postwar compromise also dramatically altered the structure of Canadian unionism by reducing the influence of rank and file union members in favour of enlarged, hierarchal union bureaucracies.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, unions became significantly less radical in the postwar period, and particularly after the strike waves of 1946 and 1947, when McCarthyism and Cold War paranoia accelerated the removal of union radicals.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> The Rand Decision, or, Rand Formula, is a component of Canadian labour law that requires union workers who benefit from collective bargaining to pay union dues, regardless of if they are in the union or not. Union fees are taken from every paycheck regardless of union affiliation under the assumption that non-union workers are equally benefitting from the union as union workers are. It was handed down on 29 January 1946 by Justice Ivan Rand, who was arbitrating the Ford strike.

<sup>10</sup> James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 297.

<sup>11</sup> This interpretation is found universally throughout the literature. Examples include: Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2012), 77-79; Wells, *The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism*, 150; Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1985), 21-22.

<sup>12</sup> The Cold War and labour has been touched only briefly in the context of the Lakehead. See Jean Morrison, "The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds. Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 138.



The postwar compromise also made wildcat and sympathy strikes illegal, a trade-off for mandatory collective bargaining. The illegality of wildcat strikes arose from the state's need to ensure continued production throughout the end of the war and for a sustained workforce during Canada's postwar growth and prosperity, but again, this move further marginalized the rank and file union members within their organizations. The trade-off between security and worker influence created internal tension within the union because the union leadership was expected to police and pacify its members until they could negotiate a suitable collective bargaining deal.

Another significant drawback for labour was that 51% support from employees was necessary for a union to be recognized.<sup>13</sup> Though unions who amassed this number were guaranteed recognition, it was often a challenging number to reach when a plurality of different unions and union conglomerates were fighting for membership. Perhaps the most significant change during 1940s and 1950s was the increasing role that the state played in labour-capital relations; while the state had always had a vested interest in peaceful industrial relations (though often favouring business), the degree to which the state became involved in numerous components of the relationship between unions and managements, including in bargaining, the grievance procedure, and policy, had become unprecedented.<sup>14</sup>

Historians have spent considerable time exploring the consequences of the postwar compromise, as well as numerous trends that coalesced in 1944 that made the settlement possible. The postwar compromise emerged largely out of the tripartite actions between labour, capital, and state throughout the Second World War, all of which had strived to influence the social planning of postwar Canadian society.<sup>15</sup> At this juncture, organized labour held

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<sup>13</sup> Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 277.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-301.

<sup>15</sup> For the most sophisticated discussion of the cooperative actions between labor, capital, and state in planning postwar Canadian society, see Peter S. McNis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 47-86. This sentiment is echoed by Bryan

unprecedented bargaining power. Well-timed strikes throughout the war, often noted as the height of Canadian labour militancy, played a significant role in forcing concessions from both business and state, as did strike waves in 1946 and 1947 where the LSWU played a vital role. Worker militancy, coupled with memories of the Great Depression and the rise of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), created the conditions out of which the postwar settlement could occur.<sup>16</sup> The Canadian working-class underwent extreme hardship throughout the 1930s, and a significant push-factor for their militancy was the fear of returning to pre-war conditions.<sup>17</sup> The fear of these desolate conditions manifested in the rise of the CCF as a significant threat to industrial capitalism's political hegemony.

The success of the CCF, which emerged in Ontario in 1943, was a reflection of the public's anxious approach to postwar politics, and their distrust in the existing political establishment to achieve simultaneous prosperity and peace. Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King's Liberals were aware that maintaining political power necessitated concessions to labour. Taylor Hollander, in a study of the relationship between Prime Minister King and organized labour, neatly summarizes the impetus on King's shifting labour policy: "Politicians could no longer ignore the growing labour movement, the escalating strike rate, the overlapping demands of the main labour bodies, the rise of the CCF, and the groundswell of popular support."<sup>18</sup> While labour militancy or business savvy should not be discounted as major factors

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Palmer in *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Inc., 1992), 269.

<sup>16</sup> Peter S. McInnis, "Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 77:3 (September 1996): 337.

<sup>17</sup> Laurel Sefton MacDowell, "The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System During World War Two" *Labour/Le Travail* 3 (1978): 175-176. The conditions of the Great Depression at the Lakehead are lucidly depicted through first-hand accounts of the labourers and union leaders who lived through them, all of who universally lamented the conditions. See for example: Magnuson, *The Untold Story*, 7-18; LUA, Jean Morrison Labour History Collection, GS186a, Einar Nordstrom Interview, 1972 and A.T. Hill, "Historic Basis and Development of the Lumber Workers Organization and Struggles in Ontario," unpublished manuscript, Northern Studies Resource Centre, Lakehead University (c. 1952).

<sup>18</sup> Hollander, *Power, Politics, and Principles*, 173.

in Canada's postwar vision, understanding that King and the Liberals in part architected the postwar compromise to ensure their political survival is crucial to understanding the settlement at the national level.

The policies first presented through *PC1003* were entrenched nationally in 1948 after the passing of the *IRDLA*. For the first time in the nation's history, organized labour had won guaranteed recognition and bargaining rights that were enshrined in federal legislation.<sup>19</sup> Labour, too, had unprecedented leverage in Canada. Though union leadership could not have been expected to predict the short and long-term negative consequences of the compromise with perfect accuracy, if somebody had told Bruce Magnuson immediately after the LSWU strike that, throughout the 1950s, the power-balance between labour and capital would shift dramatically towards capital, unions would be purged of nearly all of their radical elements, and that the Lakehead's working-class would sharply turn towards labour-oriented politics rather than unions and direct action to address their concerns, it would seem almost unbelievable.<sup>20</sup> Yet, that is precisely how the postwar history of the region unfolded. The postwar period at the Lakehead saw the most dramatic shift in the region's industrial relations since the arrival of Harry Bryan and organized unionism in 1902.<sup>21</sup>

The postwar period marked an important shift in industrial relations at the Lakehead but has not received proper scholarly treatment. This study will examine the postwar compromise at the Lakehead and chronicle the histories of organized labour and social democratic politics during this period. Between 1902 and 1935, the Lakehead housed several variants of leftist thought that intersected with enclave-like ethnic groups to create an antagonistic labour legacy

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<sup>19</sup> Every province produced similar pieces of legislation by 1950 except for Québec.

<sup>20</sup> Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 169-183.

<sup>21</sup> For a biography of Harry Bryan, see Michel S. Beaulieu and Bruce W. Muirhead, "Harry Bryan – A Man of Fanatical Convictions," in *Essays in Northwestern Ontario Working Class History: Thunder Bay and Its Environs*, ed. Michel S. Beaulieu (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University Centre for Northern Studies, 2008), 53-70.

between labour and capital and within the labour movement itself. Building upon the growing body of literature focused on the Lakehead labour movement that has predominantly analyzed the first few decades of the twentieth century, this thesis will demonstrate forces acting upon both the organized labour movement and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in the postwar period necessitated a formal partnership for both to continue to survive in the postwar period's changing social landscape. This thesis also contends that analysis of postwar compromise is insufficient unless it properly examines the role that politics played throughout the compromise process. The organized labour movement primarily faced the following challenges that forced the move towards politics as an avenue to accomplish working-class goals: the bureaucratization of the union movement and the stripping of rank-and-file influence in union affairs, the complete decimation of influential radical leaders from labour's ranks, and the rise of international unionism at the Lakehead.<sup>22</sup> A former heartland of Finnish-Canadian, and other ethnic, radicalism and militant strikes, the Lakehead's working-class had become homogenized into the broader Canadian social experience in the post-Second World War era. Overall, the examination of the postwar labour movements reveals that, between 1935-1959, labour and politics became increasingly intertwined. The CCF, meanwhile, became increasingly familiar with organized labour to offset local voter complacency.<sup>23</sup> The culminating event, the election of the New Democratic Party in Port Arthur, and the community-wide dialogue within the Lakehead about the New Party idea, is a reflection of the uneasy marriage that united labour and politics in a region formerly characterized by its labour radicalism.

Documenting the changes in the structure of the Lakehead working-class adds to the growing understanding of the Lakehead's working-class. The lack of literature exploring the role

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<sup>22</sup> The Lakehead's labour history is typically composed of a fascinating blend of broader national and international labour currents and peculiar regional characteristics largely derived from the relationship between class and identity.

<sup>23</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 193-196.

of the working-class at the Lakehead during this period, an area that is still contemporarily reliant on primary industry and natural resources, leaves a gap in the modern understanding of the region and the character of Thunder Bay's working-class. Filling this void in the historiography will add to the knowledge of the local working-class and will contribute to the understanding of the historical trends that manifest in Thunder Bay today. Through studying the postwar Lakehead labour movement, "The CCF is not a 'Class' Party" will provide a greater understanding of a region central to the development of Canada.

Important to the understanding of the postwar compromise's manifestation at the Lakehead is knowledge of the nature of Canadian industrial relations during this period. The changes in union-management relations at the Lakehead and the working-class turn to labour politics is primarily a consequence of the legislative and political changes enacted throughout the postwar compromise. Two major historiographical themes have emerged that coalesce to form the fullest picture (to date) of the postwar changes afflicting the Canadian working-class: the increasing role of the state in labour relations and the transformed role of unionism and working-class identity in the period, and labour's increasing involvement and relationship to politics, most visibly witnessed through the rise of the CCF. An understanding of the postwar Lakehead, therefore, is necessitated by an understanding of these two themes.

The classic study of Canadian postwar industrial relations is Harold Logan's 1954 *State Intervention and Assistance in Collective Bargaining: The Canadian Experience, 1943-1954*.<sup>24</sup> Hindsight has allowed historians to flush out some of the nuances of Logan's work, but Logan succeeds in establishing the foundation of this stream of historical analysis by positioning the role of the state as central to the period while still focusing on labour's autonomy in striving for

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<sup>24</sup> Harold Logan, *State Intervention and Assistance in Collective Bargaining: The Canadian Experience, 1943-1954* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954).

guaranteed collective bargaining and other rights. Only two years after Logan's study, Charles Lipton's *The Trade Union Movement of Canada, 1827-1959* further advanced the study of Canadian postwar industrial relations.<sup>25</sup> Described as "egregiously flawed" by Desmond Morton, *The Trade Union Movement in Canada* became the standard text on Canadian industrial relations despite its shortcomings, the most notable of which concern Lipton's proximity to the issues which he tackles.<sup>26</sup> Lipton played a leading role in Canadian labour's push for collective bargaining rights in the 1940s, serving as an organizer for the United American Textile Workers. His leadership is evidenced by his appointment as a labour representative to Canada's National War Labour Board. Lived experience can often be a net positive in historical studies, but Lipton's study is an exception, offering very little substantive knowledge to the understanding of postwar industrial relations.

In the same year that Lipton published *Trade Unions in Canada*, the first major work from a historian that focused on the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation was published, University of Toronto historian Kenneth McNaught's *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth*.<sup>27</sup> Published only two years before the founding of the New Democratic Party, McNaught's work ignited the historical study of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, which at that point had only been the focus of political scientists. McNaught's biography on Woodsworth is in line with other historical works from the same period, blending rigorous scholarship with a colorful style of prose that contrasts the majority of contemporary scholarship.<sup>28</sup> McNaught's work remains influential in the study of Canadian social democracy

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<sup>25</sup> Charles Lipton, *The Trade Union Movement in Canada, 1827-1959* (Toronto: NC Press, 1973).

<sup>26</sup> Desmond Morton, "Some Millennial Reflections on the State of Canadian Labour History," *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000): 18.

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics: A Biography of J.S. Woodsworth* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

<sup>28</sup> For example, the opening of his chapter on the Social Gospel. See McNaught, *A Prophet in Politics*, 30.

to this day.<sup>29</sup> McNaught places Woodsworth and the CCF movement within the framework of Christian socialism and explores the nuances both of Woodsworth's life and the progression of the CCF through its three decades of existence.

The next significant publication focused on the CCF was Leo Zakuta's *A Protest Movement Becalmed: A Study of Change in the CCF*.<sup>30</sup> Zakuta primarily argues that the CCF as a socialist movement became increasingly conservative as the postwar period progressed.<sup>31</sup> Debating the evolution of socialist movements from the CCF to the NDP has been a central question in the historiography since the publication of *A Protest Movement Becalmed*. Specifically, historians struggle to agree on the degree to which revolutionary socialism and working-class politics defined the philosophy of the CCF as it transitioned to the NDP.<sup>32</sup>

The year 1968 marked breakthroughs in both postwar industrial relations and labour-politics studies, coinciding with the formalization of labour studies as a legitimate historical pursuit. Stuart Jamieson's *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-1966* became the new standard text on Canadian industrial relations.<sup>33</sup> Produced for the federal government, *Times of Trouble* deftly explores the tumultuous history of labour and capital, chronicling their various clashes and strike activity through the immediate postwar period and into the 1960s. Similar to Lipton, Jamieson was politically and socially involved in a significant portion of the time period that he discusses, but unlike Lipton, is able to distance himself sufficiently to allow a more proper interpretation.

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<sup>29</sup> It is a testament to the longevity and importance of *A Prophet in Politics* that it has been reprinted seven times to date.

<sup>30</sup> Leo Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed: A Study of Change in the CCF* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> A recent commentary on this problem can be found in James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016).

<sup>33</sup> Stuart Marshall Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66* (Ottawa, Task Force on Labour Relations, 1968). Palmer

Canadian labour-politics, too, advanced with two important publications on the CCF: Gad Horowitz's *Canadian Labour in Politics* and Walter D. Young's *Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961*.<sup>34</sup> Horowitz's study is seminal to the understanding of the relationship between labour and politics; it is particularly important because its timing allowed for an interpretation of the formation and the NDP where Horowitz suggests that the transition from the CCF to the NDP was a consequence of party leaders' desired or perceived need to increase the influence that labour had within the party.<sup>35</sup> As Horowitz argues, "the CCF's slow decline after the Second World War finally led to labour demands for a new party which would attract new support and become a major party."<sup>36</sup> His analysis, though dated, succeeds in establishing the foundation for studying the CCF throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

Walter D. Young's *Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961*, published a year after Horowitz's study, also made essential contributions to historians' understanding of the CCF. Young's most important contribution is his insistence that measuring the success of the CCF should include analyzing the gradual revolution that the party pressured the Liberal Party to undergo. On this topic, Young writes: "The success of the CCF as a movement was the extent to which the CCF as a party performed an input function, as measured by legislation enacted by the Liberal government which reflected the ideas, if not the ideology, of the CCF."<sup>37</sup> Young contends that the CCF was simultaneously a party and a movement, and understanding that dual-dynamic allows for a proper evaluation of the success of the CCF that cannot solely be measured by electoral success.

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<sup>34</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*; Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969).

<sup>35</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 262.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>37</sup> Young, *The Anatomy of a Party*, 301.



The early 1970s marked a relative lull in the study of industrial relations and labour-politics.<sup>38</sup> A notable exception is the work of Irving Martin Abella, who between 1973 and 1974 published two different works that made exceptional contributions to labour studies. The first, and the most enduring, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956*, explores the dialectic between the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) and their relation to Canada's communist movement and the CCF, concluding that the CCL "failed to check the advance of American unionism into Canada," but succeeded in providing "the Canadian workingman with the protection and power of the international unions he so desperately wanted."<sup>39</sup> What is crucial, Abella contends, is that the Canadian labour movement was able to attain a "a degree of autonomy" that had not been present since 1902.<sup>40</sup> In 1974, Abella edited *On Strike: Six Key Labour Struggles in Canada, 1919-1949*. Of particular importance to this study are the last two strikes that the work focuses on: the 1945 Ford Windsor Strike and the 1949 Asbestos Strike.<sup>41</sup> The entirety of postwar industrial relations and strike conduct is often distilled into and epitomized by the 1945 Ford Strike, and as a consequence, the literature surrounding the strike has ballooned comparatively to other important strikes. Abella's edited collection is a key early figure in situating the Ford Strike's importance.

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<sup>38</sup> This lull in industrial relations scholarship may be because of the increased attention to culture, a result of the influence of E.P. Thompson and Herbert Gutman on Canadian social history. Thompson's most influential work remains *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1968). For further reading by Gutman, see Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

<sup>39</sup> Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour. The CIO, The Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 222. Abella has also written more generally on the labour movement. For example, see Abella, *The Canadian Labour Movement, 1902-1960* (Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1975).

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> See Abella, *On Strike*, chapters 5 and 6.

Gerald L. Caplan, in 1973, published the first provincial study of the CCF, studying the movement in Ontario.<sup>42</sup> Caplan's work, *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario*, focused on the CCF in Ontario during the first two decades after its formation. Caplan makes a significant contribution to the understanding of the CCF in Ontario's southern core, and at the same time, makes note of what he believes to be the central problem plaguing Canadian socialism throughout history: that socialism's simple problem, whether through citizens' principles, propaganda, or any other obfuscator, is that "most Canadians have viewed socialism as an ideology designed to stifle their most precious basic aspirations," aided by the CCF being unable to successfully challenge this perception.<sup>43</sup> Caplan's work remains the seminal work on the CCF in Ontario, with the caveat that few provincial studies have situated the CCF in the province of Ontario.<sup>44</sup>

The latter half of the 1970s witnessed an increase in scholarship on the CCF, a significant portion of which remains essential today. Ivan Avakumovic's *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* in 1975 and *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal and Provincial Politics* in 1978, both of which enhanced the understanding of postwar politics' relationship to the labour movement.<sup>45</sup> More important than any individual work to the study of the postwar period was the establishment of the Canadian academic journal *Labour/Le Travail* in 1976: shortly after its inception, Laurel Sefton MacDowell's "The Formation of the Canadian

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<sup>42</sup> Gerald L. Caplan, *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: the CCF in Ontario* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>44</sup> A notable exception is the work of Dan Azoulay. See Dan Azoulay, *The Survival of the Ontario CCF/NDP, 1950-1963* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1997) and Dan Azoulay, "Winning Women for Socialism: the Ontario CCF and Women, 1947-1961," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 59-90.

<sup>45</sup> Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada; a History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975); Ivan Avakumovic, *Socialism in Canada: A Study of the CCF-NDP in Federal Politics* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978). The historiography of the CCF is covered thoroughly in this chapter. A few key texts on the Communist Party of Canada not mentioned elsewhere in the main text include: Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks: The Early Years of the Communist Party of Canada* (Victoria: Trafford Publishing, 1981); Tim Buck, *Thirty Years: The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada, 1922-1952* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1952) and Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: the Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1988).

Industrial Relations System during World War Two,” and H.C. Pentland’s “The Canadian Industrial Relations System: Some Formative Factors” appeared within its pages.<sup>46</sup> Both remain potent introductions to postwar industrial relations the origins and consequences of *PC 1003*. Scholarship during this period also marked a breakthrough in feminist labour studies. A significant work to emerge that studies the role of women in the postwar compromise was historian Ruth Pierson’s “*They’re Still Women After All*”: *The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood*.<sup>47</sup> The history of women in the labour movement would soon expand exponentially in the 1980s and 1990s, led by the likes of Joan Sangster and Joy Parr.<sup>48</sup> These important studies all occurred as the popularity of Canadian social and Canadian labour history increased.

Labour scholarship, after a fairly quiet 1970s, exploded in the 1980s. The number of graduate theses focusing on working-class history in Canada increased from 9 to 99 between 1966 and 1976 and the voluminous growth would be felt during the 1980s.<sup>49</sup> Kenneth McNaught published an article in the June 1981 edition of the *Canadian Historical Review* titled “E.P. Thompson vs Harold Logan: Writing about Labour and the Left in the 1970s,” which re-ignited interest in labour and social history among historians.<sup>50</sup> McNaught’s article served as a call to action for institutional historians to produce more traditional-style histories of the Canadian labour movement to oppose the focus on culture and identity that had characterized the writing

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<sup>46</sup> See Laurel Sefton MacDowell, “The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System During World War Two,” *Labour/Le Travail* 3 (1978): 175-196; H.C. Pentland, “The Canadian Industrial Relations System: Some Formative Factors,” *Labour/Le Travail* 4 (1979): 9-23.

<sup>47</sup>Ruth Roach Pierson, *They’re Still Women After All*: *The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1986). For a more concise work, see Ruth Roach Pierson, *Canadian Women and the Second World War* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1983).

<sup>48</sup> For examples of their work, see: Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989); Joy Parr, *The Gender of Breadwinners: Women, Men, and Change in Two Industrial Towns, 1880-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990).

<sup>49</sup> Bryan Palmer, “Canada,” in *Histories of Labour: National and International Perspectives*, eds. Joan Allen, Alan Campbell and John McIlroy (Wales: Merlin Press, 2010), 204.

<sup>50</sup> Palmer, “Canada,” 200-202; See Kenneth McNaught, “E.P. Thompson vs Harold Logan: Writing about Labour and the Left in the 1970s,” *Canadian Historical Review* 62:2 (June 1981): 141-168.

of labour history in the 1970s.<sup>51</sup> Much of the understanding of *PC-1003*-era industrial relations comes from graduate theses conducted shortly after McNaught's call to action. Peter Warrian's "Labour is not a Commodity: A Study of the Rights of labour in the Canadian Postwar Economy, 1944-1948" and David W.T. Matheson's "The Canadian Working-Class and Industrial Legality, 1939-1949" remain two important studies that still inform much of historians' understanding of the shifting nature of postwar industrial relations.<sup>52</sup> Warrian and Matheson, both of whom never published extensively on their respective theses, added to the growing literature surrounding the role of the Canadian state in shaping the postwar relationship between labour and capital, a theme that was further developed in Bob Russell's *Back to Work: Labour, State, and Industrial Relations in Canada*.<sup>53</sup>

A significant development in the study of the tripartite postwar relations between labour, capital, and state, occurred in 2002 when Peter S. McInnis published *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950*.<sup>54</sup> McInnis deftly articulates each competing party's vision for the structuring of Canadian postwar society and how the interactions between each entity shaped the ordering of postwar industrial relations, including the larger role taken on by the state.<sup>55</sup> An extremely important addition to McInnis' work is Taylor Hollander's monograph, *Power, Politics, and Principles: Mackenzie King and Labour, 1935-1948*.<sup>56</sup> Similar to McInnis, Hollander attempts to chronicle the formation of the postwar Canadian state and the working-class' place in it. The key distinguishing factor is Hollander's commitment to studying the history 'from-above' by placing Canada's Liberal

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<sup>51</sup> Palmer, "Canada," 200-202.

<sup>52</sup> Peter Warrian, "Labour is not a Commodity: A Study of the Rights of Labour in the Canadian Postwar Economy, 1944-1948" (Ph.D thesis, University of Waterloo, 1986); David W.T. Matheson, "The Canadian Working-Class and Industrial Legality, 1939-49" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1989).

<sup>53</sup> Bob Russell, *Back to Work? Labour, State and Industrial Relations in Canada* (Scarborough, Nelson Canada, 1990).

<sup>54</sup> McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 1-5.

<sup>56</sup> Hollander, *Power, Politics, and Principles*.

government as the focus of his analysis. Hollander contends that Mackenzie King “dominated competing visions and agendas about industrial relations [...] so that his principles informed the shape and direction of Canada’s collective bargaining regime.”<sup>57</sup> The key difference, then, between McInnis and Hollander is the importance they put on each competing interest’s vision in shaping labour policy and society more generally.

While McInnis and Hollander focus on labour as it relates to politics, Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker’s *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers’ Collective Action in Canada* places the postwar compromise in a legal framework and chronicles the history of state involvement in the collective bargaining process, exploring in-depth the responsibility of unions demarcated by the state in the aftermath of the Second World War. A thematically similar work, Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz’s *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*, forcefully argues that the Canadian labour movement in the immediate aftermath originally consented to the conditions of the postwar compromise, but as time progressed the state took several actions to coerce labour into vulnerable positions once again.<sup>58</sup>

The majority of works discussed situate the postwar compromise in a national framework. Carmela Patrias’ “Employers’ Anti-Unionism in Niagara, 1942-1965: Questioning the Postwar Compromise” and Don Wells’ “The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Auto Worker Local in the 1950s” are the two examples of a critical regional analysis of the postwar compromise that this thesis draws upon.<sup>59</sup> Studies of the postwar compromise at the Lakehead are virtually non-existent and the few works

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>58</sup> Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1985).

<sup>59</sup> Carmela Patrias, “Employers’ Anti-Unionism in Niagara, 1942-1965: Questioning the Postwar Compromise,” *Labour/Le Travail* 76 (Fall 2015): 37-77. Don Wells, “Origins of Canada’s Wagner Model of Industrial Relations: The United Auto Workers in Canada and the Suppression of “Rank and File” Unionism, 1936-1953,” *The Canadian Journal of Sociology* 20:2 (Spring 1995): 193-225.

that do cover the time period hardly mention the compromise. Jean Morrison's "The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay," Hendrick Brown's thesis "Local 1075 International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW-CIO), 1952-1962," and Ian Radforth's *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* are examples of works that have, at least in part, focused on the post-Second World War era.<sup>60</sup> Very little literature exists that places postwar compromise in a provincial light, with the best example being Charles W. Smith's "The Politics of the Ontario Labour Relations Act: Business, Labour, and Government in the Consolidation of Post-War Industrial Relations, 1949-1961."<sup>61</sup> Smith argues that the Conservative provincial government succeeded in manipulating social conditions and labour to achieve a favorable framework for business and the province.<sup>62</sup>

The literature surrounding postwar compromise has grown, in bursts, since Logan's publication of *State Assistance in Collective Bargaining*. The historiography of CCF, meanwhile, has also grown. The more recent works of Alan Whitehorn, Dan Azoulay, and James Naylor serve as prime examples. Whitehorn's collection of essays, *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP*, aided in the reintroduction of the CCF as a topic of study in the 1990s.<sup>63</sup> Whitehorn most successfully argues for a "more balanced historiography," suggesting that writing about the CCF had become subject to predictable tropes and overused frameworks.<sup>64</sup> Azoulay's contribution is his 1997 *Keeping the Dream Alive: The Survival of the Ontario CCF/NDP, 1950-*

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<sup>60</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*; Jean Morrison, "The Organization of Labour in Thunder Bay," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds., Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2008); Hendrick Brown, "Local 1075 International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW-CIO), 1952-1962" (M.A. Thesis, Lakehead University, 2005). Brown also published an article based on his thesis in the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society's *Papers and Records*. See Hendrick Brown, "'Pressure needed': Politics and Work in a United Auto Local, Canadian Car and Foundry Ltd, Fort William, Ontario, 1952-1962," *Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers and Records* 32 (2004): 56-71.

<sup>61</sup> Charles Smith, "The Politics of the Ontario Labour Relations Act: Business, Labour, and Government in the Consolidation of Post-War Industrial Relations, 1949-1961," *Labour/Le Travail* 62 (October 2008): 109-151.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Alan Whitehorn, *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992).

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-26.

1963.<sup>65</sup> In direct opposition to a significant amount of the CCF-focused literature, Azoulay focuses on a time-period and region where the CCF was at its weakest. Azoulay argues that abstract micro-notions of class, ethnicity and region, for example, fail to properly capture the decline of the CCF.<sup>66</sup> He argues, instead, that domestic and international “macro-currents” shaped the postwar Canadian society and played the definitive role in the decline of the CCF and its transition into the NDP, complicating the earlier narratives proposed by historians such as Walter Young.<sup>67</sup>

The most recent full-length analysis of the CCF, James Naylor’s *The Fate of Labour Socialism: the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future*, seeks to complicate the historiography, suggesting that both the ‘protest movement becalmed’ view and the ‘party continuity’ narratives applied to the CCF are incorrect, since they fail to adapt a dynamic notion of class and an understanding of the role of culture to the working-class to the frameworks.<sup>68</sup> Naylor, instead, argues that the notion of class within the CCF itself was dynamic and that the heterogeneity of notions of class within the CCF led to a competing visions of a reformist or a ‘true’ socialist party.<sup>69</sup> The literature surrounding the CCF has taken on many different interpretative forms, but there seems to be a linear progression in the historiography that increasingly emphasizes the complexity and heterogeneity of the movement.

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<sup>65</sup> Dan Azoulay, *Keeping the Dream Alive: The Survival of the Ontario CCF/NDP, 1950-1963* (Montreal and Kingston, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997). Azoulay in particular has explored the role of women in the CCF. See Azoulay, “‘Ruthless in a Ladylike Way’: CCF Women Confront the Postwar ‘Communist Menace,’” *Ontario History* 89:1 (1997): 23-52; Azoulay, “Winning Women for Socialism: The Ontario CCF and Women, 1947-1961,” *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 59-90.

<sup>66</sup> Azoulay, *Keeping the Dream Alive*, 226-227.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

<sup>68</sup> James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 302-304.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.

A crucial work to understanding the development of Canadian socialism is Ian McKay's *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History*.<sup>70</sup> In his work, McKay provides a valuable framework of the development of Canadian socialism that this thesis relies upon to situate the Lakehead within the broader Canadian socialist movement.<sup>71</sup> Specifically, McKay's argument that the third phase of Canadian socialism, Radical Planism, saw socialists turn towards politics as a means towards achieving their political goals maps on neatly to the Lakehead, where socialists had rallied behind the local CCF in large numbers by 1943.<sup>72</sup> The usefulness of McKay's framework for Canadian socialist development is reflected in the fact that "'The CCF is not a Class Party'" relies on McKay's discussion of Radical Planism as a framework for understanding the changes affecting the organized labour movement and the CCF during this period.

Industrial relations and labour-politics, and the heavy amount of overlap that these two themes share, have formed the basis for understanding the postwar compromise at the Lakehead and labour's relationship to politics. However, the literature on these topics have failed to properly grasp a full understanding of the entire Canadian experience. This thesis will attempt to remedy this problem by illuminating the effects of the postwar compromise at the Lakehead, a feat in which to this date has not been accomplished.

The first chapter, "The History of the Lakehead to 1944," establishes the state of the labour movement at the Lakehead in 1944. This chapter also explores the historical antecedents of social democracy at the Lakehead, beginning with the arrival of labour organizer Harry Bryan, and concluding with first successful election for the CCF. It will document that the Lakehead housed a complex labour movement and social democratic current that was divided as much by

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<sup>70</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*. Also see Ian McKay, "For a New Kind of History: A Reconnaissance of 100 Years of Canadian Socialism," *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000): 69-125.

<sup>71</sup> McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005).

<sup>72</sup> For McKay's discussion of Radical Planism, see McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 169-183.



ethnicity as by class.<sup>73</sup> Chronicling the history of the Lakehead labour movement prior to 1944 usefully serves as context by comparatively juxtaposing the chaotic, rank-and-file led early movements with the centralized, more peaceful international unionism in the postwar period. 1944 serves as a useful origin for the remaining chapters because, that year, *PC 1003* passed, marking the beginning of the postwar compromise and the onset of changes affecting the organized labour movement. Additionally, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation elected candidates in both Port Arthur and Fort William in 1943. By 1944, all of the local elements necessary for the postwar compromise were in place.

Chapter two, “Social Democratic Politics and the Cooperative Commonwealth Movement at the Lakehead,” continues the threads established in the first chapter by chronicling the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation at the Lakehead between 1943 and 1957. This chapter will argue that, similar to organized labour, conservative forces acting upon the social democratic movement fundamentally altered its character and purpose. From 1943 to 1951, the local branches of the CCF found success at the Lakehead by forming relationships with the working-class while also, for the first time in the region’s history, building a pan-class and pan-ethnic leftist coalition. After this successful period, the local Cooperative Commonwealth Federation faced extreme electoral challenges characterized by voter apathy. Though voter apathy and conservative forces reduced the effectiveness of the party locally, provincially, and nationally between 1951-1957, the chapter concludes by arguing that this six-year period served a fundamental role in the success of Douglas Fisher in 1957.

Chapter three, ““That is what is wrong with unions...It is taken out of the membership’s hands, the grassroots!”: Changes affecting the Organized Labour Movement at the Lakehead,

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<sup>73</sup> For a recent discussion on this subject, see Michel S. Beaulieu, ““It is better to retreat now than be crushed altogether”: Questions of Ethnicity and the Communist Party of Canada at the Lakehead,” In *Left Transnationalism: The Comintern and the National, Colonial and Racial Questions*, eds. Oleska Drachewych and Ian McKay (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 337-359.

1944-1957,” explores the similar trajectory of the organized labour movement in comparison to the CCF. The chapter first discusses the success of the organized labour movement throughout the Second World War and the immediate years afterwards, followed by an exploration of the several factors influencing the labour movement that necessitated organized labour’s turn towards politics as an avenue to achieve its goal. In particular, themes of international unionism, anti-communism, and increasing union bureaucracy will be investigated to reveal their role in fundamentally altering the nature of the labour movement. The consequence of these forces was the reduction in influence for rank-and-file union members and the turn towards politics.

The fourth chapter, “The Marriage of Labour and Politics: The New Democratic Party at the Lakehead,” chronicles the time period between 1957 and 1963, mirroring the time in which Port Arthur Member of Parliament Douglas Fisher served in office. The fourth chapter depicts the conclusion of the gradual amalgamation of labour and politics at the Lakehead, reflected most vividly by the local debates around the role that organized labour would play in New Democratic Party. The marriage of politics and labour at the Lakehead was never inevitable, and many members in both spheres resisted the change. However, as the chapter depicts, the beginning of the 1960s marked the conclusion of the gradual marriage between labour and politics and the nature of the working-class in the region were forever altered.

The history of the working-class at the Lakehead is long, storied, and understudied at the provincial and national levels. This study borrows heavily from the framework presented by McKay as an overarching guide to approaching the history of postwar labour. In doing so, this study is another attempt in a long history of studies that attempt to place the Lakehead within a national narrative. The Lakehead has never been isolated; quite the opposite, the Lakehead has traditionally blended regional peculiarities with significant influence from international and national currents. “The CCF is Not a Class Party” will place the Lakehead at the forefront of

historical analysis, shining light on an area most historians care not to. Overall, the history of the post-Second World War labour movement is that of compromise; at the era's conclusion, labour and politics had compromised so significantly that organized labour and social democracy became undistinguishable from each other.

## Chapter One The History of Lakehead Labour to 1944

When the Trades and Labour Congress met in Berlin (present-day Kitchener) in 1902 to discuss the most pressing issues facing the Canadian labour movement, the organized labour movement at the Lakehead was still in its infancy. Irving Abella has claimed that 1902 “was a major turning point” for Canadian labour, as the country’s labour leaders decided that it would not, in fact, be Canadian: the labour movement would be dominated by Americans and, specifically, the American Federation of Labour (AFL).<sup>1</sup> It is no coincidence that the AFL-affiliated Harry Bryan arrived in the Lakehead in the same year as the Trades and Labour Congress’ Berlin Conference. While four railway unions did exist at the Lakehead prior to 1902, the modern labour movement began with Bryan, who established at least twenty-two separate unions at the Lakehead.<sup>2</sup> Unlike the previously established railway unions, Michel S. Beaulieu notes that the labour organizations established by Bryan were the first in the region concerning themselves with larger social questions.<sup>3</sup> The arrival of Bryan ignited the organized labour movement at the Lakehead, that, by 1935, had matured significantly.

The historic development of the Lakehead shaped the nature and identity of the labour movement. The evolution of the Lakehead has always paralleled the market demand for various staples that depended on the region for extraction or transportation.<sup>4</sup> Throughout its

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<sup>1</sup> Irving Abella, *The Canadian Labour Movement, 1902-1960* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1975), 2. The subordination of the TLC to the AFL and its president, Sam Gompers, is essential to any understanding of Canadian labour history and is discussed in every broadly-focused Canadian labour text. Examples include Desmond Morton, *Working People: An Illustrated History of the Canadian Labour Movement* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2007), 67-76 and Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 2012), 31-34.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Morrison, *Labour Pains: Thunder Bay’s Working Class in Canada’s Wheat Boom Era* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2009), 27; Beaulieu and Muirhead, “A Man of Fanatical Convictions,” 53.

<sup>3</sup> Michel S. Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead: Ethnicity, Socialism, and Politics, 1900-35* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2011), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Many regional overviews have been conducted of the Lakehead, and to a larger extent, Northwestern and Northern Ontario. See Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott, *North of Superior: An Illustrated History of Northwestern Ontario* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd. 2010); Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp, eds., *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2008); Matt Bray and Ernie Epp, eds., *A Vast and Magnificent Land: An Illustrated History of Northern Ontario* (Thunder Bay and Sudbury:

development, silver, wheat, and immigrants have all passed through the area due to its geographic location: the Lakehead has, and remains to be, a transshipment hub for Canadian goods.<sup>5</sup> The first important step for the Lakehead's development occurred when the North West Company built what became Fort William in 1804.<sup>6</sup> It served as the West-East transshipment locale for the valuable furs obtained from the "Grand Nord," the fur-bearing regions of Mackenzie and Athabasca.<sup>7</sup> The 1821 merger between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company dramatically alerted Fort William's position in the fur trade, and suddenly, the role of the fort had significantly decreased and the Lakehead digressed into a period of lull.<sup>8</sup>

A regression in economic activity occurred at the Lakehead for nearly fifty years.<sup>9</sup> Two concurrent developments, the 1867 Confederation of Canada, and the 1868 discovery of silver at Silver Islet, a small island located at the tip of the Sibley Peninsula on Lake Superior, rejuvenated economic and political interest in the area. Canadian Confederation and Silver Islet occurring within a two-year span created intertwining forces of economic and physical colonization spurred by imperialist and romantic notions of expansion and progress that once again forwarded the development of the Lakehead. Physical and economic action increased during this period, and seventeen years after Confederation, and fifteen years after the use of Dawson's Road to quell the Riel Rebellion, the Lakehead's development advanced further when the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) established Fort William as its Lake Superior terminus in

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Lakehead University and Laurentian University, 1984); W. Robert Wightman and Nancy M. Wightman, *The Land Between: Northwestern Ontario Resource Development, 1800 to the 1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> The seminal text on Fort William's role in the fur trade is Jean Morrison, *Superior Rendezvous-Place: Fort William in the Canadian Fur Trade* (Toronto: Natural Heritage Books, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Beaulieu and Southcott, *North of Superior*, 39; Morrison, *Superior Rendezvous-Place*, 46.

<sup>8</sup> At this point, only small-scale mining and fishing operated in the region. For more information see Beaulieu and Southcott, *North of Superior*, 43, 45; Wightman and Wightman, *The Land Between*, 26.

<sup>9</sup> The most thorough treatment of this time period can be found in Elizabeth Arthur, ed., *Thunder Bay District, 1821-1892: A Collection of Documents* (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1973).

1875. On 1 June 1875, the first sod was turned at Westfort, and construction was complete by 1885.<sup>10</sup>

Similar to 1867-1868, intertwining forces of economic and physical colonialism again drove the Lakehead's development in 1885; the intersection between the CPR providing access to capital investment and labourers and the realization of the 1876 party platform of John A. MacDonald's Conservatives, containing MacDonald's National Policy, again deepened the importance of the Lakehead to the development of the Canadian state.<sup>11</sup> These developments allowed the shipping of raw goods from West to East, while immigrants moved to settle the West from the East, both of which had positive economic and demographic consequences for the Lakehead. The most important product to move through the Lakehead is grain, and the role that the grain trade played in growing the city has led to its local nickname, "King Grain."<sup>12</sup>

It was during this formative period, from 1885-1914, that the Lakehead's twin cities, Port Arthur and Fort William, though having existed for at least two decades prior, began to resemble urban cities, developing their own industry and manufacturing. This development did not happen solely because of the presence of a railway, but because of the wheat boom that necessitated the growth of the area to accommodate national and international markets. The amount of wheat passing through the Lakehead increased from four million bushels in 1882, to ten million in 1896, and finally (and dramatically), to 115 million bushels in 1914.<sup>13</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce Muirhead, "The Evolution of the Lakehead's Commercial and Transportation Infrastructure," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds. Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2008), 77.

<sup>11</sup> The National Policy was part of the platform of the Canadian Conservative Party in 1876 which sought to primarily accomplish three goals: the linking of British Columbia to the rest of Canada through a transcontinental railway, increased immigration to settle the Canadian West, and high tariffs to protect Canada's young industries.

<sup>12</sup> See David W. Tarbet, *Grain Dust Dreams* (Albany: Excelsior Editions, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> James Stafford, "A Century of Growth at the Lakehead," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds. Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2008), 41.

populations of Port Arthur and Fort William increased exponentially during the same time period, from a combined 6,850 in 1888, to a combined 45,500 in 1914.<sup>14</sup>

Ethnic immigration to the Lakehead also played a significant role in shaping the character of the organized labour movement. The Lakehead, from 1900 to 1945, was the most ethnically diverse region in Canada.<sup>15</sup> The diversity of labourers at the Lakehead has led Jean Morrison to term the early organized labour movement as a “Cosmopolitan workforce.”<sup>16</sup> Labourers from different areas in the world, but particularly from Northern and Eastern Europe, were attracted to the Lakehead between 1885 and 1902. Naturally, each ethnic group brought their distinct political notions with them. As a consequence, the Lakehead labour movement’s genesis occurred after the fusing of three elements: a long-standing tradition of capitalist exploitation of natural resources, an economy largely composed of working-class jobs, and a cadre of ethnic workers that contributed different leftist ideologies.<sup>17</sup> By 1902, all of the ingredients that composed the Lakehead labour movement were present.

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<sup>14</sup> F. Brent Scollie, “The Population of Thunder Bay, 1884-1901,” *Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers and Records* 7 (1979): 23.

<sup>15</sup> Beaulieu and Southcott, *North of Superior*, 65.

<sup>16</sup> Morrison, *Labour Pains*, 21.

<sup>17</sup> The relationship between class and ethnicity is one of the most important and interrogated themes in the Lakehead’s labour historiography. See, for example, Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead* and Morrison, *Labour Pains*. A particularly strong thread is the examination of the role of the Finnish population at the Lakehead. See Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*; Ian Radforth, “Finnish Radicalism and Labour Activism in the Northern Ontario Woods,” in *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s*, eds. Franca Iacovetta, Paula Draper and Robert Ventresca (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 293-315; Michel S. Beaulieu, David K. Ratz, and Ronald N. Harpelle, eds., *Hard Work Conquers All: Building the Finnish Community in Canada* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2018); Samira Saramo, ““A socialist movement which does not attract the women cannot live”: Finnish Socialist Women in Port Arthur, 1903-1933,” in *Labouring Finns: Transnational Politics in Finland, Canada, and the United States*, eds. Michel S Beaulieu, Ronald N. Harpelle and Jaimi Penney (Turku: Institute of Migration, 2011): 145-166; J. Peter Campbell, “The Cult of Spontaneity: Finnish-Canadian Bushworkers and the Industrial Workers of the World in Northern Ontario, 1919-1934,” *Labour/Le Travail* 41 (Spring 1998): 117-146; Marc Metsaranta, *Project Bay Street: Activities of Finnish-Canadians in Thunder Bay before 1915* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Finnish-Canadian Historical Society, 1989) and Ronald Harpelle, Varpu Lindström and Alexis Pogorelskin, eds., *Karelian Exodus: Finnish Communities in North America and Soviet Karelia during the Depression Era* (Beaverton, ON: Aspasia Books, 2004). It should be emphasized that these are but few of the works that give a considerate amount of attention to Finns in the Thunder Bay region. There are many more, and it is, as a consequence, an extremely rich historiography.

Upon organization in 1902, the Lakehead's working-class wasted little time in challenging capitalist hegemony. Work at the Lakehead during this era was physically demanding and compensated with very poor wages. To combat poor working-conditions, numerous strikes occurred through the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> The 1909 Freight Handlers strike in particular stands out as a foreshadow of future labour action at the Lakehead. Deemed "probably the bloodiest labor riot ever in Canada," the strike is a watershed moment in Lakehead labour history, simultaneously revealing the area's tenuous relationship between class and ethnicity and worker militancy, two themes which weave through the Lakehead's history.<sup>19</sup> The strikers, largely of Greek, Italian, and Finnish descent, walked off the job on 9 August 1909. After failed conciliation by Port Arthur mayor L.L. Peltier and a gun battle that left eight strikers dead, the strike finally concluded.<sup>20</sup> A key outcome of the strike that had long-term ramifications was the association, fair or not, between ethnic groups at the Lakehead and violence.<sup>21</sup> This association helped further entrench ethnic divisions among the Lakehead's working-class that would hinder pan-class movements until the postwar period.

While labour fought key battles on the employment front during the first decade of the twentieth century, so too did it make its first foray into politics. Local labour first entered mainstream politics in the 1904 federal election, where Louis Peltier ran as a member of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), while the Ontario Socialist Party (OSP), largely powered by the

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<sup>18</sup> For a list of prominent strikes in the region during this time period, see Morrison, *Labour Pains*.

<sup>19</sup> Morrison, *Labour Pains*, 84.

<sup>20</sup> Jean Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Lakehead Freight Handlers Before World War 1," in *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, eds., Gregory S. Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 154-156. The gun battle occurred on 12 August 1906 after the CPR transported thirty heavily-armed policemen from Winnipeg to guard strike-breakers. For the most thorough discussion of the the early freight handlers at the Lakehead, with particular attention to ethnicity, see the previously cited essay by Jean Morrison in this footnote. For more information on Peltier, see Frederick B. Scollie, "Louis Lawrence Peltier (1853-1939): Railway Labour Leader, Mayor of Fort William 1909-10," *Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers and Records* 32 (November 2004): 10-30.

<sup>21</sup> Morrison, "The Lakehead Freight Handlers," 158; this thought is reflected by Michel S. Beaulieu, who instead claims the public associated with socialists and violence. Both statements are true, however, because most socialists were ethnic. See Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 41.



Finnish working-class, also contested the election.<sup>22</sup> Peltier and the OSP candidate both lost in the election. Two years later, the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) established a branch in Port Arthur.<sup>23</sup> The SPC fared no better in achieving electoral success than the ILP had and, by 1911, a rejuvenated Independent Labour Party was being led by Frederick Urry.

Urry had moved from England in 1903 and established himself as an architect in Port Arthur by 1906.<sup>24</sup> Deemed the “wage-earners advocate,” Urry played a key role in the Lakehead labour movement: he helped found the Port Arthur Trades and Labor Council (1908), revitalized the ILP and contested several elections, offered vocational training to the working-class, served as editor of *The Wage-Earner* newspaper, and involved himself in many strikes, including the 1909 Freight Handlers Strike.<sup>25</sup>

The SPC had imploded by 1911. That year, former Port Arthur SPC members convened at the Lakehead with representatives from across Canada to discuss the possibility of a pan-Canadian socialist party.<sup>26</sup> The outcome, the Social Democratic Party of Canada, sought to

educate the workers of Canada to consciousness of their class position in society, their economic servitude to the owners of capita, and to organize them in into a political party to seize the reins of government and transform all capitalist property into the collective property of the working class.<sup>27</sup>

The SDPC, among the few parties or organizations calling for class unity, played an important role in the earlier decades of socialist organization at the Lakehead, but fell out of existence after the First World War because of a ban imposed on the Party by the Canadian government.

Though the SDPC was short-lived, its legacy lived on through several local organizations, and many early members of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF)

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<sup>22</sup> For a thorough discussion of this period at the Lakehead, see Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 18-25.

<sup>23</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 18.

<sup>24</sup> Jean Morrison, “Frederick Urry, Architect: The Wage-Earner’s Advocate,” Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society *Papers and Records* 24 (1986): 8-9

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 34.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

were former SDPC members. Michel S. Beaulieu comments that the establishment of the SDPC at the Lakehead is significant because of the party's attempt at cross-country unity and because the Lakehead's socialist currents had reflected both eastern and western strains of Canadian socialist thought.<sup>28</sup> The local iteration of the CCF, which arrived at the Lakehead in 1934, would similarly blend eastern and western socialist theory and practices in a concerted effort to appeal to the region's peculiarities.

By the onset of the First World War, relationships between enigmatic leaders, the labour movement, and politics had become ingrained into Lakehead society. Though the region mirrors the broader Canadian labour movement in several ways, an example being increasing radicalism throughout the early twentieth century, several key factors that differentiate the region emerged early, notably, the distinct 'languages of socialism' that had come to permeate the relationship between ethnicity and labour solidarity at the Lakehead.<sup>29</sup>

When the war began, the Lakehead had been suffering through a paralyzed economy punctuated by the collapse of the wheat boom in 1913. Poor working conditions, if any work could be found at all, fostered a growing sense of radicalism, largely among the ethnic working-class at the Lakehead, and particularly the Finnish, during and after the First World War.<sup>30</sup> The relationship between the labour movement and the First World War at the Lakehead can be divided into two periods: before and after 1917. In line with the experience of ethnic workers throughout Canada, state-sponsored violence characterized the labour's first epoch in the Great War.<sup>31</sup> Government repression was particularly pronounced at the Lakehead for three reasons:

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> This term is borrowed from Michel S. Beaulieu in his work, *Labour at the Lakehead*.

<sup>30</sup> The most thorough scholarly analysis of the Lakehead during the First World War can be found in Michel S. Beaulieu, David K. Ratz, Thorold John Tronrud, and Jenna L. Kirker, *Thunder Bay and the First World War* (Thunder Bay, Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2018).

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the general Canadian experience, see Donald Avery, *"Dangerous Foreigners": European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979).

the amount of ethnic working-class in the area, the proliferation of socialist organizations, and the notion that the Lakehead in particular had to be protected from the ‘Fifth Column’ because of its role in feeding the war effort. Nominally targeted for their “socialistic tendencies,” the Royal Canadian Mounted Police repressed the Lakehead’s ethnic population, such as the Finns, Italians, and Ukrainians, through several means including break-and-enters, destruction of property, violence, and, of course, internment.<sup>32</sup> The turning point in the socialist and labour communities during the First World War occurred after the 1917 Russian Revolution, in which Russia’s Tsar Nicolas II was forced to abdicate the monarchy in a coup by the Bolsheviks led by Vladimir I. Lenin.. The Revolution served as a sense of socialist renewal in which the Lakehead’s leftist population once again felt purposeful about their goals because the local working-class had been further alienated from society after their repressive treatment by the state.<sup>33</sup>

Significant strikes did occur at the Lakehead during this period, but, despite the proximity of the Lakehead to Winnipeg, evidence suggests that the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike had minimal impact on socialists and labour organizations at the Lakehead.<sup>34</sup> Importantly, the years immediately following the war witnessed the increase of socialist and labour political candidates, and, for the first time, electoral success. Riding the wave of postwar protests and strikes, Farmer-Labour candidate Harry Mills won the riding of Fort William in the 1919 Ontario General Election.<sup>35</sup> A.M. Dennis, an ILP member, was elected Fort William mayor in 1919 and 1920, while another ILP member, Sid Wilson, along with union man James Dunbar, were elected to

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<sup>32</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 47-48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>34</sup> For a thorough examination, see Michel S. Beaulieu, “Reacting to the Workers’ Revolt: The Lakehead and the Winnipeg General Strike,” *Left History* 14:1 (2009): 18-32.

<sup>35</sup> Jean Morrison, “The Organization of Labour in Thunder Bay,” in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds., Thorold J. Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2008), 129.

Port Arthur city council.<sup>36</sup> Though labour's success in local politics would be fleeting until 1935, the twin cities clearly had an appetite for socialistic and working-class politics.

Another important development in this period was the arrival of A.T. Hill. Hill, a Finnish immigrant who had spent time in the United States and, later, the Fort Frances area, had been drawn to the Lakehead in 1917 because of the region's growing unrest, immediately working towards accomplishing Finnish-Canadian socialist goals.<sup>37</sup> Upon his move to the Lakehead, Hill had already been involved with the Industrial Workers of the World, began selling subscriptions to the Finnish newspaper *Vapaus* and leading and organizing local lumber unions.<sup>38</sup> In this period, Hill also became the Finnish liaison for the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Throughout the next two decades, Hill would become increasingly radical. His labour career is characterized by his dedication towards furthering the cause of the Finnish-Canadian working-class.

Throughout this period, women asserted their importance in the labour movement as domestics, bush camp cooks, and more. Jenna L. Kirker has noted that women at the Lakehead between 1903-1918 challenged traditional notions of femininity and renegotiated their roles in politics and labour.<sup>39</sup> Kirker further argues that the statistics showing the increasing prominence of women involved in labour and political activism is only a half-story because of the failure of traditional historical evidence to capture the expansive nature of women's work, including, but not limited to, domestic work, agricultural employment, the work of women traditionally marginalized, and "others in employment that was not counted towards government census statistics."<sup>40</sup> Indigenous peoples, too, though not often captured in the historical record, played

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<sup>36</sup> Morrison, "The Organization of Labour," 129.

<sup>37</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 55.

<sup>38</sup> Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Oral Interview Collection, A.T. Hill Interview.

<sup>39</sup> Kirker, "A Matter of Principal," 110.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

an important role in the wage-economy at the Lakehead throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup>

Indigenous labourers often worked in the natural resource sector, or in tourism, but were universally barred from union participation and protection.

The First World War and the years immediately afterward depict the development of the labour movement through the connected actions of organized labour, labour in politics, and leftist individuals. From 1919 to 1935, the Lakehead labour movement became increasingly radical, often led by a Finnish-Canadian vanguard, which culminated in strike waves in 1933 and 1934. Prominent organizations include the One Big Union (OBU), the International Workers of the World (IWW), and the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Beaulieu effectively breaks down each organization's sphere of influence and the time period in which they were most prominent, showing in *The Labour at the Lakehead* that the OBU was most prominent from 1919 to 1922, followed by the emergence of the CPC in 1922, which culminated in a decade-long battle for regional superiority between the CPC and the IWW, whose presence in the Lakehead dates to the First World War.<sup>42</sup>

These political organizations played an important role in the Lakehead's history, the most important historical antecedent for the post-Second World War period occurred through the formation and consolidation of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union (LSWU). The LSWU had its roots in the earlier Lumber Workers Industrial Union of Canada (LWIUC), which was established in 1921, though organization would not occur until 1924.<sup>43</sup> The organization and action of the LWIUC in the Lakehead region was largely facilitated by Harry Bryan and A.T. Hill, as secretary and organizer, respectively.<sup>44</sup> The LWIUC had both success and failures. Their

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<sup>41</sup> Steven High, "Native Wage Labour and Independent Production during the 'Era of Irrelevance,'" *Labour/Le Travail* 37 (Spring 1996): 249.

<sup>42</sup> For Beaulieu's discussion, see Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 65-201.

<sup>43</sup> Thur, "Beating Around the Bush," 36.

<sup>44</sup> A.T. Hill, "Historic Basis and Development of the Lumber Workers Organization and Struggles in Ontario," (unpublished manuscript: Northern Studies Resource Centre, 1952), 7.

last significant strike action occurred in June 1935 near Nipigon, Ontario.<sup>45</sup> In the Fall of 1935, the LWIUC evolved as part of the Popular Front when leftists in Northern Ontario began refocusing their energies, resulting in the formation of the LSWU. The LSWU descended from the LWIUC, but focused more on collective bargaining than radical strike action, and would play a significant role in the organization of labour at the Lakehead post-1945.

In the midst of the evolution of the LSWU, Bruce Magnuson moved to the Lakehead in 1933, searching for work in the Northern Ontario forests.<sup>46</sup> Magnuson's appearance at the Lakehead during this period is significant: the timing of his arrival caused his politics to radicalize, which manifested in leftist union leadership and heavy political activity well into the 1950s at the Lakehead. The radicalization of Magnuson occurred through his contact with Finnish-Canadian bushworkers, who were well-regarded by fellow leftists for their vanguard politics and radicalism in the bush. Radicalism among Finnish-Canadian bushworkers at the Lakehead had evolved into a "vibrant culture," and throughout the late 1920s and early 1930s, several violent, combative strikes occurred that further radicalized the Finnish population.<sup>47</sup> By 1933-34, and operating under the influence of both the IWW and the CPC, Finnish bushworkers built off of Marxist and Finnish socialist rhetoric to, as noted by Ian Radforth, to wage a bona fide class-war.<sup>48</sup> By 1934, the labour radicalism had reached its peak at the Lakehead, helping to shape Magnuson and his politics for the rest of his political and labour career. Similar to

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<sup>45</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 132.

<sup>46</sup> Thur, "Beating around the Bush," 56.

<sup>47</sup> Radforth, "Finnish Radicalism in Northern Ontario," 309-310. Further instigating bushworker radicalism was the alleged murder of two Finnish bushmen, Viljo Rosvall and John Voutilainen, in 1929. It has not been conclusively proven whether the two men were actually murdered or died on their own accord (likely from drowning), but the manner of their death became irrelevant after the Finnish community martyred the men into heroes struggling against class oppression in the bush. See Satu Repo, "Rosvall and Voutilainen: Two Union Men Who Never Died," *Labour/Le Travail* 8/9 (Autumn/Spring 1981/1982): 79-102.

<sup>48</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 132-133; Campbell, "The Cult of Spontaneity," 143; Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 200.

Magnuson, A.T. Hill, who also played an important role in the post-Second World War labour movement, had also been shaped in part by the radicalism of this era.

After the highly militant early 1930s, radicalism at the Lakehead began to wither by 1935.<sup>49</sup> Beaulieu notes that 1935 marked a watershed year for the Lakehead's socialist movement.<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Ian Radforth parallels Beaulieu's thinking in stating that 1935 marked a seminal year for the history of Ontario bushworkers, who of course overlapped heavily with the Lakehead's socialist movement, in that the movement focused less on "blasting employers with class-war rhetoric [and] collective bargaining and signing agreements became the major objectives of the unions."<sup>51</sup> 1935 marked a decline in labour radicalism, but it also witnessed the introduction of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation to the Lakehead. With the exception of a few committed communists, the CCF would succeed in becoming a pan-class party at the Lakehead, regardless of industry or ethnicity.<sup>52</sup>

This dramatic shift in Lakehead socialism that occurred in 1935, had, in part, its genesis in 1932 after the emergence of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation. That year, 131 delegates at a convention in Calgary representing farmers, labour, and socialists chose to unite under one banner; the overarching goal for the CCF was to combat the unfair conditions created for the working-class created by business and capital, which was punctuated by the conditions of the Great Depression.<sup>53</sup> A year later, at its first national convention in Regina, the party released

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<sup>49</sup> There are many ideas as to why Finnish radicalism denied during this period. The most likely include (finally) improving economic conditions, the emergence of the CCF as a political outlet, and importantly, the 'exodus' of the Finnish vanguard to Karelia in the mid-1930s. For more information on the Karelian exodus, see Harpelle, Lindström and Pogorelskin, eds., *Karelian Exodus*.

<sup>50</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 202.

<sup>51</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 134.

<sup>52</sup> Anthony W. Rasporich, "Twin City Ethnopolitics: Urban Rivalry, Ethnic Radicalism and Assimilation in the Lakehead, 1900-70," *Urban History Review* 18: no. 3 (February 1990), 222.

<sup>53</sup> For a few particularly good examples of general reading on the CCF, see Alan Whitehorn, *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992); James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016); Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 58-

the *Regina Manifesto*. The manifesto became a cornerstone of Canadian socialist thought, promising that “No CCF Government will rest content until it has eradicated capitalism and put into operation the full programme of socialized planning which will lead to the establishment in Canada of the Co-operative Commonwealth.”<sup>54</sup> Considering the nature of the manifesto, the early CCF’s distinct brand of radicalism would have been appealing to members of the Lakehead working-class regardless of ethnicity because of the poor economic conditions of the Great Depression and the often violent confrontations with capital, highlighted by the alleged murders of Viljo Rosval and Lanne Voutilainen.<sup>55</sup>

The CCF as a social movement in Ontario was spearheaded by Agnes Macphail, the only woman in the House of Commons at the time, and William (Bill) Irvine, a ‘labour’ Member of Parliament, both of whom were appointed Ontario CCF organizers in August 1932, shortly after the Calgary conference.<sup>56</sup> After Macphail and Irvine successfully sought the affiliation of the United Farmers of Ontario (UFO), the first CCF Club in Toronto was established on 22 December 1932, and throughout 1933, the Ontario CCF continued to create formal affiliations with both labour and socialist groups throughout Ontario.<sup>57</sup> The transition to Ontario politics was not smooth for the CCF, and the political party did not achieve early electoral success in Ontario as they had in Manitoba and, to a greater extent, British Columbia.<sup>58</sup> By 1934, the CCF’s first elected federal leader, J.S. Woodsworth, was forced to dissolve and fundamentally restructure

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198. The classic discussion of the Ontario CCF remains Gerald L. Caplan, *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: the CCF in Ontario* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

<sup>54</sup> “Regina Manifesto,” in Michael S. Cross, ed., *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea: CCF-NDP Manifestoes, 1932-1969* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974), 23.

<sup>55</sup> Satu Repo, “Rosvall and Voutilainen: Two Union Men Who Never Died,” *Labour/Le Travail* 8/9 (Autumn/Spring 1981/1982): 79-102.

<sup>56</sup> Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 9-10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 14-15.

<sup>58</sup> The classic discussion of the CCF in Manitoba remains Nelson Wiseman, *Socialism in Manitoba: a History of the CCF-NDP* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1985). In 1933, the British Columbia CCF won 1/3 of the total vote in provincial election. See James Naylor, “The British Columbia CCF’s Working-Class Moment: Socialism Not Populism,” *Labour/Le Travail* 71 (Spring 2014): 109.



the Ontario CCF after increased factionalism that negated the potential for broad, class-based electoral action.<sup>59</sup> Devoid of any strong provincial leadership or personalities throughout the late 1930s, it would take the Ontario CCF nearly ten years to rebuild.

Throughout 1932 and 1933, the CCF in Ontario grew considerably, but not expansively. Firmly entrenched in select urban areas in southern Ontario, as well as supported by some Ontario farmers, the CCF did not arrive at the Lakehead until 1934. In fact, the organization of the first CCF branch did not occur in Port Arthur or Fort William. Before the 1934 Ontario provincial election, the small railway town of Schreiber, Ontario, roughly two hours east of the Lakehead, had established a small but vibrant CCF branch.<sup>60</sup> Despite Schreiber's small size, their local CCF branch was reported to have over 100 members.<sup>61</sup> The Schreiber club appears to be the first CCF branch in either the Port Arthur or Fort William district, and it was the result of the efforts by Schreiber club's president, Jack F. McKeivitt, a member of the Provincial Council of the Ontario CCF, that the CCF moved to and found success in the Lakehead.

Before the 1934 Ontario provincial election, the Schreiber CCF had pledged, and then subsequently removed support for the Farmer-Worker nominee, J. Gilbanks.<sup>62</sup> The reason, as cited by the *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, was the "feeling that the nomination of J. Gilbanks [...] was creating a diversion in the ranks of labour."<sup>63</sup> With no suitable candidates to endorse in the provincial election, a week later, on 26 May 1934, McKeivitt, travelled to Port Arthur to give an address outlining the CCF platform to potentially interested party members.<sup>64</sup> Described by the local media coverage as "enthusiastic," the meeting witnessed the formal opening of a CCF

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<sup>59</sup> Desmond Morton, *NDP: The Dream of Power* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 13; For a thorough discussion of this chaotic period for the Ontario CCF, see Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 50-63.

<sup>60</sup> *Port Arthur News Chronicle* (hereafter *PANC*), 19 May 1934.

<sup>61</sup> *PANC*, 26 May 1934.

<sup>62</sup> *PANC*, 19 May 1934. Additionally, Gilbank's name is also stylized 'Gillbanks,' depending on the newspaper article.

<sup>63</sup> *PANC*, 19 May 1934.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

branch in Port Arthur, the election of T.J. Thompson and Sam Wright to the positions of president and vice-president, respectively, and the signing-up of more than fifty members in the first day.<sup>65</sup> Wright, a Port Arthur alderman, would be the Lakehead's first CCF candidate, running in the 1934 provincial election.

Wright failed to achieve any electoral success as a member of the CCF. Referred to as 'Captain' due to his ownership of tugboats, Wright had arrived in Port Arthur around 1908 and immediately began to further working-class goals.<sup>66</sup> Already serving as an alderman for Port Arthur, Wright was handily defeated in the 1934 election, finishing with only 342 votes.<sup>67</sup> The winner, Charles W. Cox, had received 7,308, and Gilbanks earned 615.<sup>68</sup> There are several reasons for the lack of success of Wright's campaign: the disarray of the provincial CCF resulted in minimal support from party leaders in the election, the early CCF drew supporters largely from the British and Canadian skilled and middle-classes<sup>69</sup> (in contrast to the Lakehead's significantly ethnic working-class), and the lack of preparation time to run a thorough campaign, having only announced his candidacy fifteen days before the election.<sup>70</sup> Other inhibitors to Wright's early campaign included the local popularity of Charles W. Cox. Cox, a long-time Liberal politician at the Lakehead who became well-known for his populist politics and the lumber business that he owned and operated. The familiar nature of the Liberal Party to Port Arthur constituents at this juncture proved too difficult for Wright to make serious inroads into Cox's popularity. However, though challenges characterized 1934, the 1935 federal election marked a significant shift in the fortunes of the CCF at the Lakehead.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Frederick Brent Scollie, *Thunder Bay Mayors & Councillors, 1873-1945* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2000), 151.

<sup>67</sup> *PANC*, 20 June 1934.

<sup>68</sup> Scollie, *Mayors & Councillors*, 151; *PANC*, 20 June 1934.

<sup>69</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 206. This phenomenon can largely be attributed to the attraction of the CCF to Christian Socialists, the adherents of which were Anglo middle-class Canadians.

<sup>70</sup> *PANC*, 4 June 1934.

A candidate in both Port Arthur and Fort William were fielded for the October 1935 federal election. Alexander Gibson ran in Port Arthur, while Garfield Anderson contested the Fort William riding, both of whom were aldermen for their respective towns. Gibson was involved in the Lakehead labour movement since 1920, including playing a founding role in the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council, and ran numerous political campaigns throughout the 1920s and early 1930s, while Anderson had little involvement in labour leadership during his early life.<sup>71</sup> In 1935, the CCF had the ability to make inroads into segments of the Lakehead working-class that the CPC, and other radical groups, had failed to ever penetrate.<sup>72</sup> The CCF's early potential for success is evidenced by the share of voters that each candidates received in the election: Gibson received 10.8% of the popular vote in 1935 while Anderson received 11.8%.<sup>73</sup> These percentages of the popular vote mark a dramatic shift from 1934, when Wright won less than 4% of the popular vote in Port Arthur and the CCF did not field a candidate in Fort William. Clearly, the CCF's momentum surged at the Lakehead over the span of these two elections. Aiding the momentum was a spring visit to the region from provincial CCF leader E.B. (Ted) Joliffe. Beginning in Port Arthur on 22 May 1935, Joliffe spent two weeks canvassing Northwestern Ontario, allowing its residents to become acquainted with CCF leadership and the party's policies.<sup>74</sup> Further adding support to the importance of 1935 to the CCF at the Lakehead was the election of four card-carrying CCF members to Fort William civic leadership roles: two alderman positions won by F.E. Moore and the aforementioned Anderson, and two other CCF members won positions as School Trustees.<sup>75</sup> *The New Commonwealth*, at the time the provincial

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<sup>71</sup> *PANC*, 17 July 1957. A short biography can be of Gibson can be found in this edition of the *Port Arthur News-Chronicle*.

<sup>72</sup> Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead*, 206,

<sup>73</sup> Scollie, *Mayors & Councillors*, 86, 156.

<sup>74</sup> *The New Commonwealth* (hereafter *TNC*), 19 January 1935.

<sup>75</sup> *TNC*, 9 March 1935.

organ of the CCF, notes that the candidates were aided in the civic elections by the last-minute arrival of federal CCF leader, J.S. Woodsworth.<sup>76</sup>

In 1935, the CCF was considered radical. An aspiring political party with socialistic ideals appeared threatening to Canadian liberal hegemony, particularly in light of the failures of capitalism made clear during the Great Depression. However, in hindsight, it can be reasonably asserted that the year 1935 marked the beginning of the slow transition away from radical politics at the Lakehead. It also witnessed the development of electoral strategies that played a fundamental role in the subsequent successful election campaigns of Garfield Anderson and future CCF candidates, Frederick O. Robinson and Douglas Fisher, in the late-war and postwar period. The first strategy involved the reliance on media as a tool for political campaigning. Of course, the CCF at the Lakehead were not the only political party to rely heavily on media, but an analysis of the 1935 election coverage by the *Port Arthur News-Chronicle* and the *Fort William Daily Times Journal* suggests that the CCF used the media the most consistently and innovatively of the three major political parties. For example, the Garfield Anderson utilized the *Daily Times* “Political Forum” section, a segment of the newspaper directly purposed for the dissemination of campaign issues, much more frequently than any political party at the Lakehead, particularly more so than the Liberals or Conservatives.<sup>77</sup>

Though the Lakehead CCF turned to new mediums post-1943, media would always be significant to the success of the local CCF. The second campaign strategy that evolved in 1935 and was significant to the success of the post-1943 CCF candidates was the emphasis placed on securing the votes of the several small-towns dotted around the Lakehead. From the inception of the CCF at the Lakehead in 1934 to the October 1935 election, smaller towns near Port Arthur

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> See for example: *Fort William Daily Times-Journal* (hereafter *FWDTJ*), 8 October 1935; *FWDTJ*, 9 October 1935. Interestingly, the Labor-Progressive-Independent party also contributed a significant amount to “Political Forum.”

and Fort William formed CCF branches en masse.<sup>78</sup> Also important, the CCF formed constituency councils, which included political and educational branches, and a District Marketing Council.<sup>79</sup> These steps were comparatively small when considering the presence that the Liberal and Conservative parties had in the twin cities, but the first electoral wins by the CCF elections at the Lakehead beginning in 1943 had its genesis between the period of 1934-1935 while the CCF rapidly expanded throughout the area. This is particularly impressive considering the local CCF underwent a period of dormancy between elections and were virtually inactive from after the 1935 election to the naming of Gibson as the President of the Port Arthur CCF branch in 1939.<sup>80</sup>

At the conclusion of the 1935 election, J.S. Woodsworth boldly stated that, though the results were limited in Ontario, “electors who voted for C.C.F. candidates laid the foundation of a movement destined to play an important part in our Canadian public life.”<sup>81</sup> Woodsworth was correct, though his prediction regarding the importance of the CCF did not materialize until 1943. The time period between 1935 and 1943, is typically viewed as a lull, and a period of slow growth in which the party was simply focused on surviving and rebuilding after the 1934 disaster.<sup>82</sup> As time would reveal, the CCF would surge to local power in 1943 when Frederick Oliver Robinson and Garfield Anderson won both MLA seats in Port Arthur and Fort William, respectively. Here, the nature of social democratic politics at the Lakehead was permanently altered.

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<sup>78</sup> During this time period, CCF branches were established in Fort William, but also, Kakabeka Falls, Upsala, Nipigon, and branches farther northwest in the region.

<sup>79</sup> *PANC*, 3 September 1935.

<sup>80</sup> Scollie, *Mayors & Councillors*, 86.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted from *PANC*, 15 October 1935.

<sup>82</sup> Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 81. As stated by Caplan, “For almost seven years after the 1935 election, the Ontario CCF simply did not count as a political factor in the province.” For his full discussion of the CCF during this period, see Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 81-87.

## Chapter Two

### Social Democratic Politics and the Cooperative Commonwealth Movement at the Lakehead

The political scene at the Lakehead before the CCF found electoral success in 1943 was dominated by Liberal dynasties at every level of government in both Port Arthur and Fort William. In Port Arthur, Charles Winnans Cox, a timber baron from just outside of London, Ontario, served as Port Arthur's Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) from 1934 to 1943. Simultaneously, Cox also served as Port Arthur's Mayor from 1934 to 1949 and concluded his political career as Fort William's MLA from 1948 to 1951. Cox had refined his political style from business-oriented pragmatism to working-class populism in time for both his 1934 mayoral and MLA candidacies, and he fought and won bitter campaigns against George Blanchard and Don Clark, respectively.<sup>1</sup> Charles Cox, affectionately referred to by his constituents as 'Charlie', became an influential figure in Lakehead politics and a bitter rival of future Port Arthur Mayor and MLA Frederick Robinson. Anthony W. Rasporich comments that Cox knew that he had met his political nemesis in the 1943 election.<sup>2</sup> Rasporich's claim is evidenced by the bitter political rhetoric that followed Robinson and Cox's future clashes, in which they contested four separate elections over a nine-year span in Port Arthur.

At the federal level, Clarence Decatur Howe, Canada's future 'Minister-of-Everything,' first won Port Arthur's Member of Parliament (MP) seat in 1935, a position he would hold until 1957.<sup>3</sup> Howe, American by birth, had moved to Port Arthur as a government employee, but left to start his own grain contracting business in 1916. The genesis of Howe's political career occurred at the intersection of a surging national Liberal movement and local discontent with the

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<sup>1</sup> Anthony W. Rasporich, "'Call me Charlie". Charles W. Cox: Port Arthur's Populist Politician," Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society *Papers and Records* 19 (1991): 6-8.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on C.D. Howe, see Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe: a Biography* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979).

Conservative party and the conditions of the Great Depression.<sup>4</sup> Howe was also positioned well as Port Arthur's Liberal candidate before the election because the radical and union vote was likely to split between the A.E. Smith (Communist Party) and Alexander Gibson (CCF), while the business vote was also expected to split between the Conservative Party and the H.H. Stevens-led Reconstruction Party.<sup>5</sup> Aiding Howe's electoral chances were his deep ties to Port Arthur's business community, and, more importantly, his endorsement and close working-relationship with Cox.<sup>6</sup> Howe won in part because of Cox's influence in Port Arthur, though as the decades progressed, it would be Howe's power and influence that would rapidly grow, culminating in his position as the most powerful person in Louis St. Laurent's cabinet.

The Liberal political hegemony benefitting the Port Arthur Liberals also occurred in Fort William. The political machine that Cox had put into motion of which Howe took advantage was also available to Fort William federal Liberal candidate Dan McIvor. McIvor, a pastor in Fort William at First Church United, ran against long-time Fort William Conservative MP Robert J. Manion.<sup>7</sup> Manion, who had served consecutively as Fort William's MP from 1917-1935, including tenures as a cabinet minister in the Bennett administration, was noted for his aggressive campaign style and, according to Roy H. Piovesana, his "arrogant [elitism]."<sup>8</sup> Two factors allowed McIvor to beat Manion in 1935. First, the same national and local trends that saw voters increasingly support the Liberal party and which aided Cox and Howe were negatively influencing Manion, exacerbated by his senior leadership position in the unpopular Bennett government.<sup>9</sup> Second, Manion's perceived sense of elitism was diametrically opposed to

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<sup>4</sup> Bothwell and Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Anthony W. Rasporich, "A Boston Yankee in Prince Arthur's Landing: C.D. Howe and his Constituency" *Canada: An Historical Magazine* 1: no.2 (Winter 1973), 29.

<sup>6</sup> Rasporich, "A Boston Yankee," 29; Bothwell and Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe*, 62

<sup>7</sup> For more information, see Roy H. Piovesana, *Robert J. Manion: Member of Parliament for Fort William, 1917-1935* (Thunder Bay, Ontario: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1990).

<sup>8</sup> Piovesana, *Robert J. Manion: Member of Parliament*, 69.

<sup>9</sup> For further reading on R.B. Bennett, see Larry A. Glassford, *Reaction and Reform: The Politics of the Conservative Party under R.B. Bennett, 1927-1938* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992) and John Boyko,

McIvor's populist campaign style and the benefit of being viewed as a "poor man's friend" during the Great Depression.<sup>10</sup> McIvor would win the 1935 election over Manion and serve as Fort William's MP until 1957; additionally, the Liberal Party would hold onto the Fort William riding until its dissolution in 1979.<sup>11</sup>

The only position in federal or provincial politics that did not follow this trend of early Liberal dominance was Fort William's MLA seat. A Liberal candidate, former Fort William councillor and mayor Joseph Edmund Crawford, won the seat from Conservative incumbent Franklin Herold Spence in 1934, but internal division within Fort William's Liberals allowed Spence to reclaim the seat in 1937.<sup>12</sup> Between 1934 and 1959, Fort William's MLA changed five times between all three parties, with no candidate serving more than two consecutive terms.

If the CCF were to achieve electoral success at the Lakehead during the Second World War or its successive decade, it would have to overcome a Liberal political machine that was operating at every level of government in the Lakehead.<sup>13</sup> The benefit to Frederick Robinson and Garfield Anderson when they sought their respective MLA seats in Port Arthur and Fort William in 1943 was the groundwork laid by local and regional CCF pioneers, including Alexander Gibson, Jack F. McKeivitt, and Anderson himself, and with support from the provincial and federal CCF bodies that was outlined in chapter one.

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*Bennett: The Rebel who Challenged and Changed a Nation* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> Piovesana, *Robert J. Manion: Member of Parliament*, 61. Additionally, Garfield Anderson challenged McIvor for the federal seat in 1940, but lost.

<sup>11</sup> Despite McIvor's long career as a local politician and member of Fort William's faith community, little has been written about his life.

<sup>12</sup> Frederick Brent Scollie, *Thunder Bay Mayors & Councillors, 1873-1945* (Thunder Bay, Ontario: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2000), 170. The division was caused by Crawford's stance on the separate schools question, leading to his replacement as the Liberal candidate by Harry Murphy. Instead running as a Liberal independent, Crawford and Murphy split the vote and Spence returned to his seat as Fort William's MLA.

<sup>13</sup> For further reading on the Liberal Party of Canada, see R. Kenneth Carty, *Big Tent Politics: The Liberal Party's Long Mastery of Canada's Public Life* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2015). For more information on the federal Liberal party during this era, see J.L. Granatstein, *W.L. Mackenzie King* (Don Mills, Ontario: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1976) and for the provincial Liberal party, see John T. Saywell, *'Just Call me Mitch': The Life of Mitchell F. Hepburn* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).



Also important to Robinson and Anderson was the maturation of the Ontario CCF in 1942. Gerald L. Caplan notes that 1942 marked a new age for the party, beginning with “recognizing its two major internal weaknesses: negligible grass-roots organization and no recognized public leadership.”<sup>14</sup> The formation of local clubs in Port Arthur, Fort William, and regional municipalities during the 1930s had ensured that the Lakehead had a significant amount of grassroots organizing, but the naming of Edward Bigelow “Ted” Joliffe ensured the local CCF a provincial ‘face’ to rally around and draw support from.<sup>15</sup> It became evident to the Ontario CCF that any chance of forming a government was contingent on forming a political apparatus throughout the province that, at worst, could operate at levels close to the Liberal and Conservative parties.

Both Robinson and Anderson recognized that their success at the Lakehead depended to a high degree on their relationships with organized labour. Before their 1943 campaign, the provincial CCF and the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL) had already become intertwined after both recognized that a close relationship could benefit their respective goals. Nowhere was this budding relationship more evident than CCF-candidate Joe Noseworthy’s electoral win over Arthur Meighen in South York, where organized labour actively assisted in the election and campaigning.<sup>16</sup> Shortly afterwards, the CCL presented a resolution connoting the CCF as the “political arm of labour in Canada” and recommended that all member unions affiliate with the CCF.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Gerald L. Caplan, *The Dilemma of Canadian Socialism: The CCF in Ontario* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 94.

<sup>15</sup> *PANC*, 19 May 1934; *PANC*, 26 May 1934.

<sup>16</sup> Laurel Sefton MacDowell, “The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System During World War Two” *Labour/Le Travail* 3 (1978): 189.

<sup>17</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 78; MacDowell, “The Formation of the Canadian Industrial Relations System,” 190.

Both the local and provincial CCF leadership recognized the importance of union support to their movement. The conclusion of 1942 and the beginning of 1943 had marked the absolute lowest point of Canadian labour policy for Mackenzie King and the federal Liberal party. Taylor Hollander comments that this period was unique because “[unlike] earlier in the war, many middle-class commentators had begun to blame federal labour policies and the hostile behaviour of employers, not the militancy of workers, for the deterioration in industrial relations.”<sup>18</sup> It appeared that the popularity of King’s labour policy operated in a zero-sum manner with the popularity of the CCF. In the same time period that King’s labour policy reached the pinnacle of public dislike, the CCF polled 32.4 per cent of the vote, compared to 30.9 for the Liberal Party.<sup>19</sup> The crisis surrounding the ‘Labour Question’ had become so detrimental to the King administration that the National War Labour Board, formed in 1941, conducted societal-wide consultations with cross-sectoral representation to help reconfigure the Liberal Party’s labour policy.<sup>20</sup> Though King would eventually stay in power through the gradual adoption of CCF-originated policies, in 1943, Canada’s only socialist party succeeded in garnering significant working-class support through a labour platform that contrasted with King’s.

The Ontario CCF were the only provincial CCF party to formally affiliate with labour unions.<sup>21</sup> More important than formal affiliation, however, were strong relationships and the securing of a consistent voting bloc. Local CCF candidates at the Lakehead recognized the need

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<sup>18</sup> Taylor Hollander, *Power, Politics and Principles: Mackenzie King and Labour, 1935-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 163.

<sup>19</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 77.

<sup>20</sup> Peter S. McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 40-41. These consultations are largely believed to be the genesis of the *Wartime Labour Relations Regulations (PC 1003)*.

<sup>21</sup> Though the Ontario CCF did affiliate with some labour organizations, affiliation was not widespread and trade unions never held actualized as active party participants. Affiliation with trade unions did not become prominent in influence or scope until the founding of the New Democratic Party. Gad Horowitz covers extensively the reasons why the CCF never succeeded in large-scale affiliation. See Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 82-84.

to court the working-class, too.<sup>22</sup> The importance of the working-class vote grew during the late 1930s and 1940s as Port Arthur and Fort William's demographics changed significantly. Between 1931-1941, the combined population of Port Arthur and Fort William grew by nearly 25%, while the labour force grew by roughly 33%.<sup>23</sup> The re-opening of the Fort William Canadian Car and Foundry (Can-Car) plant in 1937, closed since 1925, and increased war-time production largely drove this growth.<sup>24</sup> The growth of the working-class and the necessity of harmonious industrial relations for the war effort uniquely positioned the working-class at the Lakehead, similar to the rest of Canada. As Jean Morrison writes, "The Second World War proved a boon for organized labour as the work force swelled and labour shortages appeared...along with labour's growing industrial power came an upsurge in its political influence."<sup>25</sup>

Demographic shifts and the Second World War made any successful election campaign contingent on working-class voters. Frederick Robinson succeeded in this endeavour. Mirroring the CCL's 1942 resolution connoting the CCF as the political arm of labour, Robinson wrote to a constituent at the onset of his 1943 campaign: "The CCF generally, and its labor policy in particular, gives labor an excellent organ for political action."<sup>26</sup> The wording may have been

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<sup>22</sup> Considering the radical and socialist nature of the CCF, this claim may seem self-evident. However, there is a distinction between an ideology promoting the interest of the working-class, and knowledge of the electoral-landscape as a driving force to network, relationship-build, and shape policy.

<sup>23</sup> James Stafford, "A Century of Growth at the Lakehead," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds., Thorold Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 50.

<sup>24</sup> At its peak, the Can-Car plant employed 6,760 employees, 40% of whom women. See Stafford, "A Century of Growth at the Lakehead," 51.

<sup>25</sup> Jean Morrison, "The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay," in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds., Thorold Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 136- 137. The Second World War and the strength of labour throughout the War leading to increased social and political power is a common theme throughout the literature and characterized Canada nation-wide. For examples, see McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*, 1-3; Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement: A Short History* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2012), 70; Bob Russell, *Back to Work? Labour, State, and Industrial Relations in Canada* (Scarborough, Nelson Canada, 1990), 201-210 and Bryan D. Palmer, *Working Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992), 268-273.

<sup>26</sup> Lakehead University Archives (hereafter LUA), Frederick O. Robinson Fonds (hereafter FORF), Series 2, File 6, Letter to Constituent.

party policy, but Robinson did more than pay lip-service to organized labour to win an election; he was, and remained throughout his life, a committed socialist well-read in the works of Lenin and other leftist revolutionaries. Though he may not have carried the same violent revolutionary spirit as Lenin, his wife, Jean Robinson, also a member of the CCF and a former Port Arthur Councillor, reflected in a 1986 interview that “[Fred] was a socialist, a real socialist... he was for planning and doing something.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, adding support to the claim that Robinson’s intentions were his own and that he did not merely parrot the Ontario CCF’s position on unions is Robinson’s claim that Robinson never believed, at any point, that unions should be a cornerstone of the CCF.<sup>28</sup>

Important evidence of Robinson’s desire to build strong relationships with the working-class can be seen through various speeches and letters from his 1943 campaign. Aiding Robinson was his labouring background. Before his political career, Robinson was employed as a machinist for his entire adult life and was a union member in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) since the late 1920s.<sup>29</sup> To resonate with working-class voters and trade unions, Robinson almost universally prefaced conversations or letters with new acquaintances by stating a variation of the following:

“I am 39 years of age; born and educated in Port Arthur; married and live in my own home. I am a machinist by trade and have 25 years of service with the CNR. I have been a member of the I.A. of M. for over 15 years [...] I have been a student of socialism, economics and the CCF for many years.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Queen’s University Archives (hereafter QUA), Ontario CCF-NDP Oral History Project collection (hereafter OCNOHP), Locator 3217.6SE, Peter Campbell transcripts, interview with Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 6, Letter to Constituent.

<sup>30</sup> For one example see LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 6, Letter to Constituent. Note: This letter is different than the letter previously cited in footnotes 25 and 28, though both letters contain the same general phrasing.

Robinson would then typically conclude by delivering or writing an argument as to why the CCF's platform would benefit the common man.<sup>31</sup> It is evident through Robinson's correspondence that he tried not only to resonate with working-class voters and ally himself to their cause, but to show that he himself was working-class. It is a strategy that paid off for him in the 1943, and subsequent, elections.

Garfield Anderson, meanwhile, had a different background than Robinson and could not rely on a bevy of past labouring experience and union involvement to appeal to working-class voters. Anderson, a World War I veteran, did not move to Northwestern Ontario until 1904 and did not permanently settle in Fort William until 1922, where he opened a barber shop.<sup>32</sup> While Robinson had a labour background but was politically inexperienced, Anderson had name recognition, the result of serving Fort William for seven years as an alderman, running in the 1935 and 1940 federal elections as a CCF candidate, and winning the 1942 Fort William mayoral race.<sup>33</sup> Anderson's recognition in Fort William was in part responsible for his selection as the CCF candidate in Fort William for the 1943 election, as he beat two other strong candidates for the nomination, Alex Anderson and Fort William Riding CCF Council Chairman Blake Kempton.<sup>34</sup>

Garfield Anderson may not have had a labouring background, but he could speak to the concerns of Fort William's working-class during the 1943 election. Peter S. McInnis argues that labour, business, and the Canadian state all sought to impose their idea of the realignment of industrial relations in each faction's respective vision.<sup>35</sup> McInnis argues throughout his work that

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<sup>31</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 6, Letter to Constituent. There are at least ten letters to different constituents with similar openings that have survived in Robinson's collection at the Lakehead University Archives.

<sup>32</sup> Scollie, *Thunder Bay Mayors & Councillors*, 156.

<sup>33</sup> Anderson lost both federal elections by considerable margins but won the 1942 Fort William mayoralty with 43.2% of the vote. Statistic from Scollie, *Thunder Bay Mayors & Councillors*, 156.

<sup>34</sup> *Fort William Daily-Times Journal* (hereafter *FWD TJ*), 1 April 1943.

<sup>35</sup> McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*, 2-3.

labour's role in the tripartite negotiations around the ordering of postwar society helped establish a new era of industrial legality, and concludes his monograph by reinforcing the importance of social planning to the organized labour movement.<sup>36</sup>

Anderson, attuned to anxiety of Fort William's working-class, spoke to labour's postwar vision on the night he accepted the CCF's nomination for the 1943 provincial election. Anderson argued in his acceptance speech that, contrary to some schools of thought that tried to delay postwar planning to after the Second World War, working people and soldiers contributing to the Allied victory should have concrete plans for their postwar future, not least of which to avoid the chaos that ensued after the First World War.<sup>37</sup> Adding further support to the claim that Anderson was dedicated to labour's postwar vision is his attempt to establish labour-management committees at the Lakehead during his first mayoral term.<sup>38</sup>

Anderson, in campaigning for re-election during the 1946 Fort William municipal election, remarked "Council would be well advised to enlist the support and co-operation of management and labor to sit with them in an advisory capacity."<sup>39</sup> Several important points emerge out of this quote. First, industrial relations during the war and in the immediate postwar period was important enough to Fort William's residents to be a position for Anderson's re-election campaign. Second, the labour-management committees that Anderson put forward resembled the same committees that proliferated nation-wide during the "atmosphere of crisis and patriotism surrounding the outbreak of World War II."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 191-193.

<sup>37</sup> *FWD TJ*, 1 April 1943.

<sup>38</sup> *FWD TJ*, 30 November 1946.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Leslie M. Darby, *Labour-Management Cooperation: A Study of Labour-Management Committees in Canada* (Kingston: Industrial Relations Centre at Queen's University, 1986), 15.

By the end of the war, 300 labour-management committees had been formed covering a total of 300,000 employees.<sup>41</sup> While labour-management committees had existed to some degree at the Lakehead throughout the Second World War, largely because of the importance of the region to Canada's war effort, Anderson's 1946 proposal for the formation of 'citizens councils' after the war mirrored the broader Canadian effort from government, labour, and business to build industrial harmony after the war. In commenting on the Canadian experience, Peter McNinnis states "In the years following the Second World War, Labour-Management Production Committees presented a model of a shared community of interests premised on the mutuality of productivity and consumptions. With collective memories of wartime sacrifices and privations, this postwar 'social contract' proved highly seductive."<sup>42</sup> In support, Leslie M. Darby adds that the transition from wartime to postwar labour-management committees shifted the nature of the committees from "increased production to increased job security and more harmonious labour-management relations."<sup>43</sup> Anderson's advocacy for postwar labour-management committees is a reflection of his understanding that representing all parties' needs in an era of unprecedented cooperation would be beneficial to his campaign, but also, that he understood the changing nature of labour in a different era.

In the same year as his call for labour-management committees at the Lakehead, Anderson remarked in his opening speech to the 1946 Fort William Council: "For six years successive City Councils have had to defer action on many matters, until the cessation of hostilities and Victory was won...we have to bear in our minds, that you and I, whether or not we may agree or disagree in political or economic creed, must look at these problems for the year

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<sup>41</sup> Darby, *Labour-Management Cooperation*, 15.

<sup>42</sup> Peter S. McNinnis, "Teamwork for Harmony: Labour-Management Production Committees and the Postwar Settlement in Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 77:3 (September 1996): 351.

<sup>43</sup> Darby, *Labour-Management Committees*, 16.

1946... with the same set of eyes.”<sup>44</sup> The context for the 1943 federal election, then, was that the CCF’s Port Arthur candidate, Robinson, had a working-class background and connections to the working-class that he was comfortable utilizing to court voters, while the CCF’s Fort William candidate, Garfield Anderson, operated as though he had a stethoscope to the heartbeat of Canadian industrial relations. Important, too, were the changing demographics at the Lakehead which witnessed a growth in the labour force and the working-class, a change that favoured the CCF. The shifts encouraging to the CCF could not power them to electoral success alone, however, and the vast majority of CCF wins in the postwar period would have to go through a Liberal dynasty operating in the region since 1934.

The 4 August 1943 provincial election at the Lakehead revolved around two central questions: what would the Lakehead look like in the postwar period, and what role would the region play in the broader Canadian politic? The candidates in Port Arthur were Robinson, the Liberal’s C.W. Cox, and the Progressive Conservatives’ Harold Anthony (H.A.) “Doc” Oaks.<sup>45</sup> Surprisingly, Cox, the incumbent, faced a significant challenge from Schreiber’s Fred Kelly, a Liberal railway labourer who had connections to the Lakehead working-class.<sup>46</sup> Cox’s defeat to Robinson, a favourite of the Lakehead working-class, was foreshadowed by his challenging experience to beat the labourer Kelly. Oaks, meanwhile, was a First World War veteran and an experienced aviator who thought that Port Arthur could be made into the Canadian Pittsburgh.<sup>47</sup> Currently a member of the Canadian Aviation Hall of Fame, Oaks campaigned on a platform that primarily consisted of lower taxes, increased social security, and a housing plan.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> City of Thunder Bay Archives (hereafter TBA), City of Fort William Fonds (hereafter FWF), Series 1, 0045-01, Fort William Council Minutes -Garfield Anderson Inaugural Address.

<sup>45</sup> *PANC*, 5 August 1943.

<sup>46</sup> Rasporich, “Call me Charlie,” 15.

<sup>47</sup> *PANC*, 3 August 1943.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*



Each candidate used advertisements and public appearances to pitch their party's vision of what postwar Lakehead society would look like, and how they could best shape it. Cox's campaign strength came through his appearances with C.D. Howe. At that point, Howe was the Minister of Munitions and Supply in the King Cabinet and was widely popular at the Lakehead and in Canada. Howe's popularity at the Lakehead derived both from his national popularity and visibility as a major figure in the government during the war years, and the fact that Howe's tenure as Port Arthur's MP largely coincided with the constituency's rebound from the Great Depression.

Howe campaigning with Cox was surprising to many in Port Arthur, as Howe and Cox's relationship had been long soured by 1943, largely due to the widening schism between the federal Liberals and the Ontario provincial Liberals, and the fact that throughout their respective careers, Howe and Cox often butted head in Port Arthur and Howe regarded Cox as an annoyance.<sup>49</sup> Anthony Rasporich further details Cox and Howe's soured relationship: "For his part, Howe urged King to act quickly, if only because the Ontario Liberals played havoc in his own riding. Everywhere he had turned, he had been upstaged by the irrepressible M.L.A. for Port Arthur, Charlie Cox...Cox [even] let it be rumoured that he not only wanted to be mayor and provincial member for Port Arthur, but federal M.P. as well!"<sup>50</sup> It is unsure to what degree the public understood Cox and Howe's relationship, or how much their soured relationship affected the 1943 Cox campaign, but, Howe's aide for Cox in his campaign certainly was a boon and was the consequence of returning the favour from the 1935 election in which Cox played a significant role in helping Howe find electoral success.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Bothwell and Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe*, 172-173.

<sup>50</sup> Rasporich, "A Boston Yankee," 30, 33.

<sup>51</sup> For example, Howe would appear with Cox when possible at campaign events. When he could not physically attend, he would have a surrogate speak on his behalf. See *PANC*, 28 July 1943 for an advertisement of Cox and Howe speaking together.

Cox's campaign laid largely on two foundations: promoting his experience and record as both an M.L.A. and Port Arthur's mayor, and attacking the CCF as a political stepping stone to communism. As stated by John Boyko in his work *Into the Hurricane: Attacking Socialism and the CCF*, "In the ideological debate raging in Canada in the 1940s, there was no more potent weapon to use against socialism and the CCF than the accusation that both were tied to, similar to, or fronts for communism."<sup>52</sup> This mode of attack had permeated through elections since the CCF's first campaign in the Lakehead, but intensified in 1943 as the CCF was increasingly seen as a legitimate contender to win the province. In one edition of a series of advertisements from the Cox campaign placed inside the *Port Arthur News Chronicle* titled "C.W. Blockbusters," the headline read: "C.C.F. Political Stepping Stone For Communists."<sup>53</sup> The advertisement argued that the CCF movement was nothing short of an existential crisis for the citizens of Port Arthur (and Ontario), and that the CCF as a movement was being manipulated by Tim Buck and the Communist Party as a route to power.<sup>54</sup> The advertisement also suggest that the "the cause of Labor cannot be advanced by the C.C.F. and no real Labour advocate can fall for their bunkum."<sup>55</sup> The irony of these statements from the Liberal party was that at the same time, the CCF was forcing a gradual reconsideration of policies by both the federal and provincial Liberal parties that led to the widespread adoption of CCF ideals by both groups, who co-opted the CCF's objectives to stave off electoral defeat and satisfy unhappy citizens fearful of returning to the Depression.

The Progressive Conservatives' aggressive campaign blended the same polemical attacks on the CCF with an appeal to Canadians' nativist and jingoist sentiments. Perhaps the most

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<sup>52</sup> John Boyko, *Into the Hurricane: Attacking Socialism and the CCF* (Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishing Inc., 2006), 94.

<sup>53</sup> *PANC*, 27 July 1943.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

colorful example of this campaign strategy came from the series of advertisements that asserted that “The C.C.F. Would Get Rid of Churchill.”<sup>56</sup> In surrounding a series of cherry-picked quotes around portraits of Winston Churchill and George Drew, the Progressive Conservatives asked the Port Arthur public: “Do Ontario Voters Want to Break From the Empire?”<sup>57</sup> Though the two major parties in Canada were certainly willing to exploit the war and the Communists to win voters, the CCF were similarly comfortable with exploiting the conditions of the Great Depression to court the same voters. The CCF were very well aware that a significant amount of their support derived from Canadians unhappy with the country’s Liberal order and experience over the last decade, and the CCF in Port Arthur were willing to build on these anxieties to thrust their campaign forward. Several times throughout the election cycle, the CCF ran advertisements that suggested that they were the only party who could avoid a return to pre-Depression conditions.<sup>58</sup> The advertisement, which in part read “WE SHALL NOT RETURN TO BREAD LINES AND SOUP KITCHENS AFTER THIS WAR. The CCF alone presents a people’s program that will prevent such a tragedy,” was resounding in that the CCF was a bold new break with a past that was the direct result of failed policies by the two major political parties.<sup>59</sup>

The same tactics similarly unfolded in the Fort William’s provincial elections, though the concerns raised by each party were put forward in different ways. One notable difference was the more positive campaign taken by the Fort William Liberal candidate, Campbell Hanna, who focused more on what the Liberals had accomplished between 1934 and 1943 than fear-mongering over a CCF-created societal demise.<sup>60</sup> There was also a tendency among Liberal attacks to lump the Conservatives and the CCF together, rather than attacking either one

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<sup>56</sup> *PANC*, 3 August 1943.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> One example of a more positive advertisement focused on the Liberal record rather than the CCF can be found in *FWD TJ*, 3 August 1943.

individually. The Progressive Conservatives in Fort William, meanwhile, ran a similar jingoistic campaign that emphasized tying the CCF internationally to the Allied experience overseas and domestically to the Communist movement led by Tim Buck. Their candidate, Roy Kirkup, a World War I veteran, attempted to utilize his past experiences in the military as a vehicle for political success. One advertisement in the *Fort William Daily Times-Journal* attempted to link Western and Central Europe with Ontario, suggesting that political ‘indifference’ led to the rise of fascism in Europe would certainly play out similarly in Ontario if not checked by an active, Progressive Conservative-supporting voter base.<sup>61</sup>

These media attacks have all been sampled from advertisements in local newspapers in the two weeks leading up to the election because they best reflect the fear and/or hope each party wished to inspire in the constituents as related to their postwar vision.<sup>62</sup> However, jostling for position amongst who would be best to deliver Canada’s shared postwar vision occurred much earlier than the weeks prior to the election. One example comes from a May 1943 Letter to the Editor in the *Port Arthur News-Chronicle* titled “CCF and Capitalism.” The letter primarily attacked the CCF on three premises: that the CCF could be linked to European fascism, that a prerequisite for supporting the CCF and socialism more generally was to be a committed atheist, and that the CCF’s socialist vision could only be somewhat feasible in times of war during the employment of a command economy, but would absolutely crumble the foundations of any

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<sup>61</sup> *FWD TJ*, 21 July 1943.

<sup>62</sup> It is at this time that I would like to briefly comment on the archival record pertaining to Frederick O. Robinson and Garfield Anderson. There exists an abundance of archival documents left by Robinson, largely related to his work as an M.L.A. for the CCF, but also for his time as Port Arthur’s mayor. Documentation exists in a large quantity at the Lakehead University Archives, while some documentation is held at the City of Thunder Bay Archives, with the remaining used for this research scattered throughout numerous other locations and newspapers. Meanwhile, the documentation regarding Garfield Anderson’s time as Fort William’s M.L.A. and mayor is virtually non-existent, particularly in a comparative light with Robinson’s archival record. Even records typically created during a mayoral term do not exist, to the best of my knowledge and with aid from the archival staff, at the City of Thunder Bay archives. It is in this light that a significant amount of the information on Garfield Anderson is garnered through newspaper, some select city documents, and through ‘reading against the grain’ from files and documents in the Robinson collection.

postwar Canadian society.<sup>63</sup> Rather than write a retort in the newspaper, Robinson took to the radio on 31 May 1943 to address the concerns raised in the letter; primarily, Robinson spoke to the Christian nature of the socialist movement in Canada and distanced and even refuted and CCF involvement with either the Spanish Civil War or the Second World War.<sup>64</sup> Similar attacks unfolded in both Port Arthur and Fort William, and attacks, and defenses, of the CCF had an established tradition in the Twin Cities prior to the 1943 election.<sup>65</sup>

The CCF campaign in both Port Arthur and Fort William took shape around each party's postwar vision, but the CCF campaign of course unfolded in more manners than merely newspaper articles and public attacks. Robinson and Anderson both significantly benefitted through the coordination of campaign strategies and resources between each city's respective candidate. As mentioned earlier, the CCF would need cooperation and joint activity to rival the fractured, but still strong, Liberal political machine that dominated Lakehead politics in the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Proper coordination between Robinson and Anderson's campaign allowed the CCF to rival the strength of the Liberals; one tangible example of the benefit of coordinating came from the joint campaign strategy that saw both Robinson and Anderson receive endorsements and riding visits from established Manitoban CCF veteran, Stanley Knowles.<sup>66</sup> Though Knowles's presence in the CCF would become larger as the postwar period progressed, he was still a strong advocate to have in a campaign in 1943. Over the course of roughly a week in a few different events, Knowles appeared in events for both Robinson and Anderson that surely boosted their

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<sup>63</sup> *PANC*, 23 May 1943.

<sup>64</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 7, 31 May 1943 Radio Speech.

<sup>65</sup> For information on the lines of attack on the CCF, including from the left itself, see John Boyko, *Into the Hurricane: Attacking Socialism and the CCF* (Winnipeg: J. Gordon Shillingford Publishers, 2006).

<sup>66</sup> Stanley Knowles was a CCF and later New Democratic Party Member of Parliament for a total of 38 years, in which he served in various important roles for each iteration of the party. More information on Knowles can be found in Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, *Stanley Knowles: The Man from Winnipeg North Centre* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982) and Gerald G. Harrop, *Advocate of Compassion: Stanley Knowles in the Political Process* (Hantsport, Nova Scotia: Lancelot Press, 1984).

already growing reputation with the Lakehead working-class.<sup>67</sup> Described by historian Nelson Wiseman as an “individual whose influence and status was significant in both CCF and union circles,” Knowles expressed gratitude at his event with Robinson for the attention that the Liberals and Conservatives had paid the CCF, remarking that the “old line parties” were strengthening the CCF by giving them free publicity, and that the demise of the Liberals and Conservatives would be at their own hand.<sup>68</sup> Knowles also took the time to criticize Howe and the federal Liberals, insisting that the CCF had the better plan for transitioning from a wartime to a peacetime economy.<sup>69</sup>

The presence of Knowles boosted the profiles of Anderson and Robinson with the CCF, but so did the support of the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council and the Fort William Trades and Labour Council. By 1943, Port Arthur and Fort William’s respective trade councils were not yet merged but were engaged in heavy cooperation, particularly in relation to the push for collective bargaining, but also related to politics.<sup>70</sup> It is unclear the exact amount of coordination between the two labour councils and the Robinson and Anderson campaigns; in 1943, Communists had yet to be purged from labour’s ranks and many communists still played significant roles in the district labour council, the most notable being Bruce Magnuson, Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council’s secretary.<sup>71</sup> Despite a heavy communist presence on the trades and labour council, there was also significant CCF representation. Most notably, Lakehead CCF pioneer and former candidate Alexander Gibson served on the executive committee and in several other roles on the council.<sup>72</sup> In Fort William, too, Garfield Anderson had long been a

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<sup>67</sup> *FWDTJ*, 21 July 1943; *FWDTJ*, 31 July 1943.

<sup>68</sup> Nelson Wiseman, *Social Democracy in Manitoba: A History of the CCF-NDP* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1983), 81; *FWDTJ*, 21 July 1943.

<sup>69</sup> *FWDTJ*, 21 July 1943.

<sup>70</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (hereafter TBHM), Thunder Bay and District Labour Council fonds (TBDL), Series E 57/1/File 5, The Port Arthur Trades & Labour Council Officers’ Report for the Year 1943.

<sup>71</sup> *PANC*, 28 July 1943.

<sup>72</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E 57/1/File 5, The Port Arthur Trades & Labour Council Officers’ Report for the Year 1943.

member of the labour council, suggesting that his candidacy and policies would be well-received with his former colleagues.<sup>73</sup> The CCF and the trades and labour councils in each city had definitely formed links, but it is difficult to discern from the historical record whether or not Robinson and Anderson received formal endorsements or campaign assistance from the trades and labour councils. What can be said is that the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council campaigned *against* the other parties in 1943. One example of an advertisement came a week before the election in which the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council spoke against perceived Liberal falsehoods and concluded the advertisement by asking “the Liberal candidate [to] ... keep his hands off Labour and [avoid] outworn red-baiting.”<sup>74</sup>

Of course, politics were important to the district labour councils, but 1943 was an important year for the councils that may have diverted their attention away from an amplified role in the provincial election. The labour councils were paying close attention to negotiations at the national level between King and the Trades and Labour Council of Canada (TLC).<sup>75</sup> Asking for equal representation in Canada’s industrial framework, Port Arthur and Fort William’s labour leaders were largely concerned with how the Lakehead would fit into this new vision of Canadian society being negotiated at the federal level. To this point, much ink has been spilled regarding the importance of competing visions of postwar Canadian society. As a reminder from chapter two, Lakehead labour residents were most concerned about: proper labour representation on government-orchestrated oversight committees, a national minimum wage, guaranteed employment for workers transitioning out of wartime industries, and increased “government-labor-industry” cooperation.<sup>76</sup> Paying attention to events transpiring at a higher level was

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<sup>73</sup> *PANC*, 5 August 1943.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 July 1943.

<sup>75</sup> For more information on King’s 1943 negotiations, see Hollander, *Power, Politics, Principles*, 165-209.

<sup>76</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E 57/1/File 3, Fort William Trades & Labour Council - Resolution on Domestic Postwar Program.

important, but each of the two district labour councils were equally concerned with events transpiring at the local level. Though labour and politics became increasingly blended during the socialist era of “Radical Planism,” the Trades and Labour councils may have been too busy to play active roles in the election.

One last body of evidence that provides great insight into the first electoral success at the Lakehead for the CCF are the transcripts of radio speeches made by Robinson to the constituents on a very regular basis leading up to the August 5<sup>th</sup> election. Commonalities that run throughout the speeches speak to important campaign themes and issues facing the Lakehead that the CCF sought to remedy. Of course, as per the major theme of the 1943 provincial election at the Lakehead, an important component of Robinson’s speeches revolved around outlining the CCF’s postwar vision for the Lakehead. Of particular importance to Robinson and the CCF’s vision was the transition from wartime to peacetime while still maintaining full employment, as previously mentioned. Robinson’s speeches, and to a larger extent his entire campaign, was so reflective of the overall mission of the CCF that many of his speeches contained verbatim language used the next year in the *CCF Federal Election Manifesto*.<sup>77</sup>

Interestingly, another important point that Robinson stressed throughout his campaign and radio speeches was the importance of the farmer. Typically, farming and agriculture is not associated with Northwestern Ontario or the Lakehead, and rightfully so; large-scale agriculture at the Lakehead had largely failed in the region over the previous few decades.<sup>78</sup> Though farming

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<sup>77</sup> For example, a prominent phrase used in both Robinson’s speeches and the *1944 Election Manifesto* was “The CCF believes that war planning and postwar policies are not separate problems...”. This phrase was important because it prefaced the key discussion on the postwar vision that raged in Canada during this time. See *CCF Federal Election Manifesto*, in Michael S. Cross, ed., *The Decline and Fall of a Good Idea: CCF-NDP Manifestoes, 1932-1969* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1974), 24-29.

<sup>78</sup> Decades of propaganda originating around the building of the railways put special emphasis on the role of the farmer in Northern Ontario, particularly in relationship to the well-being of Canada. The almost mythical role that the image of the farmer took on through this propaganda is reflected by the CCF’s emphasis on attracting the farmer vote at the Lakehead, despite the fact that agriculture was not a major employer at the Lakehead during the lifetime of the CCF. Currently, J. David Wood is the expert on the encroachment of agriculture into the Canadian Boreal Forest and the Lakehead. See J. David Wood, *Making Ontario: Agricultural Colonization and Landscape Re-*



to a large degree failed, the a belief in the importance of sustained farming still permeated through the Lakehead in 1943, and Robinson, as a representative of the farmer-labour-socialist party, could speak well to the real and imagined concerns of agriculture at the Lakehead. In the same vein as the CCF's attempt to appeal to the farmer, Anderson and Robinson both built a significant portion of their campaign around winning the vote of the rural communities sprinkled throughout their district. Robinson, for example, spent a significant amount of his energy and campaign resources on winning the rural vote.<sup>79</sup> An emphasis on rural voters became a staple for the CCF at the Lakehead and was a key campaigning target for the CCF throughout the entirety of its existence at the Lakehead.

A last interesting historical thread that can be gleaned through a reading of Robinson's campaign materials in 1943 is his astute prediction that the Liberal and Conservative parties would coopt the CCF platform to maintain political hegemony. Anderson, in speaking on the radio, said: "A conservative or liberal party prepared to be radical enough might leave no room for the CCF as a major party, but to accomplish this result, would have to accept a large part of the CCF philosophy."<sup>80</sup> Prior to this speech, the process of gradually adopting CCF policies had already been occurring for at least a year, and was the consequence of the strength of labour shown at strikes in Kirkland Lake, Sydney, and Sault Ste. Marie in particular between 1941 and 1943.<sup>81</sup> However, Robinson's assessment and prediction of further policy-stealing was appropriate considering that, over the next decade or so, the Liberal and Conservative parties successfully alienated the working-class from the CCF because Canada's socialist party have

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*Creation Before the Railway* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000) and J. David Wood, *Places of Last Resort: The Expansion of the Farm Frontier into the Boreal Forest in Canada, c. 1910-1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006).

<sup>79</sup> For example, on one trip in 1943, Robinson visited Nipigon, Schreiber, Terrace Bay, Heron Bay and White River. Often, trips included visiting local mills or gathering places of the working-class. See, for example: LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 29, Campaign News Release.

<sup>80</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 8, 16 July 1943 Radio Speech.

<sup>81</sup> Craig Heron, *The Canadian Labour Movement*, 71.

nothing novel that they could offer, a fact further exacerbated by the dramatic increase in living standards and wages in “Canada’s Golden Age.”

Between 1943 and 1961, the CCF consistently used information mediums in innovative ways to reach voters and run successful campaigns. A key thread that runs through the history of the CCF at the Lakehead is how Robinson and Fisher, though over a decade separated their inaugural campaigns, used radio and television, respectively, in strikingly similar manners to reach voters. The strategy revolved around offering brief, thematic discussion on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to reach voters and distill policy points in a digestible manner. Robinson, through radio, and Fisher, on television, were able to talk policy to a broad range of voters in a conversational style that seemed more like a fireside chat than a political discussion.<sup>82</sup>

Important, too, in Robinson’s speeches are that they can be analyzed as an extension of the letters he wrote to constituents and the way in which he spoke. Specifically, his approach to leveraging his working-class machinist background was an attempt to appear more genuine to a working-class voter. For example, during Robinson’s 16 July 1943 speech, he opened his speech with the following remarks: “It is my privilege to speak to you as the C.C.F. Candidate in this riding of Port Arthur. I cannot lay claim to any impressive record as a businessman or high pressure politician. As your candidate in this election, I am simply a common man privileged to represent the common people.”<sup>83</sup> Robinson’s constant discussion of his machinist and union background, first, is reflective of his avowed commitment to socialism and knowledge of socialist literature that prerequisites leadership by the working-class. Second, Robinson’s placement of his background at the forefront of his campaign mirrors the early nature of the CCF and Second World War/postwar socialist movement at the Lakehead; in the context of Zakuta’s a

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<sup>82</sup> See for example LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 8, 16 July 1943 Radio Speech; LUA, Douglas Fisher Fonds, Box 7-ELECTIONS, 23 May 1957 Television Script.

<sup>83</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 8, 16 July 1943 Radio Speech.

“Protest Movement Becalmed,” Robinson (and Anderson) represent the early CCF movement: radical, socialistic, and uncompromising in the face of liberal capitalist hegemony.<sup>84</sup> The positioning of Robinson and Anderson on the political spectrum is in sharp contrast to Douglas Fisher, the last CCF politician at the Lakehead, who can be at best placed on the conservative wing of the NDP and the CCF.

Robinson and Anderson both won their 1943 elections. Robinson won quite convincingly, and shockingly, over Cox and Oaks while Anderson secured Fort William’s M.L.A seat in a similarly safe manner, beating out Hanna and Kirkup.<sup>85</sup> The election patterned the rest of Ontario as the CCF across the province scored their first major electoral victories. Anderson won, at that point, the largest majority ever given to a provincial candidate in Fort William.<sup>86</sup> Robinson also won his election convincingly. After the election win, Robinson recounted that “many of the people voted for the CCF in repudiation of the old line parties.”<sup>87</sup> The 1943 election is significant because it marked the first time in the Lakehead’s history that the traditional political parties’ hegemony was successfully challenged, a turn that is reflected in the expounded by Robinson after his electoral win.

The detailed analysis of some of the most important aspects to Robinson and Anderson’s campaign serves the purpose of building an understanding of the CCF at the Lakehead in this period, but more importantly, it provides a frame of reference for the regional decline of the CCF into a party nearly unrecognizable only 18 years later. Of course, consistencies existed between the Robinson-Anderson era and the Fisher era, including an emphasis on the regional, small towns, an innovative use of information mediums, and the development of strategies to seem

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<sup>84</sup> Leo Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed: a Study of Change in the CCF* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).

<sup>85</sup> Both results and summaries can be found in *PANC*, 5 August 1943.

<sup>86</sup> *FWD TJ*, 5 August 1943.

<sup>87</sup> *PANC*, 5 August 1943.

more appealing to the working-class, but by and large, the movement that Robinson and Anderson helped launched had shifted dramatically by Fisher's tenure. Robinson and Anderson had deep connections to the working-class and took electoral power through creating a common vision for a benevolent postwar order at the Lakehead, whereas Fishers' tenure as Port Arthur's MP is marked by heated contests with labour and party survival. Where Robinson and Anderson spoke more traditional dialects of socialism that resonated with the Lakehead working-class, and particularly its ethnic population, Fisher often saw himself on the outside-looking-in as he sat on the conservative wing of the CCF while the party transitioned to the NDP.

What must be understood about the Robinson-Anderson CCF era at the Lakehead is that it was very much a grassroots movement inspired by a true socialist doctrine that sought to benefit the Lakehead working-class by offering them a fair stake in Canada's postwar social order, a political style and motif that resonated in nearly every aspect of their campaign. The last successful campaign ran by both Robinson and Anderson in the same year for the CCF was the 1945 provincial election. The 1945 election changed the nature of CCF campaigns at the Lakehead, marking the first time that the Labor Progressive Party (LPP) ran at the Lakehead. The LPP Bruce Magnuson, a key party member involved in the LPP's executive, ran in 1945 in Port Arthur and would be the most prominent and recurrent LPP candidate at the Lakehead.

The Labour Progressive Party was founded in the summer of 1943 after the King administration had outlawed the Communist Party. The Labour Progressive Party immediately began to contest the CCF for working-class hegemony at the Lakehead. Running on a platform solely intended to attract the working-class, Magnuson and the LPP's entry into Lakehead politics significantly weakened the CCF. In his study of Canadian communism, Norman Penner notes that "...the CCF brought about a torrent of abuse by the Communist Party (through its

various iterations), the most virulent it had ever directed at social democracy.”<sup>88</sup> The CCF had earlier declared their explicit unwillingness to work with communists, though this did not stop the Liberal and Conservative parties from purposefully attempting to conflate the two ideologies. Speaking to the broader Ontario experience, Caplan notes that 1944 and 1945 witnessed the LPP working to empower the Liberal Party and attack the CCF at all available opportunities, despite the irony of the Liberal Party outlawing the Communist Party only two years earlier.<sup>89</sup> Perhaps the clearest example of the relationship between the LPP and the CCF in the postwar period can be found in Stanley B. Ryerson’s *Which Side Are You On?*, an LPP publication.<sup>90</sup> *Which Side Are You On?* is in many ways a manifesto that outlines the real or perceived ideological tensions between Canada’s communists and their social democrats in the postwar period. Ryerson argues that the CCF has become another political party inculcated by capital and that the working-class has to make a choice: continue to vote for the CCF and embrace capitalist policies or vote for the LPP and work in unity to dismantle the capitalist system that oppresses Canadian labourers.<sup>91</sup>

At the Lakehead, the working-class had a choice to make between the CCF and the communists. Competing visions of social democracy, socialism, and communism have existed in the region, as mentioned in chapter one, since at least 1902 when the local trade union movement originated. The difference in the 1945 provincial election is that the nature of the socialist movement in Canada changed dramatically as the movement shifted into its third phase of organization, Radical Planism. This phase is largely responsible for the success and growth of the CCF, but it can also be used to explain the turn towards party politics by communists. Of

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<sup>88</sup> Norman Penner, *Canadian Communism: The Stalin Years and Beyond* (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1988), 14.

<sup>89</sup> Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 135. Another example of the ironic support provided for the Liberal Party by the LPP came from a 1945 Federal by-election in the riding of Grey North. Several prominent LPP members appeared in an advertisement that claimed Canada’s trade union leaders supported the Liberal candidate. The irony is further intensified after considering that the King government had just recently interned many of the men in the photo. See Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 147-148.

<sup>90</sup> Stanley B. Ryerson, *Which Side Are You On? A Question for Messrs. Coldwell, Lewis and Millard* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1949).

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-8.

course, the communist party and communists on labour tickets were involved electorally before the advent of Radical Planism, but this era marked a shift in communist discourse that saw electoral success as a prerequisite for revolution and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

It is important to understand the LPP and their outlook towards the CCF to understand the different dynamic that characterized postwar politics for the CCF at the Lakehead. The LPP at the Lakehead was not outwardly hostile towards the CCF until the 1948 election, likely because Magnuson still played an important role in the Lakehead's trade union movement and had deep connections to the labouring community, many of whom were CCF voters. In the 1945 election, Magnuson's advertisements were largely tame and focused on his platform, rather than attack advertisements. The key theme to Magnuson's campaign, in keeping in line with the broader Canadian experience outlined by McInnis, revolved around his belief that the LPP had the best vision for postwar Lakehead. Specifically, Magnuson campaigned on the development of the Lakehead's natural resources, and their transition to worker-controlled products that were harvested for the sole benefit of the proletariat.<sup>92</sup> Robinson and Anderson, meanwhile, continued the campaign streams that had led them to electoral success in 1943: a frequent yet casual use of radio, guest speakers from prominent CCF ridings, focus on the district's rural areas (including bush camps), and language that exemplified their working-class connections. Robinson ran against Progressive-Conservative Lt.-Col. Herbert Cook, who ran on a platform of tax reduction and a new education policy, and Liberal Bert Styffe, who Robinson would meet again in 1948, and his long-time rival, C.W. Cox, as an independent. Robinson won in convincing fashion but did considerably worse than 1943; his worse showing can be largely attributed to the nearly 1,400 votes that Magnuson received, and the fact that there were five candidates in the race.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *PANC*, 1 July 1945.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 5 June 1948.

Anderson, meanwhile, faced his stiffest competition from another Lt.-Col., R.A. Keane. Similar to Robinson, Anderson had a strong showing, though overall he did worse than his 1943 campaign.<sup>94</sup>

A striking juxtaposition arises from the 1945 provincial election for the Lakehead CCF: the local elections for Robinson and Anderson were extremely similar in multiple ways, including success, campaign issues, overarching themes, and advertising and campaign strategies, while the CCF at the provincial level were decimated and reduced to eight seats. Gerald Caplan describes this period bleakly, stating: “June 4 and June 11, 1945, proved to be black days in CCF annals: socialism was effectively removed from the Canadian political agenda.”<sup>95</sup> Caplan’s argument holds true more so for the Ontario CCF than the federal CCF; in the federal election, the CCF actually gained twenty seats and won 15.6% of the popular vote, the party’s highest ever.<sup>96</sup> The Port and the Fort now represented 25% of the CCF’s total Ontario seats, and because of this Robinson and Anderson were able to take much larger roles in the party. After the 1945 election, Anderson became the CCF deputy house leader and Robinson became the caucus secretary.<sup>97</sup> The importance of the Lakehead to the Ontario CCF is further reflected in *The New Commonwealth*, the Ontario and Maritime provincial CCF newspaper. After the collapse of the party in 1945, *The New Commonwealth* began running a new weekly feature: the Northwest Corner. Specifically dedicated to Northwestern Ontario and the actions of

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<sup>94</sup> Important to the context of the CCF at the Lakehead during this time, but not nearly as consequential because of the electoral losses and near-guarantee of failure, was the CCF’s federal candidates in the 1945 Federal Election, held only one week after the Provincial Election. In Fort William, CCF candidate W.C. McKenzie lost quite handily to Daniel McIvor, who was still in the midst of his stranglehold on Fort William federal politics. In Port Arthur, Jack Thompson of the CCF finished second, but was still a remarkable 4000+ votes behind C.D. Howe. The federal elections reflect the CCF’s activity at all levels of Canadian government, but the federal Liberal dynasty at the Lakehead between 1934 and 1957 prevented any real chance for a CCF win here.

<sup>95</sup> Caplan, *The Dilemma*, 191.

<sup>96</sup> Alan Whitehorn, *Canadian Socialism: Essays on the CCF-NDP* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>97</sup> *The New Commonwealth*, 26 July 1945.

Robinson and Anderson, the Northwest Corner kept the rest of the Ontario CCF members in the loop in a region that was still very remote and distant in 1945.

Whether by choice or by necessity, the Lakehead had become increasingly important to the Ontario CCF immediately after the 1945 election. The question remains, though: what regional peculiarities allowed the CCF at the Lakehead to remain strong in lieu of a provincial collapse? There appears to be at least three major influences, all of which relate to shifting demographics. As previously mentioned, a postwar boom occurred at the Lakehead that coincided with the end of the Second World War. More important than just strictly population change were the changing family structures. Between 1941 and 1951, the male to female ratio declined from 117:100 to 103:100.<sup>98</sup> Increasingly, families began to settle at the Lakehead as the Twin Cities transitioned, figuratively, from a male-dominated frontier town to a more family-centred urban centre.<sup>99</sup> Growth of families led directly to the establishment and proliferation of women's-only organizations at the Lakehead, a strong local disarmament movement, and an emphasis on public places, such as parks.<sup>100</sup> The growth of families and the increased presence of women at the Lakehead (and in Lakehead politics) were important because the CCF at the Lakehead, relative to the Liberal and Conservative parties, had an extremely pro-family program and robust women's involvement. At the Lakehead, a growth of families equaled a growth in the CCF base.

The second demographic shift comes from the changing relationship between ethnicity and politics, first outlined by Anthony W. Rasporich. The CCF at the Lakehead had originated through relying on the English-speaking working-class vote, with some middle-class support and

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<sup>98</sup> Stafford, "A Century of Growth," 52.

<sup>99</sup> For further reading on Canadian frontier regions, see J.M.S. Careless, *Frontier and Metropolis: Regions, Cities, and Identities in Canada before 1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1989).

<sup>100</sup> Examples of women's-only organizations present in the Lakehead during the 1950s and 1960s include: The East Fort William Women's Institute, McGregor Women's Institute, the Ontario Women's Institute of Westfort and the West Algoma Council of Women, among many more.



marginal ethnic participation; a shift that began in 1943 and fully materialized in 1945 witnessed a significant migration of ethnic voters to the CCF that sustained a strong local. As noted by Rasporich, “Party lists for the CCF in its halcyon days from 1943-1948 reveal a considerable number of Italians, Ukrainians, Poles and Finns who made their way into the postwar socialist camp.”<sup>101</sup> The assimilation of previously segregated ethnicities into the broader Canadian postwar structure allowed the Lakehead CCF to disproportionately increase their base and succeed while, comparatively, the rest of the CCF in Ontario were electorally decimated.

Thematically, the 1945 election mirrored the 1943 election in key issues and the centrality of each party outlining their vision for postwar Canada, and the CCF in Port Arthur and Fort William were able to survive by growing their base and offering a broad platform. Anderson and Robinson both won convincingly, though it would be their last simultaneously successful election. The transition from the Robinson-Anderson era to the Fisher era began in 1948 with Garfield Anderson’s electoral loss. In great annoyance to the CCF at the Lakehead, and particularly to Robinson, Anderson lost to Cox, by then a seasoned long-time Lakehead politician, though to that point exclusively in Port Arthur.<sup>102</sup> Cox, in reflecting on his win in Fort William, remarked that it had been his most satisfying election campaign to date.<sup>103</sup> Robinson, meanwhile, won by a fair margin over Liberal Bert Styffe and Conservative George Wardrope.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Rasporich, “Twin City Ethnopolitics,” 222. See also LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 10, 1948 Party List.

<sup>102</sup> For election results, please see *FWD TJ*, 8 June 1948.

<sup>103</sup> *FWD TJ*, 8 June 1948.

<sup>104</sup> Bert Styffe was the son of Oscar Styffe, founder of Oscar Styffe Limited, a lumber company based at the Lakehead. He had prominent ties to the business community and his relationship to the forestry industry was appealing at the time. For more information on Oscar Styffe Limited, see Beth Boegh, “Oscar Styffe: Conservationist and Lumberman,” in Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society *Papers and Records* 21 (1993): 7-18; John Styffe, *Oscar R. Styffe 1883-1943: the Man and his Companies* (Thunder Bay, Ontario: Lakehead University Library, 1985) and Andrew J. Hacquoil, “Bunkhouses, Hauling Roads and Finnish Beer: the Logging Camps of Oscar Styffe Limited,” Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society *Papers and Records* 23 (1995): 2-23. George Wardrope, meanwhile, would eventually unseat Robinson in 1951, serving as a Conservative representing Port Arthur in the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for sixteen years from 1951 to 1967.

Important themes arise when studying the early period of the CCF at the Lakehead that provide insight into the working-class in the Port and the Fort. The origins of electoral success at the Lakehead lie in the conditions of the Great Depression, and publicly manipulating the anxieties that the public had regarding a return to these conditions allowed the CCF to position itself as the sole party that could deliver prosperity to the Lakehead after the war. McInnis's discussion of trilateral relations between state, labour and capital can be reworked, at least in the case of the Lakehead, to describe a competition, rather than a negotiation, between the three major political parties, all of whom were trying to advocate for their respective postwar vision and how that would manifest at the Lakehead.<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, in a parallel to McInnis' thesis, the CCF were able to "harness labour confrontation" to capitalize on anxieties at the Lakehead and succeed in the 1943, 1945, and 1948 elections at the provincial level.

To achieve this, Frederick Robinson and Garfield Anderson embedded themselves into the working-class culture of the Lakehead and made broad alliances across trade and ethnicity. Innovative in their electoral strategies, Robinson and Anderson succeeded in building a CCF movement that, though weakened in 1948 and again in 1951, remained active enough to help Douglas Fisher win the 1957 Port Arthur federal election. Retrospectively, it can thus be seen that the CCF at the Lakehead during and immediately after the Second World War can serve as an inverted microcosm of debates and negotiations happening at the provincial and federal level, while also providing important information on local socialist thought and the use of media in politics at this time. Last, the juxtaposition of the local CCF and the provincial CCF can provide insight into the nature of the Lakehead CCF and provide reasons into the continued local success.

In examining the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and organized labour during the period 1943-1948, it becomes apparent that both movements underwent dramatic shifts to

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<sup>105</sup> McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*.

accommodate the changing postwar order. The labour movement emerged from the Second World War with unprecedented leverage. After successful strikes in 1946 and 1947, several coalescing forces slowly eradicated the movement's radical leadership that would lead the rank-and-file susceptible to the influence of international unionism in the 1950s. The CCF, meanwhile, emerged both as a viable political party and a local movement that sought to realign the spectrum of traditional politics. The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation grew more influential at the Lakehead during this period, and through the politics of Frederick Robinson and Garfield Anderson, laid the foundation for the Douglas Fisher era of social democratic politics at the Lakehead. The early actions here mark the genesis of the marriage between labour and politics at the Lakehead; their eventual coming-together became exacerbated and accelerated by challenges faced by both between 1948-1957.

### Chapter Three

#### **“That is what is wrong with unions...It is taken out of the membership’s hands, the grassroots!”: Changes affecting the Organized Labour Movement at the Lakehead, 1944-1957**

Between 1935-1943, trades and labour councils in Port Arthur and Fort William assumed the lead in selecting a labour candidate, led by union-built electoral committees.<sup>1</sup> The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation’s initial success in 1943 resulted from the combination of successful campaigning and a sense of anxiety among the general Canadian public on the future state of postwar Canada, a waning belief in the organization of society under a capitalist structure, and the fear of a return to the conditions of the Great Depression lifted the CCF to provincial (and national) prominence. The CCF would form the official opposition in Ontario, only trailing the Conservatives by eight seats, including MLAs from both Port Arthur and Fort William, Robinson and Anderson, who both had also won the mayoralty of their respective cities.

The organized labour movement made important strides during this period that built to the passage of *PC 1003* in 1944. An important development in 1936 saw the Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union join the American Federation of Labour, despite the differing political alignments of the LSWU and the AFL.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding different political inclinations, the bushworkers’ union with the AFL and the uptick in economic conditions revitalized the local labour movement. Between 1936 and the start of the war, the working-class made gains in the bushes, grain elevators, and on the docks.<sup>3</sup> Despite the dismal beginning to the 1930s, the

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<sup>1</sup> James Naylor, *The Fate of Labour Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation and the Dream of a Working-Class Future* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 258.

<sup>2</sup> Jean Morrison, “The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay,” in *Thunder Bay: From Rivalry to Unity*, eds. Thorold Tronrud and A. Ernest Epp (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 1995), 135.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

organized labour movement at the Lakehead had already been building momentum by the time the Second World War began in September of 1939.

As the Second World War ravaged Europe and the Allies had not yet landed on the northern coast of France, Mackenzie King had to fight a separate war on the domestic front. Aided by increasingly skilled union leadership and timely strikes, organized labour successfully complicated domestic affairs during the Second World War by continually increasing their leverage and influence on Canadian society. King, in attempting to solve this “Labour Question,” had the added problem of dealing with the dramatic rise of the CCF, whose momentum had culminated in an electoral breakthrough in 1943.<sup>4</sup>

Always the savvy politician, King began to slowly adopt left-wing reforms that changed the Liberal Party’s stance on many key issues upon recognizing the existential threat that organized labour and the CCF posed to the Liberal Party’s future electoral success.<sup>5</sup> A significant moment in the genesis of King’s shift was the passing of *PC 1003* on 17 February 1944. For better or worse, the Canadian state became heavily intertwined with industrial relations after the Second World War. At this point, the Canadian state generally respected its conciliatory and oversight role in labour negotiations. The importance of this period and its legislation is neatly summarized by Charles Smith: “For North America, the American *Wagner Act* of 1935 and the *PC 1003/Industrial Disputes Investigation Act* of 1948 in Canada have often been seen together as the equivalent of organized labour’s *Magna Carta*: for the first time labour rights would be protected by the state, including the basic rights to collectively bargain and strike.”<sup>6</sup> Though the

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<sup>4</sup> The Labour Question, as discussed by Peter S. McNinnis, refers to the debate around the role that labour would play and want in the organization of post-Second World War Canadian society. See Peter S. McNinnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation: Shaping the Postwar Settlement in Canada, 1943-1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor Hollander, *Power, Politics, and Principles: Mackenzie King and Labour, 1935-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018), 166.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Smith, “The Postwar Compromise and the Future of North American Unionism,” *Left History* 11:1 (Spring 2006): 123.

legacy of *PC 1003* and its offspring legislation is to this day still hotly debated, a strong sense of optimism permeated through labour's ranks as union members prepared for a new Canada in which they had felt firmly positioned within.<sup>7</sup>

The postwar era officially began with a strike wave in 1946 that reorganized several important industries at the Lakehead.<sup>8</sup> Local organized labour, similar to the general Canadian experience, had become staunch supporters of the war effort, but were cautioned by the infringement of civil liberties happening again in 1940 that had previously defined the First World War ethnic experience at the Lakehead.<sup>9</sup> Though the local trades and labour councils, along with the majority of the unions, supported the war effort, local communists were persecuted for no other reason than their (perceived) political ideology, with no person as targeted as Bruce Magnuson. Magnuson was arrested on 7 August 1940 by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police despite no evidence of wrongdoing.<sup>10</sup> Leading up to the arrest, a pattern appears that suggests that the LSWU, and Magnuson in particular, were the favourite targets of local police and the RCMP. One example includes a 9 January 1940 raid, seven months before Magnuson's arrest, of LSWU property and the seizure of "working class newspapers," only some of which were later returned.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> McInnis, *Harnessing Labour Confrontation*, 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> This strike wave occurred nationally as the Canadian labour movement made a concerted effort to maintain the gains that occurred during the war.

<sup>9</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (TBHM), Thunder Bay and District Labour Council Fonds (hereafter TBDL), Series E 57/1/3, The Port Arthur Trades & Labour Council Officers' Report for the Year 1943. For ethnic repression during the First World War, see Michel S. Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead: Ethnicity, Socialism, Politics, 1900-35* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011), 59-61.

<sup>10</sup> Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO), Bruce Magnuson Textual Records (hereafter BMTR), Series F 1405-78-1, Letter to the Trades and Labor Council of Canada.

<sup>11</sup> AO, BMTR, Series F 1405-78-1, Letter to the Port Arthur Police Commission, Port Arthur City Council, Attorney General Gordon Conan, Minister of Justice Hon. Ernest Lapointe and Trades and Labor Council of Canada.

The justification for the infraction of civil liberties during this period came by invoking Canadian fears of a German ‘fifth column’.<sup>12</sup> In responding to a letter sent by the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council regarding Magnuson’s unwarranted arrest, Minister of Munitions and Supply C.D. Howe argued:

Your letter indicates that you are under some misapprehension as to the procedure which is followed in cases of interments during a period of war. For very obvious reasons, the normal course of law must be supplemented by special powers. Otherwise the effort of the Government to suppress Fifth Column activities would be of no avail. The now tragic account of Fifth Column activities in Norway, The Netherlands, Belgium and France is ample proof of the inadequacy of the ordinary peacetime machinery of the law in controlling subversive elements.<sup>13</sup>

Magnuson recalls smoking a tobacco pipe as he was suddenly met in his office by two RCMP officers, who without warning, arrested him and began the process of sending him to an internment camp in Petawawa.<sup>14</sup>

Magnuson’s experience was not the first of its kind; communists and trade union leaders had been arrested frequently during the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What should be understood from Magnuson’s story during the Second World War is that organized labour at the Lakehead were in favour of the war effort, both for nationalistic reasons and as a part of the Popular Front against Fascism, though many involved in labour’s higher ranks were extremely guarded around the issues of civil liberties and unfair suppression by the Canadian government.

Organized labour immediately built off of the momentum of the war by launching strikes to better their positions in Canadian society. Two of the most important industries at the Lakehead in 1946, lumber and shipbuilding/shipping, both launched strikes that saw varying

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<sup>12</sup> Evidence of the presence of a German Fifth Column in and around the Lakehead can be seen through the internment camp located at Red Rock, Ontario. See Ernst Zimmerman, *The Little Third Reich on Lake Superior: A History of Canadian Internment Camp R* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> AO, BMTR, Series F 1405-78-1, Letter to the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council from Mr. C.D. Howe.

<sup>14</sup> Bruce Magnuson, *The Untold Story of Ontario’s Bushworkers: A Political Memoir* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1990), 49. See also the chapter on Magnuson in William Repka and Kathleen M. Repka’s work that details his time in the internment camp at Petawawa. William Repka and Kathleen M. Repka, *Dangerous Patriots: Canada’s Unknown Prisoners of War* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1982), 121-126.

results, including some concessions from various management companies.<sup>15</sup> It is no coincidence that the union leadership representing the Lakehead in lumber and shipping industries were the most heavily targeted among anti-Communist raids during the ‘Red Scare.’<sup>16</sup> The lumber strike, conducted by the LSWU and led by Magnuson, at that time the regional organizer in Timmins, saw nearly 5,000 bushworkers from the Thunder Bay District, and roughly 5,750 men from the Timmins area, go on strike in October 1946.<sup>17</sup> The strike paralyzed the Northern Ontario forestry industry concurrent to Canada scrambling to reconstruct civil society after the defeat of Nazi Germany.

The friction between organized labour at the Lakehead and the bureaucratic structures and processes created by *PC 1003* can be witnessed during this strike. Douglas Thur, in an in-depth study of the Lumber and Sawmill Workers’ Union, writes “...the L.S.W.U was busy struggling to establish itself with the Ontario Labour Relations Board...Capital, however, did all it could to prevent the L.S.W.U from becoming a bargaining agent.”<sup>18</sup> Thur suggests that in the immediate postwar period, the LSWU’s biggest challenge came from the certification process.<sup>19</sup> Certification certainly was an issue in the strike, but the strike itself revolved around several factors that all contributed to a poor standard of living for Ontario’s bushworkers.

In a letter to the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council, AT Hill, then the secretary of the LSWU, alluded to certification as a major issue but also referenced other central problems

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<sup>15</sup> Jean Morrison, “The Organization of Labour at Thunder Bay,” 138. *PANC*, 22 June 1946; Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 147.

<sup>16</sup> The ‘Red Scare’ occurred at the onset and throughout the Cold War, characterized by the widespread fear of the rise of communism in the West. Originating in the United States of America, the post-Second World War ‘Red Scare’ is the second iteration of the phenomenon; the first occurred after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the conclusion of the First World War. For more information, see: John Earl Haynes, *Red Scare or Red Menace?: American Communism and Anticommunism in the Cold War Era* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publishing, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> Douglas Thur, “Beat around the Bush: The Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union and the New Political Economy of Labour in Northern Ontario, 1936-1988,” (MA thesis, Lakehead University, 1990), 106.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*



that helped create conditions for the strike. He wrote, “The issues of the strikers are higher wages and human living conditions in the bush camps of Ontario...the pulp and paper trust has refused to negotiate in good faith with the Union concerning very reasonable demands of the Union. This forced the lumber workers to strike.”<sup>20</sup> The tenor of Hill’s letter, and the strike itself, contains many themes that can tie into the postwar labour experience in Canada as a whole. First, it is evident that a sense of anxiety permeated through the bushworkers who were wary of working in Depression-era conditions. Second, the dichotomy existing between the radicalism associated with Northern Ontario bushworkers and the new structures in place through *PC 1003* can be gleaned from Hill’s letter, who acknowledges that the strikers found themselves in “peculiar conditions.”<sup>21</sup> As Stuart Jamieson has alluded to, strikes typically reach unprecedented levels of frequency, size, and time loss in the year immediately following a war.<sup>22</sup> Beginning with the Ford Strike in Windsor, 1945 to 1948 witnessed two separate strikes waves in Canada, each of which were punctuated by labour militancy. The 1946 Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union Strike nestles perfectly into this pattern of postwar Canadian labour action, and in more ways than one, characterizes the experience of immediate postwar labour-management relations at the Lakehead.

The Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union Strike was a resounding success. As noted by Ian Radforth, capital had regarded the strike as an utter defeat; every striker demand was met, including a base net pay of \$5.00, union recognition, and better working and living conditions.<sup>23</sup> Put more bluntly by A.T. Hill, the superb coordination of the strike, and the unanimous

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<sup>20</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (hereafter TBHM), A.T. Hill Fonds (hereafter ATF), Series A17/2/2, Letter to the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council from A.T. Hill, 19 October 1946.

<sup>21</sup> TBHM, ATF, Series A17/2/2/, Letter to the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council from A.T. Hill, 19 October 1946.

<sup>22</sup> Stuart Marshall Jamieson, *Times of Trouble: Labour Unrest and Industrial Conflict in Canada, 1900-66* (Ottawa: Task Force on Industrial Relations, 1968), 295.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 147

commitment by the strikers, “brought the operators on their knees.”<sup>24</sup> The bushworkers strike had launched the postwar era of industrial relations in a manner similar to previous decades at the Lakehead, with the only exception being the success for labour. As Radforth argues, the logging contract contained conditions more reflective of the language used in *PC 1003* and that, despite the overwhelming success of the strike, the genesis of the insidious drawbacks intrinsic to the postwar compromise were contained here.<sup>25</sup>

The strike also reveals insight into the nature of collective bargaining in the postwar period that often goes misses. because unions had guaranteed right to recognition, did not mean that recognition was guaranteed. Postwar Canadian unions, including those at the Lakehead, had to continue to be militant in their approach to labour gains to combat management that would, at any cost, relegate labour to second-tier status. Neither *PC 1003*, or later, the *IRDIA* or the *Ontario Labour Relations Act* manifested as neutrally in reality as it appeared to in text, and the postwar ‘compromise’ continued to be a battleground between labour and capital.

The LSWU strike was one of two strikes that initiated a new era of industrial relations at the Lakehead. The second, that of the Canadian Seaman’s Union (CSU), provides even more evidence for the lack of a ‘compromise’ in the postwar compromise. Similar to the LSWU strike, the CSU strike encompassed a geographic area much larger than the Lakehead itself, occurring throughout the entire Great Lakes system, though its importance to the Lakehead is marginal in comparison to the bushworkers strike.

Assessing the 1946 CSU strike is difficult because the majority of the secondary literature focuses solely on their 1949 strike because the later strike led directly to the Canadian government enlisting known criminal Hal Banks to break the CSU, which he successfully did by

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<sup>24</sup> A.T. Hill, “Historic Basis and Development of the Lumber Workers Organization and Struggles in Ontario,” (unpublished manuscript, Lakehead University Northern Studies Resource Centre, 1952), 15.

<sup>25</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 147.

1951.<sup>26</sup> Though the 1949 strike does receive more attention, the 1946 strike, which occurred only four months before the LSWU strike, is an important moment in the Lakehead's labour history in the role it played in shaping the immediate postwar relationship between labour and capital.

In 1937, nine years before the 'Great Lakes strike', the first CSU office was opened at the Lakehead.<sup>27</sup> Jean Morrison, in chronicling the early history of the labourers working in the local shipyards, has noted their penchant for violence and unpredictability when striking.<sup>28</sup> Leading up to the 1946 strike, the major issues for the CSU were the right to an eight-hour day and increased wages.<sup>29</sup> By the time of the 1946 strike, the CSU was headquartered in Toronto.<sup>30</sup> A significant difference between the LSWU and the CSU strikes is that violence characterized the CSU strike, whereas the bushworkers strike, though militant and long-lasting, did not result in violence.

The strike began at the Lakehead on 27 May 1946, when 400 seamen on 20 different vessels walked off the job in both Port Arthur and Fort William, complying with the general strike order issued from the CSU.<sup>31</sup> The strike, initially, was extremely successful in delaying all

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<sup>26</sup> The Canadian government had decided to break the union because it had become increasingly under communist influence throughout the late 1940s. See William Kaplan, *Everything that Floats: Pat Sullivan, Hal Banks, and the Seamen's Unions of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 189-190. Pat Sullivan, who formed the CSU, confirms the communist presence and dominance of the union in his work, *Red Sails on the Great Lakes*. However, in an interview with Ukrainian immigrant to the Lakehead Mike Comishin, Comishin notes that locally, red-baiting became increasingly prevalent throughout the post-Second World War period as a government reaction against militant unionism. While it is clear that communists played a leading role in the CSU, it is unclear to the degree that communists were involved in leading the movement specifically at the Lakehead, or how much the local reaction was generated through erroneous red-baiting. See: J.A. Sullivan, *Red Sails on the Great Lakes* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1955); Lakeheadfinns.com interview, Mike Comishin.

<sup>27</sup> William Kaplan, *Everything that Floats*, 19.

<sup>28</sup> The historical precedent for violence from seamen and freight handlers at the Lakehead has been thoroughly explored by Jean Morrison. See Jean Morrison, "Ethnicity and Violence: The Lakehead Freight Handlers Before World War 1" in *Essays in Canadian Working Class History*, eds. Gregory Kealey and Peter Warrian (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976): 143-160; Jean Morrison, *Labour Pains: Thunder Bay's Working Class in Canada's Wheat Boom Era* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society, 2009), 50-64 and 84-96; Jean Morrison, "Community and Conflict: A Study of the Working Class and its Relationships at the Canadian Lakehead, 1903-1913," (Master's Thesis, Lakehead University, 1974), 115-139.

<sup>29</sup> *PANC*, 27 May 1946; Kaplan, *Everything that Floats*, 43.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Edwards, *Waterfront Warlord: The Life and Violent Times of Hal C. Banks* (Toronto: Key Porter Books Limited, 1987), 16.

<sup>31</sup> *PANC*, 27 May 1946.

shipping activity on the Great Lakes. Before the strike's formal beginning, as noted by William Kaplan, "Under the collective bargaining regime established by [*PC 1003*], the union's refusal to negotiate and its subsequent scheduling of a strike vote were probably unlawful as an abrogation of the duty to bargain in good faith."<sup>32</sup> Though capital often manipulated the new industrial relations regime to their advantage, labour, too, often failed to play by the rules and conduct their business contrary to the rules outlined in *PC 1003*.

On the second day of the strike, 84 seaman at the Lakehead were charged with desertion under Section 244 of the *Canada Shipping Act*.<sup>33</sup> On the same day, the first break in the strike occurred locally when the Great Lakes Lumber and Shipping Company signed an agreement that guaranteed eight hour days on all of their ships.<sup>34</sup> Despite this breakthrough, the Dominion Marine Association issued an ultimatum to the CSU the next day that they would introduce strike-breakers if local workers did not return to work by 12:00P.M. on 30 May. Strike-breakers complicated the labour negotiations and put pressure on the union leaders.<sup>35</sup> Brought into the Lakehead from Western Canada, strike-breakers, remarkably, joined the CSU workers in striking.<sup>36</sup> Staging a "sit-down" strike, the non-union men amplified the pressure on the shipping industry which, at that point, had been silent for nearly a week.

The strike continued in virtual deadlock at the Lakehead until 15 June, when a skirmish broke out that saw two strikers arrested. In other regions, the strike had witnessed multiple outbursts of violence, largely around the Cornwall, Ontario, area.<sup>37</sup> Though the strike had become, in the public's eye, a battle between fair working conditions and 'lawlessness,' the

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<sup>32</sup> Kaplan, *Everything that Floats*, 42.

<sup>33</sup> *PANC*, 28 May 1946.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> A very lucid example of the role that strike-breakers can play in a strike, including inciting violence, can be witnessed in the 1949 Asbestos strike. See Pierre Elliott Trudeau, *The Asbestos Strike* (Toronto: James Lewis & Samuel, 1974).

<sup>36</sup> *PANC*, 31 May 1946.

<sup>37</sup> Kaplan, *Everything that Floats*, 43.

proceedings had remained largely orderly until this date. On 15 June, Don Campbell and Douglas Johnston were arrested by the Fort William police following a demonstration by roughly 100 CSU strikers in front of the office of the Canadian Steamship Lines.<sup>38</sup> Campbell and Johnston had allegedly engaged in a confrontation with strike-breakers who were entering a taxi when they were arrested by the police; this was the only violence that occurred at the Lakehead during the CSU strike of 1946.

On 22 June 1946, the *Port Arthur News Chronicle* reported the conclusion of the strike in a prominent headline: “Victory Seen for Eight-Hour Day. Lake Seamen Ready to Start on Monday.”<sup>39</sup> The road to ending the strike was extremely difficult for all parties involved. Negotiations between the Dominion Marine Association and the CSU had proven to be unfruitful, and after the Dominion Marine Association rejected an offer on the 18th of June, it had become clear to the Canadian Government that the strike would only end if the federal government took control of the entirety of the Great Lakes shipping. The Passing of *PC 2556* provided the Canadian government the power to do so, and Captain Eric S. Brand was handed the controllership. Government action in this instance is a reflection of the dramatic changes that *PC 1003* and other legislation instituted on industrial relations. William Kaplan, in support, writes “The Government of Canada...[placing] a private company under controllership, especially during peacetime, is rare. However, there was considerable government regulation of the economy both during and after the war.”<sup>40</sup> Kaplan further notes that the objective of the regulatory effort became “the promotion of employment and curbing of inflation,” and in the context of postwar reconstruction, it was absolutely essential for both to have a functioning shipping industry.<sup>41</sup> The Government of Canada took over the shipping industry on 21 June

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<sup>38</sup> *FWD TJ*, 15 June 1946.

<sup>39</sup> *PANC*, 22 June 1946.

<sup>40</sup> Kaplan, *Everything that Floats*, 44.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

1946, the union victory was announced the next day, and on 24 June, seamen at the Lakehead were back at work under Captain Brand.

The conclusions of both the LSWU and the CSU strikes highlight the intricacies of Canada's postwar regime. Both strikes reflect militancy of the immediate postwar period, while the LSWU successfully demonstrates the degree to which union management could, if handled skillfully, utilize the parameters set out by *PC 1003* to achieve union recognition, financial security, and widespread inter-union support. It may serve as a textbook example for negotiating the postwar compromise to achieve better working conditions and wages. The CSU strike, meanwhile, reflects similar themes but to a larger degree demonstrates the role that the Canadian state would play in the new industrial economy; as noted by many historians, the Canadian state's most prominent role in postwar industrial relations would be that of the overseer.<sup>42</sup> The degree to which this is a positive or negative development for the long-term health of the labour movement is still up for debate; what can be said relative to the CSU strike is that the Canadian state, for the first time at the Lakehead, intervened in a strike that it saw detrimental to the prosperity of the nation. Even more surprising, in considering the history of the labour movement in Canada, is that the state ruled in favour of labour.

The two major strikes of 1946 symbolized the changing state of labour at the Lakehead and in Canada more broadly. Cross-industrial labour solidarity, as illustrated by the sheer number of sympathy strikes launched for both the CSU and the LSWU, reflect the broader pattern across Canada of a strengthened labour movement and the continued shift in the balance of power towards labour excited many of the local organizers. It would not last, however. The

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<sup>42</sup> Peter S. McInnis, "Planning Prosperity: Canadians Debate Postwar Reconstruction," in *Uncertain Horizons: Canadians and Their World in 1945*, ed. Greg Donaghy (Ottawa: Canadian Committee for the History of the Second World War, 1997), 253; Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, *The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms: From Consent to Coercion Revisited* (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988), 20-21; Judy Fudge and Eric Tucker, *Labour Before the Law: The Regulation of Workers' Collective Action in Canada, 1900-1948* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 300.

CSU victory in 1946 was short-lived, marred by the 1949 strike and the eventual destruction of the union by the end of 1951. In a parallel trajectory, much of the LSWU leadership had been purged by the same time. The beginning of the postwar period, being highly successful for labour, had given way to the Lakehead's 'Red Scare.'

1944 served as a pivotal moment for the labour movement at the Lakehead and in Canada more generally because the structural elements of the new industrial regime were put into place. Only a year earlier, in 1943, the CCF locally and provincially evolved into a political threat to Canadian liberal hegemony. Labour and socialist politics paralleled each other as they slowly gained momentum through to the end of the war, becoming increasingly influential. Labour, as discussed, in an effort to consolidate its wartime gains, pressed on with several severe strike actions that, in two instances, brought the region's economy to a standstill. The CCF, meanwhile, also had to consolidate their gains against the backdrop of propaganda campaigns intended to discredit the socialist movement. Both organized labour and the CCF had to adapt and shift their core functions in order to survive in a rapidly shifting social landscape; among these changes were the gradual acceptance of each other.

The organized labour movement first experienced the purging of its radical leadership in the late 1940s. Throughout the 1950s, the rank-and-file became increasingly under the control of enlarging union bureaucracies controlled in most part by distant, international unions. In parallel fashion to the organized labour movement, the CCF also faced significant issues. Though the groundwork for Fisher's tenure in 1957 was established by Robinson and Anderson, the party went through a lull period characterized by member complacency from 1951 to 1957, with no elected representatives at the Lakehead. The complex struggles affecting the organized labour movement and the CCF during this period provided motive to both to forge closer ties.

The ‘Red Scare’ provided the impetus for the federal government to act on radical labour leaders in the postwar period.<sup>43</sup> After the Second World War, the ‘Red Scare’ manifested in Canada through the widespread hunting and naming of communists (real or perceived), and their purging from unions, and often, broader societal participation. Jean Morrison, in her survey of labour at the Lakehead, wrote two paragraphs about Labour and the Cold War.<sup>44</sup> Morrison, in the introduction to her piece, admits to the limitations of her research: “Many important episodes have been omitted altogether or referred to only briefly. For example, the post-Second World War period needs far more than the cursory treatment it receives here.”<sup>45</sup> Notwithstanding the ‘cursory treatment,’ Morrison largely succeeds in covering the major events of the Second Red Scare at the Lakehead. The following section will expand on the incidents brought up by Morrison and cast more nuance on the Second Red Scare.

The essential key to understanding the Red Scare at the Lakehead is that the guise of purging communists from the labour movement at the Lakehead contained only a kernel of truth, and more often than not, the Red Scare was weaponized as a tool to strip union locals of their power and influence by outsourcing decision-making to larger international bodies. As noted by Irving Martin Abella, most communist union members and most left-wing unions had been expelled from the Canadian Congress of Labour by 1952; overall, Canadian labour unions were fully controlled by international unions.<sup>46</sup> In response to this displacement, at the local level, smaller unions petitioned the CCF and other local politicians to help protect them from the communist purges.<sup>47</sup> Frederick Robinson, the CCF’s only remaining representative at the

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<sup>43</sup> The term connotes the widespread fear of communism and the belief that communist insurgents had infiltrated key societal institutions.

<sup>44</sup> Jean Morrison, “The Organization of Labour,” 138.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 120.

<sup>46</sup> Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism and Canadian Labour: The CIO, the Communist Party and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 213.

<sup>47</sup> Jean Morrison, “The Organization of Labour,” 138; Lakehead University Archives (hereafter LUA), Frederick Oliver Robinson Fonds (hereafter FORF), Series 3, File 64, Correspondence with Local 344 of the Operative Plasterers and Cement Finishers.



Lakehead after 1948, and Port Arthur's mayor from 1949-1951, had his hands tied by five years of anti-CCF propaganda. Though communist hysteria did not start removing people from positions of power at the Lakehead until the late 1940s, with a brief exception during the beginning of the Second World War, the Liberal and Conservative opposition in both Fort William and Port Arthur constantly bombarded the Lakehead public with propaganda designed to associate the CCF with communism.<sup>48</sup> This came, as outlined in the next chapter, despite the constant categorical refutation of the CCF's link to communism.<sup>49</sup> The public campaign against the CCF effectively inhibited the party from exerting their influence to protect local unions. To defend the real or perceived communists in local unions would have equaled political suicide for Robinson and the CCF more generally, and likely would have translated to Douglas Fisher losing to C.D. Howe in the 1957 federal election.

The union hit hardest by the communist purges at the Lakehead, thanks in part to the importation of Hal Banks, was the CSU. Though Sullivan believed communists had infiltrated the CSU by 1946, and that the 1946 strike was "part of the new 'get tough' line of the Communist Labour Progressive Party, with the incidental purpose of disrupting shipments of foodstuffs to Europe," Sullivan's *Red Sails on the Great Lakes* is a partisan account purposed to attribute the gains made by the CSU to the rank and file while simultaneously blaming the communists for the violence during the strike.<sup>50</sup> At the Lakehead, there was certainly a communist element in the CSU, but as the chronology of the local strike can attest to, there was

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<sup>48</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 6, Letter from Mr. Robinson to the editor of *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*. Here, Robinson writes to the editor of the *FWDTJ* to correct misinformation contained within the newspaper that argued that the CCF was much more aligned to communism than capitalism.

<sup>49</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 31, Address by Mr. Robinson to the general membership of the Port Arthur CCF; LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 8, Statement on Communist Party. Issued by C.C.F. Provincial Executive, 21 January 1948.

<sup>50</sup> Stuart Marshall Jamieson, *Times of Trouble*, 319.

very little violence and the strike proceed orderly. If there was a disruptive communist influence, it had not originated or manifested at the Lakehead.

Hal Banks organized the Seafarers' International Union (SIU) so efficiently that the CSU rapidly fell from grace after the 1949 strike. On 7 December 1950, the Canadian Labour Relations Board revoked the CSU's certification, charging that the union was "Communist controlled and directed." Less than a year later, the CSU was disbanded and the SIU represented the majority of Great Lakes Shipping, including those in the industry at the Lakehead. Propelled by the Red Scare, this dramatic shift is also reflective of the changes in Canadian labour at the national level; in short, Canadian labour had allowed the Canadian state to replace it with American and International labour influences that, under the guise of purging communists, further centralized power away from union locals and regional bodies.

The process of de-radicalizing the CSU mostly happened at the national and international levels, but the ramifications are clear as the Lakehead labour movement moved towards permanent labour subjugation. A local example of the communist purges can be seen in the battle between the LSWU and the local trades and labour councils between 1948 and 1951, which culminated in the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (UBCJA) seizing control of the union. The LSWU had first become associated with communism through its support of the CSU via the union's official organ, *The Ontario Timberworker*.<sup>51</sup> It is true that the LSWU had, at least, a moderate communist influence; the union at the time was controlled by old-time labour organizers such as Magnuson, A.T. Hill, and Jack Quinn, all of whose politics were forged in the revolutionary context of the First World War and the Russian Revolution. Though the CSU and the LSWU both had communistic elements, the historical record clearly shows that the Seamen's Union's leftist commitments bubbled to the surface more often; in his

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<sup>51</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 150.

study of Northern Ontario logging, Ian Radforth notes that the LSWU “took stands that placed the union pretty much within the mainstream of the Canadian labour movement.”<sup>52</sup>

The removal of communists from the LSWU has been covered quite thoroughly by Ian Radforth and Douglas Thur. This study will build upon their work but approach the subject from a different perspective: the purging of the LSWU will be analyzed through the lens of a historical process, one in which sought to hegemonize industrial relations for the benefit of the Canadian state mostly, but also capital. The communist purges did not happen solely at the Lakehead because of communist fervor, but instead, the proceedings should be threaded into the larger pattern of labour relations at the Lakehead where the ultimate goal was to pacify and control the entire labour movement.

The significant precondition for purges to be successful at the local level was the necessity to infuse the local trades and labour councils with anti-communist hysteria. In the buildup to the purge, and after the dramatic success of the 1946 strike, the LSWU had continued to gain concessions between 1948 and 1951.<sup>53</sup> Despite the concessions, communism had scared the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council, and in 1951, the council removed three communist delegates from various unions. One of the communists removed was Dan McIsaac, then-president of Lumber and Saw local 2786. It was, as Radforth notes, only a “matter of time” until significant portions of the LSWU would be forced to resign.<sup>54</sup>

Radforth highlights that the purging of communists from postwar unions were likely, but the historical record does not suggest they were always inevitable; the inevitability of the communist purge is only applicable in retroactive historical studies as displacing union members for being communists often came through circumstantial evidence and disregarded the affidavits

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid..

<sup>53</sup> Douglas Thur, “Beat around the Bush,” 119.

<sup>54</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 152.

every union member had to sign during the War years.<sup>55</sup> Of course, Magnuson could have been lying, and by all accounts, he was a communist. But it was far from certain that the LSWU would be purged, as some union locals in Canada had managed to escape red-baiting and delegate removal.<sup>56</sup>

An important moment for the postwar labour movement at the Lakehead occurred on 4 May 1951. Aside from this event, 1951 had been an extremely quiet year for the organized labour movement at the Lakehead, partly due to de-radicalization and partly due to increased wages and standards of living. The action taken by the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council, which had already rooted out several local communists, had weakened the LSWU and created the conditions for the LSWU to be bullied by its parent union. Under the presupposition of mismanaged finances, on 4 May 1951, Andrew V. Cooper, the General Executive of the UBCJA and four other international union representatives, seized control of the LSWU, including all of its affairs and finances.<sup>57</sup>

Complicating the procedures for Cooper and the UBCJA is that the LSWU executive had been democratically elected and by all accounts, extremely favoured by the rank and file.<sup>58</sup> On 6 May 1951, two days after the UBCJA had commandeered the union, the LSWU executive met with 115 rank and file members to pass a resolution that sought to: reconfirm the confidence in the LSWU's elected executive, the opposition to the imposition by the International Union, and to assert the local union's autonomy.<sup>59</sup> The resolution passed by unanimous vote, but it did not

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<sup>55</sup> AO, BMTR, F-1405-78-1, Bruce Magnuson Affidavit in the City of Port Arthur.

<sup>56</sup> See Gary Marcuse, "Labour's Cold War: The Story of a Union that was Not Purged," *Labour/Le Travail* 22 (Fall 1998), 199-210.

<sup>57</sup> *PANC*, 8 May 1951; University of Maryland Archives (hereafter UMA), United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Collection (hereafter UBCJA), Series 4: Local Unions, 1880-2007, Letter to the Members of Local #2786 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America from the Executive Board of Local #2786.

<sup>58</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 155.

<sup>59</sup> *PANC*, 8 May 1951; UMA, UBCJA, Series 4: Local Unions, 1880-2007, Letter to the Members of Local #2786 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America from the Executive Board of Local #2786.

matter. Nine members of the executive, including Magnuson and Hill, were expelled from the union.

Cooper and the UBCJA took Bruce Magnuson and Harry Timchishin, Natalia Weyha Raketti, John Zajackowski, Wilfred Borlock, Gunwald Espeland, August Bartell, Dan MacIssac, and Mac Leclerc, all of whom played significant roles in the LSWU, to the Supreme Court of Ontario to ensure the UBCJA had a legal basis to expel the (real or perceived) communists. Listed in the case as the precept for expelling from the union is the mismanagement of money, including “for the purpose of spreading Communistic doctrines...”.<sup>60</sup> Despite the best attempts in defense and appeal, the union had been lost. Magnuson and the other defendants immediately established, in response, the Canadian Union of Woodworkers. The constitution and the by-laws of the Canadian Union of Woodworkers may have been the last breath of rank and file-control of a union, and additionally contained many nationalist themes, to be expected after the bullying of the LSWU by the International UBCJA.<sup>61</sup>

An example of how the postwar compromise and the rise of international unionism unfolded at the individual level at the Lakehead can be witnessed through an examination of the career of labour organizer Helmer Borg. Borg immigrated to the Lakehead from Sweden shortly after Christmas in 1926; immediately, Borg became involved in the labour movement and began working in the bush camps, an experience not dissimilar to a significant number of immigrants during the first few decades of the 20th century at the Lakehead.<sup>62</sup> Borg first became an organizer for the LSWU shortly after the communist purge, was promoted to Special

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<sup>60</sup> AO, BMTR, F-1405-78-1, Summary of Court Case between Andrew V. Cooper on behalf of the UBCJA and Harry Timchishin, Natalia Wertyha Raketti, John Zajackowski, Wilfred Norlock, Gunwald Espeland, August Bartell, Dan MacIssac, Marc Leclerc and Bruce Magnuson.

<sup>61</sup> AO, BMTR, F-1405-78-1, Constitution and Laws of the Canadian Union of Woodworkers.

<sup>62</sup> LUA, Jean Morrison Labour History Collection (hereafter JMLHC), GS186a, Helmer Borg Interview, 1972.

Representative in 1954, but was fired in 1958 after Borg's localist political philosophy began to contrast sharply with the UBCJA's leadership.<sup>63</sup>

Borg could speak English, but had difficulties writing coherently. A significant barrier to participation in the postwar industrial regime at the Lakehead that fails to receive much attention in scholarly literature is the lack of writing and non-verbal communicative forms instrumental to the new bureaucratic form of unionism. Borg, though skilled in oration and effective as an organizer, had trouble effectively disseminating his thoughts to the international executive because he lacked English language skills.<sup>64</sup> Poor language skills cannot completely account for the rift between Borg and the UBCJA, but it does reflect how the changing nature of unions and labour organization stood in stark contrast to the ethnic and radical make-up of the Lakehead, particularly the immigrants who came in increased numbers during the Great Depression. In a predictable manner, the international executive paid little attention to regional nature of the Lakehead, language or otherwise.

The LSWU was not the only union who struggled to have local concerns remedied by distant union executives. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers Division (BLE) local 631 (the Lakehead local), whose members primarily worked on the Canadian National Railways, had significant difficulties in achieving conditions to improve local working-conditions during the winter, and better rest-house conditions.<sup>65</sup> The union executives who managed Northwestern Ontario for the BLE resided in Winnipeg and Dauphin, Manitoba, and Calgary, Alberta. And yet, it does not appear that the executives understood the crippling hardships of winter on the tracks

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid; TBHM, Helmer Borg Fonds (hereafter HBF), Series A/9/1/File 1, Termination of Helmer Borg, 1 July 1958.

<sup>64</sup> Borg's lack of English skills is evident in many of the documents he created while working for the Lumber and Sawmill Workers' Union. See for one example: TBHM, Helmer Borg Fonds (hereafter HBF), Series A/9/1/File 1, Letter to W.J. Baker, 21 May 1955.

<sup>65</sup> TBHM, Brother of Locomotive Engineers 631 Fonds (hereafter BLE), Series B/5/1/File 1, Letter to All Divisions of the B. of L.E., Canadian National Railways Western Region from the General Committee of Adjustment.

at the Lakehead, a point in which Division 631 worked on for multiple years despite radio silence from the executive.

A second incident that shows the disconnect between Division 361 and the BLE executive came in December of 1955 when a member of the local, J.G. Blackshaw, passed away suddenly. The incident arose out of a discrepancy in dues owed to the executive because the Secretary-Treasurer of Division 631, J.W. Crossland, opted to redirect Blackshaw's dues to his widow.<sup>66</sup> In a response to the local on 6 January 1956, an executive member wrote: "Your letter and explanation has some interesting points, and while it is certainly not my intention or desire to be critical, it still appears to me as my duty to point out various requirements of our Constitution and Agreements."<sup>67</sup> The executive then proceeded to list the various stipulations within the BLE's constitution that suggested that the local's divisional fund should have been used to pay Blackshaw's widow and that the executive should have been paid full dues.<sup>68</sup> This incident within the BLE is not an isolated incident, but rather, is intrinsic to the pattern of hegemonizing labour's power by international and national unions with little attention to the day-to-day activities of the local, except when it revolves around money.

Disinterest of regional peculiarities, whether it be language, surviving the winter, or membership health, and the hegemonizing of union power by international executives, are only two of the factors that helped pacify the labour movement in the 1950s. Again analyzing through Borg's experiences, the competition between smaller unions at the Lakehead with larger, union conglomerates, intensified throughout the 1950s as national and international union bodies sought to extend their reach and influence throughout the entirety of Canada, including Northern

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<sup>66</sup> TBHM, BLE, Series B 5/5/File 3, Letter to the Secretary-Treasurer of Division 631 of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

Ontario.<sup>69</sup> The first example, of which Borg was a significant part, was the immediate competition between the LSWU and the Canadian Union of Woodworkers. The Canadian Union of Woodworkers, founded by Magnuson and other disgraced former LSWU leadership, “tried to appeal to Ontario and Quebec woodworkers by opposing all forms of ‘Yankee imperialism,’ by pledging absolute rank-and-file control and full local autonomy.”<sup>70</sup> The historical record suggests that the radical presence at the Lakehead had the clearest understanding of the negative effects of the postwar regime, though the Canadian Union of Woodworkers (CUW), a last-ditch effort to pitch a nationalistic labour, failed. Uncertain that the CUW would fail, Borg reflected on the fact that Magnuson and the new union had become popular in the bush camps after he was expelled from the LSWU, but ultimately, worker apathy and a general fatigue at the prospect of having to fight for re-certification and proper working-conditions prompted the rank-and-file to stay en masse with the LSWU, whose new leadership eventually won their support. The international union had won because of the work that local radicals had put in to build it.

A second example of intra-union conflict occurred in 1951 when the United Steelworkers of America representatives conducted a raid on Local no.11 of the Industrial Union of Marine and Shipbuilding Workers (IUMSW).<sup>71</sup> Newspaper coverage appears to suggest that members of the United Steelworkers of America attempted to convert members of the IUMSW, who, in a recent letter to Mayor F.O. Robinson and through complaints to the Canadian Congress of Labour, were extremely “disgusted” with their working-conditions.<sup>72</sup> Importantly, a written statement to the press was provided and signed by “Brother Brough,” a Canadian Congress of Labour direct representative. In response to the conditions, it was reported that members of the

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<sup>69</sup> For a discussion of this phenomenon at the national level, see Irving Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour. The CIO, The Communist Party, and the Canadian Congress of Labour, 1935-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973).

<sup>70</sup> Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses*, 153.

<sup>71</sup> *PANC*, 25 August 1951.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*



IUMSW were considering joining the USW. However, on 16 September 1951, J. Morphet of Local no. 11 wrote to the secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labour and categorically denied the existence of any raid, dialogue between the IUMSW and the USW, and even a letter to Robinson.<sup>73</sup> In a localist tone, the Local no. 11 blamed the entirety of the fictional tale on Canadian Congress of Labour employee “Brother Brough,” requesting an investigation into meddling in “the affairs of the local.”<sup>74</sup> Local no. 11 concludes the letter by powerfully stating: “... I wish to go on record as absolving any member and executive of this Local for anything in this statement to the Press, and lay the responsibility on the shoulders of your employee... [now] our local, whose name is connected with the statement (to the press), has to take the consequences of firing the gun that Brother Brough had loaded.”<sup>75</sup> An examination of this event through union documents and the newspapers cannot bring a clear understanding; the key question that remains is whether or not the event had actually been faked by Brough, or if localist instincts kicked in and the executive of Local no.11, in recognizing the growing power of the CCL and fear of being replaced, sought to distort the happenings to preserve their positions.

Regardless of the legitimacy of the event, in conjunction with the LSWU and the CUW rivalry, it becomes clear that intra-union rivalry and tensions between the local and the national/international permeated throughout the Lakehead during the 1950s. Helmer Borg would be fired in 1958 for stoking these localist tensions. On 1 July 1958, Borg received a curt letter informing him of his termination “due to lack of need for [his] further services.”<sup>76</sup> Later, in an

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<sup>73</sup> Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Canadian Congress of Labour fonds (CCLF), MG 28-I103, "Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Industrial Union of. Local 11 (Part IV)" series, volume 102, file 3, Letter to the Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labour from Brother J. Morphet.

<sup>74</sup> LAC, CCL, MG 28-I103, "Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Industrial Union of. Local 11 (Part IV)" series, volume 102, file 3, Letter to the Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labour from Brother J. Morphet.

<sup>75</sup> LAC, CCL, MG 28-I103, "Marine and Shipbuilding Workers of Canada, Industrial Union of. Local 11 (Part IV)" series, volume 102, file 3, Letter to the Secretary Treasurer of the Canadian Congress of Labour from Brother J. Morphet.

<sup>76</sup> TBHM, HBF, Series A9/1/File 1, Termination of Helmer Borg, 1 July 1958.

interview conducted in 1972, Borg refuted that he was fired because his services were simply not needed. Instead, Borg argued that his firing was the direct result of his stand made against LSWU leadership in which he promoted the position of the rank-and-file membership in union decisions.<sup>77</sup> As Borg stated: “That is what is wrong with unions...It is taken out of the membership’s hands, the grassroots. That is the union, not the top union men. They’re the servants. They should be responsible to the majority.”<sup>78</sup> Borg’s plea echoes throughout the era; by the time of his firing in 1958, local unions had completely succumbed to international pressures and were, in large part, absent of active radicals in the rank-and-file.

Borg’s story is that of a Swedish immigrant and socialist who lost his employment at the Lakehead’s most notable union because of his preference for rank-and-file control of union affairs, as well as influences from national and international pressures that disregarded the local and almost always prioritized the larger labour body. It is ironic that the expelling and alienating process of many radicals at the Lakehead during this period, including Borg, Magnuson, and A.T. Hill occurred simultaneous to the radicals being the only component of the left to identify and attempt to address the ill-effects of Canada’s new postwar regime.

As the radical contingent at the rank-and-file became excommunicated from the labour movement, similar processes were occurring within the district labour councils at the Lakehead. The 1950s marked a dramatic shift at the labour council level in Port Arthur and Fort William; throughout the decade, three existing labour councils, the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council, the Fort William Trades and Labour Council, and the Lakehead and District Trades and Labour Council, would merge into one. The first merger, between the Port Arthur Trades and Labour Council and the Fort William Trades and Labour Council, had been discussed as long as

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<sup>77</sup> LUA, JMLHC, GS186a, Helmer Borg Interview, 1972.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

amalgamation of the cities themselves, and formally occurred in 1951 into the Thunder Bay and District Labour Council as an affiliate of the Canadian Congress of Labour (CCL).<sup>79</sup> The merger of the two towns' labour councils reflect several trends in the post-Second World War era that culminated in the amalgamation of Port Arthur and Fort William in 1970.

The second merger, in 1957, witnessed the amalgamation of the CCL-affiliated Thunder Bay and District Labour Council and the formerly Trades and Labour Congress (TLC)-affiliated Lakehead and District Labour Council.<sup>80</sup> When the two bodies officially amalgamated on 15 March 1957, after extensive discussions between a Thunder Bay District Labour Council and Lakehead and District Labour Council unity committee, the executive had equal representation from the previous bodies and, consequently, from each of the former national trade unions.<sup>81</sup> The significance of the merger is deeper than simply strengthening the labour movement in Northwestern Ontario by conjoining and accumulating resources under one banner; rather, the merger represents the growing importance of industrial unionism at the Lakehead and the internationalist nature of the labour movement. Put another way, the merger of the two district labour councils thematically mirrored the CLC merger at the national level in cause and effect.<sup>82</sup>

The District Labour Council(s) at the Lakehead played significant roles in resourcing and supporting the various affiliated unions throughout the postwar era; perhaps the most important role that the District Labour Council played was in the field of political advocacy.<sup>83</sup> And while the District Labour Council was effective in many regards, similar processes earlier described occurred within the Council's ranks that saw increasing bureaucratization and hierarchy,

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<sup>79</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/9 File 3, Executive Committee Report 1951.

<sup>80</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/12 File 6, Report of the Lakehead Unity Committee.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Abella, *Nationalism, Communism, and Canadian Labour*.

<sup>83</sup> Many labour unions and district councils began to focus more on political advocacy, fitting in neatly with McKay's interpretation of socialist development in Canada. For example, see: TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/8 File 2, Political Action Correspondence.

particularly in the necessitated deference of labour power to the CLC, that continued to strip power away from the rank-and-file. The executives of the District Labour Council almost always came from powerful unions that had already won key battles, leaving smaller locals to be dependent for labour strength and solidarity. The shape of the labour movement at the District Labour Council level, albeit briefly described, shifted dramatically in a manner similar to unions and labourers themselves; if nationalists or communists, or even anti-capitalist labourers were to seek support during the postwar era, it would not be from the District Labour Council.

The changes affecting the district labour councils marked the end of an era for organized labour at the Lakehead. Before 1943, the organized labour movement featured several different unions, councils, and other organizations operating independently, and in some cases, against each other. After the passage of *PC1003*, the organized labour movement slowly began to consolidate amidst the backdrop of postwar social and political forces. The number of local unions and labour councils continually decreased during this period because international and national labour organizations began to represent ever-larger segments of the population. The CLC's emergence necessitated the merger between the Lakehead's last two district labour councils; at this point, under a single authority, organized labour had completed its long journey from a chaotic, rank and file led movement to a movement characterized by stability, structure, and playing by the rules.

## Chapter Four

### The Marriage of Labour and Politics: the New Democratic Party at the Lakehead

The organized labour movement faced significant challenges in the postwar period, characterized by the outsourcing of labour's decision-making to international unions. The CCF, meanwhile, faced a shifting social landscape that worked to weaken their party's hold on federal politics at the Lakehead. From 1948 to 1957, the CCF weakened internally through party-member complacency that manifested in the removal of both Robinson and Anderson from political power by 1951. The period for the CCF was one of change as the party moved closer to the acceptance of labour, represented in part by Douglas Fisher's election in 1957.

The transition to the Fisher era at the Lakehead began in 1948, when Anderson lost his seat in Fort William to Charles Cox and Robinson found success again in Port Arthur. It appears that the difference between Robinson's success and Anderson's lack thereof can be reduced to each politician's relationship to Northwestern Ontario's forests. Leading up to the 1948 election, the state of Northwestern Ontario's forests became the dominant issue in political and social discourse at the Lakehead. The postwar Ontario Royal Commission on Forestry, known as the Kennedy Commission, was completed and published in 1947 and contained a dire warning for Ontario's forests: "In future Government action, the principle of sustained yield must ever apply. Any other course will spell eventual disaster to many of our existing industries and the communities they support."<sup>1</sup> The Kennedy Commission firmly established that Northern Ontario's forests were in danger unless significant changes to management were made. In the same year, Ontario's *Forest Management Act* which, among many stipulations, required forestry companies to adopt sustained-yield forestry in order to be eligible for a license.<sup>2</sup> As noted by

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<sup>1</sup> Ontario, Ontario Royal Commission on Forestry, *Report of the Ontario Royal Commission on Forestry* (Toronto: Queen's Printer, 1947), 179.

<sup>2</sup> E. Peter Gillis and Thomas R. Roach, *Lost Initiatives: Canada's Forest Industries, Forest Policy and Forest Conservation* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 250; Monique M. Ross, *A History of Forest Legislation in Canada, 1867-1996* (Calgary: Canadian Institute of Resources Law, 1997), 5-6; W. Robert Wightman and Nancy

Robert Wightman and Nancy Wightman in their seminal work on Northwestern Ontario resource development, the Kennedy Commission and the 1947 *Ontario Forest Management Act*, along with the decentralization of the Lands and Forests department administration, helped to initiate the “final breakdown of united industrial resistance to the serious application of principles of sustained yield and planning.”<sup>3</sup> Dramatic shifts in forest policy were necessary during the immediate postwar period, a requirement that manifested as the dominant election issue at the Lakehead in 1948.

In the year before the election, the Kennedy Commission and the *1947 Forest Management Act* created cause for concern for Lakehead citizens that centered the health of Northwestern Ontario’s forests as the dominant election issue.<sup>4</sup> Multiple extreme forest fires had been ravaging the Northwestern Ontario forests for the weeks leading up to, and through the election.<sup>5</sup> The closest fires to the Lakehead were burning near Nipigon, Ontario, though the panic portrayed through the local newspapers reflect a populace whose fears were driven by an acknowledgement of the intricate link between the region’s forests and its economic viability, rather than the actual proximity of the fires.<sup>6</sup> Historically, forestry had been an economic driver in the Lakehead since the turn of the twentieth century, and the bombastic coverage of forest fires may have constructed fear that was not necessarily warranted.<sup>7</sup>

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M. Wightman, *The Land Between: Northwestern Ontario Resource Development, 1800 to the 1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 327-328.

<sup>3</sup> Wightman and Wightman, *The Land Between*, 327.

<sup>4</sup> Local newspaper coverage and the amount of discussion among candidates, through speeches, debates, and radio broadcasts, on the health of forests and the forestry industry are the primary pieces of evidence that reflect the importance of the issue in the election.

<sup>5</sup> *Port Arthur News-Chronicle* (hereafter *PANC*), 1 June 1948.

<sup>6</sup> *Fort William Daily Times-Journal* (hereafter *FWDTJ*), 2 June 1948.

<sup>7</sup> On the historic importance of forestry to the regional economy, see: Michel S. Beaulieu and Chris Southcott, *North of Superior: An Illustrated History of Northwestern Ontario* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2010), 57-58; 85-86 and Wightman and Wightman, *The Land Between*, 71-72; 123-135; Ian Radforth, *Bushworkers and Bosses: Logging in Northern Ontario, 1900-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987).

Also important was the historic and contemporary fact that forestry and forest labour played important roles in the cultural and social fabric of the majority of ethnic groups at the Lakehead in 1948. Ironically, the cultural group with the deepest attachment to the forests, Indigenous people, were still disenfranchised in 1948.<sup>8</sup> Optimism for suffrage sparked in 1946 with the launch of a House of Commons special joint committee that was tasked with reviewing Indian affairs and recommending solutions to alleviate desolate conditions on many Indigenous reservations. The conclusion of this committee saw twelve recommendations, and, surprisingly, an increase in the autonomy of First Nations communities, yet, Indigenous people in Canada were still not given the right to vote, federally or provincially, as the Canadian state continued their policies of assimilation.<sup>9</sup> Six years later, (some) Indigenous people received the vote in Ontario (1954), and it would take another six years to receive the vote federally.

While Indigenous people at the Lakehead could not leverage their connection to Northwestern Ontario's forests into voting, other ethnic groups at the Lakehead could. Historically, the Finnish and Ukrainian communities in the Lakehead held ties to the Northern Ontario forests and in the Finnish case, immigrants often had entrenched associations with forestry in Finland upon arrival to the Lakehead.<sup>10</sup> Dominant unions of the era, including the particularly relevant Lumber and Sawmill Workers Union, began to exhibit increased ethnic

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<sup>8</sup> Indigenous peoples in the Lakehead region had a deep connection to the region's forests through the obvious connection as being the original inhabitants of the land, but research has also shown that Indigenous people successfully navigated the industrial wage-economy prior to the maturation and addition of increased structural barriers that systematically discriminated against Indigenous people freely trading their labour for wages. For historical perspectives, see Thomas Dunk, "Aboriginal Participation in the Industrial Economy on the North Shore of Lake Superior, 1869-1940," in *Essays in Northwestern Ontario Working Class History: Thunder Bay and its Environs*, ed. Michel S. Beaulieu (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University Centre for Northern Studies, 2008). For particular references to forestry, see pages 203-204.

<sup>9</sup> John S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879-1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 189.

<sup>10</sup> Michel S. Beaulieu, David K. Ratz and Ronald N. Harpelle, "Introduction," in *Hard Work Conquers All: Building the Finnish Community in Canada*, eds. Michel S. Beaulieu, David K. Ratz and Ronald N. Harpelle (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 4-5.

participation in both membership and the executive by the late 1940s.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1940s , almost every ethnic group in the Lakehead had developed intimate relationships with the Northern Ontario forests, occasionally as company owners or lumber barons, but more often as workers .<sup>12</sup>

The condition of forests had become the dominant issue leading up to the 1948 Ontario general election. For this reason, Robinson succeeded in the election while Garfield Anderson saw defeat. Between 1943 and 1948, Robinson had always presented himself as the candidate who was capable of managing Northern Ontario's forests. For example, in his election advertisements in the *Port Arthur News Chronicle*, Robinson often referred to his experience testifying in the Kennedy Commission when attempting to strengthen his electoral credentials; one such advertisement read:

Recognizing the forests as the lifeblood of the Northwest, red prepared and presented a brief to the Royal Commission on Forestry. This brief has been highly commended and had been adopted in convention as CCF forest policy. It is a clean cut statement of forest policy designed to make this great asset serve the best interests of the real owners of the forests, the people.<sup>13</sup>

Disregarding the hint of populism in positioning the people as the 'owners' of the forests (in contrast to the implicit suggestion of the corrupt elite), Robinson leveraged his experience in forest advocacy to aid in his re-election campaign. Further significant to Robinson's testimony in the Kennedy Commission is that he focused on labour and bushworkers as much as the forests themselves. In discussing management in the Port Arthur and Marathon, Ontario, areas in Northwestern Ontario, Robinson remarked that "every effort should be made inverstiage [sic]

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<sup>11</sup> Anthony W. Rasporich, "Twin City Ethnopolitics: Urban Rivalry, Ethinc Radicalism and Assimilation in the Lakehead, 1900-70," *Urban History Review* 18:3 (1990): 219.

<sup>12</sup> Though this era marked a period of ethnic assimilation at the Lakehead, Anglo-Canadians, whether local or foreign to the Lakehead, were still disproportionately likely to own companies.

<sup>13</sup> *PANC*, 1 June 1948. This line was often repeated by Robinson. Another example can be found at: *PANC* 5 June 1948.



present camp conditions and find out the discrepancies and try to correct them.”<sup>14</sup> Later, Robinson would argue that prerequisites for healthier forests were better conditions for labourers within, and that this could not be accomplished so long as private industry had free reign in dictating the practices of forestry.<sup>15</sup>

Robinson may have sought to embellish the effectiveness of his testimony, but there is no doubt that his testimony had an influence on the Kennedy Commission’s final report. Because Kennedy’s recommendations do not include citations, causation cannot be directly established considering the extent of individuals and organizations providing evidence for the commission. That being said, multiple recommendations made by the Kennedy Commission mirror the language used by Robinson in his testimony, including the recommendation that companies build and facilitate access to “attractive recreation-rooms” for increased opportunity for social activities, the recommendation that stumpage rates can be altered by the government as a blanket penalty for improperly dealing with labour and labour unions, and the recommendations of conditions in smaller bushworker camps, which to that point had often gone overlooked relative to the attention received by larger camps.<sup>16</sup> To further cement Robinson’s status as the regional voice for forestry, Ontario CCF leader Ted Joliffe remarked in a radio speech to the people of the Lakehead in 1948, “I must also commend the efforts of your hard-working representative from Port Arthur, Mr. Fred Robinson...[he] has done a particularly fine job on forestry questions. It was Fred Robinson who presented the CCF brief to the Kennedy Royal Commission. I am proud to say that many of the proposals put forward by Mr. Robinson were accepted by [Kennedy]”.<sup>17</sup> It is clear that Robinson’s campaign attempted to make a clear connection to his close

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<sup>14</sup> Lakehead University Archives (hereafter LUA), Frederick O. Robinson Fonds (FORF), Series 3, File 40, Evidence of Mr. Robinson, Kennedy Commission Testimony, 10-11 December 1946, 161-162.

<sup>15</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 3, File 40, Evidence of Mr. Robinson, Kennedy Commission Testimony, 10-11 December 1946, 163-183.

<sup>16</sup> Ontario, *Report of the Ontario Royal Commission on Forestry*, 173, 190.

<sup>17</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 29, Speech by Ted Joliffe.

relationship to the Northwestern Ontario forest industries. Joliffe would conclude by summarizing the major points that Robinson covered in his testimony to the Kennedy Commission; of importance was the call for living conditions for forestry labourers.<sup>18</sup> The Kennedy Commission allowed Robinson to directly connect his political campaign to his advocacy for bushworkers' rights which, in 1948, were still extremely important at the Lakehead.

Robinson's connection to forestry benefitted his campaign, but cannot solely account for his success; after all, his opponent, Hobart H. "Bert" Styffe was the son of Lakehead lumber baron Oscar Styffe, and had two years earlier taken over his father's companies with his two brothers, John and Roy.<sup>19</sup> Though local bushworkers would be unlikely to support a business owner, let alone one with deep ties to the forest community, it is assured that Styffe's history would allow him the competence to speak to the issues plaguing the forests and the community. The importance of the forestry industry to the election is further reflected by Robinson, who, hoping to indulge Styffe's competence in the forestry industry, challenged him to a public debate on the issues.<sup>20</sup> The genesis of the debate is two-fold: Premier George Drew had earlier invoked fears of state confiscation of property if the CCF had been elected, and in closing days of May, Styffe attacked Robinson by stating that he would not know the difference between a spruce tree and a balsam tree.<sup>21</sup>

Styffe would later clarify his remarks that his comment towards Robinson did not carry ill-intent, and that the only significant difference between their forestry policies revolved around their belief in the socialization of forestry industry as beneficial to the public.<sup>22</sup> During this election, the CCF were attacked simultaneously and viciously by both parties, a practice they

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> John Styffe, *Oscar R. Styffe: 1885-1943* (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University Library, 1985), no page number.

<sup>20</sup> *PANC*, 1 June 1948.

<sup>21</sup> *PANC*, 1 June 1948; *PANC*, 4 June 1948.

<sup>22</sup> *PANC*, 4 June 1948.

commonly endured since their founding. In a continuation of the line of thought established in the previous chapter, the vision of what postwar Canada would look like still loomed over the election, with the emergence of the forestry debate as the most pertinent manifestation of this phenomenon. The 1948 election at the Lakehead centred around each competing candidate's vision for Northwestern Ontario's forests, and, in a close vote, Robinson's views were decidedly superior.

Robinson managed to win the election on the basis of his strength in and knowledge of the forest industries despite the propaganda campaigns undertaken by the Conservative and Liberal parties who were trying to equate the CCF with both Fascism and Communism.<sup>23</sup> Bruce Magnuson, the Labour Progressive Party candidate, factored into the election but did not play as large a role as he would throughout the 1950s. Robinson's win would be his last as the Member of Provincial Parliament for the riding of Port Arthur.

While reflecting on the election win by Robinson, Bert Styffe remarked that the shift of politics to the left was "disturbing."<sup>24</sup> Styffe, however, may have been more gleeful had he realized that Robinson, the committed socialist and a people's politician, would be the last elected CCFer at both the provincial or federal levels who reflected notions of revolutionary change and class consciousness in his politics. Garfield Anderson had lost to Charles Cox by less than two hundred votes for three key reasons: his lack of connection to the dominant issue of the election, the overall apathy plaguing the Ontario CCF that had continued since the 1945 election, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that he had to spend over half of the campaigning period in the hospital after suffering an automobile accident.<sup>25</sup> Anderson would run once more under the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> *PANC*, 8 June 1948.

<sup>25</sup> *PANC*, 8 June 1948; Queen's University Archives (hereafter QUA), CCF-NDP Oral History Project collection (hereafter CNOHP), Peter Campbell Transcripts, Interview with Jean Robinson, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

banner of the CCF, challenging Liberal Dan McIvor in Fort William's federal riding, losing by over 4,000 votes in the 1949 federal election. With Anderson nearly finished as a CCF politician, and Robinson to lose in 1951, the shift to the right had begun.

The six year period, from late 1951 to 1957, in which the CCF had no elected representative at the Lakehead for the first time since 1943, has been described by Jean Morrison as the years in which the party "had fallen apart."<sup>26</sup> Jean Robinson, a loyal CCF party member, Port Arthur Alderman and CCF publicity chairman during the Douglas Fisher era, attributes Fred Robinson's 1951 loss to party membership apathy.<sup>27</sup> The election, held on 22 November 1951, began comparatively late to other elections because of a Royal Visit, an incident that Robinson lamented.<sup>28</sup> It is possible that, in the fervor of the Royal Visit, which have been historically important at the Lakehead, apathy did play a role in the poor showing for Robinson, who lost by over 2,000 votes. The language of socialism that Robinson spoke of had less impact on two communities that were experiencing their highest standards of living ever and did not necessarily see the need for a revolutionary force to continue to mold Canada, an experience characteristic of the rest of Canada.<sup>29</sup> Two other factors contributed to Robinson's loss in 1951: the relative safety and sustainability of the forestry industry, and the 'Red Scare,' which had become so influential in the Lakehead labour movement, the CCF's key voting bloc, that several unions successfully purged (real or perceived) communist members. In the context of the traditional parties' constant attempts to link the CCF and communists, Robinson was likely to fail.

The CCF lay dormant, but not dead, during the period between 1951 and 1957. The Robinsons still played a significant role in the organization of the local CCF, while other

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> LUA, FORF, Series 2, File 12, Letter from Fred Robinson to Jack Thompson, 24 October 1951.

<sup>29</sup> Walter D. Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: The National CCF, 1932-1961* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969), 290.

longtime CCF members, such as Ron Wilmot, carried the banner in the elections. In this period, the Labour Progressive Party, led primarily by Bruce Magnuson at the Lakehead, ran in elections and absorbed a significant component of the working-class vote; more detrimental to the CCF, however, was the LPP's constant barrage on the CCF (who they saw as failing to represent the working-class) from the Left and the traditional barrage from the Liberal and Conservative parties from the right. Because of these constant attacks, by 1957, federal Lakehead politics was still very much controlled by the Liberal Party, who had returned to their political hegemony after Robinson and Anderson's socialist scare. C.D. Howe and Dan McIvor have both served as federal Members of Parliament for the Liberal Party, in the ridings of Port Arthur and Fort William, respectively, since 1935. Interestingly, between 1951 and 1959, both provincial ridings at the Lakehead had voted Conservative, a massive breakthrough for the party who had failed to gain traction at any level in the region since Robert Manion's tenure.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout 1951 to 1957, the CCF continued to have weekly study groups and fairly well-attended events, but, as Jean Robinson notes, CCFers in Port Arthur in the 1950s did not appear to be concerned about the health of the party.<sup>31</sup> The CCF managed to survive to 1955 largely through the success of Robinson at the civic level, who was then serving as the mayor of Port Arthur. By 1957, the CCF had weakened but survived, and were ready to be re-energized by Douglas Fisher, then a relatively unknown CCF member and schoolteacher. The organized labour movement, too, needed to rejuvenate and, during this final period, found its opportunity to do so through the creation of the New Democratic Party. The local CCF underwent a dormant period at the Lakehead from the time of Robinson's election defeat in 1951, to the emergence of Douglas Fisher as a political upstart in 1957. The interim six years between the two periods has

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<sup>30</sup> Two conservative candidates at the Lakehead, George Wardrope and Clare Mapledoram, would succeed at the provincial level.

<sup>31</sup> QUA, CNOHP, Peter Campbell Transcripts, Interview with Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

been characterized by Jean Robinson as an era in which voter complacency led the CCF's brass to believe that there were no significant issues with the health of the party despite consistent electoral failures.<sup>32</sup> Electoral failure and voter complacency mirrored similar issues at the national level. Here, Walter D. Young comments that many party members felt comfortable with the CCF remain the "perpetual gad-fly" that continued to push traditional parties to enact gradual reform.<sup>33</sup> Local patterns of voter disengagement and apathy mirrored national trends that contributed to a dismal six years of federal and provincial politics for the CCF at the Lakehead.

Voter apathy was among one of the myriad number of issues affecting the CCF at all levels of politics during the 1950s. Of particular importance among these issues was that it became apparent to many Canadians and residents of the Lakehead that CCF prophecies of a post-Second World War economic collapse would not occur. A third, as articulated by Gerald Caplan in his study of the CCF in Ontario, is the sheer fact that many Canadians' value-systems were more closely aligned with those of the Liberal Party, and that constituents could not see themselves reflected in the party's national or provincial leadership.<sup>34</sup> Against the backdrop of local and national problems plaguing the CCF, Douglas Fisher emerged as an unlikely candidate to unseat C.D. Howe and thrust the CCF back into the local spotlight in 1957.

Frederick Robinson's daughter, Mary Rakowski, commented in an interview that the popularity of local CCF candidates were determined less by platform and more by personal charisma.<sup>35</sup> Rakowski's diagnosis of the CCF does not appear to apply to the early Robinson-Anderson era, where both candidates won multiple elections through strong campaigning and a platform that addressed the postwar concerns of local constituents. Rakowski is correct,

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Young, *The Anatomy of a Party: the National CCF, 1932-1961*, 292.

<sup>34</sup> QUA, CNOHP, Peter Campbell Transcripts, Interview with Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

however, that Fisher's personal charisma played a significant and perhaps deciding role in the 1957 federal election. Fisher's personable nature shown through most vividly during his novel use of television, a key factor in his ability to connect with voters.

In the immediate aftermath of his electoral defeat, C.D. Howe, in reflecting on his loss to Fisher, remarked that it had been Fisher's use of television that made the difference in the election; according to Howe's biographers, Robert Bothwell and William Kilbourn, television at the time "was not part of the political experience of any of Howe's managers. They simply didn't think of it."<sup>36</sup> On the contrary, Fisher recognized the potential of the television. The 1957 campaign was the first to use television in Northern Ontario and the provided the decisive edge in the race against Howe.<sup>37</sup> Fisher did not buy advertisement spots on television to run CCF advertisements in the way that a modern audience might expect. Rather, Fisher would buy significant amounts of time on the air, and would sit down, by himself, with a chalkboard and one piece of chalk; Fisher would then proceed to discuss his stance on a particular policy issue.<sup>38</sup> Fisher's delivery and effectiveness was made possible by his background as a teacher. He spoke, for example, on the state of communism in the world and at the Lakehead, old-age pensions, labour, Northern Ontario forests, education, and more.<sup>39</sup> Fisher proceeded throughout the election period, appearing almost nightly (at least twice a week) in many of the homes in Port Arthur, discussing his entire platform in a manner that felt more intimate and conversational than typical political canvassing would. As he would reflect a few months after in the pages of *The Canadian Forum*, Fisher sought to present "without scripts, to use the arm-chair - fireplace setting, and to bring on a variety of people, almost all of whom would be publicly unknown."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bothwell and Kilbourn, *C.D. Howe*, 327.

<sup>37</sup> George Hoff, "Douglas Fisher, Politician and Journalist, 1957-2006. Canadian Political Journalism Practiced by the Participant Observer" (Masters of Journalism thesis, Carleton University, 2009), 31.

<sup>38</sup> LUA, Douglas Fisher Fonds (hereafter DFF), Box 7, File "Elections," TV Script, 23 May 1957

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> *Canadian Forum*, September 1957.

Fisher's personable nature could shine through television unlike any other information medium in human history. Christopher Dummitt in his study of Mackenzie King, writes that television in the 1950s "brought public figures and politicians into the open."<sup>41</sup> Soon after television's inception as a political tool, Dummitt writes, the media began to "crave immediacy and even intimacy."<sup>42</sup> Fisher capitalized on television's potential as a political tool, whereas Howe did not. As such, television served as a deciding factor in Fisher's defeat of Howe.

A few historical studies have correctly analyzed the role of television in Fisher's success against Howe. It is important to expand on this analysis in the local context, however. Fisher's innovative use of television to beat Howe was not an isolated event, but rather, part of a larger pattern of CCF's election strategies that dated back to Frederick Robinson's first campaign. In that campaign, Robinson gave radio addresses that spoke to certain issues on a revolving basis; the structure of Robinson's campaign in terms of addressing the public was mimicked by Fisher, the only difference being the change in information medium. Many of the key people who worked for the CCF movement during the Robinson-Anderson era, including the Robinsons themselves, were directly involved in the Fisher campaign; the pragmatic use of television was not the sole innovation of Fisher, but part of the CCF's movement that had witnessed successful campaigns at the Lakehead.

Fisher also succeeded against Howe because he won the working-class vote, having made a concerted effort to campaign for that specific demographic, including travelling to remote work camps.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Fisher's television success (which likely won more middle-class votes than working-class), is tied to his efforts to win the working-class. The majority of his television spots were sponsored and fully funded by local unions, including significant contributions by the

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Dummitt, *Unbuttoned: A History of Mackenzie King's Secret Life* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 85.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Hoff, "Douglas Fisher," 45.



United Steelworkers of America local from the Port Arthur shipyards.<sup>44</sup> In one television speech, Fisher remarked: "...unions of the region have come forward to make this the best campaign the CCF has ever waged in terms of money-backing and political workers. This support of the CCF by organized labour will have real significance in the years ahead as it helps move our party towards a position of power."<sup>45</sup> Fisher was much more conservative than Robinson and Anderson when they were in power. Still, Fisher managed to win union and rank-and-file financial support that was crucial to succeeding at the Lakehead. Howe had spent the majority of his campaign fundraising and promoting other Liberal candidates because he perceived Port Arthur "safe"; by the time his staff had realized Fisher had a chance in Port Arthur and tried to recall Howe, the working-class vote was already lost to Fisher.

Ian McKay's third phase of socialist development, 'Radical Planism', took full root during the Fisher years. 'Radical Planism,' defined as socialists working within the Canadian political system to effect change, is most evidently seen in Fisher's first campaign through union workers' paycheck 'check-offs' that redirected a small portion of willing workers' wages to the CCF, as well as direct union contributions, notably in buying television advertising. Though much has been written about Fisher's aversion to cozy relations with organized labour,

Important to the Fisher strategy that was unique in the history of the Lakehead is the solicitation of the business and management vote. Fisher really valued the opinion of small and local business leaders that comprised an important role in the Lakehead's social fabric. Specifically, Fisher worked from the onset to ensure that his iteration of the CCF "was not a class party" and that all factions in society could see themselves reflected in it.<sup>46</sup> As early as Fisher's first election, the language and actions of the CCF reflected a party, not a movement.

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<sup>44</sup> LUA, DFF, Box 7, File "Elections," TV Script.

<sup>45</sup> LUA, DFF, Box 7, File "Elections," TV Script, 23 May 1957.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

This key distinction, always evident throughout the secondary literature, manifested tangibly in the Lakehead when Fisher began to incorporate the interests of capital and other key stakeholders, moving away from Robinson and Anderson, who often spoke in terms of socialism that advocated for a complete reorganization of Canada's economic system. It would not be long before Fisher shifted the local CCF even more towards the conservative wing of the national party, likely to its extreme end, and became anti-union.

When Fisher beat Howe in 1957, the entire country was shocked. Fisher's new public image was reflected in a letter he received on 12 June 1957 by George Foster, who stated: "During the 10 years since South House, I've often wondered where and what you were doing. Now that you're Public Hero No. 1, I've been bathing in reflected glory all week. Seriously though, Doug, I can't tell you how good it made me feel to see him [Howe] beaten...It's the greatest thing that's happened in Canadian politics in twenty years."<sup>47</sup> To anybody but the Liberal Party, Fisher became a hero for knocking Howe out of politics; despite his stature, Howe had become increasingly unpopular since the war days, particularly for his dealings with the Trans-Canada pipeline shortly before the election.<sup>48</sup> The upset victory was particularly shocking because of Fisher's complete anonymity within the party. A news release by the federal CCF on 14 June 1957, written by Morden Lazarus, read: "But the biggest upset of all was the defeat of the most powerful man in the government, Rt. Hon. C.D. Howe, by school teacher [sic] running as a CCF candidate in Port Arthur, Donald Fisher."<sup>49</sup> Fisher was so unknown, even among CCF ranks, that the national office did not even know his first name!

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<sup>47</sup> LUA, DFF, Box 7, File "Elections," Letter from George Foster.

<sup>48</sup> For information on the local perspectives on the Trans-Canada pipeline, see: LUA, DFF, Box 18, File "Trans-Canada Pipeline," Sessional Paper with Questions and Answers.

<sup>49</sup> Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), Cooperative Commonwealth Federation and New Democratic Party fonds (CCFNDP), MG 28 IV 1, "CPA Press Release, 14 June 1957" microfilm reel C-7026.

Fisher's win over Howe shocked the nation and ushered the local CCF into a new era. He soon became prominent in the CCF; on 21 June 1957, a short biographical sketch about him, using the correct name this time, was released nationwide under the title "The Man Who Beat Howe."<sup>50</sup> Fisher would win again in 1958 and 1962, both times by roughly 2,000 votes.<sup>51</sup> In 1963, Fisher received his largest ever majority.<sup>52</sup> His last two election victories, 1962 and 1963, were won under the banner of the New Democratic Party. Fisher retired from politics after the 1965 election, and moved into a career in journalism with the *Toronto Telegram* and later, the *Toronto Sun*.<sup>53</sup>

The decision to launch a new party began to formally gather momentum after the CCF's devastating loss in 1958, in which John Diefenbaker's Conservatives delivered a record-setting majority and the party only won six seats. Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservative party succeeded by over-performing in Québec, in part due to assistance by Maurice Duplessis and the Union Nationale administration, and because Canadian voters had become disillusioned with the Liberal Party after 22 years of consecutive power. It is against the backdrop of a surging Progressive Conservative party, and a retooling Liberal Party, that the amalgamation of labour and politics into the NDP became a realistic goal. Both organized labour and the the majority of CCF members saw an alliance with each other as a means for political survival. By this point, Fisher had already been considered a "maverick" inside CCF ranks because of his tendency to question party orthodoxy.<sup>54</sup> After 1958, the CCF caucus consisted almost entirely of non-traditional CCF members because of the sheer number of long-time party members, including leader M.J. Coldwell and Stanley Knowles, were defeated in their ridings. Prior to this juncture,

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<sup>50</sup> LAC, CCFNDP, CPA Press Release, 14 June 1957.

<sup>51</sup> *PANC*, 1 April 1958; *PANC*, 19 June 1962.

<sup>52</sup> *PANC*, 9 April 1963.

<sup>53</sup> More for information on Fisher's journalism career, Hoff, "Douglas Fisher," 85-130.

<sup>54</sup> Hoff, "Douglas Fisher," 31.

Fisher appears to be one of the few CCF MPs to have openly questioned the CCF's growing alliance with institutionalized Canadian labour. In addition to the attention that Fisher paid small business, and the credit in which he bestowed upon them for making the Lakehead unique in nature, Fisher warned early in his career about the perils of becoming a "class party." The anti-class rhetoric of Fisher is a sharp contrast to Robinson, who, despite willing to work through the Canadian system, had identified deeply with socialism and the plight of the working-class.

Fisher represented the conservative element of the federal NDP, but throughout his political career and life, continued to consider himself a socialist (though not in the revolutionary sense). In a letter to the editor of the Fort William *Times-Journal*, in which regular columnist Lon Patterson wrote: "People closest to him say Big Doug seems interested in the Liberals," prompting Fisher to respond: "As a matter of fact, as opposed to speculation, might I say that the "people closest" to Big Doug both personally and politically are Socialists and are not aware of any such interest."<sup>55</sup> It appears from the historical evidence that Fisher has been mischaracterized in the literature as a maverick and shaky socialist in the CCF and NDP, whereas he appeared to only disagree with a formal relationship with organized labour. In a speech to the Rotary Club of Port Arthur and the Chamber of Commerce of Port Arthur, Fisher reflected on the role of socialism in society, arguing that people believe that "either we need more socialism or else more free enterprise," and instead of thinking in diametric terms, people would be better served to try to bring the ideologies closer together that each group needs the other.<sup>56</sup> This quote is not intended to portray Fisher as a centrist, but rather, as a moderate socialist who understood the importance of business in society.

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<sup>55</sup> LUA, DFF, Box 1, File "Hazen Argue," Letter to the editor.

<sup>56</sup> LUA, DFF, Box 10, File "Fish-MP Labour," Radio Speech.

That Fisher was opposed to a formal alliance between Canadian Labour and the CCF is no secret according to the historiography: Desmond Morton notes that: “Douglas Fisher, one of the few CCF newcomers to Parliament in the 1957 and 1958 elections, predicted that the alliance would deliver few votes and that unions would sit on their financial resources. The problem for Fisher and other doubting CCFers was they really had no alternative.”<sup>57</sup> Fisher had been adamantly against the idea of a merger with the CLC that, as Gad Horowitz notes, he was the only federal CCF MP to publicly speak out against the idea of the new party.<sup>58</sup> Fisher, in writing to Carl Hamilton, remarked “I believe that if the new party idea is proceeded with further it will lead to the wiping out of our representation in the next federal election.”<sup>59</sup> Fisher would later moderate his criticism, but still questioned “the practical wisdom of being lined up with labour.”<sup>60</sup>

To provide one last glimpse of Fisher’s apparent antipathy to the trade union movement, consider this passage from Dan Azoulay’s *Keeping the Dream Alive: The Survival of the Ontario CCF/NDP, 1950-1963*:

The New Party was plagued, too, by some rather imprudent criticisms from within its own ranks, criticism that the media were only too eager to publicize. The most vociferous critic was Douglas Fisher, CCF M.P. from Port Arthur, who along with several other CCF Members from northern Ontario...first expressed his reservations publicly in October 1959 at the Ontario CCF’s annual convention. Quite simply, Fisher opposed the closer cooperation with the trade union movement that the New Party project entailed. He argued that because labour had always been politically apathetic, except at election time, it would not contribute much to the New Party on a day-to-day basis that that a closer association with unions would only give the New Party a bad image.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Desmond Morton, *NDP: Social Democracy in Canada* (Toronto and Sarasota: Samuel Stevens Hakkert & Company, 1977), 22.

<sup>58</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 213.

<sup>59</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 214.

<sup>60</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 214.

<sup>61</sup> Dan Azoulay, *Keeping the Dream Alive: The Survival of the Ontario CCF/NDP, 1950-1963* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), 171.

The evidence provided from secondary sources provide a clear picture of Fisher's anti-union stance and generally disdain for the ideals of the New Democratic Party. But the secondary sources are overwhelmingly unsympathetic to Fisher because they are only analyzing his actions within the context of the national struggle to determine the direction of the New Party, where most of the historians are sympathetic to the New Democratic Party and to the strength of the organized labour movement. A different picture emerges when Fisher is grounded into the everyday concerns of the Port Arthur riding, regardless of the chilling effect his conservatism may have had on local labour organizations.

By all available records in the nineteen boxes of archival documents that compose the Douglas Fisher Fonds at Lakehead University, Fisher had a congenial relationship with local unions, save their lack of contributions in later years. In fact, in contrast to the way in which Fisher had been publicly and privately maligned as anti-labour by prominent NDP members, Fisher joined his first union six years into his political career, in 1963.<sup>62</sup> In writing to the Thunder Bay District Labour Council's Labour Day Committee's Secretary-Treasurer, Hal Boreski, Fisher remarked:

Their fate [deaths of three labourers in the Kapuskasing region] reminds us that the solidarity of brotherhood is more and more important. In this past year, it has been my personal pleasure to have become a member of a union for the first time. Several months ago, I was accepted as a member for the American Newspaper Build Local, servicing the Toronto Telegram. It was the most encouraging feeling for me to be asked to join this union and it was with much pleasure that I paid my membership fees... I had a sense that I was non [sic] longer merely an honorary or "front" part of the labour movement but an actual part of it now, identified with all those men and women of the past, the present, and, we hope, the future who have fought, are fighting and will keep on fighting for better things for themselves.<sup>63</sup>

Two elements of this letter are striking. First, Fisher is clearly enthused to be a member of a union, reveling in the security and comradery that exist in unions. Second, and more importantly,

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<sup>62</sup> DFF, LUA, Box 2, File "Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers," letter to Hal Boreksi.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

despite his ongoing public battle against organized labour and the NDP establishment, Fisher, at least relative to residents of the Lakehead, considered himself as labour's representative in Canadian politics, very much the same as his predecessors, Robinson and Anderson, did the same.

Four years earlier, Fisher embodied his self-image as a front for labour when he organized a citizens' delegation to meet with Prime Minister Diefenbaker in early 1959 when the Canadian Car Company, an Avro Arrow subsidiary, decided to close and abandon its Fort William factory.<sup>64</sup> Organized on behalf of Local 1075 of the United Autoworkers and local 81 of the O.E.I.U., Fisher (though not alone) succeeded in organizing the meeting with Diefenbaker to ensure that the factory stayed open in some capacity.<sup>65</sup> Fisher also regularly interacted with the Fort William-Port Arthur (Thunder Bay) District Labour Council, and was almost always well-received.<sup>66</sup> The evidence provided from Fisher in the context of local unions and documents suggests that he did not have a negative attitude towards unionism and labour more general.

The question remains: did Fisher remain a useful liaison for the Lakehead labour movement in spite of his political battles at the federal level? The historical evidence suggests that Fisher did maintain a productive relationship with labour, save for a few failures attributed to the increased role he played in nation-building for several projects under the St. Laurent government.<sup>67</sup> The key essence of the CCF, and later, NDP during this period is that Fisher did not 'conservatize' the Lakehead labour movement or the region's politics, but was a product of it. Various CCF members who throughout the 1930s-1940s that showed genuine, grassroots

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<sup>64</sup> There is a significant amount of literature on the Avro Arrow. For one example, see Greig Steward, *Shutting Down the National Dream: A.V. Roe and the Tragedy of the Avro Arrow* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1988).

<sup>65</sup> DFF, LUA, Box 2, File "Canadian Car Company," Letter to the Hon. George Nowlan, M.P., Minister of National Revenue, 29 December 1959;

<sup>66</sup> DFF, LUA, Box 10, File "Labour Organizations," brief to Douglas Fisher on unemployment at the Lakehead.

<sup>67</sup> Michel S. Beaulieu, "Louis St. Laurent: Canada's Last Big Vision Prime Minister?" (lecture, Lakehead University, 5 November 2018).

socialist integrity with a revolutionary flame also shifted their politics during this period to parallel Fisher's: friendly, sympathetic, and a part of the local labour movement, but wary of the prospects of the formal merger between the Canadian labour movement and the CCF.

The formal merger between the CCF and the Canadian Labour Congress did come, creating ramifications that Fisher had to navigate at the local level. Norman Penner points to David Lewis, National Chairman of the CCF in 1956, as the prime mover for the merger between the CCF and the CLC.<sup>68</sup> In aligning with the trade union movement, Lewis sought to expand the reach of the CCF to be more encompassing, particularly to working Liberals.<sup>69</sup> Election results at the national level had muddied the future of the CCF, and a three-year process unfolded that saw the CCF formally align with the trade union movement. The dramatic change in the party's fortunes as the CCF evolved into the NDP concluded on 31 July 1962, when the NDP held its first national convention. These dramatic changes occurring at the local level can be best summarized by the oral testimony of lifelong CCF member Jean Robinson, who reflects in an interview that the majority of the local executive members, throughout the CCF's existence at the Lakehead, were non-union people who placed a primacy on the interests of the working-class, regardless of labour affiliation.<sup>70</sup> Rakowski continues Robinson's remarks, adding that "the CCF was a party for the working class and the NDP is the party of the trade-union movement," and that the working-class can no longer look to the NDP as its representatives.<sup>71</sup> The Robinsons thought similarly to Fisher, and so did some CCFers at every level, and particularly of the rank-and-file who were wary of the new alliance with labour.<sup>72</sup> The shift, rather, sprung from shifting

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<sup>68</sup> Norman Penner, *From Protest to Power: Social Democracy in Canada, 1900-Present* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1992), 91.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> QUA, CNOHP, Peter Campbell Transcripts, Interview with Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1968), 210-211.



material conditions that consequently changed the way that labour and its politics were organized, a complex process that saw gains in many areas, but losses in others.

While the CCF underwent dramatic changes enacted largely at the national level, Fisher managed to be a successful voice for the Lakehead's labour movement. The movement had, as described in the previous two chapters, underwent its own dramatic shift primarily characterized by the reduced influence of communists and radicals, the introduction of dominant, international unions, and the whittling of various district labour councils into one. All the while, the CCF and organized labour grew increasingly interdependent in relying on the other for success. The pinnacle of the decades-long march towards formal amalgamation, and the full manifestation of 'Radical Planism' had the Lakehead, occurred at a public forum on 18-19 October 1958 designed to gauge the level of support among Port Arthur and Fort William in the idea of what would later become the New Democratic Party.<sup>73</sup>

The People's Forum on the New Party in Canada marked the local symbiosis between labour and politics at the Lakehead because the idea of merging labour and politics was favourably received by the majority of attendees.<sup>74</sup> The District Labour Council, including both council executives and members from individual unions, were thoroughly supportive of the New Party idea and voiced their support throughout the entirety of the program.<sup>75</sup> Though the forum marked an important moment in the local histories of organized labour and social democratic politics, the New Party idea had been percolating since, at the latest, 1956, and the eventual merger between the CLC and the CCF was an inevitability by the time the forum was held. The forum was held in 1958 partly as a consequence to the dismal results shown by the CCF in the 1958, where Fisher was one of the few party members to retain his seat. In part a reaction to the

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<sup>73</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (hereafter TBHM), Thunder Bay and District Labour Council fonds (TBDL), Series E57/1/15, "People's Forum-"New Party in Canada Agenda and Minutes""

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

surge of the Progressive Conservatives in the 1958 election, the CLC and the CCF agreed to their shared new party resolution and established a “Joint Political Committee” to forward the goal of the resolution, namely, to create the New Democratic Party.<sup>76</sup>

The District Labour Council had to support the resolution and the New Party idea because they were formally affiliated with, and relied greatly on the support of, the CLC.<sup>77</sup> At this point, the rank-and-file had very little direct say in the affairs of their unions, and especially, the overarching labour hierarchy to whom they belonged. Near the time of the forum, Fisher, in an address to the Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce, remarked that unions “are conducted by absentee landlords, hence they are less militant here.”<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, in 1958, Gad Horowitz, in his study of the CLC-CCF merger, argues that the CCF rank-and-file also lacked influence in the direction of their party and that the decision on the direction of the party laid in the hands of party bureaucrats and high-level executives.<sup>79</sup> It is worthy of speculation that CCF members, similar to labourers in 1944, had to compromise their autonomy for organizational security and longevity. In this regard, it becomes clear that a parallel process of disenfranchisement from the ability to sway their respective organization’s direction affected the rank-and-file of the organized labour movement and the CCF at the Lakehead.

Fisher, throughout the forum, appeared lukewarm to the idea of the New Party.<sup>80</sup> His rabid opposition to the amalgamation of labour and politics did not materialize at early discussions of the party and only emerged after the party had been created, with a few exceptions.<sup>81</sup> The District Labour Council continued to stay busy throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, and in numerous cases, continued to work well with Fisher in advocating for

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<sup>76</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 198.

<sup>77</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/1/15 File 7, “People’s Forum-“New Party in Canada Agenda and Minutes””

<sup>78</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/1/12 File 6, Report of the Lakehead Unity Committee

<sup>79</sup> Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 211.

<sup>80</sup> TBHM, TBDL, Series E/57/15 File 7, “People’s Forum-“New Party in Canada Agenda and Minutes””

<sup>81</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 213.

working-class gains at the Lakehead. The most pertinent example comes from the District Labour Council working with Fisher, as well as Port Arthur and Fort William's mayors, and the other MPs and MLAs in the region, to combat the unemployment rate at the Lakehead.<sup>82</sup> As mentioned earlier, Fisher was more than willing to liaise between the United Automobile Workers #1075 and Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, and he also closely worked with smaller unions to help advance working-class goals. The evidence suggests that Douglas Fisher was in favour of close relationships, but not a formal merger, between organized labour and the CCF.

The earliest criticism from Fisher towards the New Democratic Party appeared to occur in 1959 throughout and shortly after the 1959 Ontario general election, lamenting the role that trade unionism played in the fate of the CCF.<sup>83</sup> Afterwards, with increasing intensity, Fisher began to spar with party elites over the direction of the party. The culmination occurred in 1964 when Fisher attacked the CLC for their "unconditional surrender" to a strike waged by the Seafarer's International Union in 1964.<sup>84</sup> According to an article in the *Montreal Star*, Fisher was so incensed that he believed that the NDP would be served well to break with organized labour.<sup>85</sup> There was, in many other instances but best reflected here, a struggle for the soul of the party. The closing of the article provides a nice summation of the view of the New Democratic Party executive and an increasing number of former CCFers:

If [Douglas Fisher] now wants to split the promising alliance between the New Democrats and the Canadian Labor Congress, he does not serve his party well, nor is he serving any national cause. The trade union movement in Canada belongs naturally with the New Democratic movement. There is a large identity of aim, and politics are stabilized when men and women of common belief are able to get together in a common political party.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Douglas Fisher Fonds, Lakehead University Archives, Box 10, File "Labour Organizations," brief to Douglas Fisher on unemployment at the Lakehead.

<sup>83</sup> Gad Horowitz, *Canadian Labour in Politics*, 213-214.

<sup>84</sup> *Montreal Star* (hereafter *MS*), 17 April 1964.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

The New Democratic Party was not universally accepted by many CCF members, but over the course of the first few years of the party's existence, general acceptance of the party increased and by 1964, the majority of the party's members reflected the views expressed in the *Montreal Star* article. Walter D. Young, in his analysis of some CCF member's resistance to the New Democratic Party, inverts the thinking presented in the *Montreal Star*, writing "Paradoxically, Arnold Peters and Douglas Fisher became spokesmen for the rank-and-file that opposed any departure from the old. They stood up for the many party members who traditionally opposed "the brass" and defended the grass-roots tradition of the CCF."<sup>87</sup> The evidence for Young's claim can be seen from Fisher's record working closely with organized labour movement, working within the organized labour movement, and, at all times, defending the interests of the working-class at the Lakehead.

Leo Zakuta, in his landmark work on the CCF, *A Protest Movement Becalmed: A Study of Change in the CCF*, argues overall that the CCF became increasingly conservative throughout its existence and evolved from a movement to a party in its gradual transition to the NDP.<sup>88</sup> In studying Fisher's influence and body of work with the local organized labour movement, it becomes clear that it *is* Fisher's conservative approach to politics and labour that kept the grassroots tradition of the original CCF alive. In rejecting party orthodoxy and favouring a distinct party, free from the vices of organized labour, Fisher implicitly advocated from grassroots, rank-and-file control of the party's politics and refused to be assimilated into the broader Canadian politic.

Politics and labour took a long and winding journey to their eventual amalgamation. Both the organized labour movement and the CCF largely integrated because key decision-making

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<sup>87</sup> Young, *The Anatomy of a Party*, 237.

<sup>88</sup> Leo Zakuta, *A Protest Movement Becalmed: A Study of Change in the CCF* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964).

processes were outsourced to higher levels of executive power. In both instances, the influence of grassroots members was exchanged for safety and security. The marriage between labour and politics is a reflection of the changing material and social conditions at the Lakehead that created circumstances in which radical, grassroots-led organizations could not survive or thrive.

## Conclusion

Working-class culture permeates throughout Thunder Bay. A cultural attachment to hard work, natural resource industries, and left-of-centre politics continue to, in part, define the community. This is not a surprise, because work and individuals' relationship to their work have dominated the social and cultural norms of the region for the entirety of its existence. From the nature of work and trade in pre-contact Indigenous societies, through the complex economic ties forged throughout the Canadian Fur Trade, and the modern relationship between labour and capital that emerged after European physical and economic colonization of the Lakehead, labour and labouring has always played a significant role in defining the character of the region.

The prescient role that labour has played throughout the history of the Lakehead is evident. The exact nature and structure of working-class identity has, over the past two centuries, evolved to reflect the changing material and social conditions of Lakehead society. The most dramatic shift in the organization of the Lakehead's working-class came between 1935 and 1963, where the Lakehead's became increasingly intertwined with social democratic politics, a trend reflected in national patterns.<sup>1</sup> Culminating in the formation of the New Democratic Party, labour's drift towards politics reflected the reorientation of socialist politics in Canada during the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>2</sup> Concurrently, the experience of the rank-and-file union members at the Lakehead altered amidst the backdrop of increasingly powerful national and international labour organizations entering and dominating the pre-existing local labour organizations. Rank-and-file labourers, once the locust of labour power at the Lakehead, were reduced to tertiary roles in the movement as union local executives and pan-organizational labour bodies controlled the vast majority of decision-making.

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<sup>1</sup> Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada's Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 169-183.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

This study sought to illustrate the changes affecting the labour movement at the Lakehead between 1935 and 1963 and differentiate local and regional peculiarities from the pan-Canadian generalizations often made in the study of Canadian postwar labour history. While local differences persisted through this era, with one example being the persistent activism and presence of communists uprooted from the labour movement in the 1950s, the experience of Lakehead labourers and socialists generally fit into the framework of Canadian socialist development expounded by Ian McKay. Specifically, the Lakehead experience fully rests within the McKay's definition and explanation of the third formation, 'Radical Planism.' This dramatic shift is evidenced through the parallel process that labour and the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation took at the Lakehead that ended in their eventual formal partnership. The formal partnership, signified by the creation of the New Democratic Party, is mostly vividly witnessed through the "People's Forum" on the New Party idea.<sup>3</sup> The tenuous relationship between labour and politics that had existed through much of the Lakehead's history had evolved into an formal partnership as both organized labour and social democratic politics sought ways to stay relevant in Canada's postwar period.

A significant element of this thesis focused on conservative social and political forces acting upon both the labour movement and the social democratic movement at the Lakehead during the postwar period. The rise of international unionism at the Lakehead removed long-serving radical, and often communist, leadership from the organized labour movement. These figures, including Bruce Magnuson and A.T. Hill, had served the labour movement for over two decades prior to being expelled from their unions. The consequences of the vacuum in traditional leadership manifested in the domestication of the rank-and-file union members, who

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<sup>3</sup> Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives (hereafter TBHM), Thunder Bay and District Labour Council fonds (TBDL), Series E57/1/15 File 7, "People's Forum-"New Party in Canada Agenda and Minutes""

lost the ability of self-determination within their unions.<sup>4</sup> The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, on its path to becoming the New Democratic Party, also transformed under the pressure of conservative forces, most tangibly witnessed through attacks levied on the party by the local Conservative and Liberal parties, and through the voter apathy that plagued local and national CCF voters.

Another thread woven throughout this study is the relationship of politics to the postwar compromise. Histories of the postwar compromise largely (though not exclusively) examine the postwar compromise and its relationship to labour in isolation. An intrinsic element to the postwar compromise at the Lakehead, however, was the necessitation of labour to turn towards politics because of the conditions outlined as part of the compromise. Labour did not always independently elect to form closer bonds with politics but were forced to because they had no other avenue to turn towards to try to accomplish working-class goals.

An examination of the organized labour movement at the Lakehead between 1935-1963 reveal that social and cultural forces homogenized the labour movement and integrated the region more fully into the broader Canadian experience. To illustrate the successes and struggles of the organized labour movement, as well as the CCF's movement, preferential treatment was given to local sources and locally-created documents in other archives.<sup>5</sup> A particular emphasis was placed on using the oral histories of individuals who had lived through the time period. Of particular importance was the interview conducted with Helmer Borg. Borg's interview humanizes the process in which the structure of local unions altered dramatically throughout the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>6</sup> Oral histories of those involved with the CCF movement at the Lakehead

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<sup>4</sup> Don Wells, "The Impact of the Postwar Compromise on Canadian Unionism: The Formation of an Auto Worker Local in the 1950s," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 150.

<sup>5</sup> These include the City of Thunder Bay Archives, the Lakehead University Archives, and the Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Archives.

<sup>6</sup> Lakehead University Archives (hereafter LUA), Jean Morrison Labour History Collection (hereafter JMLHC), GS186a, Helmer Borg Interview, 1972.



were also included when possible. In particular, Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski provide a first-hand, ‘arms reach’ perspective on the rise and decline of the CCF at the Lakehead.<sup>7</sup> Relying on local documents allows for an authentic narrative that fully reflects the Lakehead during this period. Local newspapers, too, were favoured over regional, political and national newspapers when possible.<sup>8</sup> Approaching the history of the Lakehead from the bottom-up allows for the Lakehead to be centred in the narrative.

The use of local sources to articulate a local narrative reflect the need for an increased engagement with the Lakehead, and Northwestern Ontario more generally, in social and labour historiography. The history of the postwar labour movement has become increasingly detailed as the number of studies have increased, and yet, no regional studies had yet to focus specifically on the Lakehead during this time period. This thesis has begun to satisfy the gap in the historiography, outlining and discussing key themes and narratives that dominated the postwar labour movement at the Lakehead. Specifically, the study has integrated the Lakehead into the broader Canadian experience by articulating the region’s similarities and differences to the broader national experience; the rise of international unionism, the reasons for and consequences of evolving into the New Democratic Party, and the impact of the formation of the Canadian Labour Congress at the Lakehead all support conclusions present in the existing literature, providing evidence to conclude that the Lakehead patterned other regions in Canada.

There are, of course, limitations to the study. The most glaring limitation to the thesis is its lack of attention on women and Indigenous labourers. Historical studies of women at the Lakehead are sparse, with even less attention paid to the postwar period. Scholarly attention has focused on women’s experience in local industry during the Second World War, and particularly,

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<sup>7</sup> Queen’s University Archives, Ontario CCF-NDP Oral History Project collection, Locator 3217.6SE, Peter Campbell transcripts, interview with Jean Robinson and Mary Rakowski, Port Arthur, Ontario, March 14, 1986.

<sup>8</sup> These include the *Port Arthur News Chronicle* and the *Fort William Daily Times-Journal*.

in the Canadian Car and Foundry.<sup>9</sup> An edited collection, *Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario*, appears to be the only significant collection focusing on women's experience in postwar Northwestern Ontario, but in this volume, marginal attention is given towards postwar women's labour.<sup>10</sup>

A significant issue in studying both women and Indigenous people in the labour movement during the postwar period is that the two historically marginalized groups are often not reflected in traditional archival sources. There are clear strategies and historical methods that can overcome structural limitations towards studying Indigenous and women labourers. For example, there is clear evidence that women in the labour force during the postwar period at the Lakehead were subject to discrimination, similar to the rest of Canada. Local women, for example, were outright dismissed from their job if they married or became pregnant.<sup>11</sup> As an example, a wage agreement from 1950 for public sector employees in Fort William's civic administration states: "The Corporation may terminate the employment of a female employee on the marriage of such employee. The Corporation recognizes the principle that it will not employ married females except in unusual circumstances."<sup>12</sup> That the previous sentence formed a clause in the collective wage agreement suggests that unions were not fully concerned, or perhaps even conscious of, the goals of working women in the postwar period. A second example comes from the disparity in pay faced by female clerks. For the same work, female clerks were paid around \$12-\$25 less per month than male clerks throughout the 1950s in Fort

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example: Helen Smith and Pamela Wakewich, "'I Was Not Afraid to Work': Female War Plant Employees and their Work Environment," in *Essays in Northwestern Ontario Working Class History: Thunder Bay and its Environs*, ed. Michel S. Beaulieu (Thunder Bay: Lakehead University Centre for Northern Studies, 2008), 263-282; Helen Smith and Pamela Wakewich, "Representations of Women and Wartime Work in the Canadian Car and Foundry Company Newspaper, the *Aircrafter*," *Thunder Bay Historical Museum Society Papers and Records* 25 (1997): 64-77.

<sup>10</sup> Margaret Kechnie and Marge Reitsma-Street, eds., *Changing Lives: Women in Northern Ontario* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1996).

<sup>11</sup> Sangster, *Transforming Labour*, 189.

<sup>12</sup> Thunder Bay City Archives (hereafter TBCA), City of Fort William Collection (CFWC), Series 4: City Clerk's Files, 0219-03, 67-Wage Agreements, 1950.

William.<sup>13</sup> Women, comparatively, faced the same experience in Port Arthur. The Lakehead appears to follow a similar pattern to the broader Canadian experience for women in the workforce: that, despite record numbers of employment, the image of the postwar women continued revolve around domesticity and building the family, as evidenced by the emphasis on non-married female employees.<sup>14</sup>

Evidence abounds for the discrimination faced by women in the labour force. However, the local union-created documents for specific (traditionally male-dominated) industries that this study focuses on failed to provide an adequate level of primary materials that detailed the role of women in changing union structures. On exception is the case of Elvina Gibson (nee Bolt), a welder employed at Canadian Car and Foundry for 38 years.<sup>15</sup> At the conclusion of the Second World War, within a 24 hour period, Canadian Car and Foundry had dismissed all but three of the roughly 1,000 women employed at the plant; Gibson's story is interesting because she is one of the three women who managed to retain her job as she continued to work at Can-Car well into the subsequent decades.<sup>16</sup> Gibson's experience in the postwar era as a female employed in a traditionally-dominant male workplace provides valuable insight into the gendered dimensions of work and labour in the post-Second World War Lakehead.

Elvina Bolt began working at Can-Car in June of 1940 as a sewer; after one month, she had transferred to welding and had picked the trade up so quickly that the plant had decided to recruit and hire more females to become welders.<sup>17</sup> By all accounts, Elvina had succeeded in her

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<sup>13</sup> TBCA, CFWC, Series 4: City Clerk's Files, 0219-03, 67-Wage Agreements, 1950; TBCA, CFWC, Series 4: City Clerk's Files, 0219-05, 67-Wage Agreements, 1952; TBCA, CFWC, Series 4: City Clerk's Files, 0219-04, 67-Wage Agreements, 1951.

<sup>14</sup> Married women often faced the most discrimination in the workforce, often the result of the backlash against the perceived notion of a mother neglecting her child. For one example of married women faring worse, see: Porter, "Women and Income Security," 118-144.

<sup>15</sup> Elvina Gibson interview, Kelly Saxberg personal collection.

<sup>16</sup> Gordon Burkowski, *Can-Car: a History, 1912-1992* (Thunder Bay: Bombardier Inc., 1995), 90; Helen Smith and Pamela Wakewich, "Beauty and the Helldivers," 72; Interview with Elvina Gibson, Kelly Saxberg Personal Collection.

<sup>17</sup> Elvina Gibson interview, Kelly Saxberg personal collection.

role as a welder throughout the War, but as the war concluded, job security became a very real concern for the majority of women. Through a stroke of luck, Elvina held onto her position. In reflecting on the end of the War, Elvina recalled: “A lot of them were laid off. Of course, they went home after the war was over. They just put them out then, so that was it. But I was there, thank goodness. I was the only [welder] that was kept on. I enjoyed it though, I really did.”<sup>18</sup> Bolt remaining to work at Can-Car against the backdrop of management’s concerted effort to replace women war workers with men suggests that, while capital and union management still subscribed to traditional notions of gendered relations, particularly in the labour force, women struggled and resisted normative values to carve out roles in the workplace for themselves.<sup>19</sup>

Bolt’s experience is of course the exception and not the rule. Women who had worked at Can-Car reported the sensation of financial security and earning money for the first time in their lives, many of whom would have preferred to continue working at Can-Car or in another manufacturing role if they could choose.<sup>20</sup> Others were happy to move into ‘traditional’ roles upon their husbands’ return or after finding partners.<sup>21</sup> What must be understood is that women were often viewed as a conglomerate by broader societal institutions and, in particular to labour, women were often constrained by stereotypes and attitudes about how to define womanhood.<sup>22</sup> It is a mistake to generalize the present or past; a study of women at the Lakehead shows the participation in the public and private sector, in civil defense, and as homemakers. It is no coincidence that the second-wave feminist movement at the Lakehead would emerge at the onset of the 1960s as an attempt to create a society in which barriers, both physical and constructed, to

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<sup>18</sup> Elvina Gibson interview, Kelly Saxberg personal collection.

<sup>19</sup> Ester Reiter, “First-Class Workers Don’t Want Second-Class Wages: The Lanark Strike in Dunville,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 170.

<sup>20</sup> Elvina Gibson interview, Kelly Saxberg personal collection.

<sup>21</sup> Elvina Gibson interview, Kelly Saxberg personal collection.

<sup>22</sup> Joy Parr, “Shopping for a Good Stove: a Parable about Gender, Design, and the Market,” in *A Diversity of Women: Ontario, 1945-1980*, ed. Joy Parr (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 77.

equal access to employment and the freedom to choose would emerge based in part on the steps that women made in local labour and politics during the 1940s and 1950s.

Labour in the postwar period, then, marked a complex change for women that witnessed a gendered struggle and normative gendered labour codes.

Indigenous peoples also did not appear throughout the primary sources created by local unions, despite their presence and importance to the general labour movement at the Lakehead during the postwar period. In 1972 former bush worker and general labourer John Landmesser commented that Indigenous peoples were among the most populous and hardest-working employees in logging camps near the Lakehead during the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s; Landmesser also noted that Charlie Cox, a prominent lifetime public official in both Port Arthur and Fort William, almost exclusively employed Indigenous peoples in his lumber business.<sup>23</sup> It is evident that women and Indigenous peoples both played roles intrinsic to the success of the Lakehead during the postwar period. Exploring the history of women, and the role of Indigenous peoples in the labour movement, may be the most fruitful, yet understudied, avenue of labour history at the Lakehead. It is this study's regret that it could not incorporate a full, thoughtful discussion, but it is also this study's hope to posit the challenge for historians to more critically examine historically marginalized groups at the Lakehead, in particular related to labour.

The labour movement and its relationship to social democratic politics changed dramatically between 1935-1963. After the arrival of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation as a legitimate political threat in 1935, through the Second World War when the CCF first reach office at the Lakehead, and the postwar compromise was reached, and concluding with the formal affiliation between organized labour and social democratic politics after the formation of the NDP, the character, function, and purpose of organized labour and socialism at the Lakehead

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<sup>23</sup> LUA, JMLHC, GS186a, John Landmesser Interview, 1972.

changed to an unrecognizable degree. The working-class had, relative to the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lost autonomy and their decision-making power in the direction of their labour unions. The trade-off, however, saw working men (and some, but few women) receive wages, job safety and security, and access to political structures that were, to that point, unprecedented. The character and values of the Lakehead's socialists and working-class radically changed too. Notions of revolution and the reorganization of Canada's economic apparatus fell to the wayside; in its wake, the working-class saw direct political participation as the strongest avenue to make incremental changes favorable to the Lakehead's working-class. The 'Radical Planism' period at the Lakehead had fundamentally reorganized the organization of labour and politics in the region, establishing, in part, the basis for Thunder Bay's current working-class value-system and labour scene.

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